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Enabling poor rural people  
to overcome poverty

## **President's report on a proposed grant under the global/regional grants window to a non- CGIAR-supported international centre**

### **Note to Executive Board representatives**

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**For: Approval**

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## Abbreviations and acronyms

CABI	Centre for Agricultural Bioscience International
CEC	complementary extension campaign

## Recommendation for approval

The Executive Board is invited to approve the recommendation for a grant under the global/regional grants window to a non-CGIAR-supported international centre as contained in paragraph 7.

## President's report on a proposed grant under the global/regional grants window to a non-CGIAR-supported international centre

I submit the following report and recommendation on a proposed grant for agricultural research and training to a non-Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR)-supported international centre in the amount of US\$1,400,000.

### Part I – Introduction

1. This report recommends the provision of IFAD support to the research and training project of the following non-CGIAR-supported international centre: Centre for Agricultural Bioscience International (CABI).
2. The document of the grant for approval by the Executive Board is contained in the annex to this report:
 

Centre for Agricultural Bioscience International (CABI): Plantwise, a country-based approach to improving farmer livelihoods through reduced crop losses and increased productivity
3. The objectives and content of this applied research project are in line with the evolving strategic objectives of IFAD and the Fund's policy for grant financing.
4. The overarching strategic goal that drives the Revised IFAD Policy for Grant Financing, which was approved by the Executive Board in December 2009, is to promote successful and/or innovative approaches and technologies, together with enabling policies and institutions, that will support agricultural and rural development, empowering poor rural women and men in developing countries to achieve higher incomes and improved food security.
5. The policy aims to achieve the following outputs: (a) innovative activities promoted and innovative technologies and approaches developed in support of IFAD's target group; (b) awareness, advocacy and policy dialogue on issues of importance to poor rural people promoted by, and on behalf of, this target group; (c) capacity of partner institutions strengthened to deliver a range of services in support of poor rural people; and (d) lesson learning, knowledge management and dissemination of information on issues related to rural poverty reduction promoted among stakeholders within and across regions.
6. The proposed project is in line with the goal and outputs of the revised IFAD grant policy. By providing effective and accessible rural advisory services that enable smallholder farmers to reduce their costs while improving their yields and quality, the project contributes to IFAD's overarching goal of enabling poor rural people to improve their food security and nutrition, raise their incomes, and strengthen their resilience (IFAD Strategic Framework 2011-2015). The project contributes to all four outputs of IFAD's grant policy. 1. The project is based on an innovative approach designed to facilitate delivery of innovative technologies that are locally applicable to resource-poor smallholder farmers, IFAD's target group. 2. Raising

awareness of the importance of advisory services and of activities to improve farmer access to knowledge as well as advocacy for integrating new methods into systems are fundamental parts of the project. 3. At the same time, building the capacity of partner organizations to implement the Plantwise approach – so that they are able to maintain and scale out services beyond the project time span – will be embedded into project activities. 4. In addition to promoting innovation, the action learning approach is key to systematically documenting and sharing lessons learned that can be applied in other IFAD programmes and projects. Knowledge management and communication at a national level are promoted through activities that strengthen linkages among stakeholders and increase communication and collaboration between them.

## **Part II – Recommendation**

7. I recommend that the Executive Board approve the proposed grant in terms of the following resolution:

RESOLVED: that the Fund, in order to finance, in part, the project Plantwise, a country-based approach to improving farmer livelihoods through reduced crop losses and increased productivity, shall provide a grant not exceeding one million four hundred thousand United States dollars (US\$1,400,000) to the Centre for Agricultural Bioscience International (CABI) for a three-year project upon such terms and conditions as shall be substantially in accordance with the terms and conditions presented to the Executive Board herein.

