



International Coffee Organization  
Organización Internacional del Café  
Organização Internacional do Café  
Organisation Internationale du Café

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Executive Board/  
International Coffee Council  
25 – 28 September 2007  
London, England

**Report of the  
Virtual Screening Committee (VSC)  
on four new coffee project proposals**

## Background

1. This report contains assessments provided by the Virtual Screening Committee (VSC) Members on the following four new project proposals which will be considered by the Executive Board in September 2007:

- **Renovation of CATIE's international coffee collection**, submitted by PROMECAFE;
- **International research and development services for the durable genetic control of two destructive diseases affecting Arabica coffee**, submitted by the Tropical Research Institute – Coffee Rust Research Centre (IICT-CIFC) with the support of the Association for Science and Information on Coffee (ASIC) and Embrapa;
- **Revitalizing productivity, quality and trade in coffee from Africa**, submitted by the Inter-African Coffee Organisation (IACO); and
- **Coffee Berry Borer – the need for a review of the status and knowledge of a serious coffee pest**, submitted by CABI UK.

2. The VSC is currently composed of Brazil, Côte d'Ivoire, Guatemala and Indonesia (exporting Members) and Germany, Italy and the USA (importing Members). Other Member countries have been recently invited to join the VSC and responses are awaited before the next round of screening in November 2007.

## Action

The Executive Board is requested to consider the report of the VSC and to submit a recommendation on the four proposals to the Council.

**REPORT OF THE VIRTUAL SCREENING COMMITTEE (VSC)  
ON FOUR NEW COFFEE PROJECT PROPOSALS**

**Summary of VSC screening by technical area**

<b>Technical area</b>	<b>Renovation of CATIE's international coffee collection</b>	<b>International research and development services for the durable genetic control of two destructive diseases affecting Arabica coffee</b>	<b>Revitalizing productivity, quality and trade in coffee from Africa</b>	<b>Coffee Berry Borer – the need for a review of the status and knowledge of a serious coffee pest</b>
Coffee sector priorities	Adequate	Good	Adequate	Insufficient information
Project planning	Adequate	Adequate	Insufficient information	Insufficient information
Operational capacity of PEA	Good	Adequate	Adequate	Insufficient information
Sustainability	Insufficient information	Insufficient information	Insufficient information	Insufficient information
Budget/cost-effectiveness	Insufficient information	Insufficient information	Adequate	Poor
<b>Overall recommendation – Proposal should be:</b>	<i>Approved</i>	<i>Revised</i>	<i>The VSC was split on approval or rejection</i>	<i>Revised</i>

**1. Renovation of CATIE's international coffee collection** (submitted by PROMECAFE) - Project outline document WP-Board 1036/07.

**General comments:**

- (a) The proposal should be approved.
- (b) This project proposal aims to halt the process of genetic erosion that the Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Centre's (CATIE's) international coffee germplasm collection has suffered during past decades. CATIE's collection in Costa Rica is the third largest coffee field genebank in the world, after those in Côte d'Ivoire and Cameroon; it is the only one in the public domain and includes a large part of the genetic diversity of Arabica coffee (*Coffea arabica*) with a total of 1,992 accessions and over 9,000 coffee trees.
- (c) The proposed Project Executing Agency (PEA) is PROMECAFE.

**VSC comments and recommendations:**

- One Member pointed out that this proposal should be accepted for submission to the Common Fund for Commodities (CFC), as there seems to be an immediate threat of irreversible loss. The project secures resources of potential global benefit, thus concerns over the interest of the local (Central American) institutions should not block the proposal. Intellectual property right issues should be clarified before the project starts, i.e. conditions for access of the global coffee community to information and cultivars from the site.
- Another Member considered this proposal strategically important for producing countries.

**Additional comments:**

- The principles of the project and a reasonable workplan are described.
- The results need to be better identified.
- While it is laudable to regenerate and propagate the material, the project needs to have an impact on farmers.
- The proposal might be considered for funding if it clearly showed its impact on farmers and the coffee industry.

<b>Overall recommendation:</b>	<i>The proposal submitted by PROMECAFE should be approved</i>
<b>Screening by technical area</b>	<b>Scoring:</b>
Coffee sector priorities	Adequate
Project planning	Adequate
Operational capacity of PEA	Good
Sustainability	Insufficient information
Budget/cost-effectiveness	Insufficient information

**2. International research and development services for the durable genetic control of two destructive diseases affecting Arabica coffee**, submitted by the CIFIC (Coffee Rust Research Centre) which is a specialized department of the IICT (Tropical Research Institute), Oeiras, Portugal with the support of ASIC and Embrapa – Project outline document WP-Board 1033/07.

**General comments:**

- (a) The proposal should be revised.
- (b) This project proposal involves research into plant-pathogen interactions of two quarantine diseases (coffee leaf rust (CLR) and coffee berry disease (CBD)); identification and maintenance of races/isolates of the pathogens and of critical coffee germplasm; pre-breeding for resistance; and training of research personnel from coffee producing countries.
- (c) The proposed PEA is the CIFIC.

