

TERMS OF REFERENCE

for the Evaluation of the
CGIAR Global Rice Science Partnership (GRiSP)



Independent
Evaluation
Arrangement

October 2014

1. Background

1.1. Rationale and context

Research in CGIAR is guided by the Strategy and Results Framework (SRF), which sets forth the System's common goals in terms of development impact (System-Level Outcomes [SLOs])¹, strategic objectives and results—in terms of both outputs and outcomes. The SRF was approved in 2011, and is being revised with an update due in the first half of 2015. The CGIAR's research agenda is implemented by the CGIAR Centers and their partners through multi-partner CGIAR Research Programs (CRPs), of which there are currently 16². Each CRP is funded both through a pooled funding mechanism in the Fund³ and through bilateral funding directly to the Centers. A set of common Intermediate Development Outcomes (IDOs) links CRP-level targets to CGIAR-level goals for impact (the SLOs), framing the operational results framework of each CRP within the System as a whole.

In CGIAR, the Independent Evaluation Arrangement (IEA) is responsible for System-level external evaluations. IEA's principal mandate is to lead the implementation of the CGIAR Policy for Independent External Evaluations⁴ through the conduct of strategic evaluations of CRPs and of other institutional elements of CGIAR. IEA is also charged with developing a coordinated, harmonized and cost-effective evaluation system in CGIAR. IEA's first four-year Rolling Evaluation Work Plan 2014-17, approved in November 2013 by the Fund Council, foresaw the evaluation of 10 CRPs between 2013 and 2015.

The Global Rice Science Partnership (GRiSP), led by the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), was the first CRP approved (in 2010) and is one of the ten CRPs that IEA is evaluating. GRiSP encompasses nearly all research at IRRI, which had its most recent EPMP (External Program Management Review) in 2009. The CRP brings together the mandates, previously separate, of three CGIAR Centers related to rice research: IRRI, AfricaRice and CIAT.

¹ The System-Level Outcomes are: reduction of poverty; improved food security; increased nutrition and health; and more sustainable management of natural resources.

² Including a research support program focusing on funding and management of CGIAR's genebank collections.

³ The CGIAR Fund is a multi-donor, multi-year funding mechanism that provides funding to (i) CRPs through two "Windows"; Window 1 across CRPs as per Consortium decision and Window 2 to donor-specified CRP; and to (ii) donor-specified Centers through Window 3.

⁴ http://www.cgiarfund.org/sites/cgiarfund.org/files/Documents/PDF/CGIAR_evaluation_policy_jan2012.pdf

1.2. Overview

Program Objectives and Structure

GRiSP's broad objectives are to increase the production, value, and quality of rice and rice products worldwide, while ensuring a healthy rice production environment for future generations. In addition to the CGIAR centers, three non-CGIAR organizations, CIRAD, IRD and JIRCAS are involved, and GRiSP engages 900 other research and development partners worldwide.

GRiSP, which began operating in 2011, responded to the need to increase efficiency and coordination in rice research in CGIAR. It started from ongoing research activities and 80% of the portfolio comprised existing restricted grants. Hence, initially only 20% of funding went toward new priorities that were identified during the CRP development process.

To achieve its vision, GRiSP has had **three objectives** that reflect the three dimensions of GRiSP strategy—genetic enhancement, efficient natural resource use and enhanced policies:

Objective 1: Increase rice productivity and value for the poor in the context of a changing climate through accelerated demand-driven development of improved varieties and other technologies along the value chain (addressed through themes 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6).

Objective 2: Foster more sustainable rice-based production systems that use natural resources more efficiently, are adapted to climate change and are ecologically resilient, and have reduced environmental externalities (addressed through themes 3, 4, and 6).

Objective 3: Improve the efficiency and equity of the rice sector through better and more accessible information, improved agricultural development and research policies, and strengthened delivery mechanisms (addressed through themes 5 and 6).

Through 2015, the objectives are implemented through six Themes⁵:

1. Harnessing genetic diversity to chart new productivity, quality, and health horizons.
2. Accelerating the development, delivery, and adoption of improved rice varieties.
3. Ecological and sustainable management of rice-based production systems.
4. Extracting more value from rice harvests through improved quality, processing, market systems and new products.
5. Technology evaluations, targeting and policy options for enhanced Impact.
6. Supporting the growth of the global rice sector.

Within these six Themes there are 26 Product Lines for generating 94 products. Outside the FPs, GRiSP funds “New Frontier” research which is connected to GRiSP's Product Lines. This funding, through competitive calls, is for exploratory research in promising areas for long (“blue sky”) or medium term breakthroughs.

⁵ In the 2016 extension proposal, the current 6 Themes are proposed to change into **five** Flagship Projects (FPs). The original Themes 3 and 4 have been combined into a single FP 3 on crop management and value chains technology—with added emphasis on the entire production value chain.

GRiSP’s first **gender strategy** was finalized in 2010. A revised and second version was approved in 2013—incorporating dedicated gender research and gender-sensitive project areas. A specific theory of change was developed for the “engendered” impact pathways linked to the SLOs.

GRiSP has also a strategy for **capacity-building**. External capacity building involves tools and virtual extension modules; women’s self-help groups; continual extension training; scholarships for PhD and MS students; participatory leadership training; short-courses; and “mini-sabbaticals” and internships. Internally, GRiSP builds capacity through M&E impact assessment and workshops. Further “program coordination and capacity-building” (PCCB) funding goes to initializing new partnerships and public dissemination/communications.

IDO and Impact Pathways/Theory of Change

At the time of GRiSP approval, the terms and concept of Intermediate Development Outcomes did not exist yet, and GRiSP had developed an impact pathway from research to short-term, mid-term, and long-term outcomes, to intermediate and ultimate program impacts (Figure 1).

