

Independent Evaluation Arrangement Evaluation of CGIAR Research Program on rice (GRiSP): Management Response and Action plan

We are pleased to send herewith the Management Response to the Evaluation of the CGIAR Research Program on rice, the Global Rice Science Partnership (GRiSP). We thank the evaluation team and the Independent Evaluation Arrangement for the conscientious and professional implementation of the review. We thank the many researchers and partners who took time to provide input. We also appreciate the candid and useful feedback received from the evaluation team, which will be used to frame the RICE Proposal as successor to GRiSP.

Most of the proposed management actions in response to the evaluation recommendations will be part of the proposal for the CGIAR research program for rice agri-food systems (RAFS), which will be called RICE in the full proposal. However, it should be noted that the current estimate for W1,2 funding for RICE is projected at 14.4 M\$/year – which is less than 50% of the W1,2 budget for GRiSP in the years 2011-2014 (30-34 M\$), and much less than the approved (but unrealized) level of W1,2 for 2016 of 44 M\$. Hence, the proposed response activities will be constrained by limited W1,2 funding in RICE.

In the table below, the abbreviation FP stands for Flagship Project, CoA for cluster of activity, and the FP and CoA numbers refer to those used in the RAFS pre-proposal submitted to the Consortium and Fund Council on August 15, 2015¹:

Overview of RAFS/RICE CRP flagship projects and clusters of activities, as per pre-proposal August 15, 2015

Flagship project 1: Foresight and technology evaluation for impact

- 1.1 Foresight and prioritization
- 1.2 Spatial analysis for technology targeting
- 1.3 Inclusive development for women and youth
- 1.4 Rice policies and market integration
- 1.5 Monitoring, evaluation, and learning
- 1.6 Benefits and impact assessment

Flagship project 2: Upgrading rice value chains

- 2.1 Value chain and market research
- 2.2 Value chain services and finance
- 2.3 Postharvest and mechanization
- 2.4 Grain quality, food products, and processing
- 2.5 Nutritious and healthy rice
- 2.6 Novel rice by-products

Flagship project 3: Sustainable farming systems for improved livelihoods

- 3.1 Farming systems analysis

¹ FPs and CoAs will slightly change in the full RICE proposal with the amalgamation of FP1 and FP2, and with refinement and focus in all FPs and CoAs in relation to refined priorities and prevailing budget realities.

- 3.2 Sustainable intensification and diversification
- 3.3 Reducing GHG emissions and capturing carbon
- 3.4 Participatory delivery

Flagship project 4: Global Rice Array

- 4.1 Global Rice Array: establishing a worldwide field laboratory
- 4.2 Global phenotyping
- 4.3 Discovery of genomic associations
- 4.4 Genetics of rice plant interaction with the biotic environment
- 4.5 Big Data integration platform

Flagship project 5: Climate-smart rice varieties

- 5.1 Harnessing rice diversity
- 5.2 Precision breeding
- 5.3 C₄ rice
- 5.4 Hybrid rice
- 5.5 New rice varieties to enhance genetic gain
- 5.6 Seeds and seed systems

Flagship project 6: Accelerating impact and equity

- 6.1 Facilitating collective innovation at action sites
- 6.2 Engaging strategic partners for scaling out
- 6.3 Knowledge management
- 6.4 Capacity development

Signed:

