13 May 2011

ISPC Commentary on the proposal CRP 3.7: More meat, milk and fish by and for the poor (*proposal date 5 March 2011*)

The proposed program targets both the availability and affordability of sources of animal[1] protein for the poor while also promoting greater participation by the poor in animal and fish production. The proposal clearly defines key constraints and opportunities for small-scale livestock and fish production systems in the developing world, which if alleviated, would make significant contributions to the CGIAR's SLOs of improved health and nutrition and poverty reduction. The proposal presents a good assessment of causes of failure of previous attempts to increase productivity and livelihood opportunities of small scale livestock and fish farmers in developing countries and clearly identifies opportunities for sensible investments in research and generation of science-based knowledge in this sector. It adopts a value chain approach to provide research for the development of a discrete set of prioritised value chains for animal products in selected countries. This approach was unanimously supported by the external reviewers who felt it has the potential to deliver impact.

The first component on technology development, which takes a significant proportion of the budget, includes a strong element of upstream research as well as development of technologies to feed into the value chain development of the second component. The third component is cross-cutting, focusing on priority setting, gender and equity, and impact. The 'whole', provides a coherent packaged approach that avoids the impression of business "as usual". The ISPC believes the approach - through analysis of value chains in areas of poverty - should lead to impact, through offering entry points for research that address social, economic and technical problems of subcomponents of the value chain. Selection and targeting of promising value chains has been included in the proposal, with appropriate attention to the specific needs of women farmers, women active in the value chain, and women consumers. The choice of value chains and research issues has been made through regional stakeholder discussions and other priority setting studies. The result is a focus on 5 system-specific value chains, spread across 10 countries. The ISPC commends this approach as well as the CRP's proposal of a competitive grants scheme to select partners.

The ISPC does have some concerns with the approach, however, mainly in relation to delivery of relevant international public goods (IPGs). Two of the major issues posed by livestock, namely their multi-functionality in the development context and the potential for adverse environmental impacts, appear to receive relatively little consideration in the proposal. In particular, the impact of livestock systems on water and soil resources is not given much attention with regard to: (i) trends towards more intensive livestock feeding operations (e.g. south and East Asia, and perhaps at some point in Sub-Saharan Africa), and (ii) the impact and sustainability of extensive pastoral systems in relation to water and soil resources. While the intensification issues would best be covered in CRP3.7, there are research components on the environmental impact of livestock systems distributed across CRP1.1 Drylands, CRP1.3 Aquatic Agricultural systems; CRP6 Forestry, and CRP5 Water, Land, Ecosystems. There are clearly needs and opportunities to bring cohesion and coordination to CGIAR efforts on these cross-cutting topics which are not dealt with in the proposal as currently presented.

[1] We use the word livestock to refer to terrestrial, farmed animals and the word "animal" (as in animal protein) in this Commentary to refer to both livestock and fish. The production systems for livestock and fish are generally distinguished.

Communication and knowledge management is a strong element of CRP3.7, and if implemented as planned, could allow some of the downstream work to be transformed into regional public goods, through extensive knowledge sharing.

Recommendation: The ISPC recommends that the proposal is accepted with some revisions. It is a strong proposal with good integration of the natural and social sciences, which gains credibility through focus on a limited number of value chains. This approach is promising in terms of delivery of local and regional impact, but creates risks in terms of delivering IPGs. Attention to the following also is advised:

- Revisions should strengthen the description of how risk of failure to deliver broader IPGs using the value chain approach can be addressed, particularly in the areas of multi-functionality of livestock and the impact of both fish and livestock production on the environment (including competition for human food and natural resources).
- Despite the new approach, the budget still allocates two-fold more resources to technological research compared with value chain approaches. While genetic enhancement of farmed tilapia has yielded substantial benefits from previous research, there is considerably less evidence of good returns from research investment on livestock disease. The proposal should therefore identify why this overall balance of program resources is expected to deliver greater impact on the livestock side than the CGIAR's track record in technological research to date.

