

Response to iISPC Comments (18 August 2010) on the GRiSP Proposal

Issues/Proposal section	Reviewers' comments and suggestions	Proponents' response/ changes made
<p><i>Strategic coherence and clarity of program objectives</i></p>	<p>Given that the SRF is still in preparation, it is difficult to assess GRiSP's alignment with a well defined strategic framework. Overall, the proposal links rice research to poverty and sustainability albeit that the focus is in yields.</p>	<p>Our overarching program strategy focuses on productivity and efficiency enhancement as the key entry point for also enabling greater sustainability, diversification, and reduced environmental impact in a rice-based systems context. This was made clearer now in the Program Design chapter and the theme descriptions, including new data and graphs. The vision of success states multiple targets. The 3 strategic objectives of GRiSP are fully aligned with the 3 SOs in the SRF.</p>
	<p>The proposal reflects a tripartite approach combining Centre activities and plans. At least in the near term the proposal does not provide a strong case for the MegaProgram compared to the individual Centre programs. This approach affects the proposal's quality particularly regarding prioritization, focus, internal synergies and management.</p>	<p>GRiSP aligns the rice R&D programs of 6 global players, thus creating synergies and avoiding duplication and overlapping responsibilities. Part of the misunderstanding may have been caused by Figure 9 on page 53 in the document reviewed by the iISPC, conveying indeed a tripartite approach, which is far from our intention. This Figure has now been changed. We have laid out how GRiSP will further evolve over time towards even greater integrity and new programmatic areas. The R&D product framework will be regularly evaluated and revised, as outlined in the new section on future evolution of GRiSP. However, accomplishing all that will require substantial changes in funding patterns and volume which are largely out of our control: from currently 80% bilateral funding (restricted) to something more like 80% window 1 or 2 funding.</p>
	<p>There are only a few examples of savings in terms of "business merger". For example, there are 3 rainfed rice ecosystem product lines maintained for each of the regions. In all, the MP attempts to bring 32 "global and regional R&D product lines" to the market. And some of these product lines have multiple plant traits to add to the complexity. The "business-like results-based programme" would be better served by selecting fewer, high priority product lines.</p>	<p>We have thoroughly revised all Themes and their Product Lines and Products to achieve more synergism. The total number of PLs was reduced to 26 (from 32). With the exception of Theme 6, PLs in all other themes are now consistently defined as global PLs, having either global or regional product research teams. We have identified (in the logframe) milestones that can only be accomplished with additional funding. We provide, in the budget narrative, a description of high-priority areas for investment. The R&D product framework will be regularly evaluated and revised, as outlined in the new section on future evolution of GRiSP, the chapter on strategic planning and impact assessment, and the M&E chapter. More significant changes will be made in conjunction with priority setting exercises done in 5-yr cycles. Annual investment allocations will be prioritized as part of the annual review and budgeting process. There will be other savings associated with handing current center Board functions over to the GRiSP OC, and with the full change in center R&D management structures to match the GRiSP themes and products.</p>

<p>What is the logic for the proposed allocation of resources across these activities? Delaying research prioritization has costs.</p>	<p>Budgeting was done bottom up, by product lines (in many cases even by product), and taking into account additional elements such as funds needed for MP coordination, capacity building, new frontiers research, and CGIAR system cost. However, GRiSP, like most other MPs, will start from a basis of current research, which is to 80% locked into current restricted grants. Hence, to 80% our initial proposed allocation of funds is based on ongoing research, plus a number of new priorities that were identified during the MP development process. Over time, as current bilateral grants run out or are being replaced by Window 1-3 funding or new grants, more flexibility in resource allocations by new priorities will emerge. The results of the first strategic assessment for research prioritization will become available for Asia in late 2010, and for Africa and LAC in 2011 (see PL. 5.4. in GRiSP). Hence, some re-allocation of resources is expected to happen already in late 2010 (when we hope to develop the more detailed annual budget for 2011), and more in subsequent years. We will then have a complete, consistent approach for linking resource allocation to priorities in terms of technology potential and comparative advantage of GRiSP.</p>