When new terminology and concepts of theories of change were introduced at CGIAR level in 2013, GRiSP re-conceptualized its impact pathways through an evolving framework of IDOs. The most up-to-date thinking is captured in the proposal for the 2016 extension period (see footnote, previous page), which contains a refined theory of change with specific risks/assumptions and associated enabling actions the program needs to undertake—for GRiSP as a whole (Figure 2), as well as for each of its Themes/FPs. In this **theory of change**, the impact pathway assumes a hierarchical order for the FPs from small to expanding scale. Assessment of assumptions and risks associated to them underpin “enabling action” for GRiSP to undertake.

Figure 1. The original GRiSP impact pathway diagram. (Source: 2010 Proposal)

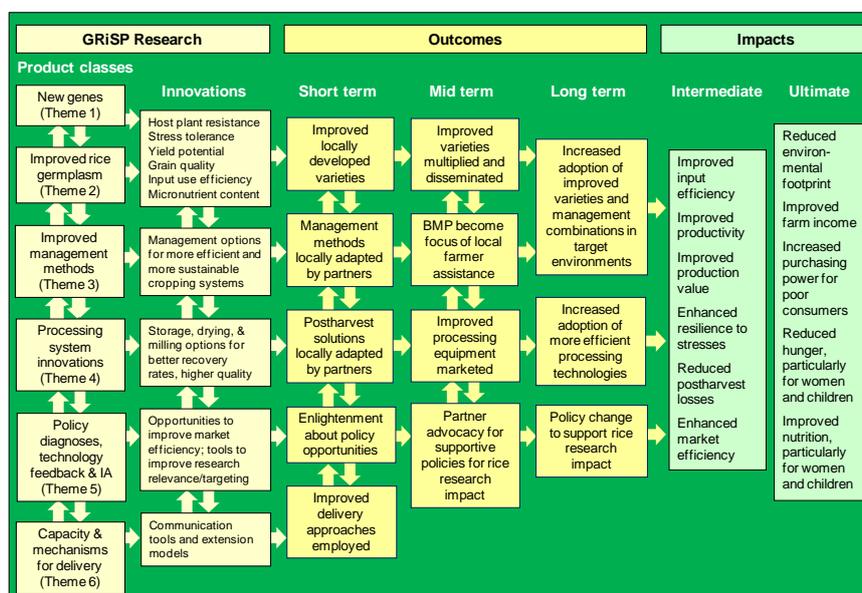
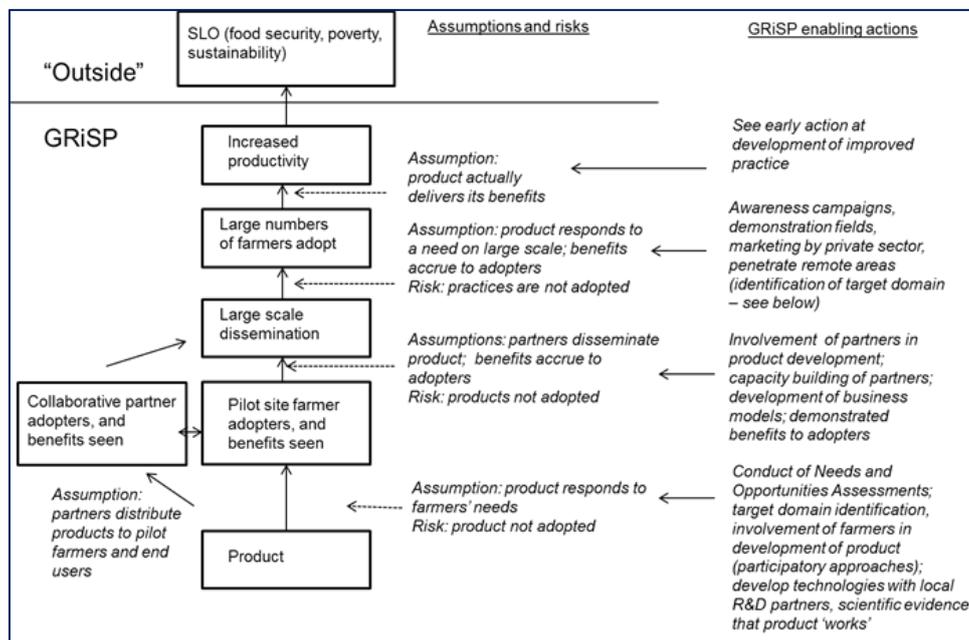
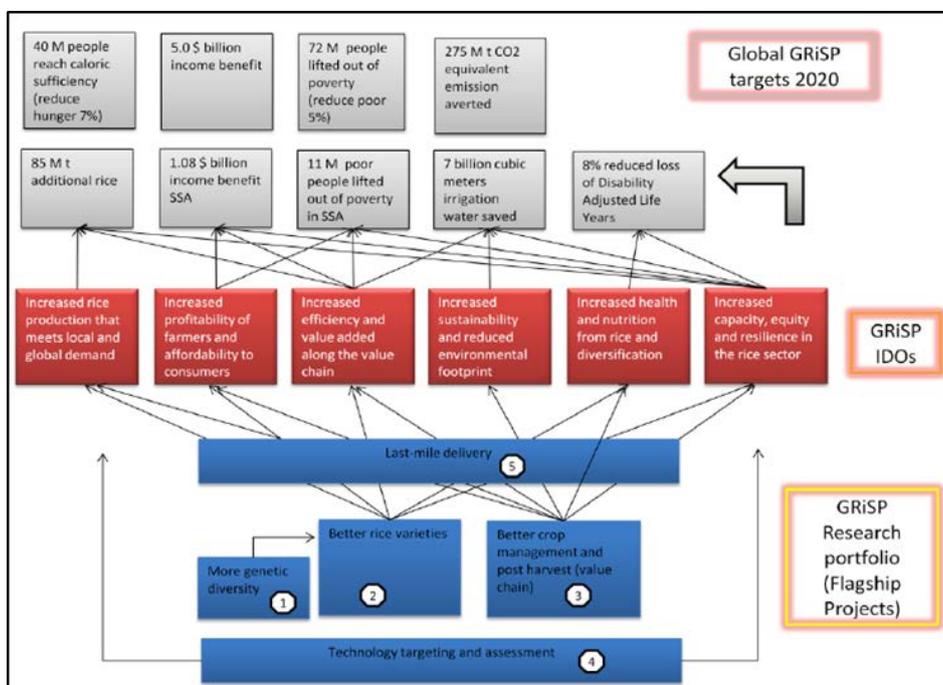