In relation to the specific value chains selected, the ISPC suggests the following revisions:

- A better description of the added value from further research in the area of dairying in India, given the considerable research effort (and success) already achieved with that value chain.
- Researchable constraints are weak and should be strengthened for efforts on sheep in Mali and dairying in Tanzania.
- External reviewers and the ISPC question the appropriateness of including the value chain of pigs in Uganda.
- The rationale for excluding poultry as a specific value chain for study was noted, but the low competitiveness of poultry production in meeting increasing demand in Sub-Saharan Africa (as evidenced by imports) may justify re-evaluation of this decision in the future. The ISPC suggests consideration be given to using the Asian poultry value chain as a benchmark because of increasing importance of eggs and chicken in diets of many poor people.
- Mention is made of evaluation of research progress, but nothing about how these evaluations will be used. While fundamentals of the "livestock revolution" seem robust, the data should be constantly reviewed and updated. Inclination of emerging value chains towards large scale producers, elite capture or swings in market demand could rapidly change the expected benefits to small holders in several of these commodity systems. It could be useful to be clear with partners and funders from the start that lack of progress or a change in external context away from the original selection criteria might alter the emphasis on specific value chains. An outline of how the evaluation process will lead to program modifications would be beneficial.

While approving the simplicity of the three themes in CRP3.7, the ISPC has some concerns about the descriptions and suggest the following:

- The past livestock disease agenda be reviewed (and hence lessons learnt) to highlight which parts of the more basic research agenda have delivered impact and how. This should inform the basis for structuring longer-term research and prioritizing how the program will conduct disease research relevant to more immediate value chain requirements.
- The ISPC also suggests re-consideration of the priorities for forages and feed research in order to focus on those most applicable to the value chains.

Although the program proposal is not yet completely developed, value chain innovation is a participative on-going process and requires actions based on the needs of actors in the value chains. The approach described and the expertise of the four cooperating CGIAR partners provides confidence that a more mature and unified work plan can lead to positive outcomes for learning and sharing worldwide.

1. Strategic coherence and clarity of Program objectives

This is a well written proposal and should be commended for its relative brevity – the key sections totalling just over 100 pages. This Program focuses on a few animal source food value chains, which have been carefully chosen (with stakeholder consultation) according to relevant criteria. The rationale for targeting a small number of value chains, and the specific relationship between country-level work and the production of global public goods are well-argued, with possible objections being anticipated and transparently discussed. For instance, the inclusion of multiple countries and regions, together with some common animal species, is anticipated to allow comparisons, cross-system learning and extrapolation of results beyond the target countries and regions

The two main innovations and changes from past research efforts are the clustering of livestock (meat and milk) and fish under one program and focusing more on the whole value chain, not just increasing production *per se*. Both innovations are excellent and should provide a sound framework for future work. However, the document reflects some of the difficulties in the transition to this new alignment. It reads more as an "arranged marriage" rather than a "marriage of choice". For example, large parts of the text focus on farms and livestock value chains with no mention of fish until much later in the narrative (see Pages 55 to 60). It will obviously take time for the synergies to develop and these teething problems are probably indications of the large change in the CGIAR approach rather than any on-going future difficulties. Livestock and fish production from aquaculture value chains have many features in common and make a much more logical cluster than the normal fisheries and aquaculture approaches adopted by many Ministries and research institutes.

In general the five value chains and target countries have been carefully chosen, according to transparent criteria. The ISPC respect the consultations that have taken place to inform the choice, but would like to receive further rationale about the prioritisation of dairy in India, since this value chain has been so widely studied and has already achieved wide success. Further explanation as to why this new work is expected to add significant value is needed. Similarly, the proposal omits poultry, the fastest growing value chain. The reasons given are noted, but there are significant issues of the competitiveness of commercial poultry in Africa that might been addressed. Even if poultry is to be excluded from CRP3.7 as a target value chain, it might be interesting to use poultry value chains as a benchmark. For two of the value chains reviewed, Sheep in Mali and Dairy in Tanzania, very few researchable constraints are identified, and it is not clearly demonstrated that these value chains would produce significant global public research goods, or represent good value for money. In addition, the Uganda pig meat value chain raises the fundamental question of whether there are sufficient incentives to upgrade what is currently a very low input system. Description of the selected fisheries value chain, makes mention of other value-chain analyses (e.g. USAID Lead (2010)) but little is said about their results or implications for the CRP.