<p>In the case of Intellectual Property, the Consortium needs to oversee coherence.</p>	<p>As provided in the Consortium Constitution, the Consortium is intended to be an enabler, <u>not a manager</u>, of the Member Centers by fostering a more conducive international <u>policy environment</u> for agricultural research [Art. 4(i)]. Hence, our understanding is that the Consortium may provide coherence in terms of general guidance on IP management principles, whereas enacting an IP policy remains the responsibility of the member Centers. That is now described more extensively in the IP section.</p>
<p>The balance of the research effort between Asia, Africa and the LAC region largely represents current funding of the three partner centres. Targeting of the research on traits and systems of special importance to poor producers and consumers needs to be sharper and this will likely affect geographic priorities.</p>	<p>Research prioritization and targeting is an integral part of GRiSP and has its own product in PL 5.4. Our goal is to, by 2011, complete a first global strategic assessments of constraints and priorities and use this information for further adjustments of GRiSP, using a quantitative, transparent, evidence-based framework. However, resource allocation must also account for regional differences in the current state of rice production and the available R&D capacities. It is for that reasons that GRiSP investments in Africa are proposed to be relatively higher than in Asia, where 90% of the world's rice is produced. The African rice R&D sector is weakly developed, but rice demand is rising much more rapidly (5% per year) than anywhere else in the world.</p>
<p>The proposal is very much oriented towards productivity gains and short on presenting alternative future scenarios that are likely to affect the future research needs. There is little indication as to how GRiSP expects to evolve in response to the shifting</p>	<p>We have strengthened the description of drivers of change and how this affects the R&D in GRiSP, and we show how productivity and resource efficiency gains are key entry point for impact on food security, poverty, environment etc. Theme 3 was re-designed, with more emphasis on drivers of change, changing farming systems, and PLs that address the key environments</p>

	needs of the three regions over the next 5 and 10 years; or respond to different needs of different ecosystems. An analysis of the expected changes in rice research needs would be useful	and the rice-based cropping or farming systems. We have also added chapter on climate change strategy and linkages with MP 7. The key approach in GRiSP will be a regular strategic assessment of priorities for international rice research, for which we have developed the methodology. It is currently ongoing and includes, for example, the expected impact of climate change. This exercise will be used first in late 2010 to further adjust GRiSP priorities, and it will be conducted every five years to keep pace with changing regional needs as well as advances in science.
	The discussion of priority setting within the portfolio of activities is very limited. The proposal would greatly benefit from greater clarity in distinguishing between the most important and least important items on the research agenda.	We have expanded this discussion and moved the section on strategic planning and IA to the main chapter on Program Design. The logframe and budget narrative contain further information on priority items.
<i>Delivery focus and plausibility of impact</i>	However, the impact pathways analyses are still quite generic and vague. There is little discussion of the constraints to uptake of the research.	Impact pathways are now described in more detail and at least one concrete example is given for each theme.
	It would have been very helpful to relate the proposed resource allocations within the program to clear analysis of the magnitude of all potential problems that the MP could address. The assessment of the poverty and hunger impacts is done of the overall portfolio of proposed research rather than its components.	Ex-ante analysis were conducted for a large number of potential GRiSP technological options and then summed up to determine total impact of GRiSP technologies as compared to counterfactuals. We have expanded this analysis now to Africa.
	How the extrapolations for SE Asia, Africa and LAC were done is not stated. The consequences of the research succeeding to enhance the global rice harvest should be projected in terms of the interplay of production and livelihoods, and translated into development scenarios.	We have expanded this chapter, including new information for Africa and some for LAC. Further studies are in progress. We will publish the methodologies and results in 2011, and utilize this information for developing more complete development and impact scenarios.
	The effects of new technologies on the demand for agricultural labour, the impact of technologies on farmers' ability to produce other crops or to engage in other income-generating activities, policies that work against technology adoption, etc. may affect impact. It would be useful to see policy as shaping the priorities for research.	These aspects are covered studies in Theme 3 and in Theme 5, and more particularly in product line 5.1., which focuses on targeting. We have expanded the discussion there and also made it clear in the Program Design chapter that it is targeting analysis and policy work that drives the product development in other GRiSP themes.
