



**GRiSP Oversight Committee Meeting**  
**1 November 2014**  
**Bangkok, Thailand**

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| <p><b>Participants</b></p>         | <p><b>GRiSP Oversight Committee (OC) members:</b> Kei Otsuka, Chair (GRIPS, Japan), Masa Iwanaga (Africa Rice BOT), Lala Razafinjara (AfricaRice BOT), Stephen Baenziger (IRRI BOT), Rita Sharma (IRRI BOT), John Hamer (CIAT BOT), Zhang Fusuo (CAU, China), Luciano Nass (Embrapa, Brazil), and Pascal Kosuth (Agropolis Foundation, France)</p> <p><b>GRiSP Program Planning and Management Team (PPMT):</b> Bas Bouman (GRiSP), Nour Ahmadi (Cirad), Alain Ghesquiere (IRD), Osamu Koyama (JIRCAS), Matthew Morell (IRRI), Joe Tohme (CIAT), Marco Wopereis (AfricaRice)</p> <p><b>Observers:</b> Derek Byerlee (Chair, GRiSP Evaluation Team), Sirkka Immonen (Sr. Evaluation Officer, IEA, Consortium Office), Philippe Ellul (Sr. Science Officer, CGIAR Consortium Office), Tony Lambino (Head, IRRI Communications), and the GRiSP Communications Team</p> <p><b>Regrets:</b> Susan McCouch (Cornell University), Paul Mafuka (INERA, DR Congo), Subbanna Ayyappan (ICAR DG, India), Robert S. Zeigler (IRRI DG, <i>represented by M. Morell</i>), and Adama Traore (AfricaRice Interim DG, <i>represented by M. Wopereis</i>)</p> |
| <p><b>Agenda items</b></p>         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Approval of agenda items</li> <li>2. Discussion and approval of 2013 OC minutes</li> <li>3. GRiSP Achievements 2014</li> <li>4. GRiSP External Review</li> <li>5. GRiSP Phase II- Looking forward</li> </ol>  |
| <p><b>Supporting documents</b></p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 2013 OC minutes</li> <li>2. GRiSP Update (B. Bouman report)</li> <li>3. GRiSP Extension Proposal 2016</li> <li>4. Evolving national and regional partnerships- GRiSP governance suggestions</li> </ol>  |

Dr. Kei Otsuka, GRiSP OC Chair, offered a warm welcome to the GRiSP OC and PPMT members, guests, and observers and congratulated IRRI on the success of the recently-concluded 4<sup>th</sup> International Rice Congress in Bangkok. He acknowledged the presence of two newly-appointed independent experts to the OC, namely

Drs. Luciano Nass of Embrapa (Brazil) and Pascal Kosuth of Agropolis Foundation (France). He also expressed his admiration on the changes and progress happening in Thai agriculture.

### **Agenda Items 1 & 2. Approval of agenda items and minutes of the 2013 OC meeting**

After a brief self-introduction of all participants, the OC approved the proposed agenda items for the 2014 meeting and the minutes of the 2013 meeting held in Yaoundé, Cameroon.

### **Agenda Item 3. GRiSP Achievements 2014**

The six major GRiSP partner institutions, each represented by the members of the Program Planning and Management Team (PPMT), discussed the highlights of the centers' achievements for 2014.

#### **Africa Rice Center (AfricaRice)**

**Dr. Marco Wopereis**, DDG and Director, Research for Development of Africa Rice, reported that AfricaRice's 2011-2020 strategic plan includes the vision to increase rice self-sufficiency ratio to almost 90% in 2020 in Africa (compared to 60% in 2010), leading to a reduction in imports of about 5Mt per year. This will be supported by having a critical mass in important thematic areas to concentrate efforts, by connecting within the research community and development partners, and through communicating science to achieve impact.

Through GRiSP, AfricaRice has leveraged global knowledge through partnerships with CGIAR and non-CGIAR centers, with advance research institutions in Asia, Europe, and the US, and with the NARES, in the areas of breeding and genomics. Research activities have been concentrated in action sites known as rice sector development hubs scattered across different agro-ecological zones, and technologies are scaled to the national and global level through its partners. Through the AfricaRice breeding task force, breeding lines are being tested in multi-environment settings at various sites. ARICA or advanced rice for Africa, a quality label which can be renamed by the partners as they wish, has been released to the NARES partners. Other areas such as gender mainstreaming capacity building (training and scholarships), providing quality seeds and new varieties to the farmers, mechanization, and operationalizing national rice development strategies have been enabled through support from GRiSP.