In general, the focus on informal value chains tends to provide a pro-poor approach for both the producer and consumer communities. In many cases, better linkages of these informal chains with formal value chains would improve overall efficiency and product quality. The ISPC suggests that the scope of the work cannot address the informal chains without looking at the wider sector in which they operate.

The multifunctionality of livestock and its asset value is presented. Nevertheless little follow up is provided in the value chain presentations which appear solely production- and not risk-oriented. Poor women especially will tend to rethink the propositions to commercialise when there is no insurance against failure.

The proposal is also disappointing at a strategic level in relation to the extent of coverage of livestock interactions with the environment/natural resources, given the global interest generated by *Livestock's Long Shadow*. Objective 5 on protection of the natural resource base is not adequately reflected in descriptions of the eight value chains. There was relatively little reference either to the impacts (positive and negative) of manure or the effect of the value chains on ecosystem services such as clean water. The proposal does mention that environmental issues could be addressed with additional funding, but it is surprising that these are not part of the core proposal or linked to research on related topics in other CRPs. This degree of focus runs the risk, therefore, of underplaying delivery of global public goods, a point recognised by the proponents, who have taken some actions - such as selecting 2 sites per value chain to cross reference research findings. It is difficult to see where else in the system-wide CRP portfolio issues such as trends in global markets for livestock products and the overall impact of livestock on the environment might be addressed. Because the proposed research focuses on local case studies, there is danger of missing the bigger picture of how these trends extrapolate to global impact. In fact, local effects may be misleading without linkage to a larger global context. There is also risk that economic changes may alter the relevance of some of the value chains selected, relative to the selection criteria, given that markets for animal protein are dynamic. There is a referenced assumption (p1) that smallholder producers will continue to compete strongly, but that reference is five years old and should be regularly challenged as markets respond. Awareness of global as well as local trends and awareness of emerging trends in larger-scale intensive production will be needed. Evaluation of whether the approach adopted is posing a risk is mentioned by the proponents, but there is little detail on what actions will be taken if small holder production systems become disadvantaged as markets evolve.

Overall the natural and social sciences are well integrated. The goal of the program, and the description of the whole in testing a clear hypothesis, is compelling. The choice of research themes is coherent in pursuit of the goal, though the question could be asked (given the management structures proposed) as to why the 3 components of the Technology Development theme are not themes in their own right? The value chain approach is innovative and the choice of value chains provides a tight focus, provided the issue of the IPGs of environmental impact and multifunctionality are addressed.

2. Delivery focus and plausibility of impact

The strong emphasis on the development aspects and the track record of the participating Centers with development projects and the private sector gives confidence in delivery of impact. However, the strong budgetary emphasis on development of upstream technologies needs further justification. The prioritizing of value chains and the commodities to be considered was carried out using appropriate criteria, although attention has already been drawn to the need to revisit these during the 10 year duration of the program. Expectations of impact are conservative, but dependent on scaling out efforts. Communication and its quality i.e. disentangling the local characteristics from the generic public good lessons of the value chains, will be decisive. Comparative studies should assist to get the public good results identified.

In the more detailed descriptions in Part 4 for each value chain, the CRP has provided detailed tables of research issues, the potential partners for the research, and outcome for each step in the value chain and address the overall potential for impact for each value chain. Some have set targets in terms of outcomes and impacts while others have not; some have provided simple pathways for impact while others have not; and some have provided indicators for monitoring and evaluation. More consistency in the analysis of impact would improve the Proposal. Thus it is difficult to conclude whether the estimated benefits are plausible.

The M&E component of the CRP is provided under theme 3. This proposes to provide M&E mechanisms for the whole Program at both the program and value-chain level. This mentions some

indicators, including behavioral change indicators, but these seem to be external to the Program rather than an integrating concept.

