I. Contact Information

Name: Sylvain Mapatano
Post held: Coordinateur
Organisation: PLATE-FORME DIOBASS au Kivu
Address: 219, Av. P.E. Lumumba Ibanda/Bukavu B.P. 1914 Bukavu RD Congo Tel: +243815217572 Email: mapatano_s@yahoo.fr Website : www.diobass.com

II. Project Details

Title of Proposal	**Mobilizing Innovation Platforms for Bringing More Quality Benefits to More People in Post-Conflict Central African Great Lakes Region**
Project Duration	24 months
Countries of Implementation	Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Uganda

III. Primary CGIAR Centre partner

Name: Pascal C. Sanginga (Email: P.Sanginga@cgiar.org)	
Organisation: International Centre for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), Address: P.O. Box 6247, Kampala, Uganda	
Position held: Senior Scientist	
Phone land line : +256 41 566749 :+ 256 751 531055 Fax: +256 (41) 567635	
Email: P.Sanginga@cgiar.org	Web Address: www.ciat.cgiar.org/africa

IV. Other Partners:

1. Mutuelle d'Epargne et de Crédit du Congo	Type: Private Sector (Microfinance)
Name of partner: Cleon Mufungizi, President	Email: cmmufungizin@yahoo.fr
2. Consortium for Improving Agricultural-based Livelihood in Central Africa (CIALCA-Rwanda)	Type: Consortium
Name of partner: Speciose Kantengwa	Email: Skantengwa@hotmail.com
3. Fédération des Organisations Paysannes du Congo (FOPAC)	Type: Farmers Organisation
Name of partner : Paluku Mivimbi	Email: fopacrdc@yahoo.com
4. Institut National d'Etudes et Recherches Agronomiques (INERA-Mulungu),	Type: National Agricultural Research Institute (NARI
Name of partner: Lunze Lubanga	Email: llunze@yahoo.fr
5. CARITAS International	International NGO
Name of partner: Serge Kalira	Email: caritasbukavu@yahoo.fr
6. Province du Sud Kivu (Local Government)	Local Government
Name of partner: Provincial Minister for Agriculture	Email: asumani2002@yahoo.fr

V. PROJECT QUESTIONS

1. PROBLEM DEFINITION

The Central African Great Lakes region, comprising of Rwanda, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo is densely populated with people living in extreme poverty on a rich natural resource base—volcanic soils, significant biodiversity, high rainfall and ample water. The basic agricultural technologies have essentially remained unchanged since colonial times, and in many cases yields of food crops have considerably declined, while population continues to grow at high rates. The low yields of food crops and livestock within this region are largely the result of the reduced yield potential of unimproved landraces confounded by diminishing soil fertility and uncontrolled pests and diseases. This region is also easily described as "emerging from conflicts". After the 1994 genocide in Rwanda which claimed over 800,000 people; the humanitarian crisis in the Democratic Republic of Congo has been described as one of the worst in the world. It has been estimated that up to 3.6 million civilians have died in eastern Congo since the war began, many of them as a result of malnutrition and preventable diseases. In Burundi, more than two million people are internally displaced, living on food aid. Such conflicts have had significant negative impacts on agricultural research and development capacity in the region, to the extent that the region is commonly described as "weak national agricultural systems (NARS)" (ASARECA, 2005).

These NARS have lost much of their prominence due to decades of neglect, deteriorating research infrastructure, limited research capacity, political turmoil, wars and civil strife. The lack of coordinated service provision, up-to-date technical information, and appropriate skills for innovation have hampered research and extension staff to deliver the right services and improved technologies to farmers in Central Africa.

With the ending of conflicts in Rwanda, the recent successful democratic elections, and prospects for peace and stability in DR Congo and Burundi, it is imperative that farmers are helped to rebuild more resilient agricultural systems, enhance and diversify agricultural production and broaden their livelihood opportunities through the adoption of improved agricultural technologies. Most civil society organisations (CSOs) are now moving away from relief and humanitarian interventions towards more sustainable agricultural development activities. However, their existing food security interventions are often inappropriate because they lack access to appropriate technologies, tools and approaches for sustainable agricultural development. At the same time, some CGIAR centres in sub-Saharan Africa (CIAT, IITA, CIP, ICRAF, ILRI, etc.) have made considerable successes with a number of improved technologies. These include bio-fortified varieties of beans, sweet potatoes; improved cassava varieties resistant to mosaic diseases and other viruses, potatoes varieties and management practices for controlling bacterial wilt and late blight, improved highland banana varieties, and a range of integrated soil fertility management options. However, many of these proven technologies are simply not yet available in the Great Lakes region, or where available, they are only achieving limited impacts on very small numbers of experimenting farmers in pilot areas. Individual CGIAR centres are now having small, localised projects in DR Congo, Rwanda and Burundi or supporting small grant projects, with no or very little involvement of civil society organisations and other local stakeholders. Their activities remain largely uncoordinated, and opportunities for greater synergies are often missed. Current experiences with the CG tend to be top-down and lack an effective process of stakeholder and community learning and empowerment.