#### **Centro Internacional de Agricultura Tropical (CIAT)**

**Dr. Joe Tohme**, Research AgroBiodiversity Area Director, explained that GRiSP has made it possible to preserve and safe keep CIAT germplasm at IRRI, targeted for later distribution to its partners. Thousands of materials were multiplied and harvested and will be sent to IRRI in 2015. Collaboration on harnessing genetic diversity (developing structured populations and specialized genetic stocks), varietal development through accelerating breeding and genetic gains, breeding climate-change ready varieties, and developing more stable genotypes through understanding of the environment (direct seeding, transplanting) are some of the activities done through GRiSP.

CIAT has a strong collaboration with IRRI through the Hybrid Rice Development Consortium (HRDC). Fondo Latinoamericano de Reservas or FLAR is committed to GRiSP's success through its efforts on agronomy and working with the right partners in the region to close the yield gap.

CIAT looks forward and invites everyone to the 12<sup>th</sup> International Rice Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean to be held on the last week of February, 2015 in Porto Alegre, Brazil.

## International Rice Research Institute (IRRI)

GRiSP remains the predominant vehicle for the achievement of impact from IRRI's research. In his presentation, **Dr. Matthew Morell**, Deputy Director General for Research, discussed the various thematic activities and their contributions.

- Theme 1 (*harnessing genetic diversity*) - the sequencing of 3000 rice genomes will enable GRiSP partners and global research community to explore and use rice diversity.
- Theme 2 (*varietal development*) - powerful technologies such as new tools and applications have been useful in achieving a high throughput SNP genotyping platform for breeding applications. Multi-environment testing (MET) was performed in 94 locations across 20 countries to decentralize testing and trial sites, avoid duplication, and maximize synergies. Breeding4Rice, a web-based management information system to manage the quantum of data from IRRI lines was introduced. Multiple stress tolerance (flooding, drought, salinity) product development- and product profiling were done. More germplasm were shared with partners through the hybrid rice consortium. Projects on healthier rice varieties (with added vitamin A, Zn, and Fe) were conducted in the Philippines, Bangladesh, Indonesia, and India.
- Theme 3 (*sustainable management of rice-based production systems*)- a global phenotyping network for key agronomic traits and response to major stress, and climate change adaptation was established; Crop manager and Rice Doctor which are decision-based tools for farmers and technicians were developed, tested , and released.
- Theme 4 (*mechanization, post harvest, grain quality*)- worked with groups to train people in collaboration with other centers; conducted regular scientific exchange on rice straw utilization and within the grain quality network.
- Theme 5 (*technology evaluation, targeting, and policy*)- household surveys on 12,000 farmers in 5 Asian countries were conducted to track the progress of GRiSP intermediate development outcomes (IDOs); monitoring and adoption studies of stress tolerant varieties in South Asia, development of a standard gender module for collecting gender disaggregated household data, product profiling, and market segmentation of rice in 5 Asia countries to complement the new restructured breeding program were conducted; web interfaces for downloading national, sub-national, and household survey data were developed; increased interaction and collaboration with CG and non-CG social scientists on M & E, impact assessment and tools and methods; used satellite information to understand what is going on in real time in production sites, with climate data and with changes in the season).
- Theme 6 (*capacity building*)- scholarships across the centers are on-going(31 current scholars, 40% women);, Rice Knowledge Bank, agricultural services training, and partnership for women's self-help groups in India were enhanced.

### Conclusion

- Technical progress across the portfolio is strong
- Focus on delivery and impact achievement has sharpened
- Major impact being realized with sub-1, drought genes, and in generating maturity classes that facilitate more productive and profitable production systems
- M & E and gender agendas revitalized
- Active and growing collaboration with CG and non-CG partners
- Portfolio and interactions continue to evolve strongly

## Cirad

According to **Dr. Nour Ahmadi**, Cirad Senior Scientist, there are more than 50 scientists involved in rice related research at Cirad working on themes 1 to 5, some of which are outposted to national and international organizations in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. From 2013 to 2014, 69 publications were published in peer-reviewed journals, 32 PhD students were supervised, three varieties were registered, and one software model has been produced.