The CRP is particularly weak in specifying the sequence of research proposed over time and the timeframes for addressing major specific research problems within the overall CRP agenda. The Gantt chart on page 73 provides timelines related to the organizational strategy for implementing the program but does not include research timelines. On page 72 the milestones are presented and in the table on page 73. Here a five year program is presented with three major interventions, while in the text new major development initiatives are targeted in each value chain. Timing of initiatives will be very important to secure support from the value chain actors/participants. Sufficient expertise is available worldwide to address a number of shortcomings of the value chains, that can be addressed quickly and accompanied by M and E work. The tone of the value chain elements in CRP3.7, however, does indicate willingness for learning as the Program evolves, as well as a willingness to engage in adaptive research. Rigorous reviews of the upstream technology development also need to be undertaken to ensure there is genuine progress towards impact. Much of the Program is based on initial surveys, studies and obtaining partner and stakeholder inputs to guide the research. Although this is seen as a strength, it makes evaluation of the quality of science difficult to assess.

Trade-off analysis is not very prominent in the proposal but is needed to understand risk mitigation and the potential loss or gain of livestock assets when multifunctionality is lost through commercialisation. More emphasis is needed on environment. Frequently waste i.e. manure management is mentioned. Manure represents a valuable resource for soil fertility and may become competitive with high fertilizer prices. Labour has been problematic and technologies to solve this problem in manure collecting, processing and application would be useful but are not offered in the program. Intensification may have positive effects on GHG emissions from ruminants at higher production levels. All together environmental impact should be addressed in the whole value chains: productivity side by side with eco-efficiency. The program does not mention losses in the value chain in informal markets. These can be high, so a first approach could be to identify losses of product and by-products and solutions to gain efficiency overall. Resilience of the value chains has not been mentioned in the program. Which characteristics will determine the adaptability of value chains to new contexts? One can imagine in the future the effects of climate change, but also price volatility, will require appropriate responses in value chains. Efficiency is not the only response to survival of the value chain. What measures will be used for innovation or adaptability?

The plans for gender and poverty analysis are clear. This approach provides the program a unique basis for change that will yield new information applicable to both poor producers and consumers.

3. Quality of science

Overall the proposal's structure and the past history of the CGIAR proponents provide reassurance about the potential quality of science, although this is difficult to judge directly in an unfinished proposal. Hypotheses are appropriate in relation to the needs chosen. The literature is up to date and includes a number of very recent publications.

Half of the funding is allocated to the technology development theme, recognising the important CGIAR expertise in this area. The health component is well developed in terms of the science, though for livestock it appears more historically science-driven compared to the research on biosecurity and fish health which derives more directly from value chain analysis. For instance, for animal health, more attention might be expected on zoonoses and diseases of intensification. Even overuse and misuse of antibiotics (in feed) has to be addressed in some value chains. The overall impression then is that distinct approaches will be pursued for livestock, separate from fish health which may be appropriate to some extent, but does it miss some potential for synergy?

In relation to the component on forages and feeds, the constraints to increasing livestock production have been known for decades and are well documented. A vast array of research information and technologies is also available, much of this developed by three of the Centers involved in the Program. For example, there are some 70,000 accessions in the CGIAR forage germplasm banks, and much is known about their adaptation to climatic, edaphic and biotic factors, their uses and management. An interactive pasture selection tool entitled Tropical Forages is already available on CD, developed by a team that included ILRI and CIAT scientists. Accordingly, agro-ecological zone evaluation of forage accessions should be kept to a minimum. Breeding programs with pasture grasses and legumes are not justified at this stage. The ISPC suggests that there is adequate genetic variation available in the forage germplasm banks that should be initially exploited. Although seed production by CGIAR Centers is necessary in the early stages of new forage cultivar development, this is ultimately a private sector activity. There are myriad crop by-products already locally available in small-scale farming systems, which are under-utilised, wasted or disregarded.

The genetics component appears reasonably well integrated (at least as described) both between disciplines and between livestock and fish. Conservation of animal genetic resources requires a clear cut strategy as part of the breeding inputs. Private breeders (international companies) often are not interested, but public support is also problematic. Can researchers offer an attractive commercial deal for both conservation and application (crossbreeding or other use)?

The CGIAR has to cooperate with partners that are knowledgeable in the areas of the value chain where the Centers have less experience – such as post-harvest losses and processing. The ISPC notes the recognition of the need for research on the trade-offs between feed and food. There was surprisingly little reference to ecosystems, given the interest in other CRPs.