IRRI DG and IRRI Board Chair

Evaluation Recommendation	Management Response to the Recommendation	Management Follow up			
		Actions to be taken	Who Responsible for Action	Timeframe	Is additional funding required to implement recommendation?
<p>Recommendation 1: Taking into account local institutional capacity for adaptive research, GRiSP should work with national partners to ensure that interdisciplinary research on the social, economic and natural context is used to tailor crop and resource management technologies more precisely to the needs of intended beneficiaries.</p>	<p>Accepted in full</p>	<p>In RICE, it is proposed to expand our multi-disciplinary and participatory activities with local institutions at ‘action site (hub)’ level through strengthening of our innovation platforms and learning alliances. After multi-disciplinary stakeholder analysis and yield gap analyses (FP3.1), crop and resource management technologies that are adapted to local situations will be developed (FP3.2, FP6.1), and scaled out (FP3.4, FP 6.2). Whereas more upstream research of RICE will focus on development of generic principles, tools and technologies for integrated crop and resource management (as International Public Goods), work at the action sites will tailor such options to local conditions</p>	<p>Leaders of FP3 (Sustainable farming systems for improved livelihoods) and FP6 (Accelerating impact and equity)</p>	<p>Design in 2016; implementation already in GRiSP 2016, and more fully in RICE 2017-2022</p>	<p>No. These activities will be integral part of the RICE budget</p>
<p>Recommendation 2: GRiSP management should encourage and incentivize stronger research collaboration among GRiSP centers and their partners in advanced</p>	<p>Accepted in full</p>	<p>In agricultural research, it usually takes a minimum of two years to conduct new experiments. The whole process from the analysis of data, to the development of</p>	<p>RICE management team; FP leaders</p>	<p>Continuous. Already in the last year of GRiSP, we will pay particular</p>	<p>No</p>

<p>research institutes for improving the overall quality of the scientific output through jointly authored, high quality publications</p>		<p>manuscripts, to the publication of journal articles, usually takes another 2 years. Hence, after 4-5 years of GRiSP, we expect to start seeing publications from the new multi-institutional collaborative efforts – with authors from a number of GRiSP participants.</p> <p>The RICE management will further encourage the development of high-quality multi-partner publications through continued investment in collaborative activities and by using institutional mechanisms/protocols for upholding scientific excellence in publications.</p>		<p>attention to co-analysis of results and to co-publication among centers and partners. In RICE, this will receive strong attention of CRP and FP management teams</p>	
<p>Recommendation 3: GRiSP should articulate a strategy for scaling up and scaling out beyond its immediate beneficiaries, by researching methods and business models for effective and equitable delivery, especially for management and post-harvest technologies, coupled with capacity development of relevant partners</p>	<p>Accepted in full</p>	<p>The need for improvement in strategies and frameworks for scaling out was also recognized in self-assessments of GRiSP staff. A major effort was made to design a new FP in RICE, entitled ‘Accelerating impact and equity’ (FP6), with a strong underpinning theory of change and conceptual framework. Scaling out through strategic partnerships and enhanced (institutional) capacity are specifically articulated clusters of activity. During full proposal development, the concepts and implementation mechanisms of this new FP will be further elaborated. Two new development partners have been invited to contribute</p>	<p>GRiSP PPMT, FP6 leaders</p>	<p>Design in 2016; implementation will be initiated in 2016 under GRiSP, and more fully in RICE 2017-2022</p>	<p>Yes. With limited opportunities to increase W1,2 investments, we will seek co-funding through strategic (outscaling) partnerships and through bilateral projects</p>

		their specific expertise: GIZ and ICRA.			
<p>Recommendation 4: GRiSP should deliver a single integrated rice research program in Eastern & Southern Africa, coordinated by AfricaRice and drawing on the relative strengths of <i>both</i> AfricaRice and IRRI, in order to improve efficiency and complementarities, and enhance the image of GRiSP among its stakeholders in the region</p>	Accepted in full	<p>Though tremendous progress has been made in enhancing the collaboration between AfricaRice and IRRI in Africa, we agree that collaboration can be further strengthened</p> <p>The three CGIAR Centers in GRiSP (AfricaRice, CIAT and IRRI) have in January 2016 signed a revised Framework Agreement reconfirming their respective responsibilities and the need for enhanced coordination and communication in each territory, including Eastern and Southern Africa.</p>	GRiSP PPMT; AfricaRice and IRRI management teams and boards	<p>Design in 2016; implementation will be initiated in 2016 under GRiSP, and more fully in RICE 2017-2022</p> <p>In 2016, AfricaRice and IRRI will develop a large joint 'East and Southern Africa Rice Initiative', to increase the productivity and competitiveness of locally produced rice in the East and Southern Africa (ESA) region by strengthening rice research and advisory capacity and establishing strong linkages with major development partners from public and private sectors</p>	No

