

ISPC Assessment of the Fish Agri-Food System (FISH) CRP-II revised proposal (2017-2022)

ISPC CRP RATING¹: B+

1. Summary

- FISH aims to supply improved breeds, aquafeeds, fish health plus aquaculture, and fishery management practices targeting 4.9 million households. The CRP aims to assist 3.5 million people to escape from poverty, 2.4 million malnourished people to address the lack of essential micronutrients in their diets, and 4.7 million women of reproductive age to consume adequately diverse food. Its technology and management practices will contribute to decreasing GHG emissions in small-scale fisheries (SSF) by 20%, increasing by 10% both water- and nutrient-use efficiency in 4.8 million Mt of annual farmed fish production, and restoring 3.3 million ha of ecosystems².
- This new CRP, led by World Fish, unites an impressive set of leading research organizations including IWMI and three advanced research institutes, namely Wageningen University, Natural Resources Institute/University of Greenwich, and the James Cook University as its managing partners. The CRP also aims to link to a convincing set of multi-stakeholder partnerships to harness emerging science in aquaculture and fisheries with the potential to deliver development outcomes at scale. Recruitment of a new CRP leader was only recently concluded, and it is therefore not possible to assess leadership, a key criterion for success, at this stage.
- The proposal, designed with the involvement of a diverse range of stakeholders, makes a strong and generally adequately evidenced case that fisheries and aquaculture are central to global strategies to reduce poverty and improve food security and nutrition. It also provides strong arguments that the CRP could make a significant contribution to delivery at the CGIAR system level by detailing the relationships between its flagship and relevant SLO targets. In doing this, it goes to great length to explain the process used in setting the CRP's targets for contributions to the SLOs.
- The CRP's potential contribution to productivity, sustainability, and resilience will strongly depend on the further articulation of functional linkages and synergies among its FPs. In addition, whilst the proposed relationships with other CRPs, including iCRPs and platforms, seem relevant, such linkages are also in need of further clarification and development.
- Insight into the feasibility of the CRP delivery has been aided by the recognition and clarification of the capacity building investments required to realize the intended impact pathways. Further strengthening of the underlying science and evidence base, for parts of the proposal, as well as a greater recognition of the complexity of systemic change, and FISH's capacity to influence and contribute to such change, would have reduced any remaining ambiguity further.

¹ 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.

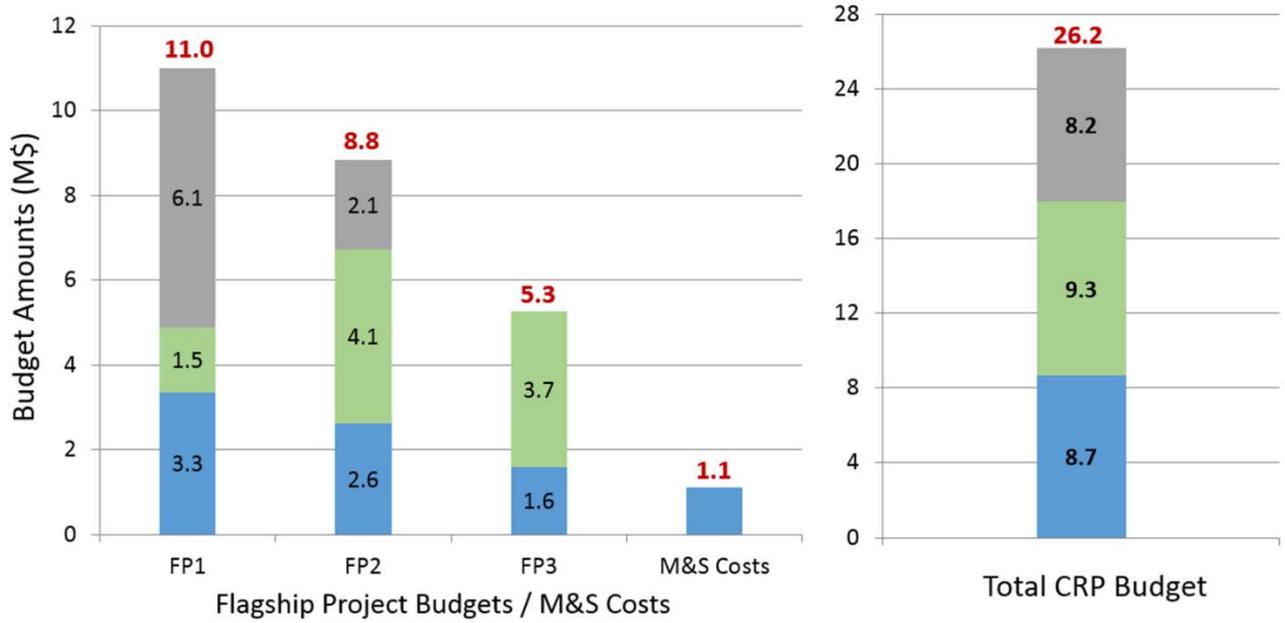
B: Fair – Elements of a sound proposal but has one or more serious flaws rendering it uncompetitive; not recommended without significant change.