The program should be able to provide a multitude of diverse outputs for scientists, for development specialists etc. in line with the great ambition of developing value chains for diverse animal food products. Much depends on the willingness of participating scientists to invest in communication skills and become partners in the process. The balance of more technically-oriented versus social scientists has to be correct, based on a shared interdisciplinary challenge. Moreover communication with, frequently, uneducated woman farmers and consumers requires different skills. Reflective thinking and participative discussions require training. In the program many skills have to be available, not only in the top management, the PPMC, but at all levels in the development of the value chain.

The success of a value chain may be dependent on strong farmer organisations for inputs and for better priced products. The conduct of platforms and fora (i.e. negotiation) with all stakeholders including farmer organisations of the value chain to set priorities is essential for analysis and publication. This is a new area and the Program, by comparison of processes and by innovation, can contribute to new outputs. The focus on woman and poor producers and consumers is even more challenging. There is some concern that Subtheme 2.3 (value chain innovation) goes too far downstream and hence risks slipping into direct development work (note for example the statements as "*we find it increasingly critical to help develop – and often create-small business services to support emerging production & marketing systems. This approach will be central to value chain development efforts*" – page76). Care needs to be taken in development of the operational plan that this is avoided.

In general, the researchable constraints and the approaches and methods (scientific and social-scientific) that will be used to address them are well set out and well-referenced. Noting the exceptions above, research activities are feasible and likely to lead to significant new knowledge. The CGIAR Centers have a track record in carrying out research such as that described in the proposal which is highly relevant in the case of Theme 1 and Component 3.1, and significant in the case of Theme 2. More specification of the composition and experience of teams working on Component 3.2 (gender) would be useful. The Proposal provides an analysis of risks inherent in the approach and the

research, but this is rather superficial. This part of the Proposal would benefit from a more thorough analysis, perhaps after some of the initial familiarization of the selected value chains, partners and stakeholders have been identified. The critical factor will be the ability of the Program to bring together the good biological science, technology and the social science into a coherent delivery platform.

4. Quality of research and development partners and partnership management

CRP3.7 includes a focused and well-reasoned partnership strategy and allocates the intellectual and financial resources needed to leverage the strategy's full value. The strategy itself moves well beyond the general formulations on the subject of partnership to a much more realistic and disciplined approach to assuring that partnerships are cultivated and utilized effectively. Evidence for this is the inclusion of a Development Manager as part of the program management team who will provide the strategy with CRP-level leadership and coordination, and a recognition expressed in a number of places in the proposal that effective partnerships will require more skill and work than simply identifying the potential range and types of partners and expressing good intentions about their engagement. The inclusion of Capacity Development activities is welcome.

The CRP proposes three broad research themes and proposes research on value chains in 10 countries. Each of the themes requires strong partnerships to realize their full potential, but the focus on meat, milk and fish value chains in specific countries is heavily dependent on strengthening existing relationships and cultivating new and meaningful relationships at every level—from "small scale producers, employees…, small scale entrepreneurs,…and consumers" through to development partners, and policy makers. The four CGIAR Centers that serve as core partners for the project bring long standing networks and relationships tied to existing projects within each of the seven countries, and also add to the strategy that relies on broader regional and international partners to facilitate investment and dissemination. The proposal clearly identifies the additional points in the program where CRP3.7 dovetails with other CRPs, particularly those dealing with integrated systems and policy. However, it is notable that ICRISAT, one of the CGIAR Centers with a research history in dual purpose crops in South Asia is absent from this proposal. Current research which is not, or may not, going to be prioritised by participants/players in the value chains may cause disillusionment.

The proposal identifies two principal types of partners—strategic program partners and value chain partners—as well as a number of roles for partners—those who can advance research, a broad array with the potential to achieve the proposals development goals, and those with the expertise and access to facilitate communication and build broader uptake of the program's results. In addition the proposal highlights the multiple roles of the private sector as science partners and as business partners [p. 75-76]. The latter is defined inclusively to include businesses at every scale, from the small livestock keeper to the multi-national corporation. Close working with partners on specific value chains though may make it difficult to implement exit strategies from specific value chains should that prove necessary if external drivers change the threats and opportunities for individual value chains in relation to the program goal. The involvement of strategic program partners on the Science and Partnership Forum (p 74) is therefore important and could help to challenge the team of the need to generate global public goods.