				(‘scaling partners’)	
<p>Recommendation 5: AfricaRice should modernize and intensify its rice breeding program for feeding elite lines to the Africa-wide Rice Breeding Task Force, for all major rice ecosystems in Africa. GRiSP core partners, especially IRRI, should give support to the African program, developing traits and elite populations targeting African needs</p>	Accepted in full	<p>Taking advantage of the move of AfricaRice to its 700ha experimental facility in M’bé, Côte d’Ivoire, where the three major agro-environments are present, AfricaRice will install infrastructure for rapid generation advancement, for high through-put phenotyping for major target traits and basic infrastructure for forward marker assisted selection (MAS). Background selection will be outsourced to service providers. AfricaRice will continue and expand the range of markers used by introducing them through links with advanced research institutes and through literature reviews. Detailed physiological studies and QTL/gene finding activities will continue to be done in collaboration with GRiSP core partners, in particular IRRI, Cirad, IRD and JIRCAS. This will further strengthen the product-oriented approach used by AfricaRice and in the Africa-wide Rice Breeding Task Force convened by AfricaRice, ultimately leading to enhanced and accelerated uptake of recently developed and improved rice varieties by farmers in Africa.</p>	Leaders of RICE FP4 and 5	Design in 2016; implementation will be initiated in 2016 under GRiSP, and more fully in RICE 2017-2022	Yes, full implementation will require investment in phenotyping infrastructure in Mbe, Côte d’Ivoire.
<p>Recommendation 6: Opportunities, incentives and modalities should be created to increase interdisciplinary research, in order to deliver</p>	Accepted in full	<p>The need for increased interdisciplinary R&D was also recognized in self-assessments of GRiSP staff. In RICE, it is proposed</p>	Leaders of all RICE FPs, but especially FP3 and FP6	Design in 2016; implementation in RICE 2017-2022	Yes. With limited opportunities to increase W1,2 investments, we

<p>integrated solutions consistent with the IDOs on critical problems of major rice production systems especially at the hubs and sites where GRiSP works</p>		<p>to strengthen our multi-disciplinary R&D activities - with our collaborators - at better-defined 'action sites (hubs), in specific agro-ecosystem ecologies (see RAFS pre-proposal, pages 21-22). We will also collaborate with other CRPs and other centers on multidisciplinary approaches in selected countries through 'site integration'. We aim to put more emphasis on the development of cross-cutting and multidisciplinary R&D projects.</p>			<p>will seek co-funding through strategic (multi-disciplinary) partnerships, cross-CRP collaboration and site integration, and bilateral projects.</p>
<p>Recommendation 7: The rapid acceleration of rice research worldwide over the past 15 years is an opportunity for GRiSP to develop new partnerships with ARIs. GRiSP should enrich its portfolio of new frontier and discovery research projects in partnership with ARIs with the objective of exploring new concepts and tools to achieve its goals.</p>	<p>Accepted in full</p>	<p>GRiSP partners are continually exploring new partnerships in search of scientific excellence and opportunities to tap into, and exploit, new and cutting-edge scientific breakthroughs, concepts, tools, and technologies. To facilitate and further strengthen partnerships, a new partnership strategy was developed for RICE, see pp 126-131 of the RAFS pre-proposal. This strategy will be further strengthened in 2016 and will guide partner mobilization in RICE. Many strategic ARI partners are already identified and listed in the strategy and in the six FP sections of the RAFS pre-proposal. Some specific mechanisms that will be continued to foster new collaborations with ARIs are the USAID-CGIAR linkage grant scheme and the constructions of sandwich PhD projects with universities.</p>	<p>PPMT; Leaders of all RICE FPs</p>	<p>The development of new partnerships is a continuing activity, and already in 2016 under GRiSP, new partnerships are initiated.</p> <p>For RICE, we will explore again new partnerships during the design stage in 2016; implementation in RICE 2017-2022</p>	<p>Yes. With limited opportunities to increase W1,2 investments, we will seek co-funding mainly through bilateral projects.</p>