Under the umbrella of GRiSP, Cirad has carried out the following research and collaborative activities:

- Genes for root development and architecture- undertaken through the PhD theses of a student from Vietnam
- Development of cold tolerant upland varieties done with African national partners
- Reclamation of grassland for rice cultivation in Laos through crop rotation and conservation agriculture
- New market for low grade rice with AfricaRice
- International workshops on root functional genomic advances and rice sector competitiveness
- Global Rice Phenotyping network for key agronomic traits and responses to major stresses funded through the GRiSP New Frontier project mechanism. Aside from IRRI and Cirad, this network involves Embrapa (Brazil), CAAS (China), PhilRice (Philippines), Flinders, Colorado, and Cornell universities (USA), and Syngenta

## IRD

IRD's activities are predominantly in GRiSP themes 1 & 2, as reported by **Dr. Alain Ghesquiere**, Director for Research. A number of comparative advantages and value adding due to GRiSP were cited, wherein IRD was able to participate and integrate the IRD research effort on rice in a global framework; had reinforced scientific links between GRiSP architects and NARES (AfricaRice); had developed joint research programs and projects; had opportunities through international laboratories, grants, and support of research teams to align tools and mechanisms of cooperation; was able to contribute to training and capacity building (PhDs Students); and had developed leverage effects for funding research actions (LabexAgro in Montpellier, French National Agency, and France Génomique projects).

IRD also leads a GRiSP New Frontier research project, MENERGEP, which covers genomics, gene discovery for stress tolerance, as well as hosting PhD students mostly from Africa and Latin America.

## JIRCAS

**Dr. Osamu Koyama**, JIRCAS Director for Research Strategy, elucidated JIRCAS's common mission to conduct collaborative research with CGIAR centers and NARES using its own fund and various external sources.

Current research programs contribute to GRiSP themes 1 to 5 on upgrading applications, gene discovery and breeding, and in global comparative studies. GRiSP provides opportunities for JIRCAS to be part of a global system through broader and organized partnership which enhances global scale exchange of scientific knowledge and results.

## Comments

1) What is the economical dimension of all these research efforts and how do we analyze this?

*Response:* GRiSP can forge proper links between genetic research and economic and trade models and look at prospects of food security using GIS, genetic analysis, and agronomy networks. GRiSP has a unique

opportunity to get these things moving. African countries are now heavily investing in the rice sector. Contributions from production to consumption and the whole value chain are being studied. GRiSP has also organized a workshop on policy and trade analysis to look into this aspect.

2) On the reclamation of grasslands in Laos as done by CIRAD, does it conflict with national policies on land use in terms of carbon sequestration, climate change, and increasing productivity?

*Response:* This study was done in collaboration with national partners in Laos, with a focus on improving productivity in upland systems. In using large-scale models, one of the GRiSP targets for 2035 is reduction on forest conversion but also encouraging increase in productivity by having a balanced approach.

3) Is GRiSP making sure that nothing is going by default, and that it has factored in adequate checks and balances? Why is there a downward trend in milestone achievement?

*Response:* Milestones have been established at the start of GRiSP. The downward trend in 2013 has been reversed, mainly because of improved explanation of definition and use of milestones to GRiSP staff.

4) What is the connection between improving yields and improving the lives of farmers? What has been GRiSP's contribution?

*Response:* There are a number of GRiSP technologies that increase farmers' yields. Case studies have confirmed a general positive correlation between increased yield and increased profitability.

5a) The purpose of GRiSP is to show integration. Should the presentations be done by institutions and seamlessly, and tackling big questions like economics, breeding, etc.?

5b) Meeting are time-bound and should be conducive so reporting should be structured. GRiSP Director should give an overall review followed by regional presentations to understand how GRiSP is making progress. This would enable the OC to make a judgment if GRiSP is moving as expected.

*Response:* In future meetings, the global theme leaders might be invited to present by thematic approach (or can be done by the PPMT themselves).

6) On integrating gene discovery and the breeding work, there should be correlation between genomic and phenotypic data.

*Response:* Linkage is very important so GRiSP should strive to access genetic information and use it for breeding programs; think about strategies in using genomics for breeding.

#### **Agenda Item 4. GRiSP External Evaluation**

**Dr. Sirkka Immonen**, Senior Evaluation Officer, Independent Evaluation Arrangement (IEA) of the Consortium Office, attended the GRiSP OC meeting and introduced the GRiSP External Evaluation which will be conducted beginning January 2015. The IEA had commissioned an independent review panel to look at overarching issues like management and governance, science, delivery towards impact, and partnerships. A reference group composed of OC and center board members, donor representatives, was also established.