	The M&E program will need clearer product pathway analysis including anticipated dates of output availability and resource requirements identified per activity. It is not possible to assess appropriateness of amounts proposed with the available information.	In the current version of GRiSP, resource allocation was mainly done by product lines or products within those, using the best available information at this stage. This also represents a baseline of current priorities, which in turn result from strategic planning exercises, stakeholder consultations, and external reviews conducted in all Centers within the past 4 years. We have

		<p>already begun a process of more detailed product pathway analysis. We have expanded the M&E Section to provide some more details of our suggested approach</p>
	<p>Whilst the proposal generates some excitement and expectation of gains through genetic and genomic approaches, more could be said of the advances in rice systems (and the breadth of benefits for environmental sustainability, including climate change mitigation, and human welfare) expected from augmenting research on eco-efficiencies, water and soil nutrition.</p>	<p>These aspects are now dealt with in more detail under a completely re-organized and strengthened Theme 3 and in the Justification chapter ('what accelerated international rice research can contribute'). Theme 3 is all about more eco-efficient farming solutions and it now also has a distinct PL one ecological resilience and climate change. These are indeed main areas of work in GRiSP. We have also added a climate change strategy chapter to the Program Design chapter.</p>
	<p>Whilst the proposal should be more keenly aware of the environmental and other consequences of targeting an increase in yield of 100 million tonnes of rice, proper management of intensive production systems may be a means to <i>mitigate</i> the production of greenhouse gasses, excess soil nitrogen etc.</p>	<p>These issues are addressed in a new PL 3.4. See response to previous comment. We also provide a first illustrative example of large reduction in GHG emissions from adoption of alternate wetting and drying.</p>
	<p>A considerable obstacle to impact not well analysed in the proposal could be the lack breeding programs in the developing world with the knowledge and capacity to efficiently and effectively use the sophisticated products (genes, markers and germplasm) of GRiSP. For GRiSP to maximise its impact in the short to medium term it needs to confront this issue. It needs to develop a network of breeding programs in each region that can effectively and efficiently use its products and also mentor and/or provide services to those breeding programs that cannot.</p>	<p>We fully agree with this statement and this will be addressed by the establishment of regional breeding task forces pooling scarce research resources in breeding (especially in Africa) and serving as a on-the-job training ground for aspirant breeders. Theme 2 is all about a transformation of rice breeding programs towards demand-driven precision breeding pipelines with greater efficiency.</p>
	<p>In planning much of the extension of technologies through existing networks (INGER, FLAR etc) there should be a plan to enhance their performance and perhaps staffing (a partnership issue).</p>	<p>INGER will be revamped and upgraded to also lead the implementation of a new, systematic multi-environment testing scheme of new breeding lines. FLAR relies on its member contributions and priorities, but is indeed in need of more capacity for agronomy work. In general, extension capacity building is of high priority in GRiSP theme 6, including new models for both public and private sectors, in which international partners can play a facilitating role.</p>

	<p>A good formal gender analysis is lacking but greater emphasis is to be given to this in the future. However, already in this proposal it would have been useful to see an attempt to relate gender considerations to specific technologies and research proposals that are discussed..... Lack of sufficient integration of social science across research is visible in the absence of proper gender consideration in the program.</p>	<p>Gender aspects of technology impact and constraints are a main component of PL 5.1 research. We have expanded the gender analysis and discussion and provide concrete examples, but will conduct a more complete gender audit once GRiSP gets started.</p>
<i>Quality of science</i>	<p>The social science is less convincing and would benefit from thinking through issues such as the allocation of resources across product lines, the likely barriers to uptake, the potential negative impact of various interventions, or the possibility of affecting welfare through means other than increasing yields.</p>	<p>The social science theme (5) was revised significantly to address these issues. We wish to clarify, however, that GRiSP's focus is not just about yield. We consider productivity and efficiency enhancements as the key entry points for achieving all of the targets stated in our vision of success, including environmental and social impact. PLs 5.1., 5.2. and 5.4. play a major role in understanding and monitoring potential negative impacts or constraints.</p>
