



RESEARCH
PROGRAM ON
Dryland Systems

Program Close-out Plan

08 November 2016

*Food security and better livelihoods
for rural dryland communities*

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List of Acronyms

CCEE	CRP Commissioned External Evaluation
CO	Consortium Office
CRP	CGIAR Research Program
CRP-DS	CRP on Dryland Systems
GLDC	CRP on Grain Legumes and Dryland Cereals
ICARDA	International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas
IEA	Independent Evaluation Arrangement
LIVESTOCK	CRP on Livestock
PIA	Program Implementation Agreement
PMU	Program Management Unit
POWB	Plan of Work and Budget
RTB	CRP on Root, Tubers and Bananas
SO	Systems Office
WHEAT	CRP on Wheat
WLE	CRP on Water, Land and Ecosystems

Six-Month Program Closeout Plan

1. Introduction

The Program Implementation Agreement (PIA) of the CGIAR Research Program (CRP) on Dryland Systems, dated May, 24 2013 between the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (Bioversity International) on behalf of the CGIAR and the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) the Lead Center designates 31 December, 2016 as the end date of the CRP on Dryland Systems. This document, referred to as the CLOSE-OUT PLAN outlines the approach, steps and specific procedures necessary that will be taken to ensure that the program contract is closed out smoothly with no expenses to be incurred beyond the designated end date.

The program closure will be supervised by the Program Director with support from the Program Management Unit (PMU) staff for their respective area of responsibilities as detailed in the [Program Governance Structure](#).

The costs associated with the closure have been provided by the CGIAR System Office (SO)¹ as part of the CRP-DS [Plan of Work and Budget \(POWB\) 2016](#) with a total budget of US\$ 2 million provided by CGIAR's Systems Office (SO) that includes both the funds to bridge key research activities and the funds for closure that will be transferred to the new portfolio of CRPs to be overseen by the System Management Board and the SO. The closure period unfolds from January to December 2016. However, the present plan considers the period June – December 2016 and the residual technical and financial reporting to be done in the first quarter of 2017, as standard practice by the CGIAR Center Staff.

While reviewing this CLOSE-OUT PLAN, please note the following decisions that will need to be taken by the SO or the System Management Board, eventually:

1. **Format of final report.** Dryland Systems has been instructed by the Consortium Office (CO) on 12 May 2016 to use strictly the POWB format². The Annual Report template used in 2015 was adopted for the extension phase until 2016. Unless otherwise stated by the SO, (as noted in the Program Implementation Agreement (PIA) clause 5.3b), the CRP will use the provided format to account of its achievements and expenditure. If the SO requires another annual reporting format, the SO must share the new annual report template and process with the CRP by no later than November 30th, 2016.
2. **Approval of the CLOSEOUT PLAN.** Approval is required as soon as possible and no later than November 15th, 2016.
3. **Inventory Distribution.** Dryland Systems through their individual partner Centers will provide the SO with an inventory of all capital items worth more than USD 1,000, procured throughout this contract by January 30, 2017 using W1/W2 funds. The SO should confirm if this list is needed by November 30th 2016, since the PIA does not indicate a specific date for this process.

2. Staffing

As Dryland Systems winds down, it is natural that program employees in Partner Centers and the Leader Center will seek new employment opportunities to secure their economic future and family

¹ The SO communicated the allocated budget; however, exact funds needed for the close-out has not yet been clearly established as the SO did not consult the CRP and Partners Centers on real estimates.

² The CO clarified that "The Plan of Work and Budget (POWB) is a standardized tool for all CRPs to present their annual work plan. It is designed to facilitate preparing proposals for the next phase and over time indicate the efficiency, productivity and future potential of a CRP".

livelihoods. At this time, Dryland Systems has seen two PMU staff members³ leave since May. While additional staff losses may be expected as the program draws to a close, the Program has drawn up contingency plans to deal with a reduction in staffing associated with the PMU. However, since program staffs are officially employed by the Partner or Lead Centre, it is expected that each Center will formalize its intention to maintain the staff and their position through other projects or release them. This action is needed since a three-month advance notice is needed and if not done by 30th September, then the Center may incur costs to cover staff days beyond 31st December 2016 from its own budget.

Our contingency plan involves:

- A) Splitting up remaining tasks and responsibilities amongst the program, administration, and finance staff who remain;
- B) Bringing on temporary staff if necessary to assist with admin and financial matters, and
- C) Allocating a percentage time of staff that may be moved to other responsibilities and positions within the lead center

Currently, in line with point **A** in the contingency plan, Dryland Systems PMU is reallocating work responsibilities in the program and finance areas to deal with staff departures. In terms of portfolio management, we have already determined the residual component of Dryland Systems research portfolio that will continue, as agreed with their respective management in the following CRPs:

1. Grain Legumes and Dryland Cereals (GLDC)⁴,
2. WHEAT
3. LIVESTOCK
4. Water, Land and Ecosystems (WLE)
5. Root, Tubers and Bananas (RTB).