<p>Recommendation 8: In order to achieve sustainable outcomes from investments in institutional and human capacity development, GRiSP should support participating countries to develop long-term capacity building strategies and tailor GRiSP capacity building support to the priorities of those strategies.</p>	<p>Accepted in full</p>	<p>The need for increased capacity on capacity development was also recognized in self-assessments of GRiSP staff. A new capacity development strategy was developed for RICE, see pp 132 of the RAFS pre-proposal and the relevant sections in the CRP and FP narratives. The strategy builds on the overall CGIAR CapDev strategy developed by the CGIAR CapDEV community of practice, and targets institutional as well as individual capacity development within participating countries. Whereas CapDev is implemented in all FPs of RICE, the further development of the underpinning strategy and guidance for implementation is concentrated in a new specific cluster of activities in FP6.4. ICRA will be involved as a new partner in RICE and will strengthen our expertise on long-term capacity development.</p>	<p>PPMT; Leader of FP 6.4; Leaders of all RICE FPs</p>	<p>A comprehensive and new capacity development strategy will be designed in 2016, with two new major partners in RICE: ICRA and GIZ; Full implementation in RICE 2017-2022</p>	<p>Yes. Strategic W1,2 investments will be fully costed in FP64 of RICE (to be elaborated in full proposal). However, with limited opportunities to increase W1,2 investments, we will seek additional funding through bilateral grants</p>
<p>Recommendation 9: GRiSP should do more in-depth analysis to understand opportunities and constraints of women in rice farming and value chains in order to better address the effectiveness and equity impacts of its research and technology delivery</p>	<p>Accepted in full</p>	<p>Though we made good progress in GRiSP, we recognize the need to keep investing in unearthing and understanding the particular roles, constraints, and opportunities that women face in the rice sector and in rice value chains. Hence, a dedicated cluster of activities is proposed under RICE FP 1.3 (page 43). Also, in developing the full RICE proposal, we will include gender-specific targets, IDOs, and indicators</p>	<p>Leader FP1; GRiSP and RICE gender team</p>	<p>In 2016 under GRiSP, we will systematically synthesize our learnings to date on opportunities and constraints of women in rice farming and value chains. These learnings will feed into</p>	<p>Yes. In RICE, we earmarked 500,000\$ annually from W1,2 to support these research activities. On top, gender research will be included in bilateral research grant proposals</p>

		across our FPs so we can target and monitor progress.		the design and implementation of RICE in 2017-2022	
Recommendation 10: GRiSP with its national partners should institutionalize a systematic process of assessing its equity, nutrition and environmental impacts at a global level, especially for its germplasm, employing the latest tools and methods to achieve credible standards of rigor at reasonable costs.	Partially accepted	<p>We agree with the need to institutionalize, with our partners, a robust framework of adoption studies and impact assessment. However, we have our reservations about doing this at the global level, specifically for equity, nutrition and environmental impacts for which other CRPs may have comparative advantage (PIM, A4HN, and WLE respectively).</p> <p>At selected action sites across Asia and Africa, we will develop a rolling, annual household survey plan that will allow us to track adoption of technologies and progress towards RICE's IDOs and impact targets through a set of well-defined SMART indicators (to be defined in the RICE full proposal). Indicators will be related to targets on reduction of poverty, hunger, malnutrition, and to the improvement of equity, nutrition, and environmental quality. This will be complemented by the use of technologies such as remote sensing, modelling, GIS, cellphone applications, and DNA fingerprinting. With RICE's underlying theory of change and impact pathway, this information will contribute to our attribution and contribution claim.</p>	Leadership FP1.5 and FP1.6	In 2016 under GRiSP, we will finalize a schema to assess progress towards the IDOs that RICE will address, based on a systematic set of indicators collected in the field. We will already compute baseline values of these indicators in 2016, based on extensive household surveys conducted during the last 2-3 years of GRiSP. Full implementation of the schema will start in 2017 and continue throughout RICE in 2017-2022.	Yes. In RICE, we earmarked 500,000\$ annually from W1,2 to support M&E (including tracking of progress towards IDOs and impact at action sites), and 500,000 \$ annually for specific impact assessment studies. On top, impact assessments will be included in bilateral research grant proposals, also at an estimated cost of around 500,000\$/year