Figure 2. From the larger Theory of Change of GRiSP as a whole, an impact pathway leading to the IDO “increased productivity.” (Source: 2016 Extension Proposal)



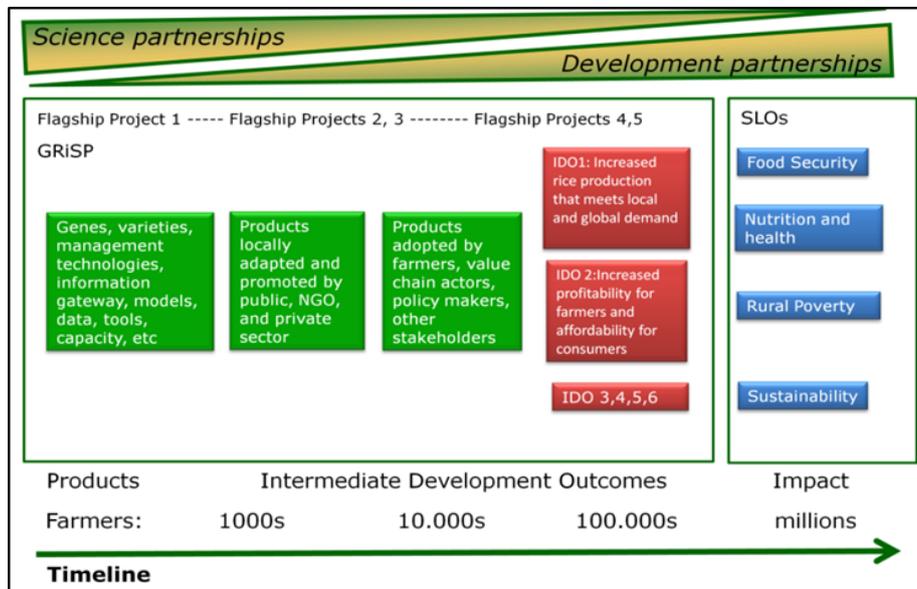
Each of the new five FPs contributes to seven IDOs with global targets for 2020 and 2015 based on ex-ante impact modeling (Figure 3).

Figure 3. The proposed GRiSP FPs and IDOs for 2016. (Source: 2016 Extension Proposal)



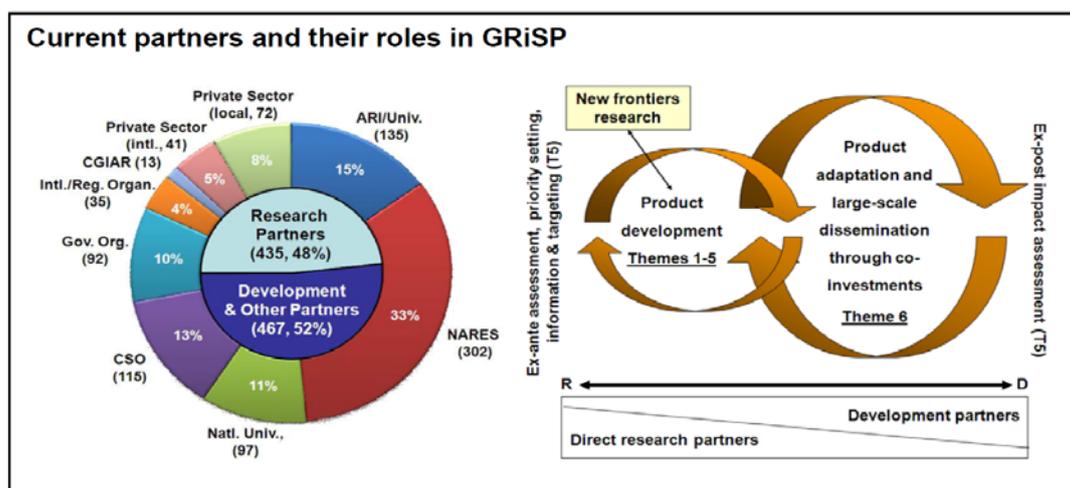
This pathway from product lines to impacts involves an evolution from upstream research to downstream development partners (illustrated in Figure 4).

Figure 4. Diagram illustrating how GRiSP’s partnership composition changes along the impact pathway. (Source: 2016 Extension Proposal)



GRiSP defines its partners as primarily research partners (48%), development partners (47%) and other boundary partners (5%). The institutional spread and roles of partners are shown in Figure 5. GRiSP also collaborates with other CRPs, such as MAIZE, WHEAT, PIM, A4NH, WLE and AAS, in specific cross-cutting projects and particular locations.

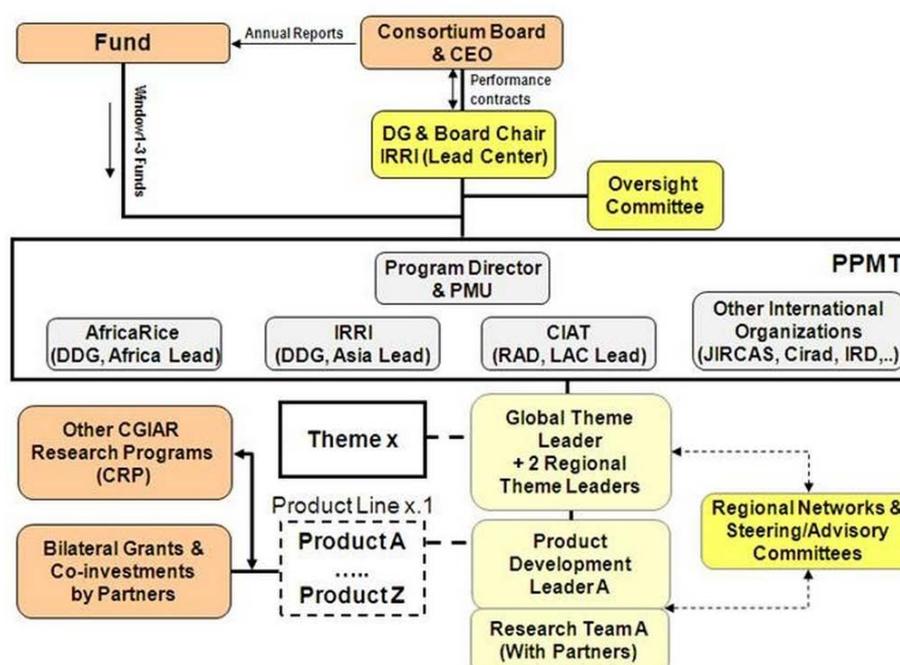
Figure 5. GRiSP partner types, next to partnership impact pathways. (Source: 2010 proposal)



