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THE RICE FUNCTIONAL GENOMICS (REFUGE) PLATFORM, AN INTERNATIONAL HOSTING PLATFORM FOR ELUCIDATING GENE FUNCTION USING RICE AS A MODEL SYSTEM

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REFUGE is an international hosting platform for the elucidation of gene function using rice as a model species. It offers international scientists, notably nonrice specialists, an access to know-how, bioinformatic, biological, and molecular resources, allowing the use of rice as a model system to investigate gene function through functional genomics strategies. PhD and postdoctoral researchers, notably from the South, are the first target beneficiaries of this initiative. Visiting scientists have access to REFUGE's know-how, including bioinformatic searches, preparation of T-DNA vectors, high-throughput production of rice transformants, molecular characterization of transformants, genotyping of insertion lines from local and international collections; growth, crossing, and phenotyping in containment greenhouse; and access to cell imaging and genotyping platforms. Hosted scientists have the opportunity to carry out one to several visits from 1 to 3 months, the REFUGE staff taking care of the materials produced between two visits. The REFUGE platform provides supervision of the hosted scientists or students and covers bench fees. Visitors have to find their own travel and subsistence funds. However, REFUGE can provide assistance to scientists notably from South countries, to find an appropriate funding source for travel and subsistence. Applications should be submitted at http://www.refuge-platform.org and will be readily examined by the REFUGE scientific committee. Funded by Agropolis Fondation, http://www.agropolis-fondation.fr/, REFUGE is a collaborative venture between the joint research unit DAP –INRA, CIRAD and Montpellier University and Agronomy School– and the 'Plant genome and development' laboratory at IRD and Perpignan University.