

1 **Interdomain interactions regulate the localization of a lipid transfer**  
2 **protein at ER-PM contact sites**

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12 **Running title:** C-terminal domains regulate RDGB localization

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35 **Keywords:** lipid transfer protein, membrane contact sites, inter-domain interactions,  
36 phosphoinositides, *Drosophila* photoreceptors

37

38 **Abstract**

39 During phospholipase C- $\beta$  (PLC- $\beta$ ) signalling in *Drosophila* photoreceptors, the  
40 phosphatidylinositol transfer protein (PITP) RDGB, is required for lipid transfer at endoplasmic  
41 reticulum (ER)-plasma membrane (PM) contact sites (MCS). Depletion of RDGB or its mis-  
42 localization away from the ER-PM MCS results in multiple defects in photoreceptor function.  
43 Previously, the interaction between the FFAT motif of RDGB and the integral ER protein dVAP-  
44 A was shown to be essential for accurate localization to ER-PM MCS. Here, we report that the  
45 FFAT/dVAP-A interaction alone is insufficient to localize RDGB accurately; this also requires  
46 the function of the C-terminal domains, DDHD and LNS2. Mutations in each of these domains  
47 results in mis-localization of RDGB leading to loss of function. While the LNS2 domain is  
48 necessary, it is not sufficient for the correct localization of RDGB, which also requires the C-  
49 terminal DDHD domain. The function of the DDHD domain is mediated through an  
50 intramolecular interaction with the LNS2 domain. Thus, interactions between the additional  
51 domains in a multi-domain PITP together lead to accurate localization at the MCS and  
52 signalling function.

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## 74 Introduction

75 The close approximation of intracellular membranes without fusion between them is emerging  
76 as a theme in cell biology (Gatta and Levine, 2017). Such apposition of membranes, referred  
77 to as membrane contact sites (MCS) can occur between multiple cellular organelles; most  
78 frequently, the endoplasmic reticulum (ER) which is the largest organelle, makes MCS  
79 with other cellular organelles including the plasma membrane (PM) (Cohen, Valm and  
80 Lippincott-Schwartz, 2018). ER-PM contact sites have been described in multiple eukaryotic  
81 cells, and are proposed to regulate a range of molecular processes including calcium influx  
82 and the exchange of lipids (Saheki and Camilli, 2017; Chen, Quintanilla and Liou, 2019).

83

84 The transfer of lipids between organelle membranes is a key function proposed for MCS. In the  
85 case of ER-PM contact sites, multiple lipids are thought to be transferred including  
86 phosphatidylserine (PS), phosphatidylinositol (PI), phosphatidic acid (PA), cholesterol and  
87 phosphatidylinositol 4-phosphate (PI4P) (Cockcroft and Raghu, 2018). These transfer  
88 activities are performed by several classes of lipid transfer proteins (LTPs). In order to carry  
89 out this function effectively, it is essential that these LTPs are accurately localized to ER-PM  
90 MCS, and several mechanisms that underlie this localization have been proposed (Alli-  
91 Balogun and Levine, 2019). LTPs frequently have multiple domains in addition to a lipid  
92 transfer domain. Some of these domains have been proposed to contribute to localization at  
93 the MCS but the *in vivo* function of several others is not clear. One group of LTPs named  
94 phosphatidylinositol transfer proteins (PITPs) mediate the specific transfer of PI between  
95 compartments. The first PITP identified and cloned was a protein with a single  
96 phosphatidylinositol transfer domain (PITPd) (Dickeson *et al.*, 1989). Since then multiple  
97 PITPs, with either single or multiple domains have been identified in various species [reviewed  
98 in (Carvou *et al.*, 2010)]. Importantly, in multi-domain PITPs, although the essential function  
99 of lipid transfer is conserved and restricted to the PITPd, the contribution of the additional  
100 domains to the regulation of PITPd activity *in vivo* is poorly understood.

101

102 *Drosophila* photoreceptors have emerged as an influential model system for the analysis of  
103 ER-PM contact sites (Yadav, Cockcroft and Raghu, 2016). Photoreceptors are polarized cells  
104 whose apical PM, also called rhabdomere, forms contact sites with the sub-microvillar  
105 cisternae (SMC), a specialized domain of the photoreceptor ER [Figure 1A]. The apical PM  
106 and the SMC are specialized to mediate sensory transduction through G-protein coupled  
107 Phospholipase C- $\beta$  (PLC- $\beta$ ) activation (Raghu, Yadav and Mallampati, 2012). PLC- $\beta$   
108 activation triggers a series of enzymes whose substrates and products are lipid  
109 intermediates of the "PIP<sub>2</sub> cycle" (Cockcroft and Raghu, 2016) that are distributed

110 between the apical PM and the SMC. Some of these lipid intermediates such as PI and PA  
111 need to be transported between the apical PM and the SMC. *Drosophila* photoreceptors  
112 express a large multidomain protein, **Retinal Degeneration B** (RDGB) that has a well-  
113 annotated PITPd (RDGB<sup>PITPd</sup>). Loss of function or hypomorphic mutants for *rdgB* represented  
114 by *rdgB*<sup>2</sup> and *rdgB*<sup>9</sup> alleles respectively, show defective electrical responses to light, retinal  
115 degeneration and defects in light activated PIP<sub>2</sub> turnover. RDGB<sup>PITPd</sup> has been shown to bind  
116 and transfer PI and PA *in vitro*, and is sufficient to support aspects of RDGB function *in vivo*  
117 (Yadav *et al.*, 2015). Interestingly, the RDGB protein is localized exclusively to the MCS  
118 between the apical PM and the SMC (Vihtelic *et al.*, 1993) [**Figure 1 A**], thus offering  
119 an excellent *in vivo* setting to understand the relationship between LTP activity at an ER-PM  
120 contact site, and its physiological function. RDGB is a large multidomain protein; in addition  
121 to the N-terminal PITPd, the RDGB protein also includes several other domains including an  
122 FFAT motif, a DDHD domain and LNS2 domain [**Figure 1 B- RDGB**]. Of these, the  
123 interaction of the FFAT motif with the ER integral protein, dVAP-A has been shown to be  
124 important for the localization and function of RDGB *in vivo* (Yadav *et al.*, 2018). However, the  
125 function of the two additional C-terminal domains: DDHD and LNS2 in the context of full  
126 length protein remain unknown. In cultured cells, the LNS2 domain of Nir2, the mammalian  
127 homologue of RDGB has been reported to have a role in localizing the protein to the PM  
128 (Kim *et al.*, 2013, 2015) but the physiological significance of this is not known.

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130 The additional 180 amino acid long DDHD domain was first noted in Nir2 (Lev *et al.*, 1999)  
131 and subsequently in the phosphatidic acid preferring phospholipase A1 (PLA1) family of  
132 proteins, first purified by Higgs & Glomset (Higgs and Glomset, 1994). This domain is named  
133 on the basis of 4 conserved amino acids D, D, H and D that are predicted to form a divalent  
134 metal binding site based on pattern of metal binding residues seen in phosphoesterase  
135 domains. In mammals, there are three members in Phosphatidic acid preferring  
136 phospholipase A1 family all of which possess the DDHD domain: PA-PLA<sub>1</sub>/DDHD1,  
137 KIAA072p/DDHD2 and p125/Sec23ip; mutations in DDHD2 have been found in patients with  
138 the neurodegenerative disease Hereditary spastic paraplegia (Pensato *et al.*, 2014; Nicita *et*  
139 *al.*, 2019) and those in DDHD1 with SPG28 (Tesson *et al.*, 2012). However, the cellular  
140 mechanism through which mutations in DDHD1 and DDHD2 lead to neurodegeneration  
141 remain unknown. Studies done on DDHD2 have shown that the DDHD domain in association  
142 with a motif called sterile alpha-motif (SAM) binds PI4P (Inoue *et al.*, 2012). This binding to  
143 PI4P has been shown to be essential for targeting this domain to Golgi and ERGIC  
144 compartments both of which are enriched in PI4P. Further, the first three D, D and H residues  
145 have been shown to be essential for the phospholipase activity of DDHD1 and KIAA072p.  
146 Another study (Klinkenberg *et al.*, 2014) on the DDHD domain of p125/Sec23ip shows that

147 the DDHD domain alone binds to weakly acidic lipids such as PA, PS, PIPs and PIP<sub>2</sub>s. The  
148 presence of a SAM motif along with the DDHD domain renders the specific binding to PIPs,  
149 PA and PS. However, the DDHD domain of p125 was also targeted to PI4P enriched Golgi  
150 membranes indicating the specificity of the DDHD domain to PI4P. However, to date there has  
151 been no study on the importance if any of the DDHD domain in the RDGB/Nir2 family of  
152 proteins for either localization or function.

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154 In this study, we report that in *Drosophila* photoreceptors, the FFAT motif is insufficient for  
155 accurately localizing RDGB at the ER-PM MCS, and also requires the presence of the C-  
156 terminal domains, DDHD and LNS2. Loss of the LNS2 domain of RDGB leads to both mis-  
157 localization of the protein away from ER-PM contact sites as well as loss of function.  
158 Additionally, mutation of the four conserved residues of the DDHD domain also leads to both  
159 mis-localization and loss of RDGB function *in vivo*. Lastly, we find that the DDHD domain  
160 physically interacts with the LNS2 domain and this interaction influences localization. Thus we  
161 hypothesize that interdomain interactions in the RDGB protein are required for accurate  
162 localization of RDGB to ER-PM junctions, and hence function *in vivo*.