Governance and Management

Program management in GRiSP is largely done through existing research management and administrative support systems of IRRI, AfricaRice and CIAT. Global leadership and coordination is provided by a Program Director (PD) and small Program Management Unit (PMU). GRiSP's management also includes the Program Planning and Management Team (PPMT), comprising the GRiSP Director as leader (PD) and senior officers from the six partners. GRiSP's Oversight Committee (OC) consists of five CGIAR board members (two from IRRI; two from AfricaRice; one from CIAT) and four representatives of international fora, as well as IRRI and AfricaRice Directors-General *ex officio*. Figure 6 illustrates GRiSP governance and management.

Figure 6. GRiSP Governance and management.⁶



Management cost for GRiSP is presented as a component of “PCCB” funding (Program Coordination and Capacity Building, see Figure 7 below). In 2013 USD 1.1 million was budgeted (only USD 0.7 million spent) for PMU staff and operations, general administrative support, and communication.

Budget and Expenditures

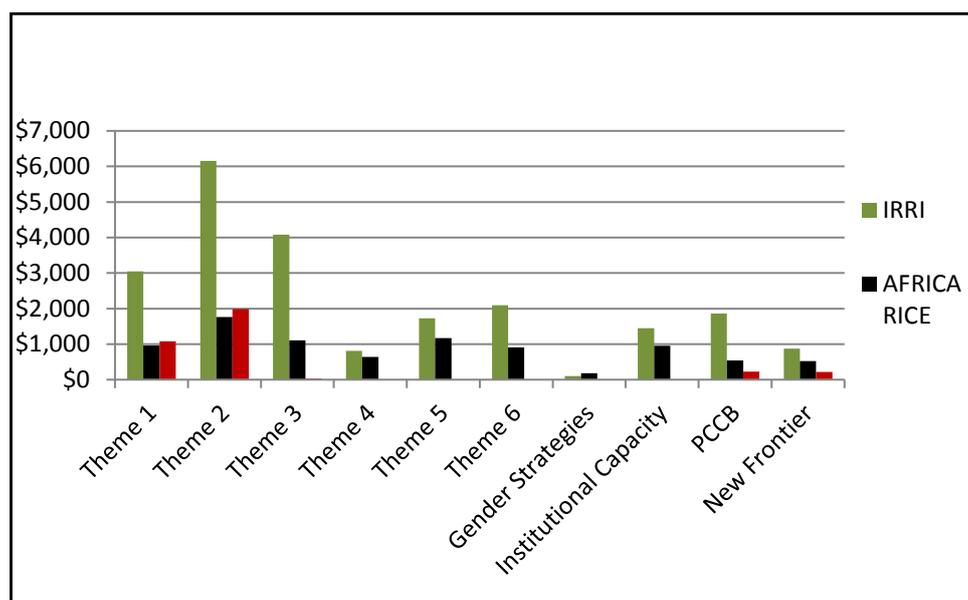
After the 2010 CRP proposal, GRiSP's budget was approved for USD 593 million over five years, 2011-2015. This makes it the largest CRP in the CGIAR System. Annual co-investments by the three strategic non-CGIAR partners were expected to exceed USD 20 million each. Additional co-investments were expected to come from other key partners. GRiSP's actual expenditure in the first three years has been USD 97, USD 99 and USD 91 million, respectively.

⁶ <http://grisp.irri.org/oversight-planning-management>

In 2013, GRiSP partner institutions accounted for 16% (about \$15 million) of the total CRP budget (about 75% to IRRI partners, the remaining mostly to AfricaRice partners).

In 2013 38% of the expenditure was from Windows 1 and 2 and 62% from Window 3 or bilateral sources. In 2013 the W1/W2 funds were distributed among three centers as follows: IRRI 64%, AfricaRice 26% and CIAT 10%, while W3/bilateral expenditure was 75%, 21% and 4%, respectively. The expenditure by thematic areas (see Footnote 4) is shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7. 2013 GRiSP Expenditure (USD '000) by thematic area.



2. Evaluation Focus

2.1. Evaluation purpose and clients

The primary purpose of this evaluation is to increase the contribution that GRiSP is likely to make toward CGIAR goals, enhancing the productivity and sustainability of rice-based farming systems, as well as the livelihoods of poor producers and consumers of rice in developing countries.

As in all CRP evaluations, the purpose of the evaluation of GRiSP is to provide essential, evaluative information for decision-making—by both CRP management and funders—on issues such as extension, expansion and structure of the program, as well as adjusting some aspects of the program.

In November 2013 the CGIAR Fund Council agreed that all current CRPs should undergo some form of evaluation before the call for the second round of CRPs and full proposal development is initiated. In that context, the evaluation of GRiSP will also provide information for decisions on program formulation and selection in the forthcoming call for second-cycle CRP funding. Taking into account

the stage of the program and given its nature and timelines for results, the evaluation aims to provide an overview and critical analysis of the relevance of the program, as well as its achievements and progress to date.

