West Africa Centre for Crop Improvement
External Review Report

Executive Summary
Commissioned to provide advice on an effective and efficient path forward for WACCI to achieve its vision and mission on a sustainable basis in the decade ahead (2018-2028) in light of its recent transition from a time-bound donor-sponsored project to an African Centre of Excellence, a Panel of five experts in various areas pertinent to the in-depth evaluation of WACCI have offered a number of recommendations for improvement and strengthening of the program. These relate to the PhD degree program in Plant Breeding, three proposed MPhil degree programmes which would create an educational pathway from BS to PhD at the University of Ghana, the Governance and Management structure, and the landscape of potential partnerships to sustain WACCI’s viability and advance its goals.

Primary recommendations include the following:

- **Eliminate duplicity in courses introduced through the MPhil programs, harnessing the opportunity to develop higher level (advanced) courses in statistics, genetics, data management/bioinformatics, and aspects of plant breeding**

- **Harmonize the WACCI teaching programmes with those in the Department of Crop Science to avoid duplication**

- **Establish WACCI as a centre for research as well as a centre for plant breeding education, which would enhance stature and attract new partnerships**

- **Expand educational capacity to serve continuing education needs as well as graduate education needs**

- **Further develop a succession plan for top leadership of the Centre and promote active mentorship of individual candidates for the role(s)**

- **Integrate WACCI staff into the University system (appointments and designations) to enhance potential for career progression**

- **Harmonize the Centre’s financial operations fully and completely with that of the University without compromising donor requirements**

- **Initiate a two-track process to become financially sustainable, obtaining Government support from the national annual budget to cover core costs and forging various partnerships to obtain funding for student support, research, and other needs.**

The Panel assessed that, following the proposed recommendations, WACCI would be well-positioned to join the ranks of top-tier institutes educating the next generation of plant breeding professionals globally. Given WACCI’s evolution, strategic plans for further expansion, and record of success to date, we view WACCI as an institution poised to have a tremendous impact on food security for Africa in the decade ahead and beyond by providing Africans with vital education in Africa to meet regional and global needs.

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