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164

## 165 **Results**

166

### 167 **The PITPd and FFAT motif of RDGB is insufficient for RDGB function at ER-PM contact** 168 **sites**

169 When the PITPd of RDGB is expressed in photoreceptors, it is distributed diffusely in the cell  
170 body. In addition, in the context of the full-length protein, the FFAT motif has been found to be  
171 important for localizing RDGB at the ER-PM junction (Yadav *et al.*, 2018). Hence, we asked if  
172 expressing just the portion of RDGB that includes only the PITPd and the FFAT motif is  
173 sufficient to correctly localize the protein to ER-PM junctions. Towards this, we generated a  
174 truncated construct of RDGB removing everything C-terminal to the FFAT motif named as  
175 RDGB<sup>PITPd-FFAT</sup> [Figure 1 B- RDGB<sup>PITPd-FFAT</sup>], and expressed it in *rdgB*<sup>9</sup> photoreceptors  
176 [Supplemental data 1A]. We determined the localization of this protein by immunostaining  
177 with an antibody raised to the PITPd. Unlike full length RDGB which localized at the ER-PM  
178 junction, RDGB<sup>PITPd-FFAT</sup> was found to be mislocalized from the base of the rhabdomere  
179 [Figure 1 C] and distributed throughout the cell body. This indicates that while the FFAT motif  
180 is essential, it is not sufficient for accurate localization of RDGB at the base of the rhabdomere.  
181 RDGB is essential to support the levels of PIP<sub>2</sub> at the apical PM by transferring PI at the ER-  
182 PM junction (Yadav *et al.*, 2015). We tested if RDGB<sup>PITPd-FFAT</sup> could support the function of

183 RDGB in supporting PIP<sub>2</sub> levels at the apical PM. PIP<sub>2</sub> levels at the apical PM were quantified  
184 through the fluorescence of PH-PLCδ::GFP probe in the pseudopupil of the eye (Chakrabarti  
185 *et al.*, 2015). As previously reported we found that the resting level of PIP<sub>2</sub> at the apical PM  
186 of *rdgB*<sup>9</sup> was reduced and could be restored to wild type levels by reconstitution with a wild  
187 type RDGB transgene (Yadav *et al.*, 2015). When tested for the ability to rescue the reduced  
188 PIP<sub>2</sub> levels in *rdgB*<sup>9</sup> flies, RDGB<sup>PITPd-FFAT</sup> was found to rescue the defect only partially. As  
189 compared to *rdgB*<sup>9</sup> flies, PIP<sub>2</sub> levels were found to be higher in *rdgB*<sup>9</sup>; *GMR>rdgB*<sup>PITPd-FFAT</sup> than  
190 in *rdgB*<sup>9</sup> but was significantly lower than that of the wild type controls [Figure 1 D, E]. The  
191 expression levels of the PH-PLCδ::GFP probe were found to be similar across all genotypes,  
192 implying that the reduced fluorescence was a direct read out of the reduced PIP<sub>2</sub> levels at the  
193 ER-PM MCS [Supplemental data 1B]. Collectively, these results imply that the domains  
194 present C-terminus to the FFAT motif contribute to localizing RDGB correctly which then  
195 impact its function.

196

### 197 **Loss of LNS2 domain from RDGB leads to loss of *in vivo* function**

198 There are two well annotated domains C-terminal to the FFAT motif in RDGB: DDHD and  
199 LNS2. Of these, the LNS2 domain has previously been implicated in the membrane  
200 localization of Nir2, the mammalian orthologue of RDGB (Kim *et al.*, 2013, 2015). To  
201 understand if the C-terminal domains are essential for localization and function of RDGB, we  
202 removed the C-terminal of the protein from just before the start of the DDHD domain [Figure  
203 **1 B-RDGB**<sup>(DDHD-LNS2)Δ</sup>] and expressed this protein in *rdgB*<sup>9</sup> photoreceptors [*rdgB*<sup>9</sup>;  
204 *GMR>rdgB*<sup>(DDHD-LNS2)Δ</sup>] [Supplemental data 2A]. Immunolocalization experiments revealed  
205 that RDGB<sup>(DDHD-LNS2)Δ</sup> was not localized to the ER-PM contact site but was distributed  
206 throughout the cell body [Figure 2 A]. An important physiological output of phototransduction  
207 is the generation of an electrical response to light; this is typically measured using an  
208 electroretinogram (ERG) and the amplitude of the ERG is reduced in *rdgB* mutants. Further,  
209 we found that RDGB<sup>(DDHD-LNS2)Δ</sup> was unable to rescue the ERG phenotype of *rdgB*<sup>9</sup> [Figure 2  
210 **B, Supplemental data 2B]** and the PIP<sub>2</sub> levels in *rdgB*<sup>9</sup> flies expressing RDGB<sup>(DDHD-LNS2)Δ</sup> were  
211 comparable to that of *rdgB*<sup>9</sup> flies [Figure 2 C, Supplemental data 2C], although probe levels  
212 were found to be unaltered across all genotypes [Supplemental data 2D]. These findings  
213 imply that the presence of one or both of these domains is essential for correct localization  
214 and function of RDGB.

215

216 Since our data shows that loss of both domains together lead to complete loss of RDGB  
217 function we then went onto investigate the role played by each of these individual domains.  
218 Firstly, to test if the LNS2 domain in RDGB is required for localization, we deleted the LNS2

219 domain [Figure 1 B-RDGB<sup>LNS2Δ</sup>] and expressed the rest of the RDGB protein in  
220 photoreceptors of *rdgB*<sup>9</sup> flies (*rdgB*<sup>9</sup>; *GMR>rdgB*<sup>LNS2Δ</sup>) [Supplementary data 2E]. RDGB<sup>LNS2Δ</sup>  
221 was found to be completely mislocalized from the base of the rhabdomere, suggesting that  
222 this domain is indispensable for localization of RDGB [Figure 2 D]. We then performed ERG  
223 recordings to test if the LNS2 domain has a role in supporting RDGB function *in vivo*. We  
224 found that the electrical response to light measured in RDGB<sup>LNS2Δ</sup> expressing photoreceptors  
225 was as low as that in *rdgB*<sup>9</sup> [Figure 2 E, Supplemental data 2F]. Similarly, PM PIP<sub>2</sub> levels in  
226 *rdgB*<sup>9</sup> reconstituted with RDGB<sup>LNS2Δ</sup> (*rdgB*<sup>9</sup>; *GMR>rdgB*<sup>LNS2Δ</sup>) was found to be as low as in  
227 *rdgB*<sup>9</sup> photoreceptors [Figure 2 F, Supplemental data 2G] although probe levels were equal  
228 across all genotypes [Supplemental data 2H]. These results collectively support an  
229 indispensable role for the LNS2 domain in supporting RDGB localization and function *in vivo*.

230

### 231 **The LNS2 domain is an apical PM binding signal in RDGB**

232 Our *in vivo* analysis reveals that loss of LNS2 domain severely affects RDGB localization and  
233 function at ER-PM MCS. While the integral ER membrane protein dVAP-A has been previously  
234 implicated in localizing RDGB to the MCS by interacting with the latter's FFAT motif, we  
235 questioned what additional factors might be contributing for accurate localization of RDGB at  
236 the ER-PM MCS. For this we developed a sub cellular fractionation assay and found that in  
237 *Drosophila* photoreceptors, RDGB is a membrane associated protein which co-fractionates  
238 with the membrane marker, dVAP-A [Figure 3 A, A']. However, when the LNS2 domain is  
239 deleted from RDGB, the protein RDGB<sup>LNS2Δ</sup> now mainly co-fractionates with the cytosolic  
240 protein tubulin. This implies that the LNS2 domain is essential for membrane association of  
241 RDGB and its loss from the protein makes RDGB cytosolic [Figure 3 B, B'].

242

243 While our sub-cellular fractionation assay reveals that the LNS2 domain is essential for  
244 membrane association of RDGB, it does not identify the cellular membrane to which the  
245 domain is targeted. To understand this, we cloned the LNS2 domain alone, tagged to GFP  
246 (LNS2::GFP) and expressed it in S2R+ cells. Under these conditions, LNS2::GFP was found  
247 to localize primarily to the PM with some punctate structures within the cell [Figure 3 C, D, E].  
248 To test if the LNS2 domain is also able to localize to the PM in photoreceptors, we expressed  
249 LNS2::GFP in wild type photoreceptors [Figure 3 F]. Unlike GFP which showed a completely  
250 diffuse distribution in the photoreceptor cell body, LNS2::GFP was found to be localized very  
251 specifically to the rhabdomeres, i.e. the apical PM [Figure 3 G]. It is important to note that the  
252 photoreceptors of *Drosophila* are highly polarized cells and exhibit strikingly structural  
253 differences in the arrangement of its apical vs basolateral PM. While the LNS2 domain  
254 associates to the PM in unpolarised S2R+ cells, (similar to what has been reported for the  
255 LNS2 domain of Nir2), it localizes exclusively to the apical PM and not the basolateral PM in

256 polarized photoreceptor cells implying underlying mechanisms which allow this preferential  
257 binding.