	<p>The program should put emphasis on developing double haploid technologies that provide significant advantages to breeding programs especially in marker assisted backcrossing of complex gene combinations into otherwise adapted varieties. They are widely used in other cereals, but in rice anther culture but success is still limited. Due to the significant benefits that a widely applicable reliable technology to be used routinely in breeding programs, the Program should include a specific research projects in this area.</p>	<p>IRRI has been using anther culture and double haploid technologies for many years, particularly in its breeding program on biofortification. We have made excellent progress in establishing this methodology and it is embedded in several PLs of Theme 2. But we have also noticed significant limitations in its use for routine breeding for other traits, particularly in indica rice. Both anther culture and embryo rescue are relevant components of the breeding program at CIAT. Anther culture protocols were adapted to our conditions and teams from 10 NARs were trained and the technology transferred to their programs ; currently Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, and Brazil are using AC in their breeding program. Efforts are now focusing on improving the response of indica rice to AC. AFRICARICE is also using AC and some of the NERICAS were developed this way.</p>
	<p>GRiSP is proposing to host projects on two high-risk, high-reward projects: C₄-rice, which are a current project in IRRI and a new proposed consortium project on N fixing rice. While the motivation driving the projects is clear, although not derived from a clear priority setting, it is worth noting that two relatively large, very high-risk research projects will be in one Mega- Program, which may be questionable in terms of the balance of the research portfolio.Thus the justification for a CGIAR program to engage in, for example, the C₄ rice research now rather than waiting for basic research to advance has not been explained.</p>	<p>We do not consider C₄ rice to be a "high risk project" because the basic science involved will also have many benefits for the understanding of biological mechanisms in C₄ and C₃ plant per se. The C₄ project was started only in 2007, after a period of nearly 10 years of discussions, including two major international workshops. It brings together the world's leading laboratories in that field – those who represent the advances in basic research. IRRI plays the key role of facilitating this project and putting it into a development context. No other organization could play that role. It is an area where the CGIAR must show leadership. The BNF PL was removed. This is now part of the more exploratory new frontiers research, i.e., we plan to go slower and establish first what pathways may be most promising..</p>

	<p>A research fund will provide grants for innovative proposals to blue sky research. Ambition of research is very high and the ambition is linked to the very ambitious budget plan that assumes a significant increase in donor allocations to rice research.</p>	<p>We now present two major budget scenarios, steady state (no growth in research expenditures other than inflation adjustment) and one of moderate growth, with and additional annual increase in research fund by 5%. We believe that this is rather insufficient, but we also assume that significant amounts will continue to come from bilateral sources, including non-CGIAR donors. C4 research (PL 1.4.) is currently fully funded from bilateral sources and indications are that it may continue under the new Window 2 or 3 mechanism. The only new “blue sky research” we propose is now summarized in a new chapter on new frontiers research, for which we also make some centrally managed flexible funds available in the GRiSP budget. We recognize that, initially, only modest amounts will be available (2-3% of GRiSP total), but this type of research should grow significantly over time in order to provide innovation to this program.</p>
<p><i>Quality of research and development partners and partnership management</i></p>	<p>The role of other ARI partners could be increased; and the current proposal could have more discussion of research entities not within the GRiSP. More clarity is needed on roles of specific partners as the proposal is too generic in this regard and often sites the 450 odd rice research partners (an unrealistic number to strategically manage, and appears to refer in many cases to “clients”).</p>	<p>We have (i) conducted a bottom up inventory of all our partners (by products within each PL), (ii) categorized them according to their roles in each PL, and (iii) completely re-written and greatly expanded the partnership chapter to describe all that. We now distinguish:</p> <p>Research partners (R) are key partners directly involved in GRiSP research, usually through a collaborative agreement, and thus also accountable for certain GRiSP outputs. Research partners play an active role in the product development teams in GRiSP themes 1-5.</p> <p>Development partners (D) are partners who are more indirectly involved in the research (local adapters) and/or play a significant role in the dissemination and adoption process (disseminators). Typically, such development partners need to be influenced by the research partners to mobilize their own resources for taking up GRiSP outputs. They do not necessarily receive much funding from GRiSP and are thus also not directly accountable for certain GRiSP outputs.</p> <p>Other partners (O) may not be directly involved in developing, adapting or disseminating GRiSP products, but are in need of information on GRiSP and its outputs for various purposes.</p> <p>Previously, we mainly reported R partners and only few of the boundary partners falling into D and O. Our new analysis shows that the six international centers and organizations in GRiSP (IRRI, AfricaRice, CIAT, JIRCAS, Cirad, IRD) have some 800 rice research, development and other partners, but about 60% of those are mainly of the boundary type (D, O). GRiSP actively interacts with the latter and tries to influence them, but does not manage them. We provide a detailed description of partner categories and partner maps by regions. Upon request, we can make the entire partner database available, showing their roles by PLs in GRiSP.</p>

