

April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2014

Dear Rachel,

The GCP thanks the IEA for its review and notes the overall very favourable commentary. In particular, we wholeheartedly agree with the conclusions of the Review Team:

*".....the GCP has performed well, has met the majority of its genetic enhancement goals and surpassed others, and will leave a formidable legacy of useful and accessible products and information. It has remained relevant throughout its ten-year duration".*

*"Looking to the future, the Review Team is optimistic that GCP's investors, Consortium members, governance bodies, partners, and other stakeholders who have contributed significantly to GCP's progress thus far will remain fully committed to sustaining this successful Programme's considerable achievements and benefits over the coming years."*

The GCP is grateful that the European Commission allowed this independent review to form a part of its monitoring and evaluation process and obviate the need for an additional review.

We agree with all 11 recommendations, and measures have been or will be put in place to ensure that the spirit and intent of the recommendations is upheld (see annex). With the GCP terminating in December 2014 (although a few projects will be extended until 2015), the recommendations will be implemented as best possible during the final phases of the GCP and/or will be passed on to the CRPs, the IBP Phase 2 team, and/or other GCP partners as feasible and suitable.

We firmly believe that the success of the GCP has been due, in large part, to **what, how** and **with whom** it was done, and we acknowledge the important contribution of many hundreds of partners in national programmes, CGIAR centres and advanced research institutes around the world. Over 90% of stakeholders either agreed or strongly agreed that the GCP has performed well on a range of indicators (relevance, partnerships, products/outputs, efficiency, quality of science). And last but not least, we would like to express our appreciation to all our donors for the trust and support they have provided, which has enabled us to achieve our overall objectives.

We also take this opportunity to congratulate the CGIAR for its vision and action in establishing the Challenge Programs, the success of which is exemplified by the GCP. We are confident that the work of the GCP over the past 10+ years will result in the delivery of benefits that will ultimately impact the lives of some of the world's poorest farmers and their families.

Yours,



Andrew Bennett, Chair, Executive Board

Dave Hoisington, Chair, Consortium Committee

Jean-Marcel Ribaut, Director, Generation Challenge Programme

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**R1. The Review Team recommends that during 2014 GCP select 20 or so products with highest potential impact and develop a market and promotion strategy that strongly emphasizes their value and utility to targeted users. (Section 3.3)**

Response: The GCP acknowledges this recommendation. We already have about 10 products highlighted for the IBP, and the promotion and marketing of these products will start with the release of the Breeding Management System version 3, in June this year, to be expanded further into the development of Phase II of the IBP. Key research products with highest potential impact will also be identified with the various CRP leaders, with the aim to incorporate them into the future plans of CRPs. From those selected products, the GCP will elaborate delivery pathways and promotion strategies for 2-3 major products per type of product generated (genetic and genomic resources, cloned genes, predictive markers and improved germplasm). The GCP agrees that a SPIA-led impact assessment study should be commissioned during 2016-17 by the CGIAR Consortium that will review and evaluate the impact of the IBP and other selected products.

**R2. The importance of IBP is such that the Review Team recommends that early in 2014 GCP appoint a senior staff member who understands the plant breeding process, the CGIAR and the private sector, and also has software development and commercial skills to guide and manage the launch of final versions of IBP, oversee the development of hubs, and help finalize the workplan of IBP Phase 2. (Section 3.4)**

Response: Agreed. Since it will be difficult for a single person to assume all responsibilities as proposed, we plan to advertise two positions to complement the current team. In the short run, a Technical Manager will be recruited to coordinate overall development of the BMS, thereby alleviating most technical responsibilities of the interim IBP Director (the GCP Director). This new position should be filled by the summer of 2014. The IBP Director position, that will oversee the deployment and adoption component of the IBP, should be advertised towards the end of this year, once the new governance and management structure for the IBP has been confirmed.

**R3. The Review Team recommends that to maximize the impact of GCP publications and products the website collection of published documents developed from GCP-sponsored molecular breeding research (2005–2014) is maintained on a CGIAR-sponsored website along with a means to query this collection. (Section 6.2)**

Response: Agreed, the GCP is planning for the future maintenance of its website for so long as the number of visits merits its maintenance, including lists of publications and the product catalogue. The website will be accessible through different channels including the CGIAR consortium. In addition, all publications and products related to breeding will be made available in a sustainable way through the IBP website.

**R4. The Review Team recommends that GCP allocate funds from its reserves to ensure that PhD and MS theses in process at the end 2014 are completed, and request that the appropriate CRPs assume responsibility for oversight of those that continue beyond that date. (Section 6.3)**

Response: Agreed. The GCP has ensured that all GCP-supported PhD and MSc students will have the budget to complete their degrees either through current commitments or through recent extensions

to projects. Five PhD students, two at the University of Ghana (WACCI), and three at AfricaRice, will complete their degrees in 2015. All students have been allocated funds through to completion.