The partnership strategy includes a number of mechanisms to assure its effective implementation—an assessment process to identify the necessary partners, working groups for each value chain, and a recognition that the program staff will need to bring new skills to their assignments, including "interpersonal, facilitation, conflict management, feedback and negotiation skills [p.77]." Theme 3, in which monitoring and evaluation will take place, will also play a role by monitoring partnership processes and developing "incentives…for program teams to demonstrate the development and effective management of required partnerships." The results of M and E are essential for comparisons of results across chains and for disentangling local from generic benefits. A basic agreement for data collection is needed and in addition specifics for the chain and local situation.

The descriptions of the value chains vary according to experience in the particular country and area. In most cases partner inclusion is logical, but not definitive as the diagnostic studies will yield more contacts, potential organisations and focus. The program shows appropriate awareness of the role of research and development partners. However, as with the identification of previous relevant research, this seems to be still work in progress and the "Partnership Strategy will include an assessment of the actor (sic) and organizational landscape at the national and sub-national levels. Potential partners and their roles have yet to be finally identified from the long list of candidates.

The program could pay more attention to basic research and adaptive and applied research phases. The more adaptive research (on farm testing) takes more time and is more costly and raises the question of who will take this on and how will extension, private industry involvement and government contribute? Policy and institutional changes are frequently addressed in the program. Sometimes legal changes are required[2]. Partners for legal change should become involved in the program and for IPR issues.

The structure does attempt to address the tension of applying a consortium model to the program (which implies a consultative process of decision making and overall shared ownership of and responsibility for program success and outputs), while still retaining clear leadership roles, and specific accountability for designated elements of the program by each institution and team.

5. Appropriateness and efficiency of Program management

Management Oversight and Coordination: The framework for the program's overall management includes the Lead Center (ILRI); a Program Director; a Program Planning and Management Committee (PPMC), chaired by the Program Director, which initially brings together the leaders of each of the main program elements and the leaders of the three components of Theme 1 (feeds, genetics and animal health) to recommend work plans, strategic direction and resource allocations for the CRP; a Science and Partnership Advisory Committee (SPAC), which reports to both the PPMC and to ILRI's DG and Board and comprises expertise in science, development and the private sector; a program coordination unit, which, in addition to the Program Director, includes a Development Manager, and Communications and Internal M&E officers. However, the proposal also refers to a Program Governance Committee [p.71], and a Science and Partnership Forum [p.74]. It is not clear whether initial elements of program management and oversight were dropped, both bodies were renamed as the PPMC and SPAC, or the conceptualization of management and oversight evolved.

Program Management: The ISPC considers that CRP3.7 proposes a strong and efficient management structure. It demonstrates a realistic grasp of the level and focus of program-level management required to achieve the program integration and partnership goals required by its research structure. The program management staff include clearly identified positions to lead and manage critically important elements of the proposal—partnership development and management, knowledge management and communications, as well as internal monitoring and evaluation. These positions support implementation of the program, but also assure that the strategies for engaging significant new partners and leveraging outcomes have the expertise and attention they require to be successful.

The Program Planning and Management Committee's initial membership signals the functionality of the committee. The proposal notes the assumption that the core CGIAR Centers will be adequately represented because of the role of their staff in program leadership. This relieves the committee of having to function as both a management entity and a representative body. The proposal mentions the potential inclusion of external partners who invest and play critical roles comparable to the core Centers. This may be a practical necessity and a good thing, but it may also compromise the focus,

[2] For example running animal health services with paravets is cheap and effective, but often not possible as veterinarians have the sole right to practice. Surveillance activities can be contracted to private veterinarians instead of state agencies if legally permitted. Food safety has to be supported with a legal framework.