<p>There is little discussion of how to align priorities even among the three CGIAR Centres and the three main outside partners.</p>	<p>Priorities will be aligned based on the agreed GRiSP workplan, PL priorities, and responsibilities for specific milestones, which are now indicated in the revised logframe. The PPMT, together with the TLs, play the lead role in this.</p>
<p>Only 14% of budget is planned to be allocated to partners outside the CGIAR, which appears little.</p>	<p>To increase funding for partners is one of the goals in GRiSP, and also one of the reasons for why we propose to have a partnership development fund in it. However, it will depend on the overall level of funding available. We will also encourage more partners, particularly in the BRIC countries, to make concrete co-investments as opposed to be only on the receiving end, so that more funds can be channeled to weaker NARES.</p>
<p>The proposal is lacking in its consideration of the strong NARS (BRICS), particularly China (with substantial programs in rice, its own direction in hybrid rice - and probably massive potential for technological capacity building in Africa) and Brazil. These countries are lumped together with other NARS.</p>	<p>We have added expanded discussion on the roles of BRIC countries in a new, separate section. We have already held consultations with India and China on mechanisms for that, and will meet with Brazil soon. Russia participates in the Temperate Rice Research Consortium, now also as a donor.</p>
<p>the roles of and aspirations for the private sector are not addressed. The role for the private sector in hybrids appears static; no clear analysis of private sector expertise in innovation and business know-how for added value of rice products is presented.</p>	<p>We agree and have greatly expanded that, in a new section on private sector, in which we also describe our key models for engagement.</p>
<p>With regard to developing a state of the art global rice monitoring and forecasting system, it is important to interact with FAO—that has a mandate and considerable activity in this area—for synergy that may help other major crops.</p>	<p>We will work closely together with FAO on that. GRiSP's role is that of being the most knowledgeable provider of rice information, at a level of detail that surpasses what FAO can do by far, also in terms of timeliness of available. We have explained that better in the revised proposal.</p>
<p>In the absence of the SRF and with the other MPs being at various stages of development, it is understandable that the GRiSP proposal cannot provide detailed links with other MPs. Thus there is a risk of loss of potential synergies among MPs or weakening of other future MPs through this program's encroachment into their core business. The program covers some "product lines" that will also be the domain of other MPs. It appears that interactions with other MPs will be at additional cost.</p>	<p>True, but we have nevertheless made further improvements in that chapter based on our best available knowledge. We will further monitor these developments and will have mechanisms for adjustments through the regular review and updating of GRiSP.</p>
<p>One of the hallmarks of the SRF is to think in terms of systems, but this MP has a strong commodity lens. For example, in the upland systems in Africa and Asia rice is only one part of the system and focusing on rice will be</p>	<p>This may not have been expressed well enough in the previous draft, but we wish to clarify that GRiSP does indeed focus on rice-based production systems, not the commodity rice as such. This is now being made clearer throughout the revised proposal, but also in the completely revamped theme 3.</p>

	<p>inadequate for solving major problems in those systems. The greater opportunity is to focus on key rice-based ecosystems.</p>	
	<p>In general, the rice-based systems of South Asia should be at the core of MP1 on systems research, as they concern hundreds of millions of poor people. At the portfolio level, the rice-wheat systems must be appropriately addressed, for instance.</p>	<p>The three MPs under TA focus on dryland systems, humid tropics, and coastal zones, whereas systems such as R-W in the IGP clearly belong to the MPs on rice and wheat in terms of product development, but also in terms of delivery. With the new Cereal Systems Initiative for South Asia (CSISA), the successor of the RWC, an effective new model for joint action on the ground has been established, connecting several MP for greater impact in South Asia. CSISA is thus featured in several of them and we already work closely together with, for example, the proposed MPs on wheat, maize, legumes, fish, livestock and policy (all represented in CSISA). Hence, CSISA is an effective alternative model to MPs under TA1 and it covers large areas/systems that are not covered by those.</p>
	<p>Germplasm conservation could be fragmented; in this proposal it is considered Center-specific and the costs additional to the already large GRiSP budget.</p>	<p>A key element of PL 1.1 in GRiSP is to align germplasm conservation work for rice across the key genebanks. This has been made clearer. Genebank funding was removed from the GRiSP budget.</p>