258

### 259 **The DDHD domain is required for normal localization and function of RDGB.**

260 If the FFAT motif is essential for interaction with the ER (via dVAP-A) and the LNS2 domain  
261 with the apical PM at the ER-PM MCS of *Drosophila* photoreceptors, then what is the function  
262 of the DDHD domain, present just N-terminal to the LNS2 domain? To determine if this domain  
263 is essential for the function of RDGB, we at first checked if at all the residues which give the  
264 domain its identity and nomenclature are present in RDGB. For this, we aligned the DDHD  
265 domain of PA-PLA1 with that of RDGB and determined that all four residues D, D, H and D  
266 are indeed also conserved in RDGB [Figure 4 A]. To check if these conserved residues are  
267 functionally important we mutated these 4 residues each to alanine [Figure 1 B- RDGB<sup>DDHD/4A</sup>]  
268 in the full length protein, expressed it in fly photoreceptors [Supplemental data 3A] and  
269 checked for its localization. RDGB<sup>DDHD/4A</sup> was found to be diffusely distributed and not localized  
270 to the base of the rhabdomere [Figure 4 B]. Thus the conserved residues of the DDHD domain  
271 are essential to localize RDGB to ER-PM MCS.

272

273 Since altered localization leads to defects in RDGB function, we then tested if mutation of  
274 these conserved residues in the full length protein also had a similar impact. We found the  
275 electrical response to light in *rdgB*<sup>9</sup> photoreceptors expressing RDGB<sup>DDHD/4A</sup> was significantly  
276 lower than that of wild type [Figures 4 C, D]. Similarly, we found that the PIP<sub>2</sub> levels in *rdgB*<sup>9</sup>  
277 photoreceptors reconstituted with RDGB<sup>DDHD/4A</sup> were as low as in *rdgB*<sup>9</sup> [Figures 4 E , F],  
278 although probe levels were equivalent in all genotypes [Supplemental data 3B]. These  
279 results collectively suggest that the DDHD domain is required for the correct localization and  
280 normal function of RDGB.

281

### 282 **The DDHD domain interacts with the LNS2 domain**

283 Our *in vivo* data shows that mutations in the conserved residues of the DDHD domain impact  
284 localization and function of the full length protein. To understand the function of the DDHD  
285 domain as a whole, we expressed an mCherry tagged version of the DDHD domain in S2R+  
286 cells. We found that DDHD domain showed a diffuse distribution in the majority of cells, while  
287 in some cells a few punctate structures were also observed [Figure 5 A, B, C]. Since there  
288 are now two individual domains, each of which when mutated leads to altered localization and  
289 loss of function, how do they contribute to the localization of RDGB? To analyze this, we  
290 generated an mCherry::DDHD-LNS2 construct and expressed it in S2R+ cells. In sharp  
291 contrast to the diffuse localization of the DDHD domain, mCherry::DDHD-LNS2 was found to  
292 have a punctate distribution very close to the PM. [Figure 5 D, E, F]. Likewise, the primarily



293 PM localization of the isolated LNS2 domain was also altered. These findings suggest that the  
294 DDHD domain can modulate the localization of the LNS2 domain when present in *cis*.

295

296 One of the possible ways via which the DDHD domain can modulate the localization of the  
297 LNS2 domain is via physical interaction. To understand if indeed this is true, we co-expressed  
298 mCherry tagged DDHD domain (mCherry::DDHD) in S2R+ cells along with GFP tagged LNS2  
299 domain (LNS2::GFP). When we immunoprecipitated the DDHD domain using an mCherry  
300 antibody, we could detect the LNS2 domain in the pulled down fraction implying physical  
301 interaction between these two domains [Figure 5 G, H].

302

## 303 Discussion

304

305 The presence of multiple domains in LTPs is hypothesized to enable their correct localization  
306 at MCS. These domains are conceptualized as independent units each with a unique property  
307 contributing to optimal lipid transfer function at MCS. A similar model has been proposed for  
308 the PITPs, a specific group of LTPs that can transfer PI at ER-PM junctions (Kim *et al.*, 2013,  
309 2015). However, in the case of *Drosophila* RDGB, a multidomain PITP, it has been noted that  
310 re-expression of just RDGB<sup>PITPd</sup> which performs lipid transfer *in vitro*, in a null mutant  
311 background, is sufficient to rescue key phenotypes *in vivo* suggesting the sufficiency of the  
312 RDGB<sup>PITPd</sup> in supporting RDGB function. A more recent study has however shown that  
313 while RDGB<sup>PITPd</sup> can rescue key phenotypes, it is incapable of supporting lipid turn over during  
314 high rates of PLC- $\beta$  signalling (Yadav *et al.*, 2018), emphasizing the importance of ensuring a  
315 sufficiently high concentration of RDGB at the ER-PM contact site in photoreceptors [Figure  
316 6 A, B].

317

318 How is RDGB accurately localized such that it can be concentrated at the ER-PM MCS? It has  
319 previously been demonstrated (Yadav *et al.*, 2018) that an interaction between the FFAT motif  
320 and dVAP-A is essential for the normal localization and function of RDGB. In this study,  
321 surprisingly, we found that an RDGB protein with only the PITPd (for function) and the FFAT  
322 motif (for ER anchoring) was (i) mislocalized away from the base of the rhabdomere and (ii)  
323 unable to restore RDGB function. These observations imply that additional regions of the  
324 RDGB protein, C-terminal to the FFAT motif are functionally important. To the C-terminus of  
325 the FFAT motif lies the DDHD and LNS2 domains. We observed that loss of these domains  
326 together from full length RDGB led to mislocalization and complete loss of function [Figure 6  
327 C]. Additionally, our findings that mutation of the DDHD domain or loss of the LNS2 domain,  
328 completely mislocalizes RDGB away from the base of the rhabdomeres and also abrogates

329 RDGB function support a role for each of these domains individually in the localization and  
330 function of RDGB. The LNS2 domain when expressed by itself localized to the PM in cultured  
331 *Drosophila* cells and specifically to the apical PM in photoreceptors. These data strongly  
332 support the function of the LNS2 domain as a PM localization signal. Although previous studies  
333 have implicated the LNS2 domain of Nir2, the mammalian ortholog of RDGB, in localization to  
334 the PM (Kim *et al.*, 2013, 2015), our data are the first demonstration of the requirement of this  
335 domain in supporting physiological function *in vivo*. Interestingly, when expressed in  
336 photoreceptors, the LNS2 domain localized only to the apical PM (and not the basolateral PM)  
337 suggesting a unique apical domain interaction partner that localizes it here. Studies on Nir2  
338 have suggested the LNS2 domain binds PA (Kim *et al.*, 2013); while we also found that the  
339 LNS2 domain of RDGB also binds PA and PS [**Supplemental data 4A**], neither of these lipids  
340 is unique to or enriched in the apical PM. Thus the signal through which the LNS2 domain  
341 interacts specifically with the apical PM remains to be determined.

342

343 If the FFAT motif of RDGB mediates its interaction with dVAP-A and the LNS2 domain with the  
344 PM, what role does the DDHD domain serve in the protein? Although the DDHD domain was  
345 first reported in Nir2 (Lev *et al.*, 1999), its function in this protein has not been described.  
346 However, studies of mammalian PA-PLA1 have implicated the DDHD domain in localization  
347 and function (Inoue *et al.*, 2012; Klinkenberg *et al.*, 2014) but the mechanism has not been  
348 discovered. Our finding that mutation of the D, D, H and D residues of this domain to 4A in full  
349 length RDGB led to mis-localization support a role for this domain in the correct localization of  
350 RDGB. Surprisingly, and in sharp contrast to the LNS2 domain, when expressed by itself, the  
351 DDHD domain did not localize to the PM but showed a diffuse cytosolic distribution [**Figure 5**  
352 **A, B, C**]. Thus, while the DDHD domain is essential for PM localization of RDGB, this domain  
353 in itself is not sufficient and cannot act as a primary membrane targeting signal. Interestingly,  
354 we found that when co-expressed with the LNS2 domain, the DDHD domain was able to alter  
355 the localization of the LNS2 domain and in immunoprecipitation experiments, the DDHD and  
356 LNS2 domains were able to physically interact [**Figure 5 H**]. These two findings strongly  
357 suggest that the DDHD domain is able to influence the function of the LNS2 domain and it is  
358 likely that through this mechanism it influences the localization of RDGB, rather than a direct  
359 role in membrane localization [**Figure 6 A, C**]. Interestingly, in the case of mammalian DDHD2,  
360 the DDHD domain appears to act in conjunction with the adjacent SAM motif (Inoue *et al.*,  
361 2012). It is noteworthy that the DDHD domain in RDGB interacts with and influences the  
362 localization of the LNS2 domain, a domain that binds PA (this study); this has also been shown  
363 for the LNS2 domain of Nir2 (Kim *et al.*, 2013). Interestingly the only other known DDHD  
364 domain containing proteins are the family of PA preferring phospholipase A1 enzymes; the  
365 significance of this observation is unknown but may reflect the importance of DDHD domains

366 in some classes of PA binding proteins. The molecular mechanism by which the DDHD domain  
367 influences the function of the LNS2 domain in localizing RDGB to MCS remains to be  
368 determined. However our findings on the role of a wild type DDHD domain in preventing retinal  
369 degeneration provide an insight into the cellular mechanisms that could explain the  
370 neurodegenerative phenotype seen in spastic paraplegias, in patients carrying mutations in  
371 human DDHD1 and DDHD2.