The evaluation provides both accountability and learning. It contributes to mutual accountability and responsibility among program, donors and partners. And it fosters institutional learning among the CRP and its stakeholders, for improving program relevance, efficiency, and the likelihood of sustainable results. Therefore, it will look at the extent to which GRiSP is responding within its mandate, to the vision and focus underlying the CGIAR reform—especially through a delivery orientation, clearer accountability, and synergy through efficient partnerships.

Stakeholders of this evaluation include the management of GRiSP, all participating Centers, partners associated to the Program, the CGIAR Fund Council, and the Consortium Board (Table 1). These stakeholders will be consulted and engaged throughout the evaluation through structured interviews, surveys, and site visits. A reference group will be convened to represent GRiSP management, governance, partners and stakeholders closely involved in the CRP.

Table 1: CRP evaluation stakeholders

Type of stakeholder	Role in CRP	Interest in evaluation
CRP level		
CRP management	Program management	Lessons learned to increase performance of CRP
CRP governance committee	Program oversight and strategic advice	Accountability CRP performance Lessons learned about effectiveness of Governance committees
CRP Researchers	Carry out research in line with CRP IDOs	Research performance
Center level		
Lead center management	Contribution to program management	Organizational performance Comparative advantage
Lead center board	Fiduciary responsibility Oversight of the CRP	Organizational performance Comparative advantage
Boards and management of participating centers	Oversight of CRP activities carried out by its center	Organizational performance Comparative advantage
CGIAR level		
CGIAR Fund Council	Oversight on use of funds for CRP	Accountability CRP performance Decision making for resource allocation
Donors of bilateral projects	Funding source	Accountability CRP performance Decision making for resource allocation
CGIAR Consortium	Signatory to Program	Lessons learned to

	Implementation Agreements with GRiSP lead-Center, strategic advisor and oversight body.	increase the effectiveness and relevance of the work of CGIAR; Lessons learned to increase the efficiency and accountability of CGIAR.
Partners		
Research partners	Participate in the design and conduct of CRP Research	Research Performance Collaboration mechanisms, Capacity development
Development and Boundary Partners	Targeted stakeholders for implementing change	Relevance of CRP and its research, Research Performance, Collaboration mechanisms, Capacity development
Beneficiaries; e.g. farmers and policy-makers	Targeted clientele for development oriented research	Relevance, effectiveness and impact of CRP and its research

2.2. Evaluation scope

The evaluation will cover all research activities of GRiSP, thus including activities funded by Window 1, 2 and 3 as well as bilaterally funded projects. In the new CGIAR programmatic approach, GRiSP represents a major component of CGIAR commodity research—that of rice breeding and rice systems—bringing together the long-standing rice research of IRRI, AfricaRice, and CIAT in an expanded global partnership. In the evaluation’s assessment of GRiSP’s research performance, given that some of the research is so long-standing, particular emphasis will be placed on GRiSP’s research pipeline, where results maturing to outcomes and impact can be expected.

Given that the previous CGIAR-level evaluations that covered rice research were conducted in 2008 for IRRI and in 2007 for AfricaRice and CIAT, the scope of the GRiSP evaluation is quite broad, covering both **past research** for results and impact, and current program relevance, efficiency, likely effectiveness and quality of science. The **summative** dimension of this evaluation will determine to what extent earlier results on rice and rice-systems (still relevant to GRiSP) have led to outcomes and impacts.

The evaluation is being undertaken at a time when the CRP will be completing its first funding phase (2011-15) and is adjusting its program design in accordance with guidance from the CGIAR Consortium Office. This adjustment includes restructuring the program into Flagship Projects, and within them clusters of activities, defining program theories of change as well as impact pathways for each Flagship Project (see section 1.2 above). These key components of the CRP also entail Intermediate Development Outcomes with target achievement goals for the medium-term (about a 10-year time span), according to specific agroecologies and beneficiary groups for them, with measurable indicators for progress and results. Therefore, the **formative** dimension of this evaluation will evaluate the **programmatic approach** undertaken to enhance the relevance and efficiency of GRiSP, examining the likelihood of its effectiveness to contribute to the CGIAR SRF vision, SLOs and outcomes as defined in the results framework.

The evaluation will also examine the institutional context of GRiSP and its relation to other CRPs. This includes examining the effectiveness and efficiency of the institutional structure and

management systems of the CRP and the extent to which it creates incentives among scientists and partners for high quality research oriented towards tangible outcomes.

The strategic issues and evaluation questions that address the main evaluation criteria are structured around two dimensions: Research/programmatic performance and organizational performance.

Research/programmatic performance

The GRiSP evaluation will have its focus on two time frames:

- Results from research prior to establishment of GRiSP—outputs, outcomes and impacts—emerged and now emerging from the GRiSP program pipeline (summative); and
- Progress since 2011, during which time GRiSP CRP has been set up and continues to evolve with a newly defined structure, targets and impact pathways (formative).

As part of programmatic performance, the evaluation will look at **quality of science**, both in terms of what can be expected from a leading international research program and as a prerequisite for effectiveness. It will look at factors in the program design and implementation that determine the **relevance** of GRiSP within the CGIAR strategic framework and in the context of research opportunities and beneficiary needs. It will look at the CRP's likely **effectiveness**, as characterized by the logic and analytical rigor of GRiSP's impact pathways, including the plausibility of linkages between outputs and outcomes (first to the IDOs, then beyond, toward the SLOs), as well as the nature of the process to develop this theory of change. This criterion of the evaluation will also examine GRiSP's assumptions, especially those that relate to external factors crucial for the planned outcomes and impact. It will look at the validity of the assumptions underlying the program impact pathways and theory of change—and the research hypotheses related to those assumptions.

The evaluation will examine the extent to which GRiSP addresses the challenges of linking research outputs to development outcomes—and of scaling out promising results for greater **impact** and **sustainability**. It will also assess the nature and magnitude of impact from past research, with particular relevance to the current program.

The evaluation will give emphasis to three cross-cutting topics particularly as they pertain to programmatic performance: **gender**, **capacity-building** and **partnerships**. Specific evaluation questions will address these cross-cutting topics.