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

² The CRP targets have not been independently verified.

**FISH 2017 FP and CRP Budgets:
W1/W2 Amounts, W3/Bilateral Amounts & Shortfalls (US\$M)**

- Projected 2017 W1/W2 Amounts
- Secured 2017 W3/Bilateral Amounts
- 2017 Budget Amounts not yet Secured
- Figures in red are Total 2017 Budgets Needed*



Data Source: CGIAR System Management Office

2. Characterization of Flagships

FP	Main strengths	Weaknesses/Risks	Rating
<p><i>FP1 Sustainable aquaculture</i> Focus: Productivity-improving technologies and management practices to increase farmed fish production.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unites leading scientists and science organizations in fish genetics, health, nutrition, aquaculture systems and sustainable intensification. • Balance between development of additional genetic technologies and the understanding of barriers to impact at scale. • Articulation of the centrality of the FP's chosen approaches to fish genetics, breeding and management research to sustainable increases in farmed fish supplies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Magnitude of expected outcomes not supported by past impacts from fisheries R4D. • Lack of clear strategies to address unintended consequences and trade-offs inherent to proposed research focus. • Lack of clarity of local and international networking and partnership arrangements beyond research actors. 	Strong
<p><i>FP2 Fish in multifunctional landscapes</i> Focus: Governance of SSF for food security and resilience of fishery-dependent households.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breadth of scientific and practical leadership in SSF. • Potential to bring together relevant CRPs around the issues of water quality. • Degree of alignment with national and regional priorities and initiatives. • Partnership strategy within and without the CGIAR. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weak articulation of the understanding the complexity of achieving systemic change. • Evidence base in this area of research is evolving rapidly. • Strategy to scale results up and out not tested. 	Strong
<p><i>FP3 Enhancing the contribution of fish to nutrition and health of the poor</i> Focus: Increase the availability and consumption of safe and nutrient dense fish by poor consumers, especially women and young children.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scientific leadership and ability to bring together a world-leading network of partners to address issues related to nutrition-sensitive aquaculture and fisheries. • Clarity of intended outcomes for target geographies with annual milestones and proposed impact pathways. • Networking and partnership arrangements at local levels clearly organized on subsidiarity and comparative advantage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential inconsistency with current evidence on the greater efficacy of nutritional impact and the economic benefits of fish-based supplements. • Lack of articulation of a convincing strategy to attain indicated pervasive impact across countries/regions. • Lack of clarity on the linkages with the other FISH FPs. 	Weak

3. Assessment of CRP response to the ISPC major comments

Initial ISPC comment (16 June 2016)	CRP response/changes proposed (31 July)	ISPC assessment (14 September)
<p>1. A description of the process which the CRP intends to use for further priority setting and closer functional integration with the other AFS CRPs and GIPs.</p>	<p>FISH overall priority setting across its research portfolio uses both quantitative and qualitative analysis of the probability of success considering four dimensions such as science challenge and capability, capacity to deliver, clarity of planned outcomes and clearly defined delivery pathways. Further details are also given in the response, particularly to address specific issues brought to the attention of the proposers in the ISPC commentary.</p>	<p>Satisfactorily addressed.</p> <p>Response satisfactorily addresses the ISPC commentary. It also provides additional information to deal with other points brought by to the attention of the proposers related to funding allocation, and the integration and collaboration with other CRPs (e.g. A4HN, CCFAS, RICE, WLE, Excellence in Breeding platform).</p> <p>The three areas that FISH highlights as examples of the close integration with other CRPs, <i>foresight modeling</i>, <i>nutrition strategies of governments and development agencies and climate smart agriculture options</i>, could have been more effectively used as components of the FISH priority setting process, but this opportunity has not been considered in the addendum.</p> <p>The activities listed as new co-investment and of high priority (e.g. cassava waste for fish feed, sorghum in fish feed) are not novel. FISH does not consider the fast growing area of research on edible insects for fish, and poultry feed.</p>
<p>2. The provision of supplementary information to better support the CRP and FP TOCs including the supporting evidence base, the concomitant capacity development and a deeper analysis of complexities.</p>	<p>The potential trade-offs and unintended consequences are detailed in the ToC narratives for the FPs, particularly the table within each FP detailing the change mechanisms, key risks and assumptions, and corresponding management actions associated with each (Tables 7, 12 and 17). Results-Based Management Annex (Annex 3.6) re-written partially to</p>	<p>Partially addressed.</p> <p>Response partially addresses the ISPC concerns. Edits made in revised proposal contribute to the improvement of the ToCs and clarify the capacity building investments required to realize the intended impact</p>