372

373 In summary, our study identifies the C-terminal domains of RDGB that play a key role in its  
374 localization and hence function. We define a novel intramolecular interaction between these  
375 domains that is required to facilitate accurate localization of RDGB at ER-PM contact sites.  
376 More generally, our study provides a framework for understanding the localization of  
377 multidomain PITPs at MCS and their function *in vivo*.

378

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384 A antibody.

385

## 386 **Materials and methods**

387

### 388 **Fly stocks**

389 All fly stocks were maintained at 25<sup>0</sup>C incubators with no internal illumination. Flies were raised  
390 on standard corn meal media containing 1.5% yeast. UAS-Gal4 system was used to drive  
391 expression in the transgenic flies.

392

### 393 **Molecular Biology**

394 BDGP gold clone 09970 containing the *rdgB*-RA transcript was used as the parent vector for  
395 making various constructs of RDGB used for the experiments. The cDNA coding region  
396 corresponding to RDGB<sup>PITPd-FFAT</sup> (amino acids 1-472) was subcloned into pUAST-attB by using  
397 the restriction enzymes *NotI* and *XbaI* (NEB). Similarly, for making RDGB<sup>(DDHD-LNS2) $\Delta$</sup>  the cDNA  
398 corresponding to amino acids 1-655 was amplified, and for RDGB<sup>LNS2 $\Delta$</sup>  the cDNA  
399 corresponding to amino acids 1-1000 was amplified and then individually subcloned in *NotI*  
400 and *XbaI* digested pUAST-attB. For cloning of RDGB<sup>DDHD/4A</sup>, mutations were introduced in the  
401 *rdgB* cDNA corresponding to amino acid numbers 776, 872, 894 and 902. The resulting mutant  
402 gene *rdgB*<sup>DDHD/4A</sup> where the 4 residues were substituted to alanine was then subcloned *in NotI*

403 and *Xba*I digested pUAST-attB. To clone the LNS2 domain alone, the cDNA of RDGB  
404 corresponding to amino acids 947-1259 was subcloned in pJFRC::GFP vector using the  
405 restriction enzymes *Bgl*II and *Not*I (NEB). A flexible linker of Gly(G)-Ser(S) of the sequence G-  
406 G-S-G-G-G-S-G-G-G-S-G-G was introduced between the LNS2 domain and GFP to allow  
407 independent and efficient folding of the two proteins. For cloning of the DDHD domain, the  
408 cDNA of RDGB corresponding to amino acids 730-913 was subcloned in *Bgl*II and *Xho*I  
409 digested pUAST-attB-mCherry with the flexible linker sequence present between mCherry and  
410 the DDHD domain. The DDHD-LNS2 construct was cloned by amplifying the cDNA  
411 corresponding to the amino acids 730-1259 of RDGB and tagging it to mCherry in *Bgl*II and  
412 *Xho*I digested pUAST-attB-mCherry, with the flexible linker sequence present between the  
413 mCherry and the DDHD domain

414

#### 415 **Cell culture, transfection and immunofluorescence**

416 S2R<sup>+</sup> cells were cultured in Schneider's insect medium (HiMedia) supplemented with 10%  
417 Fetal Bovine Serum and with antibiotics Penicillin and Streptomycin. Cells were transfected  
418 using Effectene (Qiagen) as per manufacturer's protocol. Post 24 hours of transfection, cells  
419 were fixed with 4% paraformaldehyde (Electron Microscopy Sciences) and imaged to observe  
420 for GFP or mCherry fluorescence using a 60X 1.4 NA objective, in Olympus FV 3000  
421 microscope

422

#### 423 **Western Blotting**

424 Heads of one day old flies were homogenised in 2X Laemmli sample buffer, and boiled at 95<sup>o</sup>C  
425 for 5 minutes. The samples were then run on a SDS-PAGE gel, and transferred on to a  
426 nitrocellulose membrane [Hybond-C Extra; (GE Healthcare, Buckinghamshire, UK)], with the  
427 help of a semi-dry transfer apparatus (BioRad, California, USA). The membrane was then  
428 blocked using 5% Blotto (sc-2325, Santa Cruz Biotechnology, Texas, USA) in Phosphate-  
429 buffered saline (PBS) with 0.1% Tween 20 (Sigma Aldrich) (PBST) for 2 hrs at room  
430 temperature (RT). The membrane was then incubated with the respective primary antibody,  
431 overnight at 4<sup>o</sup>C, using the appropriate dilutions [anti-RDGB (lab generated), 1:4000; anti-  
432 dVAP-A (kind gift from Dr. Girish Ratnaparkhi, IISER Pune), 1:3000; anti- $\alpha$ -tubulin-E7 (DSHB,  
433 Iowa, USA), 1:4000; anti-syntaxinA-8C3 (DSHB, Iowa, USA), 1:1000; anti-GFP (sc-9996),  
434 1:2000]. Following this, the membrane was washed in PBST thrice, and incubated with the  
435 appropriate secondary antibody (Jackson Immunochemicals; dilution used: 1:10,000) coupled  
436 to horseradish peroxidase, at RT for 2 hrs. The blots were visualized using ECL (GE  
437 Healthcare), and imaged in a LAS4000 instrument.

438

439

## 440 **Immunostaining**

441 For immunohistochemistry, retinae of one-day old flies were dissected under bright light in  
442 PBS. The samples were then fixed using 4% paraformaldehyde (Electron Microscopy  
443 Sciences) in PBS with 1 mg/ml saponin (Sigma Aldrich) for 30 minutes at RT. Post fixation,  
444 samples were washed thrice with PBS having 0.3% Triton X-100 (PBTX) and blocked using  
445 5% Fetal Bovine Serum (ThermoFisher Scientific) in PBTX for 2 hrs at RT. The samples were  
446 then incubated overnight with the appropriate antibody in blocking solution at 4°C [anti-RDGB,  
447 (1:300); anti-GFP (1:5000), ab13970 (Abcam Cambridge, UK)]. Samples were then washed  
448 thrice with PBTX and incubated with the secondary antibody [Alexa Fluor 633 anti-rat  
449 (A21094), anti-chick (A21103), IgG (Molecular Probes)] at 1:300 dilution for 4 hrs at RT. For  
450 staining of the F-actin, Alexa Fluor 568–Phalloidin (Invitrogen, A12380) at 1:200 dilution was  
451 added during incubation with the secondary antibody. Samples were then washed in PBTX  
452 thrice and mounted with 70% glycerol in PBS. The whole-mounted preparations were imaged  
453 under 60X 1.4 NA objective, in Olympus FV 3000 microscope.

454

## 455 **Co-immunoprecipitation**

456 S2R+ cells were co-transfected with mCherry::DDHD and LNS2::GFP for 48 hours, and lysed  
457 in ice-cold Protein Lysis Buffer [50mM Tris-Cl, 1mM EGTA, 1mM EDTA, 1% Triton X-100,  
458 50mM NaF, 0.27 M Sucrose, 0.1%  $\beta$ -Mercaptoethanol]. 10% of the lysate was aliquoted to  
459 be used as input. The remaining lysate was split into two equal parts. To one part, anti-mCherry  
460 antibody (Thermo Fisher Scientific PA5-34974), (1.6 ug)] was added, and to the other part, a  
461 corresponding amount of control IgG (CST, 2729S) was added, and incubated overnight at  
462 4°C. On the next day, Protein-G sepharose beads (GE Healthcare) were spun at 13000X g for  
463 1 minute, and then washed with Tris-buffered saline (TBS), twice. The beads were then  
464 incubated with 5% Bovine Serum Albumin (BSA) (HiMedia) in TBS with 0.1% Tween-20 (TBST)  
465 for 2 hrs at 4°C. Equal amounts of blocked beads were then added to each sample, and  
466 incubated at 4°C for another 2 hrs. The immunoprecipitates were then washed twice with TBST  
467 containing  $\beta$ -Mercaptoethanol, and 0.1 mM EGTA for 5 minutes. The supernatant was then  
468 removed, and the beads were boiled in 2X Laemmli sample buffer for western blotting.

469

## 470 **Sub-cellular fractionation assay**

471 The assay was performed as described by Sanxaridis et al., 2007 with minor modifications  
472 (Sanxaridis *et al.*, 2007). Briefly, snap-frozen *Drosophila* heads were homogenised in ice-cold  
473 homogenisation buffer A (30 mM NaCl, 20 mM HEPES, 5 mM EDTA, pH=7.5). 10% of  
474 homogenate, representing the total head lysate, was directly taken for western blotting. The  
475 remaining homogenate was centrifuged at 5000 rpm for 5 minutes at 4°C to remove all  
476 chitinous material. The pellet was re-homogenized in the buffer to redeem any remaining

477 membranous component from the cell ghost. This was done twice, post which the homogenate  
478 was spun at 100,000X g for 30 minutes, at 4<sup>0</sup>C to separate the entire membranous component  
479 from the cytosolic fraction. The pellet was reconstituted in buffer A. The re-suspended pellet  
480 representing the membrane fraction, and the supernatant representing the cytosolic fraction,  
481 were then individually used for doing western blotting.