Kanayo F. Nwanze  
President

# **Centre for Agricultural Bioscience International (CABI): Plantwise, a country-based approach to improving farmer livelihoods through reduced crop losses and increased productivity**

## **I. Background**

1. Resource-poor smallholder farmers manage mixed enterprises with a range of subsistence and commercial crops. Many plant health problems threaten crop production, including pests (insects, vertebrates, diseases and weeds) and abiotic stresses such as soil health constraints and water management problems. It is estimated that pests alone destroy 30-40 per cent of smallholder farmers' produce, and even higher losses regularly occur in key crops. Smallholders need access to capital and inputs to avoid/control these losses, but without knowledge, they are unable to make use of these resources effectively. To obtain knowledge, farmers need access to efficient advisory services covering all aspects of good agricultural practices, including seed varieties, soil management, crop rotation and integrated pest management.
2. The CABI Plantwise initiative addresses these problems by facilitating the creation of a network of plant clinics in which extension staff trained as "plant doctors" diagnose a broad range of problems relating to crop production and advise farmers on how to deal with such problems in ways that are practical, economical, feasible and environmentally safe, given the local context and availability of inputs. Far from being a parallel approach, plant clinics are embedded in everyday activities of existing extension providers and link to and complement other farmer support activities and advisory services. They are located in village markets and places accessible by smallholder farmers and are run by qualified plant doctors trained using Plantwise methods and materials to diagnose plant health problems and give appropriate and locally relevant advice. When fed back to provincial, regional or national authorities, information gathered at plant clinics helps in early planning to address area-specific input supply systems, and to cope with any emerging pest outbreak.
3. Plant clinics are underpinned by the Plantwise knowledge bank, a free online source of locally relevant, comprehensive information about the problems facing farmers. It is a searchable, open-access database containing factsheets, management advice and other information on problems of plant health affecting the most-commonly grown crops worldwide. It provides a secure data management facility for plant doctors to manage and analyse data collected on crops and crop problems brought to the clinics. It also offers a platform for national plant health stakeholders to share information with each other in-country, identifying and responding to key problems and emerging threats, while controlling how much information to share and with whom.
4. The plant clinics are used as an entry point to strengthen linkages among key stakeholders in a plant health system: plant clinics and research and diagnostic laboratories; agro-dealers and plant clinics; plant clinics and regulatory bodies; and plant clinics and other extension providers. Monitoring and evaluation schemes within Plantwise are supporting continuous learning, suggesting improvements and developing quality assurance schemes.

## **II. Rationale and relevance to IFAD**

5. By providing effective and accessible rural advisory services – which enable smallholder farmers to reduce their costs while improving their yields and quality – the project contributes to IFAD's overarching goal of enabling poor rural people to

improve their food security and nutrition, raise their incomes, and strengthen their resilience (IFAD Strategic Framework 2011-2015). It fits well with IFAD's programme and project-level priorities: (i) enhancing environmental sustainability in smallholder agriculture (through more-judicious use of inputs based on plant clinic advice); (ii) sustainably intensifying small-scale agriculture (enabling smallholders to lose less and grow more – increasing yields by reducing losses and improving soil and plant health, rather than by using more land, water or inputs); and (iii) promoting the capabilities of rural women and men, including young people (by providing a forum for smallholders to improve their understanding of good agricultural practices in order to achieve good plant and soil health, as well as by training local plant doctors).

6. The project contributes to all four outputs of IFAD's grant policy. 1. It is designed to facilitate delivery of innovative technologies that are locally applicable to resource-poor smallholder farmers, IFAD's target group. 2. Raising awareness of the importance of advisory services and of activities to improve farmer access to knowledge as well as advocacy for integrating new methods into systems are fundamental parts of the project. 3. Building the capacity of partner organizations to implement the Plantwise approach – so that they are able to maintain and scale out services beyond the project time span – will be embedded into project activities. 4. The action learning approach is key to systematically documenting and sharing lessons learned that can be applied in other IFAD programmes and projects.