**Dr. Derek Byerlee**, a world-renowned economist, has been appointed Chair of the review panel. He said that the reviewers will be focusing on big issues and analyzing value-adding from various partners working together. A combination of methods will be employed such as field visits, surveys, and interviews. The review panel will look at the program as a whole in terms of achievement of intermediate outcomes and

impacts, and other forward-looking issues. The terms of reference (TOR) of the panel have been finalized and a report will be available by July 2015. The panel will be working with the GRiSP Program Management Unit to have a repository of the required documents and make them available to the review team.

### **Agenda Item 5. GRiSP Update and Moving Towards GRiSP Phase II (2017 onwards)**

GRiSP phase I runs from 2011 to 2015 and all second generation CRPs are expected to commence in January, 2017. Hence, all CRPs were asked to submit an extension proposal until the end of 2016. The expected approval of the proposal would be on the 1st week of November. (NOTE : The GRiSP 2016 extension proposal was approved by the Fund Council on November 6).

Prior to the OC meeting, the PPMT conducted a two-day assessment on what the centers have accomplished because of GRiSP, what could have been done better, and what directions to take. **Bas Bouman** presented the following information to the Oversight Committee:

#### **What have been accomplished**

*Synergy.* The alignment of research agenda enhanced knowledge exchange across all GRiSP themes; collaborative tools were developed through the networks, and staff capacity was enhanced through scholarships and staff training in specific research areas across centers.

*Clear and functioning theme structure.* The themes are disciplinary-based, which proves conducive for collaboration.

*Outcome orientation.* Strong science is evident in the context of innovation and product development through pipeline approach (new initiatives), market, and consumer analyses. Good progress was seen in the development of Monitoring & Evaluation (M & E) and impact assessment methodologies along the impact pathway. Outcome and impact focus was sharpened, including the Impact Pathway and Theory of Change.

*Impact pathway* is a logical framework used to measure inputs, outputs, and outcomes against stated activities or occurrences. In particular, it illustrates a 'theory of change', demonstrating, for example, how technologies or services for development can bring about short, medium, and long term change that improves lives.

*Theory of change* is the causal (or cause-effect) logic, with sound theoretical underpinnings, that links research activities to the desired changes in the desired groups of people in a project or program. It describes how a project is supposed to work, the partnerships and networks necessary to achieve the changes, and the stakeholders and beneficiaries of the project.

## What works well and can be strengthened

*GRiSP Funding.* Despite initial growth and stability in Windows 1 & 2 funding, it dropped to lowest level in 2014 (and 2015...). The use of W1,2 funds can be more strategic and there should be enough flexibility to steer at GRiSP level. The use of funds for new frontier initiatives and competitive grants are very positive mechanisms, as well as the embedding of M&E and gender research. Scholarships across regions and centers will continue to be offered. A 2<sup>nd</sup> call for GRiSP scholars has generated 54 research topics and almost four hundred applicants and selection will commence in early 2015.

*GRiSP Themes.* There is a need to further strengthen collaboration among themes to create 'baskets of options' for specific production systems and foster global theme atmosphere. To be both innovative and to achieve impact, there should be a high degree of interdisciplinary work and interaction. Theme leaders need to be better resourced and empowered, and the role of the global theme leaders should be further clarified.

*Current GRiSP M&E and reporting.* There is weakness in the milestone system being used, as the product lines often did not have concrete milestones to develop products. Thus, achieving milestones became goals for scientists rather than working together to develop one main product. Milestones were defined based on existing projects and are very center-based but there is little or no reporting of milestones by the non-CGIAR partner centers. Cirad and IRD had requested for a formal assignment of responsibility for the implementation of GRiSP Phase II.

*GRiSP Visibility and Partners.* The challenge is to make GRiSP more visible (e.g., through branding) and its accomplishments properly documented and communicated. Define the current partnership arrangements and select strategic partners who would be truly involved.

*Governance.* GRiSP has the right governance structures through the Program Planning and Management Team (PPMT) and the Oversight Committee, (OC) and there is balance of independent and center representatives in the committee. The role of OC as advisory body should be clarified more.

