

**Management Response and Action Plan (March, 2016)** to the CRP-Commissioned External Evaluation (CCEE) with support from the Independent Evaluation Arrangement (IEA) of the CGIAR Research Program on Integrated Systems for the Humid Tropics (Humidtropics).

Humidtropics Management would like to thank the evaluation team for a diligent and well-executed evaluation and constructive report, which we find fair and balanced. Of special note are the set of key assumptions and propositions that explain the formative and development-results lens that the CCEE team applied in appreciation of the challenges of integrated system research, the recentness of the Program, and the expanded integrated nature of Humidtropics' research compared to farming systems research.

The CCEE team applied a range of methods, including a desk review, key informant interviews, site visits, case studies, focus group discussions, and an electronic survey, and handled the process in a coherent and inclusive manner. The team obtained useful information from various stakeholders such as farmers, researchers, communities, partners, and policymakers. We would like to thank all stakeholders for sharing their knowledge, experiences and insights with the CCEE team.

Humidtropics Management notes with satisfaction the following findings of the evaluation:

- All the Area-Based Flagship Projects are aligned with national priorities and CGIAR System Level Outcomes (SLOs);
- Commending of the simplicity of the overarching Theory of Change and related Generic Impact Pathway that show the relatedness of the Intermediate Development Outcomes (IDOs) with possible synergies and trade-offs that interventions may result in based on the entry points;
- Partnership design and targeting for integrated systems improvement is appropriate for engaging diverse partners that best fit their capacity and interest;
- Appreciation of Management's fostering of delegated decision-making at the lowest appropriate levels to accommodate for the significant political, cultural, social, geographical and agro-ecosystem differences;
- Recognition of high quality scientific leadership, oversight, and guidance for the research provided by the core partners with the involvement of local universities and national research institutes;
- Notice of sufficient evidence to demonstrate that collaboration among the multiple types of partners has resulted in important Program outputs, but not yet in outcomes;
- Acknowledgement that wide stakeholder involvement is central for sustainable intensification research and enhances shared leadership for setting and achieving outputs and outcomes;
- Conclusion that the Program has made progress with implementing a Results-Based Management System, which required significant changes in managing, thinking and working for core and other implementing partners.

Management also appreciates the effort the CCEE team made to understand the complex institutional and financial environment in which Humidtropics, and other systems CRPs operate, and to provide practical and realistic suggestions and recommendations.

This Management Response and Action Plan includes input from Humidtropics' Independent Advisory Committee (IAC), IITA's Management and Board of Trustees.

Responses to the 11 recommendations are organized around 4 key evaluation criteria applied by the CCEE team: Relevance (Recommendations 1-2), Effectiveness (Recommendations 3-4), Quality of Research (Recommendations 5-7), and Efficiency (Recommendations 8-11).

## Response by Recommendation

Evaluation Recommendation	Management Response to the Recommendation	Action to be taken	Who Responsible for Action	Timeframe	Additional funding required?
<b>Relevance</b>					
1. The CGIAR Strategy and Results Framework (SRF) could be modified to show for its IDOs and sub-IDOs a similar generic interdependencies and relatedness diagram that could be used to develop more specific CRP related ones.	Fully Accepted	The SRF for 2 <sup>nd</sup> cycle of the CRPs already includes elements of the recommendations of the CCEE team. No further action is anticipated.	N/A	Completed	No
2. Inform future research design by robustly assessing mechanisms for effectively linking research for development models to achieve SLOs using a set of biophysical and socio-economic metrics that comprehensively characterize system change.	Fully Accepted	Assess biophysical and socio-economic metrics that have good potential to characterize systems change.	Executive Office and SRT1 Researchers	Completed 15/12/2016	No
<b>Efficiency</b>					
3. Due to lack of capacity at the local level, there is need to establish more cost-effective approaches for replicating the Humidtropics Platform-based process. This can be done by marshalling the current multi-disciplinary expertise of Humidtropics-affiliated researchers and practitioners to analyse the cost-effectiveness of diverse methods used in Action and Field Sites across Area-Based Flagship Projects.	Fully Accepted	Analyse cost-effectiveness of different multi-stakeholder processes such as Innovation Platforms (IPs).	EO, FMs and SRT3 Researchers	Completed 15/12/2016	No
4. The CCEE Team recommends that Humidtropics translates its experiences with developing, funding and managing Platform research initiatives through widening participation of local partners into guidelines that can be used by other projects and 2 <sup>nd</sup> generation CRPs.	Fully Accepted	Produce guidelines on developing, funding and managing multi-stakeholder platform research initiatives.	EO, FMs and SRT3 Researchers	Completed 30/11/2016	No
<b>Quality of Research</b>					
5. The underlying approach encourages experimentation with various social and technical systems interventions at farm and institutional levels. As such, it is recommended to reduce the investments in systems analysis and baselines in favour of experimentation.	Fully Accepted	This recommendation is in line with Humidtropics strategy on Program implementation. Investments in systems diagnosis that were during early stages, has been significantly reduced in favour of experimentation with social and technical systems interventions.	EO, FMs and SRT2 and SRT3 Researchers	Completed 31/12/2016	No