The Dryland Systems Partner Centers have been informed of these changes to facilitate a seamless management transition. As grants and sub-contracts move into the CLOSEOUT phase, the program staff will focus on collecting information and contributing to the write-up of the final report. It is anticipated that the Dryland Systems PMU local administrative and finance staff supported by the program will not stay beyond December 31, 2016, unless the Lead Center communicates to them their intention to retain as them as Centre employees on other projects.

PMO Staff Name	Position	Expected End date
Management		
	Director	December 31 st 2016
	Research Program Coordinator	December 31 st 2016
	Finance Program Coordinator	June 1 st 2016
	Finance Officer (Lead Center)	December 31 st 2016

³ These are the Gender Program Coordinator and the Finance Program Coordinator. The departure of the later on June 1st 2016 does not deprive the PMU of all financial capacity to implement the close-out plan as these tasks are now being handled by a Finance Officer appointed by the Lead Centre to follow up and deliver the financial component of the 2016 Annual Report during the first quarter of 2017.

⁴ Some of these activities were planned for transfer over to the proposed CGIAR Research Program on Grain legumes & Dryland Cereals (GLDC). However, with the rejection of the GLDC proposal, the effective closure and final reporting and evaluation of these activities is made challenging, unless research activities with a focus on drylands are included in other parts of the Phase II CRP portfolio. Indeed we are exploring options to map some key activities for drylands with WLE and Wheat CRPs but these are as yet not confirmed by the respective lead centers.

Program Staff	Program Administrator	December 31 st 2016
	Communication Program Coordinator	December 31 st 2016
	Agricultural System Expert	December 31 st 2016
	Gender Program Coordinator	June 30 th 2016

6. Partnership/Grants

Partners were notified by the SO on the closure of the CRP on Dryland Systems early in 2016.

The 2017 annual reporting process will not be affected by the closure of Dryland Systems as donors and relevant stakeholders will have a full report of projects from all funding sources from each Partner Centre.

The PMU will require Partner Centers to submit their technical Annual Reports by December 31, 2017, while the financial report by March 30 2017 since the closure of financial books is expected only by the first quarter of 2017. It is important to note that while the Dryland Systems Focal Points may no longer be in their position, each CGIAR Center is required contractually to deliver an annual report where all research achievements are presented for the W3/Bilateral component.

Financial reports including liquidation of expenditures incurred in 2016 should comply with the Dryland Systems L-Series. All financial records (printed and electronic) should be kept by the Partner Centers Finance Departments for a period of at least 3 years as per PIA requirement and subject to auditing from the SO.

7. Intellectual Property and Close-out Communications

Each Partner Center should attach to the annual report due on 31 December 2017, an inventory of the intellectual property rights and assets produced with W1/W2 funding from Dryland Systems and, as well as W3/Bilateral projects/funding mapped to the CRP. This includes the reference to storage of electronic copies and printing copies of files.

The Communications Program Coordinator will oversee all closeout communication activities for Dryland Systems, including the following:

- Making the necessary arrangements for transferring the current program website under the current server that is hosting the MEL platform.
- Organizing a program closeout event subject to remaining program funds in order to promote program achievements and ensure its research legacy and outcomes are taken further by other partners and programs focusing on drylands.

8. Program Close-out Evaluation and Audit

Dryland Systems conducted a program evaluation in 2015 as part of its plan⁵.

The evaluation covered all key areas of the program and was intended to be part of future planned evaluation. The notification from the SO to close the Dryland Systems in 2016 did not allow the program to plan and ensure an effective second evaluation one year later from the previous one. The PMO considers that the evaluation conducted presents and excellent review of the program as confirmed by the CGIAR Independent Evaluation Arrangement (IEA)⁶.

⁵ <http://mel.cgiar.org/xmlui/handle/20.500.11766/3298>

⁶ <http://mel.cgiar.org/xmlui/handle/20.500.11766/3308>

The 2016 Summary of CGIAR CRPs evaluations⁷ concluded the following about Dryland Systems:

“Current governance structure and management processes are largely suitable for effectively implementing the CRP. Delay in filling staff positions of the PMU was identified as a problem.” In addition, the program *“was commended for implementing a forward-looking, innovative and functional Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning system”* adopted by other four CRPs.

This led to the conclusion that the notification from the CO to close the CRP caused a loss in terms of effectively achieved Portfolio outcomes as planned. The handover of key areas of management and research to other CRPs is the mitigation strategy set by the program.

In addition, the program is contributing to two additional evaluations on Capacity Development and Gender conducted by the IEA. These two evaluations will also contribute to providing the Donors with a clear analysis of the program’s results and achievements in comparison with the approved proposal.

During its life, the program has had two audits. One in May 2014, after one year of implementation, and one after 2 years, in July 2015, during the CRP-Commissioned External Evaluation (CCEE). The information contained in the second audit provided to donors and stakeholders the status of the program and the achievements made since the first audit. It is important to note for a CRP that formally started in 2013, Dryland Systems, differently from most other CRPs, has been subject to an excessive number of reviews, audits, and evaluations.