### **III. The proposed project**

7. The overall goal of the project is to contribute to significant increases in the productivity of key crops and/or improve household incomes for smallholder farmers. The project's objectives are to (i) establish networks of plant clinics integrated with IFAD-financed programmes in Mozambique, Rwanda and Uganda, and build and strengthen linkages with other plant health stakeholders (other extension service providers, researchers and other technical experts, input suppliers, diagnostic service providers and regulatory bodies); (ii) build links between plant clinics and other active advisory service providers to increase outreach of advice related to key problems identified at the clinics; and (iii) inform and achieve policy changes that facilitate the creation, maintenance and expansion of clinic networks and activities based on lessons learned in pilot schemes.
8. The target group is smallholder farmers in Mozambique, Rwanda and Uganda (target countries).
9. The three-year project will comprise three main components:
  - Establishing plant clinics and training plant doctors, with up to 60 plant doctors trained in each target country. Plant doctors will establish at least 20 new clinics in each target country. Linkages will be established with key stakeholders to allow effective functioning of service delivery, and information materials will be developed for the clinics. National capacity for delivery-effective advisory services will be strengthened, including training of up to 10 individuals in each target country as "master trainers" to facilitate scaling out beyond the life of the project.
  - Advice and recommendations will be delivered to a large number of farmers by adapting key messages to suit the delivery methods of the advisory service providers in the region. It is expected that at least one complementary extension campaign (CEC) in the second and third years of the project will take place in each target country, once there are established clinics that the rallies and campaigns can work with. CECs will include plant health rallies in which validated messages or particular topics are discussed in community-based events by teams associated with the clinics, moving among villages over a short period of time.

- Monitoring and evaluation and lesson learning will be complemented by more-detailed research into clinic performance and how clinics combine with other extension methods to add value. An iterative approach will be adopted – as lessons emerge they will be used to adjust implementation approaches. Advocacy for policy change will also be undertaken through broad dissemination and engagement with government representatives and other policy, development, agriculture and research stakeholders.
10. CABI plans to carry out an impact assessment of the overall Plantwise initiative, and as this project will be part of this assessment, the results and lessons learned will be shared with IFAD.

#### **IV. Expected outputs and benefits**

11. The following are foreseen:
- Plant clinics running regularly and delivering advice to a large number of poor smallholder farmers (at least 88,000 over the life of the project);
  - Advice on key problems identified at clinics or through clinic operations delivered to a large number of farmers (at least 300,000) through CECs;
  - Progress towards embedding the Plantwise plant clinics and systems approach in national policies and the working practices of relevant national organizations.

#### **V. Implementation arrangements**

12. CABI will be the lead implementing organization, operating through its Plantwise initiative. The project will work in two countries where plant clinics are currently being piloted: Rwanda and Uganda. We are seeking to scale up activities and further integrate them with other rural advisory services (including services planned in the IFAD-financed Agricultural Technology and Agribusiness Advisory Services [ATAAS] Project in Uganda and the Kirehe Community-based Watershed Management Project [KWAMP] in Rwanda) to strengthen their impact and sustainability. In both countries, clinics are locally owned by the organizations that run them, which have full control and responsibility for their activities, including operating clinics with their own resources. CABI's role is to catalyse and facilitate, strengthening links between local stakeholders, building local capacity for integrating clinics into advisory services (including providing training and training local trainers), and serving as a source of technical support and backstopping as necessary. Local partners will take on increasing responsibilities throughout the course of the engagement, gradually taking over activities such as training new plant doctors and developing and updating extension materials. This focus on building local capacity and ownership will help ensure the sustainability of the approach beyond project end.
13. In addition, the project will work in Mozambique, where Plantwise is not yet active, linking with the IFAD-financed PRONEA Support Project<sup>1</sup> and using lessons from Rwanda, Uganda and elsewhere to explore how the approach can be used to support activities in a new target country. These IFAD-financed loan projects will be among the main collaborators of Plantwise.
14. Apart from CABI, the implementing entities envisaged for this grant include the following:
- Mozambique: National Directorate for Agricultural Extension (DNEA), Provincial Service for Rural Extension (SPER), Eduardo Mondlane University;

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<sup>1</sup> PRONEA National Agricultural Extension Programme (Mozambique), which was approved by IFAD in 2006 as the Agricultural Support Programme (ASP) and transformed in 2012 into the PRONEA Support Project (PSP).