482

### 483 **Lipid overlay assay**

484 S2R+ cells were transfected with pJFRC-LNS2::GFP and pJRFC::GFP for 48 hours, following  
485 which cells were lysed with Protein Lysis Buffer (50 mM Tris-Cl, 1 mM EGTA, 1 mM EDTA, 1%  
486 Triton X-100, 50 mM NaF, 0.27 M Sucrose, 0.1%  $\beta$ -Mercaptoethanol). Commercially available  
487 PIP strips (Echelon Biosciences, P-6001) were blocked using 5% BSA (HiMedia) in TBST for  
488 2 hours at RT. Following this, the strips were incubated overnight at 4<sup>0</sup>C with the remaining  
489 cell lysate. Next the membranes were washed extensively 5 times with 0.1% TBST and then  
490 incubated with anti-GFP antibody [(sc-9996), 1:2000] at RT for 2 hours. The membranes were  
491 then probed with HRP-conjugated anti-mouse IgG (Jackson Immunochemicals; 1:10,000) and  
492 binding was detected using ECL (GE Healthcare) in a LAS4000 instrument.

493

### 494 **Electrophysiology**

495 Anaesthetised flies were immobilized at the end of a pipette tip by applying a drop of colourless  
496 nail polish on the proboscis. For recordings, GC 100F-10 borosilicate glass capillaries  
497 (640786, Harvard Apparatus, MA) were pulled to form electrodes and then filled with 0.8%  
498 (w/v) NaCl. The reference electrode was placed on the centre of the eye and the ground  
499 electrode on the thorax to obtain voltage changes post stimulation. The protocol for recording  
500 involved dark adapting the flies for 5 minutes initially, following which they were shown green  
501 flashes of light for 2 secs (10 times), and 12 secs of recovery time in dark between the two  
502 flashes. Voltage changes obtained were amplified using DAM50 amplifier (SYS-DAM50, WPI,  
503 FL), and recorded using pCLAMP10.7. Analysis was done using Clampfit 10.7 (Molecular  
504 Devices, CA). For analysis, the average of 10 recordings was taken for per fly.

505

### 506 **Deep pseudopupil imaging**

507 The imaging is done with flies expressing a single copy of PH-PLC $\delta$ ::GFP (PH domain of  
508 PLC $\delta$ , a PIP<sub>2</sub> biosensor, tagged to GFP) driven by the transient receptor (*trp*) promoter of flies.  
509 Flies were anaesthetised and immobilized at the end of a pipette tip using a drop of colourless  
510 nail polish. The flies were then placed on the stage of an Olympus IX71 microscope, and the  
511 fluorescent pseudopupil focussed using a 10X objective lens. For imaging the deep  
512 pseudopupil, the flies were first adapted to red light for 6 minutes, following which a blue flash  
513 of 90 msec was given. The emitted fluorescence was captured, and its intensity was measured

514 using Image J from NIH (Bethesda, Maryland, USA). Quantification of the fluorescence  
515 intensity was done by measuring the intensity values per unit area of the pseudopupil. The  
516 values are represented as mean +/- s.e.m.

517

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613

614

## 615 **Figure Legends**

616 **Figure 1: The PITPd and FFAT motif are insufficient for accurate localization of**  
617 **RDGB at ER-PM junctions in *Drosophila* photoreceptors.**

618 A. The *Drosophila* eye is composed of repeating units called the ommatidia each of which  
619 includes photoreceptor cells. Cross section of an individual photoreceptor is shown. The  
620 apical PM is thrown into numerous microvillar projections collectively termed as the  
621 rhabdomere, while the modified smooth ER compartment called Sub Microvillar Cisternae  
622 (SMC) is present at a distance of approximately ~10 nm from it. Expanded view of a

623 membrane contact site is depicted. Rhabdomere and SMC membranes are marked which  
624 form the ER-PM contact site. dVAP-A and RDGB protein with its individual domains are  
625 shown. Domains whose function is investigated here are marked with ?. Dotted arrow  
626 indicated the proposed movement of the PITPd to transfer phosphatidylinositol (PI) from  
627 the SMC to the PM.

628 B. Domain structure of RDGB and the list of constructs generated in this study. RDGB  
629 protein is 1284 amino acid long and contains three domains-PITPd (red), DDHD (blue) and  
630 LNS2 (yellow), a FFAT motif (green). The length of the protein is marked on each of the  
631 construct. Individual deletion constructs of RDGB used in this manuscript are depicted.  
632 RDGB<sup>DDHD/4A</sup> represents the full length RDGB where each of the conserved residues  
633 (D,D,H and D) in the DDHD domain has been mutated to alanine [Domain structure of  
634 RDGB drawn using Illustrator for Biological Sequences (IBS) software;  
635 <http://ibs.biocuckoo.org/>].

636 C. Confocal images of retinae obtained from flies of the mentioned genotypes.  
637 Transverse sections of an individual ommatidium are shown. Red represents phalloidin  
638 which marks the rhabdomeres and green represents immunostaining with an antibody to  
639 RDGB. Scale bar= 5  $\mu$ m.

640 D. Representative images of fluorescent deep pseudopupil from 1 day old flies of the  
641 mentioned genotypes expressing the PH-PLC $\delta$ ::GFP probe.

642 E. Quantification of the fluorescent deep pseudopupil (A.U.=Arbitrary Units). Y-axis  
643 denotes the mean intensity per unit area  $\pm$ s.e.m.. Individual genotypes depicted are  
644 marked. n $\geq$ 10 flies per genotype (\*\*P<0.001, two tailed unpaired t-test).

645

646 **Figure 2: The DDHD and LNS2 domains of RDGB are indispensable to support full**  
647 **RDGB function.**

648 A. Confocal images of retinae obtained from flies expressing RDGB<sup>(DDHD-LNS2) $\Delta$</sup>  and  
649 controls. Transverse sections of an individual ommatidium are shown. Red represents  
650 phalloidin which marks the rhabdomeres and green represents immunostaining for the  
651 RDGB protein. Scale bar= 5  $\mu$ m.

652 B. Quantification of the light response from 1 day old flies of RDGB<sup>(DDHD-LNS2) $\Delta$</sup>  and  
653 controls. Y-axis represents mean amplitude (mV)  $\pm$ s.e.m. n=10 flies per genotype  
654 (\*\*P<0.001, ns= not significant; two tailed unpaired t-test).

655 C. Quantification of the fluorescence intensity of the deep pseudopupil of RDGB<sup>(DDHD-  
656 LNS2) $\Delta$</sup>  and controls. (A.U. =Arbitrary Units). n=10 flies per genotype. Y-axis denotes the  
657 mean intensity per unit area  $\pm$ s.e.m. (\*\*P<0.001, two tailed unpaired t-test).

658 D. Confocal images of retinae obtained from flies expressing RDGB<sup>LNS2 $\Delta$</sup>  and controls.  
659 Transverse sections of an individual ommatidium are shown. Red represents phalloidin

660 which marks the rhabdomeres and green represents immunostaining for RDGB. Scale bar=  
661 5  $\mu\text{m}$ .

662 E. Quantification of the light response from 1 day old flies expressing RDGB<sup>LNS2 $\Delta$</sup>  and  
663 controls. Each point on Y-axis represents mean amplitude  $\pm$ s.e.m., n $\geq$ 7 flies per genotype  
664 (\*\*\*) - P<0.001, ns= not significant; two tailed unpaired t-test).

665 F. Quantification of the fluorescence intensity of the deep pseudopupil from 1 day old flies  
666 expressing RDGB<sup>LNS2 $\Delta$</sup>  and controls. Y-axis denotes the mean intensity per unit area (A.U.  
667 =Arbitrary Units)  $\pm$ s.e.m., n=10 flies per genotype (\*\*\*) P<0.001, two tailed unpaired t-test).

668

669 **Figure 3: The LNS2 domain is an apical PM targeting signal.**

670 A. Representative immunoblot showing fractionation of RDGB between the membrane  
671 and cytosolic fractions from *Drosophila* heads. dVAP-A, an ER integral protein marks the  
672 membrane fraction, while the soluble protein tubulin represents the cytosolic fraction  
673 [THL=Total Head Lysate, MF=Membrane fraction, CF=Cytosolic fraction] (N=3).

674 A'. Quantification showing the relative enrichment of RDGB in membrane and cytosolic  
675 fractions. The Y-axis, denoting the relative enrichment, is calculated as the ratio of RDGB  
676 in each fraction to the sum total of RDGB in both membrane and cytosolic fractions.

677 B. Representative immunoblot showing fractionation of RDGB<sup>LNS2 $\Delta$</sup>  between the  
678 membrane and cytosolic fractions from *Drosophila* heads. dVAP-A, an ER integral protein  
679 represents the membrane fraction, while the soluble protein tubulin represents the cytosolic  
680 fraction. [THL=Total Head Lysate, MF=Membrane fraction, CF=Cytosolic fraction] (N=3).

681 B'. Quantification showing the relative enrichment of RDGB<sup>LNS2 $\Delta$</sup>  in membrane and cytosolic  
682 fractions. The Y-axis, denoting the relative enrichment, is calculated as the ratio of  
683 RDGB<sup>LNS2 $\Delta$</sup>  in each fraction to the sum total of RDGB<sup>LNS2 $\Delta$</sup>  in both membrane and cytosolic  
684 fractions.

685 C. Confocal images of S2R+ cells transfected with pJFRC-GFP or pJFRC-LNS2::GFP.  
686 Green represents signal from GFP. The white line indicated the region of the cells selected  
687 for the line scan quantified in D.

688 D. Line scan profiles showing the fluorescence intensity of GFP distributed along the line  
689 marked in C. Y-axis is the intensity of fluorescence while X-axis represents the length of  
690 the cell in  $\mu\text{m}$ . In GFP transfected cells, the fluorescence is distributed uniformly along the  
691 width of the cell while in LNS2::GFP, the highest intensity is seen at the PM and in punctate  
692 structures in the cytosol.