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	describe how assessment of strategies to identify and manage risks and unintended consequences will be integrated into program-level M&E system.	pathways. In some cases, however, the underlying scientific basis, the recognition of the complexity of systemic change, and the evidence base supporting FISH's capacity to influence policy, remains thin.
3. Checking and clarification of the internal consistency of the CRP's outcome targets and validation against poverty reduction achievements based on evidence from the CGIAR.	Annex 3.11 (new) included in FISH proposal v2 provides details on setting outcome targets, assumptions made and corresponding evidence applied in target setting for the CRP.	Partially addressed. The response partially addresses the concerns raised by the ISPC. New annex 3.11 (16 pages) includes the relationships between flagship targets and SLO targets and explains the process used in setting the CRP targets for contributions to SLOs, including some illustrative examples regarding the considerations and assumptions used for setting country-level targets. Table 1 in the annex therein provides further data on the contribution to SLO targets disaggregated by country or region. No real attempt has been made, however, to validate the proposed outcome targets against past impacts from fisheries development / fisheries R4D.
4. Additional clarification is needed on how it will balance its research agenda between the need for context specific response while at the same time achieving impact at scale, both in its technology and policy work.	Overview section of ToC (1.0.3), science quality sections of each flagship, and in revised annexes on partnerships (Annex 3.2) and capacity development (Annex 3.3) provide this clarification. There are further minor revisions for FP1 text (Sections 2.6, cluster 3 and Section 2.7 on partnerships) that give details on enterprise--related research activities, which gives clarity on the role of FISH research and partners in scaling of FP1 business and entrepreneurial models.	Satisfactorily addressed. Response deals satisfactorily with the concerns raised by the ISPC.

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<p>5. The provision of greater detail on the CRP's further development of its partnership and gender strategy.</p>	<p>Table 2 added to Annex 3.2 on partnerships to complement the analysis of strategic partnerships. It provides specific examples of how the programme will work with partners to achieve targets. Furthermore, Tables 8, 14 and 18 of the proposal) include examples of non-CGIAR partners at discovery, proof of concept and scaling stages of the impact pathways, thus showing how FISH will pursue a partnerships focused implementation strategy with the aim of harnessing the strengths of institutional comparative advantage guided by the principle of subsidiarity.</p> <p>The overview of gender strategy (section 1.0.4 and Annex 3.4) revised to address explicitly the role of gender research in the FISH ToC and for individual flagships.</p>	<p>Partially addressed.</p> <p>The response partially addresses the ISPC comments. Changes made in the revised proposal provide additional detail on partner roles and their importance in achieving impact, and FISH's gender research strategy.</p>
<p>6. The specification of time allocations to FISH by the indicated staff and availability of gender and process-related research skills among staff.</p>	<p>Gender Annex (3.4) now includes an explanation of the gender staffing planning process, from which an outcome-based map ensued to guide staffing decisions.</p> <p>This Annex explains how this process led to a significant planned increase in both staff with gender research skills across the focal countries, and the level of expertise of these planned staff in focal countries, vis-à-vis ongoing AAS CRP.</p> <p>Senior positions added to revised Annex 3.8 (staffing list) and as noted in Annex 3.6 (results-based management), learning from implementation will guide an adaptive approach to program implementation, which includes proactive efforts to identify and fill skills gaps through both staffing and partnerships.</p>	<p>Satisfactorily addressed.</p> <p>The revised proposal deals satisfactorily with this commentary as noted in previous column.</p>

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7. Terms of Reference [ToRs] for the CRP director to be subject to international recruitment to be included.	Annex 3.8 provides the ToRs for the FISH CRP Director. The role is proposed to be fully integrated with the WorldFish position of Director, Aquaculture and Fisheries Sciences.	Satisfactorily addressed. Response satisfactorily addresses the ISPC concern. The ToRs were used in the recently concluded recruitment of WorldFish's Director, Aquaculture and Fisheries Sciences.
8. The clarification of the foundational science at the basis of FP3 on <i>Enhancing the contribution of fish to nutrition and health of the poor.</i>	The response refers to Thilsted et al. (2016), who summarized the foundational research for the program's focus on increasing the quantity and frequency of consumption of fish. Minor edits made in FP3 aim to demonstrate gains due to production and supply of nutrient-rich small fish, improved fish value chains and development and consumption of fish-based products; and to communicate the lessons for maximum effect in focal and scaling countries.	Partially addressed. Response does not address the comment but repeats information included in the original proposal. Given that FP3 remains largely unchanged, the ISPC's concerns in respect of the clarification of the foundational science, required research focus and the current version of the ToC, equally remain largely unchanged.
9. Proponents should re-write FP1 taking into account comments provided below, particularly regarding the critical role of developing additional genetic technology, which will need additional supporting evidence given the proposed level of investment.	FP1's revised text taken into account IPSC commentary. The key points and responses (indicating changes made) are summarized as last item in addendum 1.	Satisfactorily addressed. Revisions made to FP1 satisfactorily address the ISPC concerns and increase clarity, through the inclusion of additional detail and articulation of the centrality of the FP's chosen approaches to fish genetics, breeding and management research to sustainable increases in farmed fish supplies.