

## ISPC Assessment of the revised proposal for the Genebank Platform phase 2 (2017-2022)

### ISPC PLATFORM RATING<sup>1</sup>: A

#### 1. Summary

- CGIAR genebanks conserve, by far, the world's most genetically diverse and widely disseminated collection of germplasm available under the Multilateral System of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA). Between 2012 and 2014, CGIAR genebanks distributed 94% of the reported germplasm under the ITPGRFA.
- CGIAR genebanks are key to the conservation and exchange of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture and SDG targets. Climate change and changes in insect and pathogen population dynamics will further increase the importance of genebanks to the future of agriculture.
- The record of accomplishment of the Genebank Platform team is impressive and the credibility of the team high. They are lead experts in relevant domains and represent the appropriate skills and experience to ensure the delivery of the proposed work.
- Although the core of the CGIAR research products are increasingly generated by the AFS CRPs, developments in science and technology, conservation standards, collecting requirements, value-adding activities, require a unified response. This is even more important in respect of the increasingly complex policy environment shaping the conservation, use, and benefit sharing conditions in the area of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture. A collective approach to conservation and use of the plant genetic resources held in the CGIAR genebanks, following a harmonized policy via the proposed Genebank Platform, will ensure an effective and efficient System-wide research infrastructure and will strengthen the CGIAR's role as a leading global player in this field.
- Key to the successful long-term management of the Platform is a streamlined and efficient Governance and Management structure. Given that the Genebank is a major enabler for global food security, it is critically important that physical, financial, political and reputational risks are appropriately recognised, managed and ultimately reduced. In this respect, additional clarity on the purpose of the various proposed committees and committee members will be required.
- The proposal makes the case that its work is synergistic with the CRPs, and shows how genebank information and outputs enable R&D outcomes related to achieving the SLOs. Delivery of the proposed outcomes in a timely manner, however, will also depend on the appropriate management of how risks and unforeseen developments.
- The Platform potentially provides a means for strong monitoring, evaluation, reporting and learning, as well as ensuring cohesion to achieve shared targets and to pursue quality management. The shared approach is expected to promote efficiency, the use of powerful tools and resources to access collections, the alignment of standards, and strong trust and transparency.

<sup>1</sup> A+: Outstanding - of the highest quality, at the forefront of research in the field (fully evolved, exceeds expectations; recommended unconditionally).

A: Excellent – high quality research and a strongly compelling proposal that is at an advanced stage of evolution as a CRP, with strong leadership which can be relied on to continue making improvements.

A-: Very good – a sound and compelling proposal displaying high quality research and drawing on established areas of strength, which could benefit from a more forward-looking vision.

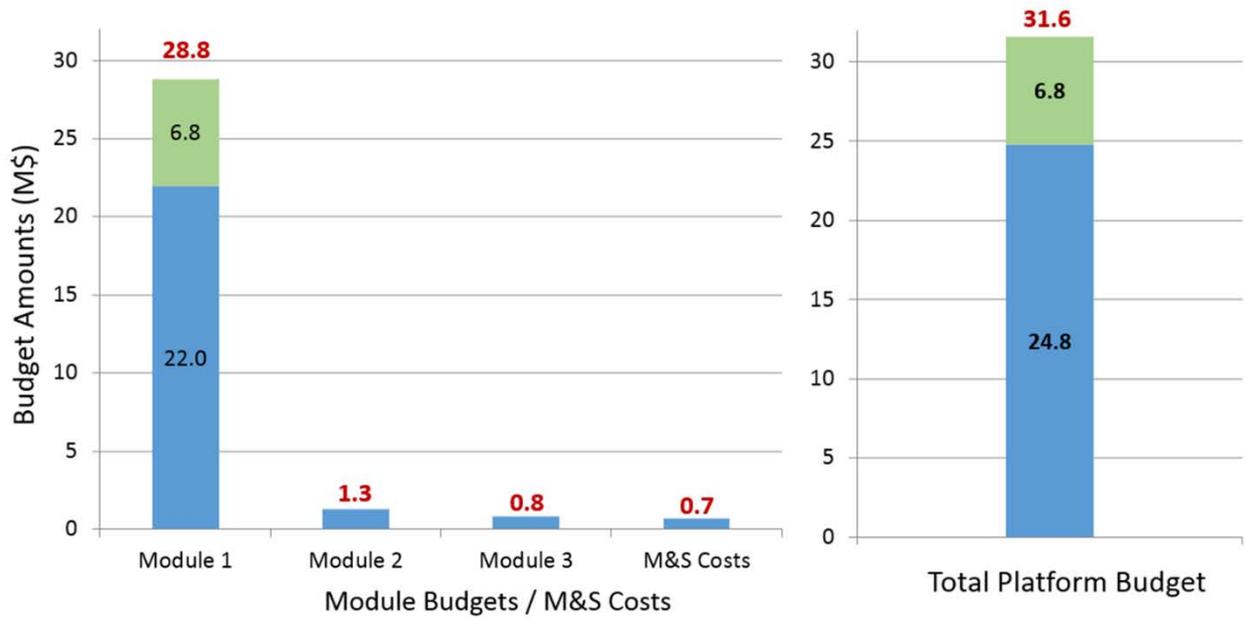
B+: Good – a sound research proposal but one which is largely framed by 'business as usual' and is deficient in some key aspects of a CRP that can contribute to System-wide SLOs.