The evaluation will assess GRiSP's gender strategy and the adequacy of its funding and implementations, particularly in terms of integrating gender in research design and targeting (theories of change and impact pathways), strategic research on gender and gender aspects across the research portfolio.

Integration of capacity building needs assessment and funding into program design and research activities will be assessed, particularly regarding assumptions and risks in the impact pathways related to capacity; sustainability of research results and outcomes; equity among gender; and the comparative advantage of the CRP.

Regarding partnerships, the evaluation will consider both partnerships and integration of research among the implementing centers, linkages with other CRPs, and partnerships with both research and development partners as well as boundary partners upon whom the development outcomes depend. It will assess the strategic relevance and management of partnerships for efficiency and effectiveness of generating results and achieving program objectives, the evaluation will also examine the institutional relations that GRiSP has with the governing and administrative bodies of CGIAR.

Organizational performance

Evaluation of organizational performance will primarily pertain to aspects of **efficiency**, focusing on CRP design, structure and processes from a management point of view. In addition to efficiency, the evaluation will examine the independence, accountability, transparency and fairness of the CRP's **governance** and **management** arrangements and functions.

Areas of emphasis within these performance evaluation criteria include the changes and value-added brought about by the CRP structure relative to the previous center programs. Important aspects include organizational efficiency and effectiveness, including management of transaction costs; partnership management; financial management, including resource mobilization, transparency of resource allocation and alignment of different funding sources with program objectives; intellectual property management; and, importantly, organizational learning for improving likely efficiency and effectiveness.

3. Evaluation Criteria and Questions

The GRiSP evaluation will assess both programmatic and organizational performance through a set of evaluation questions that address the evaluation criteria referred to above. A tentative list of evaluation questions is given below. These will be refined, further elaborated and prioritized during the inception phase by the Evaluation Team, in consultation with relevant stakeholders. Furthermore, during the inception phase the team will identify emerging issues and overarching questions that will help focus the evaluation questions related to specific criteria.

3.1. Research/Programmatic Performance

Relevance

Coherence

- Is the GRiSP CRP strategically coherent and consistent with the main goals and System Level Outcomes presented in the CGIAR's Strategy and Results Framework?
- Are the CRP Flagship Projects strategically rational and coherent as a set?
- Is the core funding (Windows 1 and 2) used strategically in key areas of the program?

Comparative advantage

- How strategically is GRiSP positioning itself, considering both the CGIAR's mandate of delivering international public goods and obligation towards outcomes—relative to other international initiatives/research efforts, including the private sector; partner country research institutions; and development agencies?

- Is the CRP's role clearly defined relative to that of the boundary partners?

Program design

- Does the program target an appropriate set of Intermediate Development Outcomes (IDOs) and are the activities of highest priority for targeting the IDOs?
- Do the impact pathways logically link the principal clusters of activities to the IDOs and are the IDOs linked to the SLOs through plausible theories that take into account trade-offs between multiple objectives?
- Have the CRP research activities been adequately prioritized, in line with resource availability?
- Has gender analysis adequately informed program design and targeting and are gender issues incorporated in the design?

Quality of science

- Do the research design, problem-setting, and choice of approaches reflect high quality in scientific thinking, state-of-the-art knowledge and novelty in all areas of research?
- Is it evident that the program builds on the latest scientific thinking and research results?
- Are the internal processes and conditions, including research staff and leadership quality, adequate for assuring science quality?
- Are the research outputs, such as publications, of high quality?

Likely effectiveness

- Has the CRP stayed on track in terms of progress and milestones toward outputs, and along the impact pathway toward outcomes?
- Is the monitoring system used effectively for adjusting the program on basis of lessons learned?
- Have constraints to outcomes and impacts been considered in the program design, for example through assessment of the assumptions and risks in reliance on policies, actions of national institutions, capacity and partnerships? To what extent have *ex post* studies informed the assumptions?
- Is the CRP adequately addressing enabling factors for out-scaling outcomes?
- Has gender been adequately considered in CRP impact pathway analysis and implementation, understanding the differential roles of women and men along the impact pathway, generating equitable benefits for both women and men, and enhancing the overall likelihood of enhancing the livelihoods of women?
- Are capacity building activities sufficiently and appropriately incorporated into the program?
- Does GRiSP engage with appropriate partners, given their roles in implementation and achieving the objectives of the program?

Impact and sustainability

- What has been the record of the centers engaged in rice research, in terms of documenting and demonstrating outcomes and impacts from past research?
- Have there been sufficient efforts to document outcomes and impact from past research, with reasonable coverage over all research areas?

- What can be concluded from the findings of *ex post* studies, regarding the magnitude of impact in different geographical regions—and the equity of benefits?
- To what extent have benefits from past research been—or to what extent are they likely to be—sustained?

3.2. Organizational Performance

Governance and management

- Do the governance and management arrangements and functions conform to the program partnership requirements of independence, accountability, transparency, legitimacy and fairness?
- Are the GRiSP institutional arrangements, management and governance mechanisms efficient?
- Does GRiSP research management provide effective leadership, culture and ethos for advancing the program's objectives?
- To what extent have the reformed CGIAR organizational structures and processes increased (or decreased) efficiency for successful program implementation?
- Is the level of collaboration and coordination with other CRPs appropriate and efficient for reaching maximum synergies and enhancing partner capacity?
- Is GRiSP management using a monitoring and evaluation system efficiently for recording and enhancing CRP processes, progress, and achievements?

4. Evaluation approach and methodology

4.1. Approach and Methodologies

GRiSP builds on a long history and strong foundation of research related to rice and rice systems, so its programmatic approach is more mature than that of other CRPs. Therefore, the accountability-oriented, **summative** component of this evaluation will be as important as the, **formative** component. The summative component will draw on existing studies, adoption and impact assessments, records and other data for conducting meta-analysis of available evaluative information, and estimating the achievements from past research. It will also assess the adequacy of GRiSP's M&E system in documenting results. This approach will be complemented by other means, such as field observations during site visits and analysis of responses during structured interviews with program participants and stakeholders.