The innovation system approach calls for changes in the way agricultural research is being conducted (Hall et al., 2001; Sayer & Campbell, 2001). Within this framework, there is a wide recognition for the need of more pluralistic arrangements for conducting research with a greater role for civil society, including farmers and other non research organizations, rather than just acting as conduits of technology. Stakeholder participation and ownership form key cornerstones of this new paradigm of agricultural research *for* development that aim to improve the relevance, efficiency, equity, ownership, sustainability and impacts of agricultural and natural resources management technologies and innovations. This project aims at building such multi-stakeholder platforms, the "Innovation Platform[1]", for bringing quality benefits to more people in the Great Lakes region, an area still recovering from a decade of conflicts. The central focus of this project will therefore be to create, manage, monitor and promote "innovation platforms" in designing and implementing collaborative action research in order to increase the delivery of benefits to end users, male and female small scale farmers and rural entrepreneurs in the region. The Innovation platform should give rise to a more cohesive and integrated way of working together that generates and accelerates greater impacts of both CG technologies and CSO approaches of mobilizing and working with rural communities, thus reducing vulnerability of the poor and rebuilding their agricultural-based livelihood systems.

2. OBJECTIVES

The goal of the project is to improve food security, income, and nutrition of rural populations while conserving the natural resource base in the post conflict African Great Lakes region. The purpose is to validate and promote the potential of Innovation Platform as a more coordinated and cohesive approach to improve delivery and impact of agricultural research, and assist in the recovery and rehabilitation of agricultural systems in post-conflict contexts.

The specific objectives are:

1. To build strategic partnerships between research and development organisations, farmers organizations, public and private sectors, and strengthen their capacities for achieving impacts at scale.
2. To validate and promote strategies that build community and local stakeholders capacities to better articulate their demands of, participate and benefit from agricultural research and development services and innovations.
3. To identify and promote market institutional and technological innovations for increasing competitiveness of small-scale farming and promote participation of the rural poor in more efficient markets.
4. To support community adaptive research and promote wide dissemination of productivity enhancing technologies that respond to stakeholders demand and market opportunities of selected value chains.
5. To promote institutional arrangements and policy options for scaling up "islands of success" and for bringing more quality benefits to more farmers, quickly and over a wider geographic area.

[1] The Innovation platform is embedded in the concept of integrated agricultural research for development (IAR4D) as advocated by the sub-Saharan Africa Challenge Program (SSA-CP), led by the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA).

3. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

This project will be implemented in the Sud-Kivu province of the DR Congo, bordering Rwanda and Burundi. The project seeks to build on and expand the Consortium for Improving Agriculture-based Livelihoods in Central Africa (CIALCA). CIALCA (www.cialca.org) is a recently created consortium that brings together three CGIAR centres (CIAT, IITA and IPGRI) and their national research and development partners in DR Congo, Rwanda and Burundi to develop and promote improved technologies (legumes, banana, cassava and NRM). However, CIALCA's efforts are still in their infancy and have not benefited farmers beyond those participating in experiments. There is real risk that CIALCA, like most CG projects, will remain "islands of success", often localized and small scale, if new institutional arrangements, such as the Innovation Platform are not put in place. An Innovation Platform is a flexible alliance framework that brings together the diversity of stakeholders from both the supply and demand sides of value chains; and provides a forum for articulating stakeholders' (including farmers' organisations) demands for research and development interventions, and matching such demands with effective and adequate supply of technologies and innovations.

The key features of out implementation plan include:

i. **Stakeholder engagement:** A multi-stakeholder analysis and learning process will be used to identify and involve a range of stakeholders in the resource-to-consumption and policy continuum to build the Innovation Platform. The Innovation Platform will provide a mechanism for the joint identification of a compelling agricultural problem, panning and joint implementation on the ground building on existing success and experiences of multi-stakeholder collaboration.

ii. **Adaptive learning:** Rather than using a design perspective, the project will promote a more dynamic process will help to identify a range of options for interventions, strategies, policies and institutional development , and develop a set of tools (diagnostic approaches, methodologies, practical guidelines, etc) for understanding the range of different needs in different contexts. A participatory monitoring and evaluation system will be developed to ensure constructive feedback and provide the opportunity to evaluate what works, how and why, but also to induce a process of collective learning and sharing empirical examples and experiences with partnerships, and to examine the critical factors that may have contributed to successes or difficulties in partnerships.