## What directions to take in GRiSP II

*Have a strong GRiSP II and develop the broader concept of GRiSP.* Determine drivers of change, respond to priorities, goals, objectives, outcomes of CGIAR (Strategy and Results Framework); respond to the rice sector development priorities of partner countries and stakeholders, and have a focused agenda and strategic use of Window 1 & 2 funds.

*Improve empowerment of theme leaders.* Provide more resources and clarify their roles and responsibilities. Thematic workshops were already started in 2014 which fostered collaboration and generation of ideas. Previously earmarked allocations for new frontier projects, workshops, and partnership development activities should be lumped and made available to theme leaders to support thematic activities for 2015. Funds will be used to strengthen activities and coherence within GRiSP themes. A theme leaders meeting would be organized in 2015 to improve inter-theme collaboration.

## A truly global rice partnership

Bas Bouman has proposed some new ideas on convening a truly global rice partnership using CRP 3.3-GRiSP as an entry point, and involving the Council for Partnership for Rice Research in Asia (CORRA), the Africa Rice Center's National Experts' Committee (NEC), and CIAT's Fondo Latino Americano de Reservas (FLAR). Coordination with other advanced research institutions could be a role for Cirad, IRD or JIRCAS. This new concept will be further explored.

## Recommendations

- The OC enjoyed learning about the proposed much broader definition of GRiSP but recommended that the proposal be studied cautiously and in detail since it is an evolutionary concept and a potential game changer. They also suggested using a different name for the 'super GRiSP' concept to avoid confusion and preserve the GRiSP name that has been built already.
- The PPMT should flesh out two to three scenarios in the finalization of the phase 2, namely business as usual, evolutionary, and in between, so the OC would be able to grasp the pros and cons of each.
- Establish a community of practice with other commodity CRPs like maize, wheat, dryland cereals, grain legumes; and roots, tubers, and bananas. (Note: joint workshops on M & E and impact assessment with these CRPS were organized on the 1<sup>st</sup> week of December in Hyderabad, India).
- The Oversight Committee should meet again and be involved in the preparation of Plan of Work and Budget (POWB) for 2015 and GRiSP Phase II proposal.

*Note: As discussed during the OC closed session, the next OC meeting will be held on March 9-10, 2015 in Montpellier, France (to be hosted by Agropolis Foundation), to allow OC members to provide inputs on GRiSP Plan of Work and Budget for 2015 and GRiSP Phase II Proposal before they are submitted to the Consortium.*

## Comments/suggestions

- 1) On sustainability and increasing productivity of the resources and reducing the environmental footprint, how is impact at scale measured?

*Response:* The Sustainable Rice Platform (SRP) was established by UNEP and IRRI to mainstream and monitor the impact of technologies on the field. A long-term project, CORIGAP, funded by the SDC, is working on quantifying sustainability indicators.

- 2a) How does IRRI handle its 900 partners? For those items that are beyond the realms of GRiSP, what do we do with them? If there are national policies that do not support GRiSP activities, how do we segregate those things beyond our control?

*Response:* GRiSP identifies the assumptions and realizes what is beyond its zones of influence. It interacts with other CRPs that take care of other issues beyond GRiSP. On partnerships, details are found in the recently published GRiSP partnership report (copies shared with OC members).

- 3a) On targets and achievements, is GRiSP underestimating its targets? It might better to look at a range rather than set very specific targets.

- 3b) In reporting outcome of GRiSP, sustainability or climate change should be included in reporting the achievements, and it should be holistic rather than rice-centric. It was suggested that better metrics might be needed to improve the report or show the whole value chain in terms of products and progress; put partnerships in a value chain system by identifying who are the strategic partners and who are the research and development partners.

*Response:* These indicators were introduced by USAID (Feed the Futures initiative). GRiSP is attempting to improve the system by coming up with its own M & E system. GRiSP will engage with the



Institutional Learning and Change Initiative (ILAC) in 2015 to map all existing partnership arrangements.

**Other Matters: Planning for GRiSP II – activities and dates to remember**

- Dec/Jan 2015: CIAT Rice planning
- Jan 26-30, 2015: IRRI planning
- February 9-12, 2015: AfricaRice planning
- February 23-27, 2015: LAC Rice Conference (Porto Alegre, Brazil)
- March 9-10, 2015: GRiSP Oversight Committee Meeting (Montpellier, France)
- Senior research management meeting (Theme leaders, focal persons)- to be organized
- Stakeholder engagement (continues process)
- External review: preliminary report July 2015, final report October 2015

The meeting ended at 1700H.