		In addition, we will develop an impact assessment plan based on case studies related to the adoption of GRiSP/RICE technologies, using scientifically sound methodologies.			
Recommendation 11: The Oversight Committee should define its processes of consultation for establishing global strategic priorities in rice research, and communicate this process widely to its stakeholders.	Partially accepted	We will encourage the GRiSP OC to reflect on their role and effectiveness in 2016, and propose improved governance mechanisms for RICE. Besides the OC, however, we will explore mobilizing other (improved) mechanisms to establish consultation processes (such as CORRA, NEC, FLAR – see RAFS pre-proposal for explanation); see also our response to recommendation # 13 on expansion of GRiSP beyond the CGIAR research program.	GRiSP OC; PPMT, center management, center boards	Design in 2016; implementation through the new Independent Science Committee of RICE.	No
Recommendation 12: GRiSP level external reviews of particular areas of research should be commissioned by the Oversight Committee in consultation with the Board Program Committees and managed by the PMU.	Partially accepted	We agree that RICE will commission CRP level external reviews, but there may be instances where center-commissioned reviews may be more appropriate because of regional-specific (Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean) circumstances and conditions, and/or because of particular needs of centers.	RICE ISC; Center Boards	Design in 2016; implementation in RICE 2017-2022	Yes; will be fully costed in the full RICE proposal. An average estimate of 300,000\$/year has been proposed in the call guidelines.
Recommendation 13: GRiSP should review and clarify the roles and expectations of its non-CGIAR partners (JIRCAS, IRD and CIRAD) in governance, management and research implementation. This review should also consider the desirability of expanding core partnerships for specific Themes, the criteria for doing	Accepted in full	In RICE, there will be a stronger and more articulate role for research management and research implementation by Cirad, IRD, and JIRCAS. Specific clusters of activities have been identified that these centers will implement and (co-)lead based on their comparative advantage and particular interests, see pp 25-26 of the RAFS pre-	PPMT	Design of strengthened roles on nonCGIAR partners already started in the second half of 2015, and will continue with	Yes. Depending on the overall W1,2 budgets, a total sum of 0.8-2.0 M\$/y will be earmarked for nonCGIAR partners. We will seek co-funding

<p>so, and their role in management if included</p>		<p>proposal. These activities will be specifically co-funded from W1,2 in RICE. GIZ and ICRA will become new partners in RICE, specifically for the topics of outscaling and capacity development. RICE’s proposed partnership strategy (see pp 126-131 of the RAFS pre-proposal) articulates principles for governance and management for various types of RICE partners.</p> <p>In 2016, we will actively explore the expansion of the concept of a global rice science partnership beyond being a CGIAR research program. This will open to way for more inclusivity and flexible partnerships.</p>		<p>the development of the full RICE proposal in 2016; implementation in RICE 2017-2022</p>	<p>mainly through bilateral projects</p>
<p>Recommendation 14. The Consortium (W1) and the Fund Council (W2) should provide expanded and reliable core funding to GRiSP in order to take full advantage of the innovative scientific partnerships available for collaborative research, as envisaged in the SRF.</p>	<p>Fully supported</p>				