**R5. The Review Team recommends that GCP begin discussions immediately with the crop-specific CRPs to take ownership of the most valuable of these as genetic resources for improvement of their mandated crops, and that these discussions be brought to a satisfactory close before the GCP sunsets in December 2014. (Section 6.4)**

Response: Agreed. Preliminary discussions have been held with all six relevant crop commodity CRPs (Dryland Cereals; Grain Legumes; Maize; Rice; Roots, Tubers & Bananas; Wheat) with the goal of documenting research outputs and products specific to each CRP. Furthermore, the CRPs will be engaged in the completion of 11 research projects that will continue into 2015, and by mid-2014 they will receive a comprehensive report on all relevant projects. For example, a number of cassava segregating populations have been developed as part of the GCP research Initiative. To evaluate those populations under different experimental conditions would be “low hanging fruit” for the CRP on Roots, Tubers & Bananas in phase two, since population development represents a significant amount of work and investment for a “long cycle” crop such as cassava. The curation of genetic resources developed through GCP funding has been made explicit in all research project agreements and the terms and conditions around this requirement will be sent as a reminder to all relevant project PIs and Institutions.

**R6. The Review Team recommends that on-going costs associated with the maintenance of the GCP website and updating on-line of publication lists and the product catalogue be budgeted through 2018 as part of the GCP sunset financial strategy. (Section 6.4)**

Response: This recommendation is complementary to R3 and will be included in our discussions with the Consortium Office and in the planning of IBP Phase II. The utility of the website(s) will be assessed on the basis of number of visits over time.

**R7. The Review Team recommends the funding of Phase 2 of the Integrated Breeding Platform. (Section 6.5)**

Response: Agreed. A proposal to the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation is currently in the final stages of development with the aim to start September 2014. In addition to the proposed grant of USD 12M from the BMGF, the GCP will allocate some start-up funds to IBP Phase II, and other sources of support have been identified but not yet confirmed. We are optimistic, based on preliminary discussion with current GCP donors, that IBP Phase II will be fully funded (c\$25M over 5 years).

**R8. The Review Team recommends that in early 2014 the GCP Executive Board and Management assess both long- and short-term options for governance and hosting of IBP Phase 2, prepare business plans for these options, and in consultation with interested parties (the CC, IBP partners, other stakeholders, the Consortium Board, and various potential donors) pro-actively pursue a suitable long-term option (such as a new cross-cutting CRP), while also deciding on (possibly-short term) governance arrangements for IBP Phase 2 that would take effect immediately upon GCP closure. (Section 7.5)**

Response: Agreed. The GCP Executive Board (EB) recommended at its most recent meeting (April 2014) that GCP Management pursue negotiations with CIMMYT as the preferred Host Agent for IBP Phase II (2014-2019). Possible governance mechanisms for the IBP phase II are also under discussion, and both the EB and CIMMYT have identified as the preferred option the establishment of an independent legal entity, whose purpose would be simply to hold IP and enter into a hosting

agreement with the host institution. This option has also been endorsed by the GCP Consortium Committee. In addition, there have been, and will continue to be, discussions with the CGIAR Consortium Office around a new cross-cutting CRP, which might span a wide range of crop improvement activities from gene banks through to seed delivery systems. Under this scenario the IBP would be the central core resource providing crop information, tools and services to pre-breeding and breeding activities.

**R9. Review Team recommends that the EB request its IP Advisory Committee to regularly provide specific advice on IP-related risks and potential liabilities as GCP moves toward closure in December 2014, and that the EB systematically discuss these in 2014 and suitably advise GCP Management. (Section 7.6)**

Response: Agreed. The IP Advisory Committee will become more engaged in strategic issues related to programme closure and IBP Phase II governance. The recent GCP Executive Board meeting (April 2014) resolved that the IPAC be re-activated with a number of specific tasks to be reported during the coming months, especially in the context of IP issues relevant to the IBP Phase II programme and proposed hosting arrangements with CIMMYT.

**R10. The Review Team recommends that GCP give high priority to 'Risk management' on the agenda of the EB and MT as they respectively oversee and manage Programme closure and the transition of GCP activities to the CRPs and IBP Phase 2 governance bodies. (Section 7.7)**

Response: Agreed. The GCP is highly cognisant of risk management, as is CIMMYT as the Host Agent. Specific actions to ensure the timely closure of all research projects, including provision for penalty clauses for non-delivery, have been implemented. Similarly, risks around staffing matters, IP, and other legacy considerations have been assessed and mitigation measures put in place. A Closure Working Group comprising representatives of the GCP management, EB and CIMMYT management has been formed to provide oversight for all issues related to closure and transitioning of the IBP to Phase II.

**R11. The Review Team recommends that formal impact assessment of GCP genetic enhancement activities be undertaken in 2016–17 using some of the 14 user case studies that form part of the IBP Phase 2. (Section 9.2)**

Response: Agreed. The GCP acknowledges this recommendation and notes that measuring impact in farmers' fields of GCP genetic enhancement activities is more than 10 years away. However, formal impact of activities at the level of intermediate users, particularly based on demand for various products, is both appropriate and timely. In this context, assessing the progress of GCP sponsored outputs and products through the relevant commodity CRPs will be a useful component of the impact study. Thus, as indicated in R1, the GCP will include a proposed SPIA-led impact assessment starting in 2016-17 to evaluate the impact of the key IBP and other selected products through levels of adoption. Defining baseline data sets against which progress and impact might be assessed for the IBP product, e.g current use of database and modern analytical tools in breeding programmes, are an important activity in the IBP Phase II.