function and rigor of the PPMC if it becomes a mechanism for recognizing investors. A reassuring counterweight to this possibility is the care with which the proposal describes the working values that will guide the CRP. The CRP argues persuasively that the program's development and implementation reflect a commitment to "a consortium model [for] the partnership [p.69]." In pursuing this approach, the lead institution is not only required to engage in consultative, joint decision making with other core partners, but also "to generally cede a significant part of the strategic decision process to the partnership [p.69]." While this could be viewed as reassuring rhetoric, the overall structure, focus and tone of the proposal support the likelihood that this is not an empty commitment on the part of ILRI. The ISPC does not find it necessary to comment (as with many other CRPs) on the lead Center's relationship with the Program Director, both because the position has the necessary authority to deliver effective management of the CRP and because the Lead Center's DG is not given an out-of-scale role in program management. Whilst the role of the Program Director was clear and appropriate, the mechanism for appointing the leads of the 3 Technology Development components and the other 2 themes was not clear. For example, with respect to the Health component, the approaches for livestock and fish health seem very distinct; will one person represent both or will there be 2 representatives to ensure that World Fish has an adequate representation on the Committee?

If the proposal has one management shortcoming, it is the lack of an integrated strategy for resource mobilization that is expressed as part of program-level management—although this may be a responsibility of the Development Manager. In the proposal, the program teams for the value chains are expected to identify partners who will invest in the program, and internal M&E will include this as an element in evaluating team performance. Also in the proposal, strategic partners are defined in part by the level of investment they make, and finally, the budget estimates include a "global budget" that identifies approximately $20 million in additional investments required to fully scale and implement the CRP. The program should articulate its goals and strategy for resource mobilization more clearly; partners and donors are conflated throughout the proposal—sometimes they will be one, sometimes the other, sometimes both. In a world in which significant investments of resources will be required (and are justified), the word "donor" is not unseemly.

Science and Partnership Advisory Committee: This committee has three functions—one is to provide strategic advice and oversight to the CRP, the second is to facilitate linkages with global and regional stakeholders, and the third is to report annually to the ILRI DG and Board as part of the CRP's accountability process. In its first two functions, it reports to the PPMC and Program Director and is intended to be a powerful contributor to strategy and prioritization by offering advice and independent assessment of science quality and impact. Its reporting relationship to both management and the Lead Center's governing body is potentially workable—providing independent oversight closely linked to the CRP without adding additional complexity to oversight. To make this work, it will be important to ensure that the committee is more clearly defined than it is now. Although the general framework for its composition is clear, the proposal does not indicate how its members will be appointed and for how long. There is no indication of its optimum size and, as now described, it has no Chair or similar leadership. Because the SPAC reports first to the PPMC and Program Director, and then to ILRI's Board, it is important that responsibility for identifying its members does not rest wholly on the Program Director. In addition, it will be important to identify the criteria for inclusion on the committee to avoid it becoming a high level holding area for partners and donors that need visible recognition and influence as a condition of their support and engagement.

6. Clear accountability and financial soundness, and efficiency of governance

Financial Soundness: The budget narrative and projected income and expenses are clear, although program management and communications are combined in the budget presentation. While the overall allocation appears to be reasonable and consistent with other CRPs, the proposal describes a very extensive knowledge sharing and communication strategy that implies a substantial (and appropriate) investment. On a very minor note, the budget allocations for the individual value chains (which are aggregated into Theme 2) are clearly described in the narrative but would have had additional clarity if represented in a table.

Over three years, the CGIAR Fund is projected to provide $35.2 million toward a total program budget of $99.6 million [Table 3.7, p. 97]. As noted earlier, the budget presentation includes a "budget for global outcomes" [Table 2.8], which argues for an additional $20 million investment in the program. The proposal includes a clear and persuasive rationale for what the additional investment would achieve and also notes that it "would require higher levels of funding from multiple sources [p.98]." It goes on to note that some aspects of the proposal assume greater capacity to raise additional resources (the value chain components) than others (technology development). This raises the question of whether the CRP is requesting sufficient support from the CGIAR Fund. It also raises the question of whether "global outcomes" are within reach, because the core partners have the capacity or have identified a strategy, to raise the balance, or their achievement is at risk. In a proposal that is generally clear and straightforward, this final section is less so. Does the proposal need more from the Fund than it indicates? If it is outlining the additional funds it will seek (with some confidence) from others, that should have also been made clearer. Finally, detail on how the competitive grant scheme would be operated was rather light.

Efficiency of Governance: The Science and Partnership Advisory Committee has been referred to above. With some careful adjustments, this committee is in a position to provide the CRP with a mechanism for independent and effective oversight.