The forward-looking, formative component will review, among other pieces: program design and processes; progress made so far towards results; gender mainstreaming, governance and partnership aspects; and other innovative modalities of work introduced with the reform of CGIAR. Approaches will be selected that use, for instance, benchmarking with other comparable programs, lessons and good practices in research and management established elsewhere, and information from primary contacts.

The evaluation process will be attentive that in developing its findings, there is broad consultation among stakeholders for capturing a representative range of viewpoints. The evaluation team should

ensure that the findings are informed by evidence. This implies that all perceptions, hypotheses and assertions obtained in interviews will be validated through secondary filtering, and cross-checked through triangulation and comparison of alternative sources, data, methods, and theories.

4.2. Evaluation Phases

Preparatory phase

During the Preparatory Phase the IEA, in consultation with relevant stakeholder, will review key documents, carry out a preliminary mapping of the CRP activities, and define the scope and issues surrounding the evaluation.

The IEA will carry out the following tasks:

- Finalize these Terms of Reference
- Compile information on research projects under GRiSP and existing evaluation material and other key documents pertaining to GRiSP
- Set up a Reference Group (see 5.2) for the evaluation
- Select the evaluation team leader and in consultation with her/him, the evaluation team and contract all team members

Inception phase

The inception phase is the responsibility of the Evaluation Team, with support from the IEA. The evaluation's scope, focus, approaches and methods, and detailed evaluation questions will be defined during the inception phase. Actions during the inception phase include:

- Review of monitoring information pertaining to GRiSP that form basis evaluation plan as presented in the inception report, including: (i) information derived from the CRP's monitoring and evaluation system; (ii) impact assessments; and (iii) management related materials
- Development of an analytical framework for the assessment of GRiSP research
- Building on the TOR, refining the evaluation questions around evaluation criteria as they apply to programmatic and organizational performance and the cross-cutting topics. This includes identifying means of addressing the questions and developing an outline of the data collection methods and instruments. An evaluation matrix will specify the methods to be used for each criterion or evaluation question. Annex 1 presents a form for the evaluation matrix for identifying the most suitable methods for each purpose.
- Detailed specification of the evaluation timetable, which includes a plan for field visits and country missions
- Division of roles and responsibilities among the team
- List of strategic areas of importance prioritized for emphasis in the course of the inquiry phase.

These elements will be drawn together in an evaluation Inception Report which, once agreed between team and IEA, represents the contractual basis for the team's work. Subject to the agreement of the IEA Director, adjustments can be made during evaluation implementation, in the light of experience, but would be done so in a transparent fashion.

Inquiry phase (conduct of evaluation)

The evaluation's main phase will build on the outputs of the inception phase and proceed with the inquiry, by acquiring more information and data from documents and relevant stakeholders, to deepen the analysis. The methods and approaches refined from the Inception Report may include:

- Documents needed for specific evaluation questions (desk review)
- Structured interviews with a variety of stakeholders both within and outside CGIAR for qualitative hypotheses on, for instance, relevance and quality of research; likely effectiveness; and aspects of partnership management.
- Surveys that may include GRiSP researchers and partners and other stakeholders for perceptions of key aspects of program performance and satisfaction with CRP relevance, progress and achievements.
- Site visits to GRiSP research sites to observe and verify information on program activities and partner relations. Visits may be coordinated around management and research meetings, allowing engagement with a wide range of stakeholders in the countries of project sites.
- Case studies of selected research areas or projects.

Dissemination phase

See 5.4

4.3. Quality Assurance

In order to ensure technical rigor to the Evaluation, the following quality assurance mechanisms will be implemented during the evaluation exercise:

The IEA and manager of the evaluation will conduct quality control throughout the evaluation process. The IEA will work closely with the evaluation team throughout the evaluation and will ensure that the conduct of the evaluation and its approaches, methods and deliverables are in line with CGIAR Evaluation Policy and IEA Standards.

Advice throughout the evaluation process will be sought from one or two designated external evaluation experts. In addition, an expert panel consisting of external, independent experts in subject matter areas of rice research may be called to examine the quality of the Evaluation Report in terms of substance, including the technical, contextual, and financial soundness of evaluation findings and conclusions.

Evaluation findings and conclusions are to consider actual resources available to GRiSP and to state what recommendations are resource-neutral and what recommendations imply a greater or smaller budget.

4.4. Main limitations and constraints of evaluation

The large number and institutional and geographic spread of partnerships of the CRP may limit the ability of the evaluation team to collect information sufficiently representative of stakeholder groups. Therefore, there is need to select suitable methods to assess the CRP that allow representative evidence to be gathered across heterogeneous operations, stakeholder groups and target domains. The size and geographic spread of the CRP may limit the scope of the evaluation, which will need to select suitable methods to assess the CRP through, for example, representative project and site sampling. Finally, the evaluation focuses on a period when the CRP has gone and is

going through multiple changes in structure and reporting. This may pose challenges to acquiring comparable time-series information on, for example, projects and financing.

5. Organization and Timing of the Evaluation

5.1. Evaluation team qualifications

The evaluation team leader will have a suitable background to GRiSP and the CGIAR's mandates, as well as solid experience in leading evaluations of complex programs. The team leader will be supported by a team of experts who will among them have extensive and proven experience at international level, working for research or development agencies on issues, programs and policies related to crop production and farming systems in developing country contexts. They will also have demonstrated knowledge of the main global institutions involved in rice-based production systems improvement.

The team is likely to include 4-5 experts in addition to the team leader. Among its members, the team will have an excellent understanding and knowledge of the research issues and international debate on the following areas:

- crop production, such as biotechnology, germplasm conservation and enhancement
- natural resource and crop management in rice-based farming systems
- climate change and sustainability of rice systems
- factors influencing rice research strategies and impact
- consumer perspectives
- policy environments relevant to rice production systems.