<b>Evaluation Recommendation</b>	<b>Management Response to the Recommendation</b>	<b>Action to be taken</b>	<b>Who Responsible for Action</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Additional funding required?</b>
6. Humidtropics' approach to integrated systems research should be considered by other projects and 2 <sup>nd</sup> generation CRPs to help improving the relevance of social and technical interventions for specific agro-ecological systems through multi-stakeholder processes such as IPs and enhance the potential for their scaling to large extrapolation domains through multi-stakeholder processes at country and regional levels such as R4D Platforms.	Fully Accepted	Document and share lessons learned to demonstrate the benefits of using integrated systems research for specific agro-ecological systems through multi-stakeholder processes. Legacy products are being developed, and there is direct engagement in the development of systems dimensions in 2 <sup>nd</sup> cycle CRPs (RTB and MAIZE)	EO, FMs and SRT leaders.	Completed 31/10/2016	No
7. There remains a systematic challenge to have genuine onsite collaboration between CGIAR partners. The trial with Cluster 4 projects shows promise but it should be modified to ensure further collaboration and sharing, especially with local and non-CGIAR Partners.	Fully Accepted	Efforts will be made in this final year to document and share the experiences with collaboration between CGIAR, non-CGIAR and local partners in particular sites/countries and participate in Site Integration planning for CRP collaboration.	EO and FMs	Completed 31/12/2016	No

## **Effectiveness**

8. Continue to document effective elements of the systems research process tested by Humidtropics (e.g. co-location, cooperation, and collaboration among CGIAR and non-CGIAR partners through farmer-driven R4D projects). Emphasis should be on the multiple benefits such as improvements in productivity, better nutrition, scaling of IP concept, the benefits of using an integrated approach.	Fully Accepted	The work plan for 2016 includes a set of Legacy Products in addition to completed Cluster 4 projects. A closing event later in the year will help with sharing and documenting the experience and serves as input into 2 <sup>nd</sup> cycle CRPs who also will be invited to participate.	EO, FMs and SRT leaders.	Completed 31/12/2016	No
9. Humidtropics, has generated a lot of tools, processes, technical, institutional innovations as new research outputs on integrated systems, which should be recognized as a body of knowledge that contributes to International Public Goods (IPGs), demonstrating their potential for reaching the CGIAR goals.	Fully Accepted	Further work is being done during 2016, to enhance the utility and accessibility of these tools. The Legacy Products, publications, tools, etc. will also be shared in a new online Systems Community of Practice that will replace the website and continue after Humidtropics closure.	EO, FMs and SRT Researchers	Completed 31/12/2016	No
10. Experiences and current implementation of RBM in Humidtropics should not only be shared but where possible transition it to site integration efforts because the Program already is doing a similar thing in five of the six site integration ++ countries and in the vast majority of the 20 site integration countries.	Fully Accepted	10.1 Document lessons learned from using RBM to implement and manage programs. 10.2 Engage with CRP Directors in relation to the Humidtropics experience with RBM and the potential of the DevResults tool for site integration and other aspects of 2 <sup>nd</sup> cycle functioning.	EO, FMs and RBM&E Officers	Completed 31/12/2016	No
11. In Platform-based entry point identification, research planning and M&E, there is need to increase attention to widely accepted features for a sustainable intensified agricultural system (e.g. livestock, ecosystem services).	Fully Accepted	Develop and test mechanisms to increase participation of other CRPs (RTB, Maize and Livestock) in Action Sites to integrate explicit knowledge and tools Integrate tested mechanisms in future systems R4D programs.	EO, FMs and SRT Researchers	Completed 31/12/2016	No