



Consortium of the CGIAR Centers

To: Inger Andersen, Chair of the Fund Council

From: Carlos Pérez del Castillo, Chair of the CGIAR Consortium Board

Date: 24th September 2010

Subject: Consortium Board approval letter on GRiSP for re-submission to the Fund Council

Dear Inger,

I am very pleased to transmit to you, on behalf of the Consortium Board (CB) a thoroughly revised Global Rice Science Partnership proposal (GRiSP), for the Fund Council consideration and approval.

This new version takes fully into account comments and suggestions made by the ISPC, as well as external reviewers commissioned by the ISPC and a number of donors. It also incorporates the results of further intensive discussions by the proponents with a large number of partners as well as with Centres. Finally, it also addresses the comments from the Consortium Board and the external reviewers the Board commissioned

The CB considers that a number of important changes have been made to the original proposal submitted by the Consortium Board to the Fund Council (FC) on 9 July, which improves what we already considered a very good quality product.

Improvements were made in this new version regarding: the research background and strategy; the GRiSP Themes and product lines/products; partnerships; an expanded and more detailed gender discussion (although this will be finalized after completion of the scoping study commissioned by the CB); and a completely new budget proposal.

The Budget was a major concern of the CB when we submitted to the FC for approval GRiSP's original proposal. It is important to highlight that there were a lot of uncertainties faced by the GRiSP proponents in the process of developing their proposal and by the CB in the process of reviewing it. Unfortunately, these uncertainties are still very much present as donors have not made firm commitments for increases in the overall 2011-13 budget of the CGIAR, nor have they made firm commitments to the different CRPs.

In this new version the proponents have used different budget scenarios, starting from scenario A as the baseline requested by the CB, complemented by scenarios B (Steady State) and C (Growth) which reflected the suggestions made by members at the last FC meeting; there is a clear disaggregation in projected expenditures by themes, by years, by regions and funding sources, and there are clear specifications for funding of specific activities, such as capacity building and gender. This detailed budget information will facilitate the setting of priorities for implementation if funding realities so require.

However, by the time of the submission of this proposal we have little indication provided by donors with regards to their financial plans for the next three years, including their financing intentions with regards to fast trackers CRPs. There is agreement with donors that financing of fast trackers will not be at the expense of the financing of the other CRPs in the CGIAR portfolio. However, we have yet to be informed of the mechanism the Fund Council will use to implement this agreement. In these



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circumstances, it is difficult for the CB to provide guidelines for budget development regarding the CRP portfolio as a whole.

The CB has on countless occasions stated its concern with the uncertainties regarding donors' finance. It has furthermore insisted there is a need to ensure, as part of the balance of responsibilities and obligations between the CB and FC in the CGIAR reform process, a greater stability of funding when we address multiyear long term CRP research undertakings.

This is a concern that I know you also share, and as a result we have agreed on actions to address this problem jointly, as current levels of financial uncertainty are not manageable and cannot continue if the CGIAR reform process is to be successful.

The development of GRiSP has been an extraordinary and creative process for all involved. It has given a great impulse to the CGIAR reform process and has provided a stimulus for the other CRP sponsors to work very hard in the development of the rest of the CRP portfolio. The implementation of GRiSP will provide lessons for the development of other CRPs, including for better defining the interactions and boundaries among the CRPs.

GRiSP has met the joint assessment criteria developed by the CB and the ISPC and also has adequately responded to the comments and suggestions from the CB, ISPC, two different sets of external reviewers, donors and a large number of stakeholders and partners. It is also in line with the CGIAR vision; objectives and results envisaged in the SRF and it constitutes a comprehensive and strategic work plan for global rice research. The CB has, therefore, great pleasure in submitting this CGIAR Programme for the Fund Council consideration and approval

The first presentation of a fast-tracked CRP for approval by the Fund is an important step forward in the CGIAR reform process. The CB very much hopes that GRiSP will be approved by the Fund Council at its next November meeting and that it will be launched at the Third International Rice Conference to be held in Hanoi from November 8 to November 12. The CB considers this conference provides a great opportunity to launch formally this CRP since it includes five great events bringing together rice scientists, most influential businessmen, policy-makers, and other stakeholders and partners interested in developing an international research programme for development such as GRiSP.

With my best regards,

Carlos