	<p>Since the uptake of new varieties will be fundamental to the success of GriSP, it is important to understand how GRiSP will interact with other MPs on seed system research.</p>	<p>Seed systems research is an integral part of GRiSP, in themes 2, 5 and 6.</p>
<p><i>Appropriateness and efficiency of Program management</i></p>	<p>The new and added management structures reinforce the observation about compilation of all existing activities of the 3 Centres. It is not designed to streamline decision-making at the CGIAR system level. Thus the management structure of this MP seems already unwieldy. It appears that the research of the different institutions is separately programmed and executed. The program absorbs two Centres (IRRI and Africa Rice) entirely, but the Centres' own management and governance structures are left intact, at least for the time being.</p>	<p>All participating centers will change their research management structures to fully align with the new GRiSP themes and product lines. This will take place in late 2010 as part of the implementation plan. Each theme will have a global leader, who interacts with regional them leaders from the other two regions. These GRiSP Theme Leaders will also be the leaders of the respective research units in their institutions. In the case of AfricaRice, the current research program structure is already largely aligned with the GRiSP Themes. IRRI will shift from its current research matrix to a new structure based on GRiSP Themes to ensure full alignment and greater management efficiency. We have added this explanation to the program management section.</p>
	<p>At the same time only a very thin layer of "oversight" and small management is described for GRiSP. Thus the management (and governance) mechanism for GRiSP does not appear robust. The complete transfer of the two Centres research programs to GRiSP should be clearly acknowledged in the proposal with a more transparent elaboration of implications of this on GRiSP</p>	<p>See response to previous comment, and this statement in the Program Management section: In establishing the Global Rice Science Partnership (GRiSP), all three CGIAR member centers (AfricaRice, CIAT, IRRI) accept that all of their rice research agendas and financial obligations will be reported under GRiSP, except for certain activities that are reported under other Consortium Research Programs (CRPs). GRiSP does not absorb the entire research agendas of IRRI and AfricaRice.</p>

	management and governance.	Both centers also participate fully in MP5 and MP7 and collaborate on selected research activities with MP1, MP2, MP3 and MP4. Hence, management structures in the Centers also need to cater to those needs
	It is not clear if the PD is responsible to the PPMT or vice-versa; the position does not have clear authority or accountability. The PD is a member of the PPMT but in other respects is a coordinator and in a supporting position. The PD and PMU need a measure of independence to work effectively and in the best interest of the program. Evolution to more program based leadership will be beneficial.	The PD acts on behalf of all participating centers and partners in GRiSP. We have clarified the roles and responsibilities of the PD vis-a-vis PPMT.
	While the PD interfaces with the Consortium and the Fund Council and represents GRiSP at public events, it is likely that the DGs of the Centres will play commensurate roles.	We have added such as statement.
	However, the scope of work for the PMU that acts as an administrative support unit to the OC and PPMT is too large. While virtually all the research funds are transferred from IRRI and Africa Rice to GRiSP, the administrative and managements structures are not visible in this proposal. Thus what is seen for the Program is an extremely small management and administration arrangement, giving an impression that costs are held to a minimum. The PMU should either have the resources required to fulfil the scope of work successfully or the scope of work should be amended to make success possible. Adjustments in IRRI and Africa Rice management structures should enforce balance to demonstrate savings and streamlining.	The PMU is designed to provide administrative support at the global level for the PD, and also be an interface between the Consortium and the Center management structures. Key administrative support will be provided by the lead Center management system and the relevant management systems in AfricaRice and CIAT, particularly for managing finances, grants, reports etc. This is captured in two budget line items: the direct cost of the PMU (new staff) and another line item on Administrative support, which captures the new management requirements and represents the cost share of staff doing this work. All other (current) administrative costs of the Centers are included in the Institutional Overhead. Hence, we believe that this overall approach is efficient and appropriate for managing GRiSP. We also wish to point out that both IRRI and AfricaRice will introduce a new corporate management software system in 2011, which should further help with streamlining administrative processes.
	There are well-developed strategies for capacity building and intellectual property management and embryonic strategies for communication and risk management	We have further expanded these sections and will continue to improve them as GRiSP evolves.