B: Fair – Elements of a sound proposal but has one or more serious flaws rendering it uncompetitive; not recommended without significant change.

C: Unsatisfactory – Does not make an effective case for the significance or quality of the proposed research.

**Genebank 2017 Module and Platform Budgets:**  
**W1/W2 Amounts & W3/Bilateral Amounts (all considered secured), in US\$M**

■ Projected 2017 W1/W2 Amounts      *Figures in red are Total 2017 Budgets Needed*  
 ■ Secured 2017 W3/Bilateral Amounts



*Data Source: CGIAR System Management Office*

## 2. Assessment of the Platform response to the ISPC major comments

Initial ISPC comment (16 June 2016)	Platform response/changes proposed (31 July)	ISPC assessment (14 September)
<p>1. Greater clarification of the prioritization and risk management strategy that the Platform has for collection, conservation and management activities.</p>	<p>Proposal Section 2.7 (pages 27-30) is revised</p> <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk management strategies will be published annually on the Platform website.</li> <li>• High level of risk management is of paramount importance to the sustainability of the collections and is the responsibility of the individual Centers.</li> <li>• The Platform has a role in supporting the strengthening and validation of these strategies.</li> <li>• The risks and measures on implementation of Platform activities are described in Table 1. Although most risks listed are rated from low to moderate, the ones rated high are financial related ones.</li> <li>• Safety duplication of 90% of all accessions by 2022 indicated as one of the key performance targets.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Partially addressed.</b></p> <p>The governance that will oversee risk management as outlined in Table 1, however, needs additional elucidation: While the ‘owners’ of the risks are identified, it is not clear how accountability is assured.</p>
<p>2. Elaboration of the Platform’s strategy to strengthen and expand partnerships, including its functional linkages with the AFS CRPs and other CGIAR Platforms.</p>	<p>Proposal Section 2.3 (pages 24-25) is revised and Table 2 (pages 120-125) in Annex 4 provides detailed linkages and mechanisms between the Genebank Platform and the AFS CRPs, other Platforms and other users for the achievement of specific Module outputs.</p> <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal mechanisms and particularly the Excellence in Breeding Module Advisory Groups will support joint planning.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Partially addressed.</b></p> <p>The description of linkages with the AFS CRPs and CGIAR Platforms especially with the EiB (e.g in populating the germplasm collection of information with molecular data), however, would benefit from additional detail.</p> <p>In addition, whilst annex 4 is helpful, addition of a column that also details expected outcomes from these partnerships would clarify who benefits and how.</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through the Use Module, the Platform will engage with users, and flow of information back to the genebank.</li> <li>• The Platform is developing a communication strategy based on a website and newsletter that will give news updates, tools and information with the aim of creating awareness of the collections and building capacity and facilitating dialogue.</li> <li>• Stronger engagement with national genebanks. Reviewers, expertise and partnership are often sourced from national genebanks and other key partners.</li> </ul>	
<p>3. The Platform's strategy towards the broadening of the global Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (PGRFA) information and data management partnership, including its role in capacity development.</p>	<p>Proposal Sections 1.0.4 (pages 14-15) and 3.1 (pages 39-40) are revised.</p> <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A process of systematically reviewing and updating the 17 published crop conservation strategies that are relevant to the CGIAR genebanks will be developed in coordination with the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) and the FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.</li> <li>• Priorities will be set based on survey results across crops.</li> <li>• Thematic and regional capacity building events will be developed and implemented, bringing together specific areas of expertise from across all 11 Centers and key partners.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Satisfactorily addressed.</b></p>

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<p>4. The Platform's proposed governance and management structures.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposal Section 1.0.5 (pages 15-17) is revised. Key points:</li> <li>• The Crop Trust Board membership is made up of four appointees from the Governing Body of the ITPGRFA, one from the CGIAR and one from the FAO, all with appropriate experience to guide the management of these international collections.</li> <li>• MoU, which lays out the roles and responsibilities of the Centers and the Crop Trust and their interactions with all System bodies, to be developed and agreed between the Crop Trust and CGIAR System.</li> <li>• Proposed that the Executive Director of the CropTrust reports annually the status of the genebanks against performance targets to the System Management Board.</li> <li>• The Independent Advisory Committee will be made up of seven members: four external experts, one representative from AFS-CRPs, the Genetic Gain Platform Leader and the Crop Trust Executive Director. The Management Team will comprise seven members: three A15 members, the Policy Module leader, GHU representative and the Platform Coordinator.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Partially addressed.</b></p> <p>The governance structure, however, requires more granularity than what figure 8 provides. As indicated before, it would be good to know, for instance, who oversees risk management. Given that the Genebank is a major enabler for global food security, it is critically important that we ensure physical, financial, political and reputational risks are appropriately recognised, managed and ultimately reduced. The current narrative seems to focus exclusively on the structure of the governance, but fails to convey the purpose of the various committees and committee members.</p>