With regards to evaluating the impact of the CRP closure vis-a vis the work funded by bilateral and W3 projects, the Partner Centers will shift the mapped projects to the portfolio of approved CRPs in Phase II. This, together with some key research activities funded by W1/W2 (see POWB2016), will ensure that the closure of the CRP will not cause disruption of the SO research portfolio. With respect to W1/W2 utilization, it is important to note that Dryland Systems had a competitive allocation of resources based on research priorities rather than compensation/complementarity with W3/Bilateral projects mapped in order not to create distortions in the portfolio by favoring those participating centers that were mapping a higher number of projects.

The PMU will continue to provide regular feedback (via email, phone calls and videoconferences) to the Steering Committee Chair on the program close-out process in order to ensure this plan is effectively implemented. The Program Director and the Steering Committee Chair will provide in the Annual Report 2016, the overall results of Dryland Systems and reflections on the closing process.

⁷ Birner, R. and Byerlee D. (2016): Synthesis and Lessons Learned from 15 CRP Evaluations. Rome, Italy: Independent Evaluation Arrangement (IEA) of CGIAR. <http://iea.cgiar.org/>

9. Outline close-out plan

Following is an outline of the Close-out plan, detailing the tasks that must be undertaken, the responsible person and the timelines

Task	Initiation date	Person responsible	Recipient	Due date	Completed (sign here)	Comments
Closeout strategy session with PMU	230 days	Director	PMU	01-06-16		
Briefing with SO IAU to discuss closeout requirements	230 days	Research Program Coordinator	IAU	16-06-16		
Initiate/draft closeout plan	210 days	Research Program Coordinator	Director, Lead Center, Partner Centers	28-08-16		
Official notification to employees affected (local and international) about their contract	210 days	Director / HR Director	Staff	30-09-16		
Prepare final inventory of Project Equipment/Furniture for PMO Office	210 days	Program Administrator	Director	30-09-16		
Verbal notification of project closure to Partner Centers	180 days	Director	Partner Centers	30-09-16		
Review of draft closeout plan	180 days	Lead Center BOT	PMU	15-10-16		
Finalize/submit closeout plan to SO	150 days	Director	SO	10-11-16		
Request draft physical inventory of Project Equipment/Furniture for Partner Centers	150 days	Finance Program Administrator	Partner Centers	30-11-16		
Official Notification and termination of all agreements (purchase orders, grants, subcontracts)	120 days	Finance Program Administrator		31-12-16		
Official Notification to non-CGIAR partners, governments on CRP closing	120 days	Communication Program Coordinators	Stakeholders	31-12-16		
Program Close-out event (tentative) ⁸	120 days	Communication Program Coordinator	Stakeholders	05-12-16		
Program Website transferred to same server as MEL platform	120 days	Communication Program Coordinator		31-12-16		

⁸ Based on available funds.

Task	Initiation date	Person responsible	Recipient	Due date	Completed (sign here)	Comments
Intellectual Property Registry drafting to be submitted with the final technical deliverables	120 days	Partner Centers Focal Points / Intellectual Property Managers	Lead Center, IP Manager	31-12-16		
Ensure all payables and receivables (vendors, staff, partners) are cleared	120 days	Finance Program Administrator		31-12-16		
Submit technical report required by contract	120 days	Partner Centers Deputy Director General for Research/ Finance Director	Lead Center & SO	31-12-16		
Reconcile all advances/property issued	90 days	Partner Centers Finance Directors		30-01-17		
Submit inventory of Project Equipment/Furniture for Partner Centers	90 days	Partner Centers Finance Directors	Lead Center & SO	30-01-17		
Submit inventory disposition plan to SO for written approval	60 days	Partner Centers Finance Directors	SO	28-02-17		
Submit final financial report required by contract	30 days	Partner Centers Deputy Director General for Research/ Finance Director	Lead Center & SO	30-03-17		
Submit final Intellectual Property Registry to SO	30 days	Partner Centers Deputy Director General for Research/IP Managers	Lead Center & SO	30-03-17		



RESEARCH
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The CGIAR Research Program on Dryland Systems aims to improve the lives of 1.6 billion people and mitigate land and resource degradation in 3 billion hectares covering the world's dry areas.

Dryland Systems engages in integrated agricultural systems research to address key socioeconomic and biophysical constraints that affect food security, equitable and sustainable land and natural resource management, and the livelihoods of poor and marginalized dryland communities. The program unifies eight CGIAR Centers and uses unique partnership platforms to bind together scientific research results with the skills and capacities of national agricultural research systems (NARS), advanced research institutes (ARIs), non-governmental and civil society organizations, the private sector, and other actors to test and develop practical innovative solutions for rural dryland communities.

The program is led by the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), a member of the CGIAR Consortium. CGIAR is a global agriculture research partnership for a food secure future.

For more information, please visit

drylandsystems.cgiar.org

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