693 E. Bar graph showing the distribution of localization patterns of GFP and LNS2::GFP in  
694 S2R+ cells (N= 30 cells). Y-axis indicates the proportion of cells showing either cytosolic or  
695 membrane associated pattern.

696 F. Western blot of protein extracts made from 1 day old fly heads of the mentioned  
697 genotypes. The blot is probed with antibody to GFP. Tubulin is used as a loading control  
698 (N=3).

699 G. Confocal images of retinae obtained from flies expressing LNS2::GFP, GFP or controls.  
700 Transverse sections of an individual ommatidium are shown. Red represents phalloidin  
701 which marks the rhabdomeres and green represents immunostaining for GFP. Scale bar=  
702 5  $\mu$ m.

703

704 **Figure 4: The 4 conserved residues (D, D, H and D) of the DDHD domain are**  
705 **essential to support RDGB function *in vivo*.**

706 A. Alignment of DDHD domain region of RDGB protein with that from the DDHD1/PA-  
707 PLA1 protein. Residues 776 to 905 of RDGB protein are aligned to residues 669 to 854 of  
708 PA-PLA1 using ClustalO. ':' indicates that one of the following 'strong' groups is fully  
709 conserved:- STA, NEQK, NHQK, NDEQ, QHRK, MILV, MILF, HY, FYW. '.' indicates that  
710 one of the following 'weaker' groups is fully conserved:-CSA, ATV, SAG, STNK, STPA,  
711 SGND, SNDEQK, NDEQHK, NEQHRK, FVLIM, HFY. The four residues D, D, H and D  
712 which are considered functionally important to this domain are marked with a grey circle on  
713 the alignment.

714 B. Confocal images of retinae obtained from flies expressing RDGB<sup>DDHD/4A</sup> and controls.  
715 Transverse sections of an individual ommatidium are shown. Red represents phalloidin  
716 which marks the rhabdomeres and green represents immunostaining for the RDGB protein.  
717 Scale bar= 5  $\mu$ m.

718 C. Representative ERG traces from 1 day old flies expressing RDGB<sup>DDHD/4A</sup> and the  
719 relevant controls. Y-axis represents ERG amplitude in mV, X-axis represents time in sec.  
720 Genotypes studied are indicated.

721 D. Quantification of the light response from 1 day old flies expressing RDGB<sup>DDHD/4A</sup> and  
722 controls. Each point on Y-axis represents mean amplitude  $\pm$ s.e.m., n $\geq$ 10 flies per  
723 genotype (\*\*\*) - p<0.001, ns= not significant; two tailed unpaired t-test).

724 E. Representative images of fluorescent deep pseudopupil from 1 day old flies expressing  
725 RDGB<sup>DDHD/4A</sup> and controls expressing the PH-PLC $\delta$ ::GFP probe.

726 F. Quantification of the fluorescence intensity of the deep pseudopupil from flies expressing  
727 RDGB<sup>DDHD/4A</sup> and controls. Y-axis denotes the mean intensity per unit area (A.U. =Arbitrary  
728 Units)  $\pm$ s.e.m., n $\geq$ 10 flies per genotype (\*\*\*) P<0.001, two tailed unpaired t-test).

729

730

731

732 **Figure 5: The DDHD domain physically interacts with the LNS2 domain to regulate**  
733 **the latter's localization.**

734 A. Confocal images of S2R+ cells transfected with pUAST-mCherry or pUAST-  
735 mCherry::DDHD. Red represents mCherry. The white line indicated the region of the cells  
736 selected for the line scan quantified in B.

737 B. Line scan profiles showing the fluorescence intensity of mCherry distributed along the  
738 line marked in A. Y-axis is the intensity of fluorescence while X-axis represents the length  
739 of the cell in  $\mu\text{m}$ . mCherry is distributed uniformly along the line in A for mCherry and  
740 mCherry::DDHD.

741 C. Bar graph showing the distribution of localization patterns of mCherry and  
742 mCherry::DDHD in S2R+ cells (N= 30 cells). Y-axis indicates the proportion of cells  
743 showing either cytosolic or membrane associated pattern.

744 D. Confocal images of S2R+ cells transfected with LNS2::GFP, mCherry::DDHD and  
745 mCherry::DDHD-LNS2. The cyan lines represent the regions of the cells selected for line  
746 scan in E.

747 E. Line scan profiles showing the fluorescence intensity of mCherry or GFP distributed  
748 along the line marked in D. Y-axis is the intensity of fluorescence while X-axis represents  
749 the length of the cell in  $\mu\text{m}$ . The fluorescence intensity is distributed uniformly along the line  
750 in D for mCherry::DDHD, while it peaks at the PM and punctate structures for LNS2::GFP,  
751 and only at punctate structures in mCherry::DDHD-LNS2.

752 F. Bar graph showing the distribution of localization patterns of mCherry::DDHD,  
753 LNS2::GFP and mCherry::DDHD-LNS2 in S2R+ cells (N= 30 cells). Y-axis indicates the  
754 proportion of cells showing either cytosolic or membrane associated pattern.

755 G. Cartoon representing co-immunoprecipitation performed to test the interaction of DDHD  
756 domain with the LNS2 domain. Tags used for the individual protein domains are shown.  
757 Antibody used for the immunoprecipitation is indicated. Potential interactions being probed  
758 are shown in dotted lines.

759 H. Representative immunoblot showing the co-immunoprecipitation of LNS2::GFP with  
760 mCherry::DDHD from S2R+ cells transfected with this combination of constructs. IgG  
761 control- negative control for immunoprecipitation. [Illustrations made using BioRender  
762 (<https://biorender.com/>) and Illustrator for Biological Sequences (IBS)  
763 (<http://ibs.biocuckoo.org/>)] (N=3).

764

765

766

767 **Figure 6: Model depicting mechanisms localizing RDGB to ER-PM MCS in**  
768 **photoreceptors.** Cartoon depicting a cross-sectional view of a *Drosophila* photoreceptor  
769 with the apical plasma membrane (rhabdomere) and the sub-microvillar cisternae (SMC)  
770 forming a contact site; the cell body is also shown.

771 A. Wild type RDGB interacts with the ER (via the FFAT-VAP interaction) and the PM (via  
772 the LNS2 domain) for accurate localization of the protein at the MCS. The arrow indicates  
773 the interaction of the DDHD with the LNS2 domain which contributes to localization. These  
774 interactions ensure that a high concentration of RDGB is present at the ER-PM contact site  
775 to mediate lipid transfer function.

776 B. RDGB<sup>PITPd</sup> cannot interact with the ER or PM. The soluble protein is able to diffuse  
777 throughout the cytosol both near the ER-PM MCS but also elsewhere in the cell body.  
778 Hence a lower concentration of PITPd is found near the MCS and can partially substitute  
779 for full length RDGB function.

780 C. RDGB<sup>(DDHD-LNS2) $\Delta$</sup>  cannot interact with the PM component of the MCS, and is hence  
781 mislocalized. The loss of the C-terminal domains: DDHD and LNS2 lead to complete loss  
782 of RDGB function, implying the requirement of these domains in full length context.

783

#### 784 **Supplemental Data 1:**

785 A. Western blot of protein extracts made from fly heads of RDGB<sup>PITPd-FFAT</sup> and relevant  
786 controls. The blot is probed with antibody to RDGB. Syntaxin A1 is used as a loading control  
787 (N=3).

788 B. Western blot of protein extracts made from fly heads of RDGB<sup>PITPd-FFAT</sup> and relevant  
789 controls expressing PH-PLC $\delta$ ::GFP probe. The blot is probed with antibody to GFP.  
790 Syntaxin A1 is used as a loading control (N=3).

791

#### 792 **Supplemental Data 2:**

793 A. Western blot of protein extracts made from fly heads of RDGB<sup>(DDHD-LNS2) $\Delta$</sup>  and relevant  
794 controls. The blot is probed with antibody to RDGB. Syntaxin A1 is used as a loading control  
795 (N=3).

796 B. Representative ERG trace of 1 day old flies expressing RDGB<sup>(DDHD-LNS2) $\Delta$</sup>  and relevant  
797 controls. Y-axis represents amplitude in mV, X-axis represents time in sec.

798 C. Representative images of fluorescent deep pseudopupil from 1 day old flies of  
799 expressing RDGB<sup>(DDHD-LNS2) $\Delta$</sup>  and relevant controls expressing the PH-PLC $\delta$ ::GFP probe.

800 D. Western blot of protein extracts made from fly heads expressing RDGB<sup>(DDHD-LNS2) $\Delta$</sup>  and  
801 relevant controls and the PH-PLC $\delta$ ::GFP probe. The blot is probed with antibody to GFP.  
802 Syntaxin is used as a loading control (N=3).

803 E. Western blot of protein extracts made from fly heads of RDGB<sup>LNS2Δ</sup> and relevant  
804 controls. The blot is probed with antibody to RDGB. Tubulin is used as a loading control  
805 (N=3).

806 F. Representative ERG trace of 1 day old flies expressing RDGB<sup>LNS2Δ</sup> and relevant  
807 controls. Y-axis represents amplitude in mV, X-axis represents time in sec.

808 G. Representative images of fluorescent deep pseudopupil from 1 day old flies of  
809 expressing RDGB<sup>LNS2Δ</sup> and relevant controls along with the PH-PLCδ::GFP probe.