**VSC comments and recommendations:**

- This proposal is considered strategically important for producing countries.
- One Member considered that the project only requires a slight revision concerning the budget and that capital expenditure should be covered by co-financing from Portugal as a significant proportion of this investment benefits Portugal. On a point of financing it was also mentioned that the CIFIC's problem cannot be solved by the CFC financing this project but it will allow some breathing space and time to find permanent financing sources possibly from the European Union.
- Another Member indicated that the proposal plans to address CLR (*Hemileia vastatrix*) which the proponents say causes considerable economic damage. However, the proposal does not indicate the impact on the countries listed, nor does it describe the status of the scientific institutions in these countries. The proposal lists salary costs for a number of researchers and technicians but does not describe the capacity that will be used or created in the countries. The proposal does not have a plan for extending the results of the research to farmers who could then benefit from improved varieties.

<b>Overall recommendation:</b>	<i>The proposal submitted by the CIFIC should be revised</i>
<b>Screening by technical area</b>	<b>Scoring:</b>
Coffee sector priorities	Good
Project planning	Adequate
Operational capacity of PEA	Adequate
Sustainability	Insufficient information
Budget/cost-effectiveness	Insufficient information

**3. Revitalizing productivity, quality and trade in coffee from Africa**, submitted by the Inter-African Coffee Organisation (IACO) – Project outline document WP-Board 1035/07.

**General comments:**

- (a) The Committee was split on whether to recommend the proposal for approval or rejection.
- (b) This “Fast Track” project proposal aims to build consensus on a realistic vision for the revitalization of production, quality and trade in coffees produced by African smallholders, develop a revitalization action plan and catalyse the requisite partnerships and collective action to implement the plan.
- (c) The proposed PEA is CABI Africa.

**VSC comments and recommendations:**

- Two Members considered that the proposal should be approved while two other Members considered that it should be rejected.
- One Member noted that the PEA, CABI Africa, is requesting funds to develop the proposal. This is inappropriate as it should be able to put together a proposal on its own.
- Another Member pointed out that the involvement of non-governmental stakeholders, e.g. private sector and farmer groups, is only vaguely described and details on co-financing are missing.

<b>Overall recommendation:</b>	<i>The Committee was split on whether to recommend approval or rejection of the proposal submitted by IACO</i>
<b>Screening by technical area</b>	<b>Scoring:</b>
Coffee sector priorities	Adequate
Project planning	Insufficient information
Operational capacity of PEA	Adequate
Sustainability	Insufficient information
Budget/cost-effectiveness	Adequate

**4. Coffee Berry Borer – the need for a review of the status and knowledge of a serious coffee pest,** submitted by CABI – Project outline document WP-Board 1037/07.

**General comments:**

- (a) The proposal should be revised.
- (b) This is a proposal for a comprehensive review of the pest status of the Coffee Berry Borer (CBB) including an ICO workshop with expert inputs from the most affected countries.
- (c) The proposed PEA is CABI UK.

**VSC comments and recommendations:**

- One Member mentioned that the CBB is an important pest which can cause significant damage to coffee crops thus depriving the farmers of income. A workshop seems to be a reasonable way to disseminate information. The proposal is very short, so it is hard to judge what the outcomes and results would be. It seems to be worthy of consideration. A revised proposal with more specific information on what would be covered in the workshop would be helpful.
- Another Member noted that a stand-alone workshop would not be able to address the shortcomings encountered since the end of the large CBB project in 2002. Moreover, some constraints mentioned as causes for the spread of CBB, i.e. the low coffee prices, had significantly changed in the meantime. A proposal from one or more coffee producing countries to improve their national systems of CBB monitoring and control would be more appropriate. CABI might play a pivotal role in this effort.
- The following aspects should also be highlighted and/or considered in the proposal:
  - The two biggest problems that threaten coffee production are tracheomycosis and berry borer.
  - The berry borer can be controlled by applying the so called “hygienic harvest” involving the elimination of all cherries remaining on the tree or on the ground after the harvest. These cherries are the perfect breeding ground for the berry borer. If the efforts made to cope with the problem with a sizeable investment did not result in a solution, we should revert to previous practice of hygienic cleaning.
  - Tracheomycosis is a much more dangerous problem. It is migrating from West Africa to East Africa and threatens Ethiopian coffee production. A tracheomycosis project was approved and a lot of money spent but the results are disappointing. It is suggested that plants affected by tracheomycosis should be eradicated and burnt immediately. Unfortunately, diseased plants continue to produce some cherries for two to three years and farmers are very reluctant to destroy even such a small source of income. The result is that a

diseased plant produces an increasingly smaller crop and an increasingly bigger amount of spores that contaminate other plants and spread the contamination. There are two ways of approaching the problem:

- i) in the short term, we should invite the Governments of the affected countries to send technicians to assist with the eradication and burning of diseased plants and to give a small indemnity to the farmers to compensate them for their loss.
- ii) in the medium to long term, we should try to see whether in Ethiopia, which is the birthplace of Arabica coffee, or in other countries, we can find some plants that are resistant and, if this is the case, identify the gene that causes the resistance. Similar work has been done by the Coffee Rust Research Centre of Oeiras where the two genes responsible for the resistance to coffee rust have been identified. Unfortunately, these genes are present only in canephora and the hybridization increases resistance but lowers the organoleptic characters.