iii. **Capacity strengthening** of the 'demand side" to better organize themselves to articulate their demand and access technologies, markets and services from R&D service providers. The focus will be on strengthening existing farmers' organisations to network and form producers and marketing networks, and then building their capacities to identify, access and profit form market opportunities. This project will also build capacity of CSOs in innovative tools and approaches for accelerating the delivery and impacts of integrated agricultural research for development solutions and technologies.

iv. **Technology push (Seed as entry point).** Given the rather short time frame of the project, it would make sense to start with technologies with relatively short term benefits that have considerable potential for widespread dissemination. The project will facilitate participatory evaluation, testing and dissemination of bio-fortified varieties of beans, sweet potatoes, soybeans, quality protein maize, and resistant cassava varieties. These will serve as entry point to the testing and promotion of more integrated technologies (NRM, water use, processing and value addition) while providing opportunities for CGIAR scientists to identify new constraints that warrant strategic research.

v. **Market orientation.** Until recently, most R&D interventions have largely focused on increasing productivity, but have largely neglected linking farmers to markets. Growing evidence and experience indicates that sustaining success in productivity growth will not lead to economic growth and wealth creation without expansion of market opportunities. Enhancing the ability of smallholder farmers to access market opportunities, and diversify their links with markets is one of the most pressing development challenges in the Great Lakes region. The project will adopt a dual strategy for increasing market participation of smallholder farmers: expanding market access and competitiveness of existing crops (beans, banana, cassava, etc.) and identifying opportunities for diversification into higher value agricultural products. Access to markets will provide incentives for the adoption of improved varieties.

vi. **Wider impact strategy** The Innovation Platform will focus on developing a plausible impact pathway and a coherent strategy for scaling up and reaching more people from the start by including a broad range of organizations and people who have potential to accelerate delivery of technologies to more people over a wider geographic area. This would include, among others: (i) engaging with policy-makers and government institutions; (ii) identifying strategic entry points and value chains that will serve as the "sparks"; (iii) developing and promoting innovative tools and methodologies for going to scale, (iv) developing a proactive communication and knowledge management and sharing strategy; (v) leveraging and mobilizing additional resources and other sustainable funding mechanisms; (vi) developing an impact pathway and building in a participatory monitoring and evaluation systems for institutional learning and change.

To implement these strategies, a range of participatory techniques and mechanisms for building strategic multi-stakeholder partnerships ensuring effective participation, ownership, constructive feedback, reflective analysis and building trust and capacities will be utilised.

4. INNOVATION

While building on and strengthening CIALCA, this project proposes to experiment with a different institutional arrangement where the CGIAR centres are partnering with CSOs, on a coherent agenda driven by stakeholders' demands and opportunities. To add value to, and enhance impacts of CIALCA at scale, this project proposes innovations in five key areas:

1) **Innovation Platforms Vs Consortium**: Current experiences with CG-CSO consortia tend to be top-down and lack an effective process of stakeholder and community learning and empowerment. The decisions on what technologies to test and promote are often prescribed by the CG, with limited involvement of local stakeholders. This project intends to bring together stakeholders along the resources-to-consumption and policy continuum, with complementary skills and expertise, on the principles of mutual learning, resources sharing and knowledge management that facilitate institutional change. The "Innovation Platform" is a collective learning and capacity building process with evolving roles and responsibilities of multiple stakeholders that facilitates the sharing and spread of agricultural knowledge and technologies. It also provides a platform where local innovations and knowledge interact with scientific knowledge to achieve greater synergies.
2) **Value chains Vs Commodity:** Current CIALCA's focus is on testing and resolving constraints in the production of banana, beans and soybeans. This project will identify market opportunities for these crops and new options, and develop integrated strategies for competitive production and marketing of selected value chains. The project will identify and develop at least three value chains that have better market opportunities and develop them into community-based integrated agroenterprise projects.
3) **Institutional Innovations Vs Technology push.** While building on CIALCA's current focus on technology development and adaptive research, this project will promote innovative institutional arrangements that facilitate multi-stakeholder partnerships to prepare the ground for accelerating the adoption and impacts of CG technologies, and rebuild agricultural systems and livelihoods of the poor emerging from conflicts.
4) **Producer Associations Vs Farmer Group.** Whereas current CIALCA interventions focus on working with a number of relatively small farmers research groups, this proposed project will focus on bridging and networking second-level producers associations to undertake larger scale issues in collective marketing, watershed management, policy advocacy and linking with service providers and local government.
5) **Impacts at scale Vs farm-level impacts**: CIALCA's current focus is on farm and household level impacts, with no clear framework for scaling up at landscape level as well as beyond pilot sites. The project will integrate scaling up and communication strategies from the onset, rather than a post project activity as is the case in CIALCA. Some of the tools used will include knowledge and technology fairs, field days, and other knowledge for development tools that will involve and benefit more people from different areas.