<i>Clear accountability and financial soundness, and efficiency of governance</i>	The OC reports to the DG and Board Chair of IRRI. It appears that there is no clear authority and sufficient independence and it is not clear to which extent the actions of the OC are binding or subject to additional approval by the Centre Boards. Program research leaders continue to provide updates on research	We have added a statement explaining that the OC reports to the DG and the Board Chair of the Lead Center, IRRI, but also informs the DGs and Board Chairs of AfricaRice and CIAT. We have also revised the TOR for the OC to make it clearer that they have the authority for key issues such as approving the annual budget proposal. Theme Leaders and other scientists will primarily provide strategic updates on progress to the OC because the current Board PCs will be

	progress to Centre Boards.	dissolved.
	More clarity and transparency is needed on the mechanisms by which the OC and its independent members are elected and appointed.	We have added statements on this to clarify this further. In our view, the Boards of the three primary centers, led by the IRRI Board chair, should lead the initial election process. Once the first OC is formed, subsequent elections will take place through procedures similar to current practices in Center Boards.
	IRRI and Africa Rice may wish to revisit the size of their Boards in light of GRiSP and the assigned responsibilities: of the Consortium Board for performance contracts, the OC and PPMT for developing priorities and monitoring results, and the arrangements for financial accountability and audits. It is stated that the Board Program Committees of the two rice Centres may get dissolved in the future.	As the new OC becomes operational, the Boards of IRRI and AfricaRice will decide how current Board Program Committee functions can be handed over to the GRiSP OC to further reduce transaction costs.
	To avoid ambiguity with respect to allocation of Fund resources, the clear authority should be with the OC on basis of PPMT recommendations. OC should also have ultimate authority and responsibility for monitoring and for commissioning evaluations.	The OC will approve the annual budget proposal prepared by the PD with the PPMT. We have added that to the TOR. The role to commission external reviews was already included.
	The structure that includes the OC, PPMT and in addition a subsidiary management group, 18 theme leaders from the three Centres, complicates both communication and lines of accountability, particularly as this is set against the Centres own governance and management structures.	We have made this clearer in the revised description: the current center structures will be completely aligned with GRiSP. There will only be two management layers: themes and products (See revised management structure figure). There will be one overall leader for each Theme, and underneath of that we will have leaders for each product team. All of these are current research leaders and scientists. In many cases, a scientist will lead several products. Product leaders can be scientists from IRRI, AfricaRice, CIAT or a strategic partner, but there is only one per product. In summary, the Centers will align their management structures under GRiSP. A Theme Leader will primarily interact with (i) the PPMT, (ii) the two other regional focal points for that theme, (iii) TLs of other themes, and (iv) about 10 PDLs. The PDLs are the key action points for implementing GRiSP, with transparent, decentralized accountability for critical resources at that level. They represent primarily active scientists who already have much experience in leading research at that level. We will also seek appropriate gender equality at this research management level.
	It is not clear which entity monitors the performance of the PD and the PMU, where budget approval of the unit rests and which body has authority to hire and fire the director.	The lead center will recruit the PD. The DG of the lead center will monitor the performance of the PD and the PMU and report on that to the OC.

	<p>There is a plan to seek bilateral funding to both program activities and non-program activities. The Fund is expected to contribute, but the assumed Fund portion is not prioritized. The overall benefit of a value-added approach is not clear - rather the proposal projects more as a new funding opportunity to conduct ongoing and new rice research.</p>	<p>Due to the lack of detailed information on projected system level funding for the next 5 years and donor intentions with regard to utilizing the Fund windows vs bilateral grants, it is very difficult for us to make accurate projections of funds needed from the Fund. We have, in the revised budget, provided two general budget scenarios, which also provide our estimate of what will be needed from the Fund. We state the assumptions used for obtaining these estimates.</p> <p>Of course, given the uncertainties and the overall scope of GRiSP, it is, in our view, necessary to do a lot of bilateral fundraising, targeting primarily sources that are not part of the new Fund/Consortium mechanism. This includes, for example, bilateral development grants from country missions of donors such as USAID, bilateral agreements with the private sector or other non-CGIAR members. Such agreements are also essential for developing new partnerships with these sectors. GRiSP thus provides a new, unique umbrella for leveraging additional funding and thus increasing the return on CGIAR investments coming through the Fund. We wish to point out that this is all going to be part of the GRiSP program, not outside of it.</p>
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