- Rwanda: Rwanda Agricultural Board (RAB) (directorate of extension), community innovation centres (CCIs), Agricultural Information and Communication Centre (CICA) within the Ministry of Agriculture;
  - Uganda: National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS), National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO), Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF), Makerere University.
15. CABI will seek to work with in-country partners through memorandums of understanding (MoUs), as required by the organizations. Since this CABI project is working through the IFAD-financed loan projects in the target countries, and to ensure the sustainability and eventual adoption of plant clinics by the government, a national coordinating organization (NCO), commonly the Ministry of Agriculture or a specific designated body or department, will be designated to act as CABI's counterpart in each target country. The NCO will be suggested by the relevant implementing agencies of the IFAD country programme, in agreement with CABI, and an MoU prepared and signed. Local implementing organizations (LIO) that run clinics are often, but not always, the same as the NCO. Normally, separate MoUs will be signed by CABI, NCOs and LIOs.
16. Given that the majority of activities and staff of the present proposal are in Africa, as are all the subgrants to local partners, we expect that funds will be transferred to and managed by the CABI Nairobi office.
17. CABI will follow internationally acceptable accounting standards for accounting, technical and financial reporting. Procurement standards follow European Union (EU) guidelines and conform to the EU's "four pillars" control framework (accounting, audit, internal control and procurement procedures), which is acceptable to IFAD. CABI produces annual institutional financial statements under International Financial Reporting Standards, which are audited subject to International Standards on Auditing. CABI will ensure that, within its audited financial statements or separately, an audit opinion letter on statements of expenditure submitted to the Fund during the fiscal year is duly completed by its independent auditors. CABI will include the IFAD-financed Plantwise project as one of the sample projects that PricewaterhouseCoopers reviews as part of the audit procedures.

## **VI. Indicative project costs and financing**

18. The overall cost of the project is estimated at US\$1,842,502 over three years, of which IFAD will finance US\$1.4 million. It is proposed that IFAD financing is supplemented by cofinancing of US\$442,500 from the Government of the Netherlands and the central CABI Plantwise budget, as well as in-kind contributions from partners. Details are presented in the table.



**Summary of budget and financing plan**

(Thousands of United States dollars)

<i>Number</i>	<i>Type of expenditure</i>	<i>IFAD</i>	<i>Cofinancing<sup>a</sup></i>
1	Personnel <sup>b</sup>	371 000	332 250
2	Local partner support <sup>c</sup>	300 000	
3	Training/capacity-building <sup>d</sup>	451 000	
4	Equipment/other direct costs <sup>e</sup>	117 000	
5	Overhead	161 000	110 250
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1 400 000</b>	<b>442 500</b>

<sup>a</sup> Where applicable.<sup>b</sup> Costs in this category cover CABI staff responsible for the day-to-day management of project implementation in each target country, including training, backstopping, monitoring and evaluation and research. This constitutes 30% (before overhead) of the IFAD investment.<sup>c</sup> Local partner support will cover contracting of local support for pilot plant-health rallies, contribute to CECs and support research activities. This will include enumerators and local supervision, and covers both staff and operational costs. Also covered in this category are funds to cover national coordinators. These individuals will not be contracted full-time by the project, but will continue to work with their organizations, with limited funding to facilitate their support to the project.<sup>d</sup> Training and capacity-building is a significant element of the project and includes costs associated with delivering the courses, backstopping activities, planning with stakeholders and awareness-raising and advocacy. This category covers mainly travel and accommodation for those involved (both CABI staff and local participants), as well as inputs from an extension research specialist in the design of training and research activities.<sup>e</sup> Equipment/other direct costs includes costs associated with setting up clinics, in the first instance, and facilitating national coordinators to carry out their functions. This includes the necessary laptops, software, data management tools and consumables for the project. All equipment used by partners will be donated to the final target country beneficiaries at project end.