5. RELEVANCE AND INNOVATIVENESS OF PARTNERSHIPS

The main innovation of this project would be building innovation platforms that engage multiple stakeholders, (farmers' organisations and producers associations, development and research organisations, market chain actors, policy makers-) in processes of co-innovation and creating impacts at scale. The Innovation Platform will promote synergy among CG centres who have expertise in breeding and developing improved varieties and other technology innovations; CSOs with expertise in mobilizing rural institutions for sustainable development; the private sector for expanding market participation of smallholder farmers, and government and policy actors for supporting and providing incentives for the adoption and marketing of agricultural technologies. The project will strengthen the capacities of CSOs (with emphasis on farmers organisations) to better articulate their demand, and the capacities of CG centres to match demand and supply of agricultural innovations in order to achieve impacts at scale.

6. EXPECTED RESULTS

The main result of this project is to accelerate adoption and impacts of agricultural technologies, directly benefiting at least 43,000 households[2] (250,000 people). The project will promote at least three value chains that can increase their income by at least 30% above US$1/day. Some technologies (seed varieties, micro-finance) and value chains will reach a much larger number of farmers with quick spill over beyond the initial areas. Proactive strategies will be used to specifically target and reach women and the youth (for example through groups and associations) and equip them with skills, knowledge and technologies to improve their productivity and returns to labour, land and capital. There is evidence that increasing incomes under women's control will improve household food security and nutrition, as well as investments in children's education health, and household welfare. Increasing income levels will also help households to cope with the effects of HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases. In the long run the project will contribute to the Millennium Development Goals of food security, nutrition and reduced child mortality, HIV and AIDS by increasing food security, nutrition and

[2] These estimates are based on DIOBASS targets of 43,620 households for its Agricultural programme in Sud-Kivu, and a total of 148,764 households over a three-year programme.

income. The CSOs, and particularly local stakeholders will acquire skills and tools that will improve their capacities to deliver services and improved technologies in a more sustainable manner. CG centres will expand their partnerships with CSOs for testing and validating their technologies and deliver impacts of their research at scale. In the long-run, the adoption of productivity enhancing technologies and sustainable NRM practices will improve recovery and resilience of agricultural and livelihood systems of the rural poor.

7. REPLICABILITY

This two-year project is seen as a pilot phase where we will implement small scale initiatives and experiences that will help us identify the « sparks » (technologies, value chains, processes and methods), and develop a coherent strategy for managing the scaling up process. It is expected that both the participating CGs and CSOs will use the lessons learned, adapt and replicate Innovation Platform in other areas. Each of the partners in the Innovation Platform will be requested to have at least two related "satellite" sites where immediate spill-overs will occur within the second year of the project. Because of its multi-stakeholder nature, the Innovation Platform will involve more stakeholder groups "higher up the ladder" (local governments, CSOs policymakers, regional networks) for increasing the immediate spread of benefits across geographic boundaries as well as organizational and institutional hierarchies. The initial target areas and partners for replication will include CIALCA's existing sites in their ten mandate sites in DR Congo, Burundi and Rwanda. The Innovation Platform will also focus on developing linkages with national and regional programmes such as ASARECA (www.aseraca.org) and FARA (www.fara-africa.org) that have similar goals to leverage resources, and develop strategic alliances at the early stage of project implementation. ASARECA) has 17 networks operating in 10 countries in Eastern and Central Africa, and involve a multitude of partners.

8. SUSTAINABILITY

The project will develop an exist strategy which will gradually ensure the devolution of R&D responsibilities to local government, state institutions and local CSOs. Empowerment of local stakeholders, especially farmers' organisations and rural entrepreneurs is vital for sustainability. All partners will acquire both technical and managerial skills which will enable them to sustain the activities after the project ends. Project results and best practices will be mainstreamed in the partners' development programmes and up scaled through the partner funds. Engaging the private sector from the start, and identifying more efficient markets will provide incentives for farmers to adopt and invest in improved technologies to meet market demands. Another sustainability measures will involve a revolving fund scheme provided through the micro-finance institutions and internal lending and saving mechanisms which will be multiplied and used to reach out to many more farmers even after the end of the project.

VI. Proposed Budget

Item	**Proposed budget (in US$)**
Personnel	60000
Research supplies and services	100000
Equipment	35000
Training and other knowledge-sharing activities	40000
Travel	15000
Communication and publication	30000
General Administrative Expenses (6%)	18600
TOTAL Project Cost	**298600**
Co-Financing and Funding (no less than 30% of total project cost)	98580
GRANT Funding Request **(no more than 70% of total project cost)**	**200080**
Details of co-financing and funding sources Plate-forme Diobass and NGO partners CIALCA Cabinet du Gouverneur du Sud-Kivu (Local Government)	 30000 58580 10000