810 H. Western blot of protein extracts made from fly heads of RDGB<sup>LNS2Δ</sup> and relevant  
811 controls, expressing PH-PLCδ::GFP probe. The blot is probed with antibody to GFP.  
812 Syntaxin A1 is used as a loading control (N=3).

813

#### 814 **Supplemental Data 3:**

815 A. Western blot of protein extracts made from fly heads of RDGB<sup>DDHD/4A</sup> and relevant  
816 controls. The blot is probed with antibody to RDGB. Tubulin is used as a loading control  
817 (N=3).

818 B. Western blot of protein extracts made from fly heads of RDGB<sup>DDHD/4A</sup> and relevant  
819 controls expressing PH-PLCδ::GFP probe. The blot is probed with antibody to GFP.  
820 Syntaxin A1 is used as a loading control (N=3).

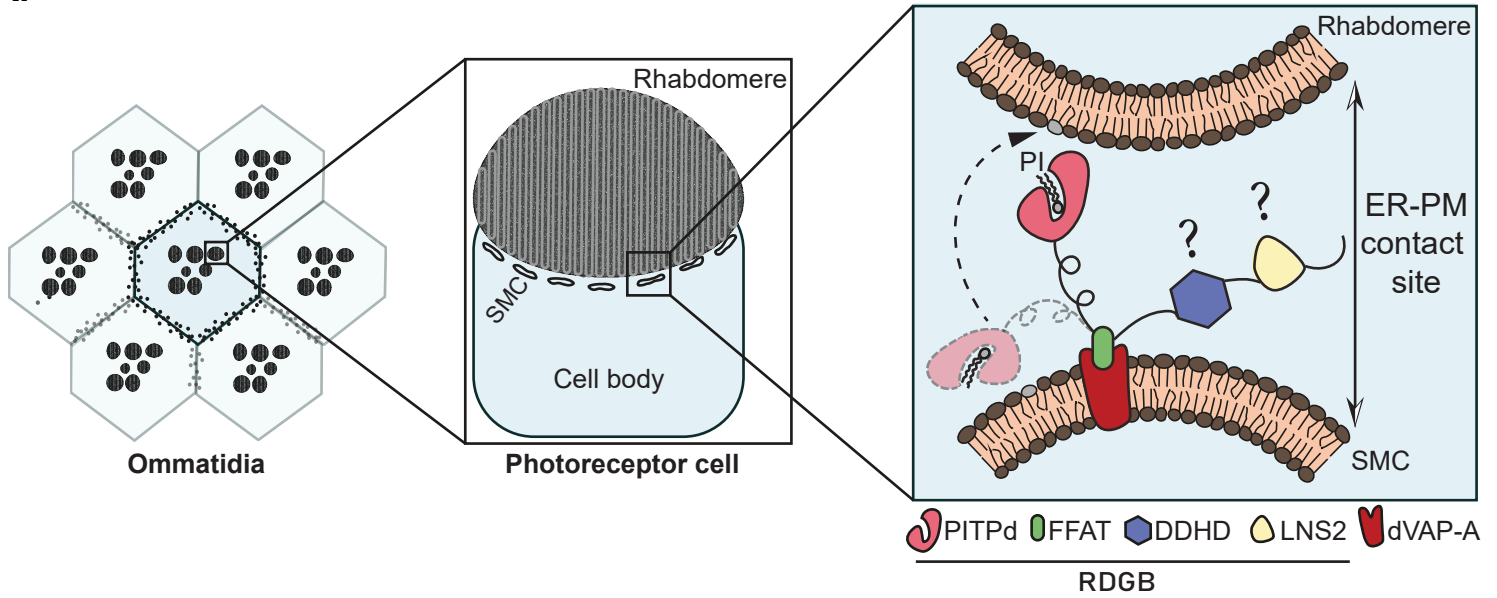
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#### 822 **Supplemental Data 4:**

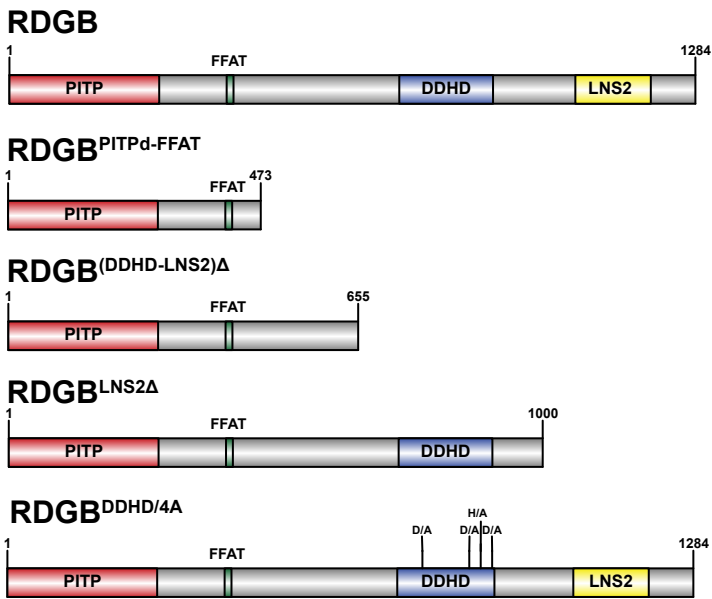
823 A. PIP-Strip membranes were incubated over night with S2R+ cell lysate expressing  
824 LNS2::GFP and GFP for control. Binding is detected by probing with anti-GFP antibody  
825 [LPA= Lysophosphatidic acid, LPC= Lysophosphatidylcholine, PI= Phosphatidylinositol,  
826 PI3P= Phosphatidylinositol 3-phosphate, PI4P= Phosphatidylinositol 4-phosphate, PI5P=  
827 Phosphatidylinositol 5-phosphate, PE= Phosphatidylethanolamine, PC=  
828 Phosphatidylcholine, PS=Phosphatidylserine, PA= Phosphatidic acid, PI(3,4,5)P<sub>3</sub>=  
829 Phosphatidylinositol (3,4,5)-trisphosphate, PI(4,5)P<sub>2</sub>= Phosphatidylinositol (4,5)-  
830 bisphosphate, PI(3,5)P<sub>2</sub>=Phosphatidylinositol (3,5)-bisphosphate, PI(3,4)P<sub>2</sub>=  
831 Phosphatidylinositol (3,4) bisphosphate, S1P= Sphingosine-1-phosphate] (N=2 blots for  
832 LNS::GFP).

