

15 September 2010

Mr. Carlos Perez del Castillo
Chair, Consortium Board
Consortium of CGIAR Centers



Dear Carlos,

I am pleased to transmit to you a thoroughly revised GRiSP proposal. It is accompanied by tables that summarize our responses to the main comments and criticisms from the donors and by the outside reviewers, including those commissioned by the iISPC. We were also able to factor in comments and feedback received informally from the iISPC during their deliberations here last week.

We found almost all of the comments and criticisms to be valuable and constructive. Thus, we took this opportunity to do a major revision of the proposal – probably much more extensive a revision than had been anticipated by the CB or the donors. We believe, though, that we have greatly improved an already very good concept and proposal. Please allow me to summarize how we arrived at the revision and briefly what has been modified.

What happened after Rome?

- We received written comments from iISPC and donors in a timely fashion. About 10 days ago we also received written summaries of the comments of four external reviewers commissioned by the iISPC. There were no surprises as almost all of their comments had been raised previously by others, so that did not derail the revision process.

- We entered into further discussions with partners, and this is ongoing.
 - India (ICAR), New Delhi, August 6
 - China (CAAS, NSFC, MOA, CAU), August 10
 - Japan (JIRCAS, JICA, NIAS, NICS, NIAES, Univ.), September 3
 - Switzerland/Germany, September 15
 - Iran, September 20
 - Brazil (EMBRAPA), September 17
 - NARES DGs Asia (CORRA & APAARI), October 11-12

- A GRiSP writing workshop was held at IRRI, August 23-27. It was attended by representatives from IRRI, AfricaRice, CIAT, CIRAD, IRD, JIRCAS, and CRS.

Major changes made.

- **Improved research background and strategy**
 - Improved demand projections; other new background info
 - Expanded ex ante assessment: more on Africa and environmental impact
 - Described the ongoing detailed strategic assessment exercise that will further improve priority setting and targeting in GRiSP
 - Greater production system & environment focus (drivers of change)
 - Vision of success targets now stated for 2020 and 2035

- **Revision of GRiSP Themes and product lines/products**
 - Consolidation from 32 to 26 Product Lines (PL)
 - Consistent definition of PL/products
 - All PL in Themes 1-5 are now global (This articulation of research organization removes the appearance that GRiSP is just a cobbling together of IRRI, AfricaRice and CIAT programs, that most decidedly it is not.)
 - Completely revised milestones; prioritized them by funding scenarios; assigned clear responsibilities to each milestone
 - Further integration of CIRAD, IRD, JIRCAS work into GRiSP
 - Clearer role of targeting (Theme 5) described in the Program Design chapter
 - More systems orientation of theme 3; included an extended climate change strategy and a whole new product line on climate change (PL 3.4), which will interact with CRP 7
 - New frontiers research included explicitly, including in the budget, so that there is more opportunity to tackle emerging new priorities
 - 8 concrete impact pathway examples are provided in the description of PLs
 - Removed the gene bank core functions (conservation, regeneration and distribution) from Theme 1 and from the budget.

- **Partnerships**
 - Conducted a full bottom-up inventory of partners by their roles in each GRiSP product; a total of 900 partners were identified
 - Divided partners into research (48%) and boundary partners (52%)
 - Described in detailed the roles of strategic partners, BRIC, private sectors, others

- **Expanded, more detailed gender discussion**

- **Revised program management chapter with a new organizational chart and clearer TOR**

- **New budget**

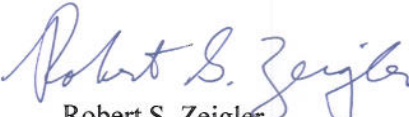
- We aligned all of our work plans and budgets to 5 years
- 3 funding scenarios.
 - As Achim explained to you, our confirmed 2010 budget is significantly higher than the 2009 + inflation level. So, that scenario would mean a major cut in our unrestricted revenue. Any reduction below the 2010 assured amounts would have to come from unrestricted funds only, as our restricted funding (about 80% of our budget now) is already contractually obligated.
 - We constructed two additional budget scenarios: a) 2010 + costs of running the CRP + inflation and b) 2010 + costs of running the CRP + inflation + 5% growth. Both estimates include the proposed 2% tax.
- Clear description of budgeting assumptions
- Estimated how much money need to come from the Fund

I would like to emphasize that the GRiSP is a living organization. We expect to revise the program, management and governance as we learn during implementation and execution. Also, we have a rigorous strategic assessment and prioritization process underway for Asia. This should be complete by the end of the year or early 2011. Africa and LAC will follow in another year or so. These studies will further inform the process over the coming years. We anticipate providing annual progress reports, work plans and revised budgets to reflect any adjustments in plans or resources.

The development of GRiSP has been an extraordinary and creative process for all involved. There has been an unprecedented commitment of several different institutions to work together in the planning phase and there is every reason to expect that this will continue through implementation. It has, however, been very demanding of our staff at all levels. I trust that once the GRiSP is approved we will be allowed three years to implement it with little disruption.

Finally, I would like to thank you and the Consortium Board for your support during this process. It was no doubt difficult to ramp up your work while the change process was in mid stream; but we are grateful for your efforts.

Sincerely yours,


Robert S. Zeigler
Director General