<b>Overall recommendation:</b>	<i>The proposal submitted by CABI should be revised</i>
<b>Screening by technical area</b>	<b>Scoring:</b>
Coffee sector priorities	Insufficient information
Project planning	Insufficient information
Operational capacity of PEA	Insufficient information
Sustainability	Insufficient information
Budget/cost-effectiveness	Poor

**CHECKLIST USED FOR SCREENING THE FOUR NEW COFFEE PROJECT PROPOSALS**

	<b>Renovation of CATIE's international coffee collection</b>		<b>International research and development services for the durable genetic control of two destructive diseases affecting Arabica coffee</b>		<b>Revitalizing productivity, quality and trade in coffee from Africa</b>		<b>Coffee Berry Borer – the need for a review of the status and knowledge of a serious coffee pest</b>	
<b>Screening related dates:</b>	EB meeting: <b>Sept. 2007</b>		EB meeting: <b>Sept. 2007</b>		EB meeting: <b>Sept. 2007</b>		EB meeting: <b>Sept. 2007</b>	
	1 <sup>st</sup> VSC Screening: <b>August 2007</b>		1 <sup>st</sup> VSC Screening: <b>August 2007</b>		1 <sup>st</sup> VSC Screening: <b>August 2007</b>		1 <sup>st</sup> VSC Screening: <b>August 2007</b>	
<b>Part A: Screening of the proposal against coffee sector priorities</b>	Score		Score		Score		Score	
	<b>(0 - 6)*</b>	<b>Not relevant</b>	<b>(0 - 6)*</b>	<b>Not relevant</b>	<b>(0 - 6)*</b>	<b>Not relevant</b>	<b>(0 - 6)*</b>	<b>Not relevant</b>
How relevant to the “Development strategy for coffee” outlined in document EB-3768/01 Rev. 3 is the proposal?	5		5		4.5		3.66	
How relevant is the proposal to the needs and constraints of the country/countries (as outlined in relevant strategy documents such as national development plans, poverty reduction strategies, rural development strategies or coffee sector development plans)?	4.75		5		4.75		4.33	
How relevant is the proposal for developing new technology and strengthening capacity to be transferred to other producing countries?	4.75		5.66		4		4.33	
Overall assessment of the quality of the proposal	4.75		4.66		4		3	



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			Score		Score		Score	
<b>Part B: Review of the project proposal prior to its submission to the CFC</b>	<b>(0 - 6)*</b>	<b>Not relevant</b>	<b>(0 - 6)*</b>	<b>Not relevant</b>	<b>(0 - 6)*</b>	<b>Not relevant</b>	<b>(0 - 6)*</b>	<b>Not relevant</b>
<b>1. Project planning:</b>								
How relevant are the objectives of the proposal to the CFC priorities?	4.85		5		4.33		3.66	
How clearly defined and strategically chosen are those involved (final beneficiaries, target groups)?	4.75		4.66		4		4	
How realistic are the expected outcomes?	4.66		4.33		3.66		3.33	
Does the proposal contain objectively verifiable indicators for the outcomes?	4.75		4.66		3.66		2	
Are the activities proposed appropriate, practical and consistent with the objectives and expected outcomes?	4.75		4.66		4		3.33	
Is the action plan clear and feasible?	5.12		4.5		4		3.33	
Is the level of involvement by the partners in planning and implementation satisfactory?	4.25		4.33		3.66		3.33	
How coherent is the overall design of the proposed activity? (in particular, does it reflect the analysis of the problems involved, take into account external factors and anticipate an evaluation?)	4.75		4.33		4		3	

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<b>2. Operational capacity of the Project Executing Agency (PEA):</b>				
Do the applicant and partners have sufficient experience of project management?	5	4.33	5	3
Do the applicant and partners have sufficient technical expertise?	5.25	4.66	4.66	3
Do the applicant and partners have sufficient management capacity?	5	4.33	4.66	3
Is the PEA proposed qualified/eligible to carry out technical administration of the project?	4.75	3	4.66	3
<b>3. Sustainability:</b>				
Is the project likely to have a tangible impact on its target group and the final beneficiaries?	4.75	4.66	3.66	3.33
Is the project likely to have a multiplier effect? (including scope for replication, extension of outcomes and dissemination of the information)	4	4.66	3.66	4
Are the expected results of the project sustainable? (financially, institutionally and at policy level)	4.12	4	3.66	3
Have gender aspects been adequately addressed?	1.75	2	2.33	2.33
<b>4. Budget and cost-effectiveness:</b>				
Is the ratio between estimated costs and expected results satisfactory?	4.25	4	4	1.66
Is the proposed expenditure necessary for the implementation of the project?	4.25	4.33	4	3.33
If co-financing is needed, is a co-financing source indicated?	3	4.5	4.5	1.5

\* Score: 0 = missing information, 1 = very poor, 2 = poor, 3 = insufficient information, 4 = adequate, 5 = good, 6 = very good.