In addition the team will have competence to assess:

- program governance, organization and management, including financial management
- sociological and gender issues
- capacity building issues
- institutional and policy analysis in the context of development
- research planning, methods and management
- intellectual property issues
- communication and partnership

5.2. Evaluation governance/roles and responsibilities

The Evaluation will be conducted by a team of **independent external experts**. The team leader has final responsibility for the Evaluation Report and all findings and recommendations, subject to adherence to CGIAR Evaluation Standards. The evaluation team is responsible for submitting the deliverables as outlined in more detail below.

The **IEA** will be responsible for planning, initially designing, initiating, and managing the evaluation. The IEA will also be responsible for the quality control of the evaluation process and outputs, and dissemination of the results. The IEA will take an active role in the preparatory phase of the evaluation by collecting background data and information and by carrying out preliminary analysis on the GRiSP CRP. An evaluation manager supported by an evaluation analyst will provide support to the team throughout the evaluation.

A **Reference Group** will be set-up to work with the IEA evaluation manager to ensure good communication with, learning by, and appropriate accountability to primary evaluation clients and key stakeholders, while preserving the independence of evaluators. The Reference Group, composed of CRP stakeholders, can be thought of as a 'sounding board' and it will give views and inputs at key decision stages in the evaluation design and implementation process, such as finalizing the TOR, the Inception Report and Evaluation Report.

GRiSP management plays a key role in catering for the evaluation team's needs information on the CRP throughout the evaluation process. It provides documentation and data, information on all GRiSP activities, access to staff for engagement with the evaluators, and information on partners and stakeholders. It facilitates arrangement of site visits and appointments within the lead Center and other stakeholders. GRiSP management is also responsible for giving factual feed-back on the draft evaluation report and preparing the management response to the final report. It assists in dissemination of the report and its finding and lessons and it acts on the accepted recommendations. While the evaluation is coordinated with the CRP management, IRRI as the lead Center is a key stakeholder in the evaluation. It hosts the visits to the Center and its leadership and Board are expected to make themselves available for consultations during the evaluation process.

5.3. Timeline

The CRP evaluation is scheduled to take place in about 10 months starting in late 2014.

Table 2: Proposed timeline for evaluation

Phase	Period	Main outputs	Responsibility
Preparatory Phase	Aug – Oct 2014	Final ToR Evaluation team recruited	IEA
Inception Phase	Oct 2014 – March 2015	Inception Report	Evaluation team
Inquiry phase	April – Aug 2015	Various analysis products as defined in inception report	Evaluation team
Presentation of preliminary findings	Aug 2015	Interaction with and feedback from main stakeholders	Evaluation team IEA
Reporting phase			
Preparing of Report	Sep – Oct 2015	Draft Evaluation Report, Final Evaluation Report	Evaluation team
Management Response	Oct 2015	Management Response	CRP Management
Dissemination phase	Nov 2015	Communications products	IEA Team Leader CRP Management

5.4. Deliverables and dissemination of findings

The **Inception Report** builds on the original terms of reference for the evaluation and outlines the emerging issues as well as the proposed approach to the main phase of the evaluation. It constitutes the guide for conducting the evaluation by: (i) outlining the scope of the evaluation; (ii)

clarifying the analytical frameworks which will be utilized by the evaluation; (iii) developing the methodological tools; (iv) providing a detailed evaluation matrix (see Annex); and (v) providing a detailed work plan for the Evaluation.

The **Evaluation Report**—which is the principal output of this evaluation—will describe findings, conclusions, and recommendations, based on the evidence collected in the framework of the evaluation questions defined in the Inception Report. The recommendations will be evidence-based, relevant, focused, clearly formulated and actionable. They will be prioritized and addressed to the different stakeholders responsible for their implementation. The main findings and recommendations will be summarized in an executive summary.

Presentations will be prepared by the Team Leader for disseminating the Report to targeted audiences. The exact forms of these presentations will be agreed upon during the inception phase. Adequate consultations with GRiSP stakeholders will be ensured throughout the process, with debriefings on key findings held at various stages of the evaluation. The final report will be presented to key CGIAR stakeholders. Following this, the IEA will interact with GRiSP management during preparation of the Management Response.

GRiSP Management will prepare a Management Response to the evaluation for the consideration of the Consortium Board. The management response will be specific in its response to evaluation recommendations, regarding the extent to which it accepts each recommendation and reasons for partial acceptance or non-acceptance. For those recommendations which it accepts partially or in full, management will enumerate the follow-up action(s) it intends to take, and in what timeframe. The consolidated response of GRiSP management and the Consortium Board will be a public document made available as a package together with the Evaluation Report, for the consideration of the CGIAR Fund Council.

Several events will be organized and several additional means considered in order to disseminate evaluation results. A dissemination strategy will be developed during the inception phase.

Annex 1. Guide for preparing evaluation matrix

The evaluation matrix will be prepared and adjusted following a guide shown below, for identifying the most suitable methods to address the evaluation criteria and questions (see sections 2.2, 3.1 and 3.2), including overarching questions. For triangulation of findings, several sources of evaluative evidence and information will be selected and examined and a plan will be presented in the evaluation matrix for analyzing of the information. In the model below, the cells present assessment of the suitability of method in terms of the power of the evidence the method provides, and the feasibility of collecting the evidence. The evaluation matrix is developed by corresponding each evaluation question (or set of questions) with method of collecting evidence in adequate detail and the associated analysis needed.

Evaluation criteria	Potential methods of evaluation						
	Document review ¹	Expert knowledge	Field observations	Interviews	In-depth case studies	Portfolio and matching analysis	Surveys of staff and partners
<i>Overarching evaluation questions</i>							
<i>Programmatic performance, including cross-cutting topics</i>							
Relevance							
Quality of Science							
Likely effectiveness							
Impact and sustainability							
<i>Governance and Management</i>							
Independence, accountability, legitimacy, transparency and fairness							
Efficiency and effectiveness							

¹The types of documents used as sources of evaluative information/evidence will vary by evaluative criteria and line of inquiry