**Oxford Centre for Agriculture and Rural Transformation (OxCART)**

**Background**
OxCART is a proposed research centre developed under the Oxford University Department of International Development. The proposal would build on research already conducted by Oxford University and the LSE and funded by UK Govt as part of work to promote sustainable growth in developing countries by providing demand-led policy advice.

World Coffee Research sees this potential work programme as being an opportunity to question the strategic allocation of investment (public *vs* private) in agricultural R&D to support coffee production as a driver to securing long term supply.
In particular, does the current economic situation and the potential for it to continue in many important producing countries mean producers and/or the coffee labour supply, pull away from coffee – leaving a more consolidated number of producing countries.

**Research Questions**
At this early stage the lead researcher has put together a proposed approach which would seek to answer a number of questions, including:

- Identify those farmers who find it attractive to grow cash crops and understand what drives adoption and abandonment of these crops;
- As economic opportunities expand for women, how does this alter their participation on cash crop production;
- As young people leave agriculture where will the labour come from for the production of labour-intensive cash crops in smallholder systems;
- Will consumer preferences for high quality be sufficient to support separate production and marketing of high-grade commodities;
- Can scientific research alter the incentives for smallholders in ways that will support increased production.

**WCR Position**
A view that this proposal gets at the heart of the issue we face in coffee for the long term - the innovation agenda to ensure stability of a diverse supply of quality. Looking forward:

1) agricultural R&D investment must be intensified to improve productivity and profitability for coffee farmers - yet those countries that need to intensify investment are under-investing (our chronic situation in agriculture broadly, unfortunately)

2) where that investment needs to happen is in low and lower middle income countries with many competing priorities. We need to understand better where there is efficiency in public investment (FCDO/USAID and other development donors alongside national governments using revenue from export levies) vs the private sector.

If there is an origin where it is simply more efficient for public funds to invest in agricultural research and innovation for the cut flower industry or dairy production - then they will pull investment away from coffee. If we really value that origin for coffee - then we need to spend our private capital in those origins and make a compelling case for our G-7 governments to foot the bill where it is a better investment for development donors based on their strategic goals.

This proposal would be led by a brilliant economist, Prof Doug Gollin, who has a very pragmatic approach to these questions. For this reason, FDCO has engaged him to lead a broader program that informs their investment decisions. We in coffee would benefit tremendously from his assessment of these issues - and would be a very important analysis of interest at the ICO and many other places.

**Questions for BCA**

Do we recognise the potential scenario set out and the value that an investigation into these issues would deliver?

If yes, do we believe BCA should indicate its support to the outline proposal and encourage further work to refine it?

Should BCA seek to be part of a coalition to push for the proposal to be accepted and funding be sought (from, as yet, undefined sources). An estimation has been given for $5 million over 5 years.