19. CABI anticipates additional in-kind contributions from local partners, including the IFAD-financed loan projects mentioned in the proposal (e.g. ATAAS in Uganda and KWAMP in Rwanda). The overall scale of activities is thus likely to be larger than presented in the proposal, with a higher proportion of cofinancing, as partners support staff of their projects to attend training, run clinics and develop factsheets. NAADS, for example, has expressed interest in adopting plant clinics as one of their extension methods, and has indicated that they are willing to invest resources in the project.
20. IFAD financing for this project will support Plantwise work in Mozambique and Uganda, as well as financing local partner support, training/capacity-building and equipment/other direct costs in Rwanda. CABI staff time in Rwanda will be covered by the Netherlands matching funds.

## Results-based logical framework

	Objectives-hierarchy	Objectively verifiable indicators	Means of verification	Assumptions
<b>Goal</b>	To contribute to significant increases in productivity of key crops, and/or incomes	Up to 50% of clinic users report reduction in losses of at least 10% in main crops, farmers reached in CECs also improve productivity	Impact assessment studies	
<b>Objectives</b>	Timely, targeted and effective responses to plant and soil health constraints of smallholder farmers	a) At least 388,000 farmers reached b) >50% of clients implement advice c) High proportion of accurate diagnoses and locally appropriate advice, e) Active collaboration between stakeholders	Clinic records Exit surveys Meeting minutes Key Informant Interviews	Crop production is high on Target country government agendas; strong cooperation with national partners; national partners adopt the knowledge bank; Appropriate personnel, facilities and materials available; Farmer targets will depend on "felt need" and prevailing problems.
<b>Outputs</b>	Independent plant clinic networks	a) Up to 10 Master Trainers and 60 plant doctors per Target country c) 20 new plant clinics established per Target country	Training records Clinic records	Local organisations take up plant clinics; Personnel available; Farmers use clinics
	Links between clinics and other services increase reach of advice related to key problems	a) At least 1 plant health problem per Target country per year identified during years 2 and 3 b) Complementary extension methods disseminate information about problems identified to approximately 300,000 farmers	Lists of identified problems Reports from CECs	Partners interested in collaborating and sharing information ; Appropriate personnel available; National knowledge management capacity is adequate;
	Policy changes which facilitate the creation, maintenance, and expansion of clinic networks and activities	Progress towards embedding the Plantwise approach in national policy and working practices: Clinics becoming embedded in the everyday working practices of organisations; Policy dialogue around incorporating clinics into extension	Policy documents Working practices of organizations	Crop production is a priority for Governments of Target countries; Existing advisory services interested in increasing collaboration; Plant clinics and activities demonstrate the benefits of the Plantwise approach; Advocacy materials and policy engagement are effective
<b>Key Activities</b>	1.1 Establish plant clinics	a) Plant Doctor Modules 1, 2, and 4 run twice per Target country, training two cohorts of plant doctors	Training records	In Uganda and Rwanda, much of the groundwork is already in place from existing activities, but in Mozambique further engagement with government and partners will be an important early step.
	1.2 Establish linkages with key stakeholders	a) Active collaboration and communication with and between national plant health stakeholders, stakeholder workshops	Meeting minutes	
	1.3 Develop information materials for plant clinics	a) Module 3 run in all three countries b) Target country portals in the knowledge bank developed and linked to in-country knowledge management systems	Training records Knowledge bank country portal	In all three Target countries, discussions with identified IFAD-financed loan projects will determine in more detail the specific opportunities for collaboration in implementation, reporting, M&E and continuous learning
	1.4 Build capacity	a) Up to 10 Master trainers/Target country trained. b) Plant doctor training in university courses piloted	Training records Curriculum	
	2.1 Capture data on key problems	a) Observations from clinics and associated	Interviews with authorities	

Objectives-hierarchy	Objectively verifiable indicators	Means of verification	Assumptions
	operations collated and analysed		
2.2 Complementary extension campaigns	a) At least 2 complementary extension campaigns including plant health rallies in years 2 and 3 of the project	Campaign reports	
3.1 Monitoring & Evaluation	a) Comprehensive M&E plan b) Studies addressing key research questions	Working papers, journal articles	
3.2 Advocacy for policy change	a) Advocacy materials developed and disseminated b) Stakeholder meetings influence policy	Materials	