833

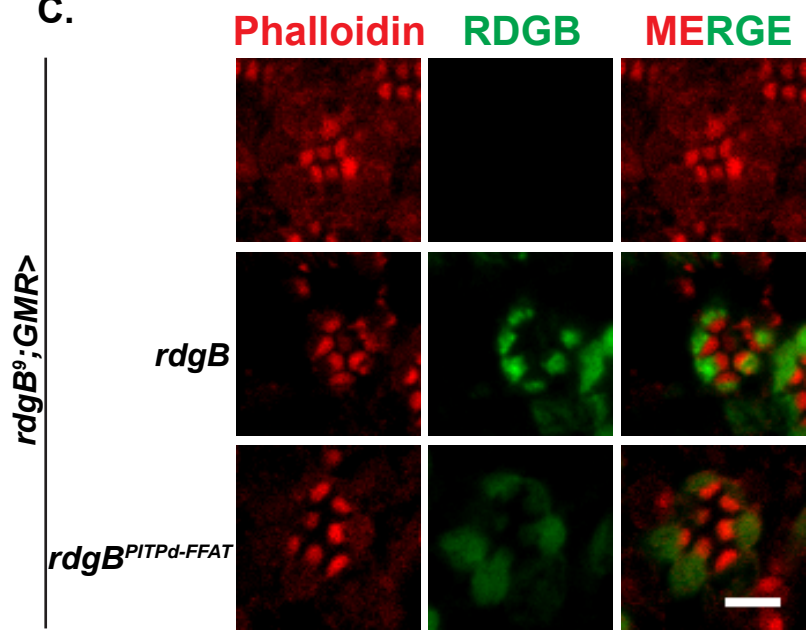
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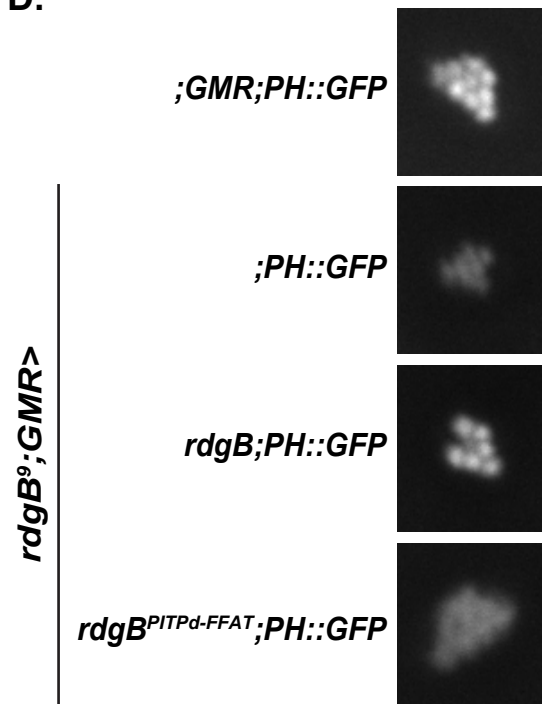
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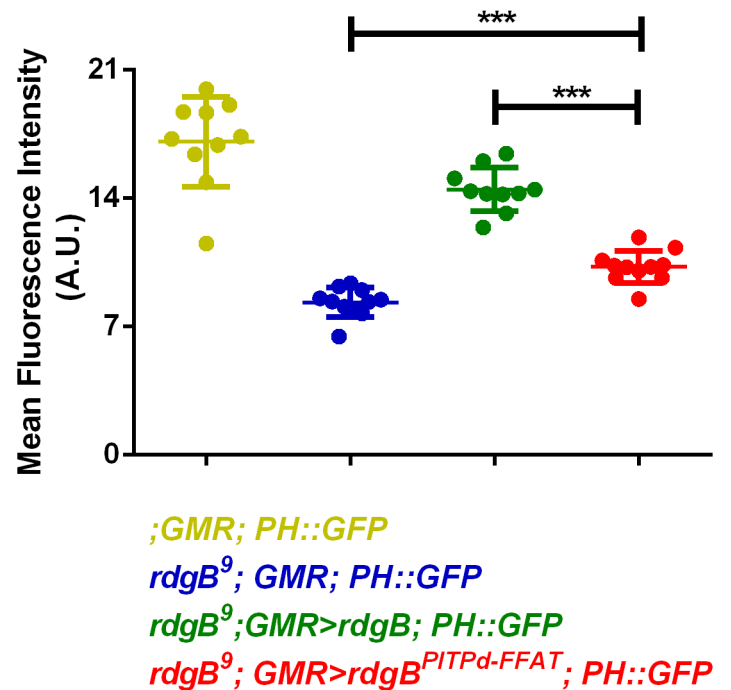
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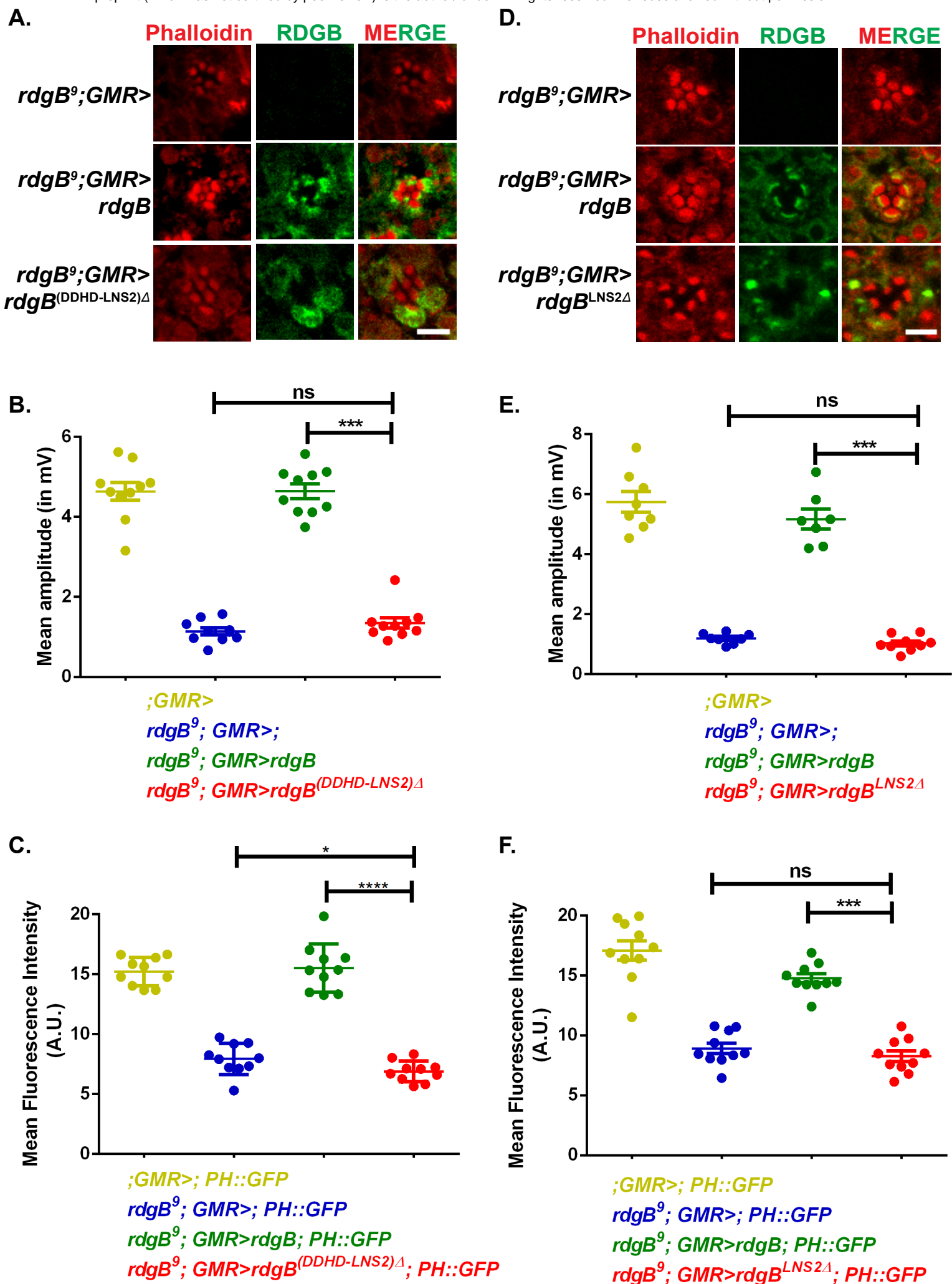
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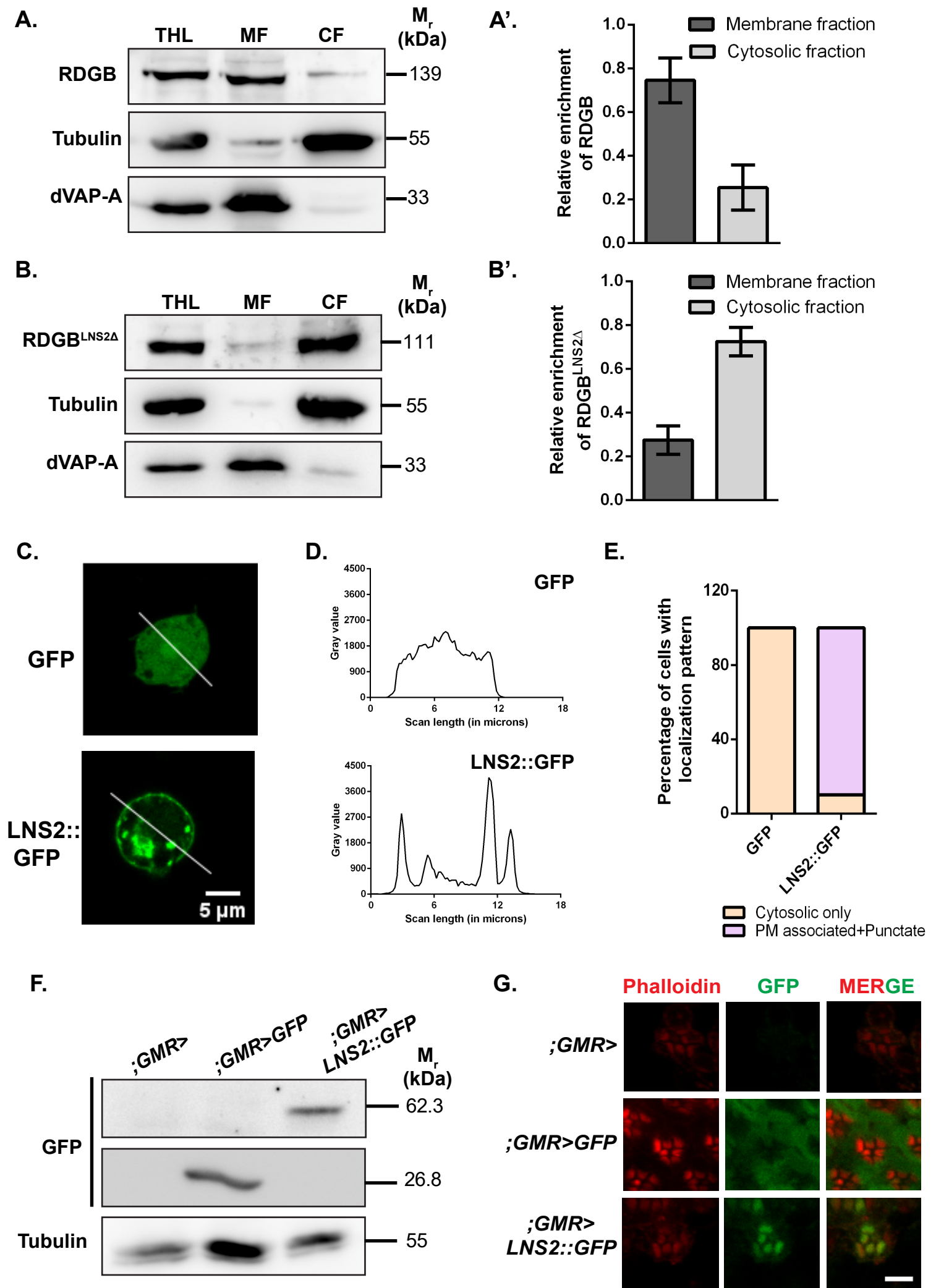


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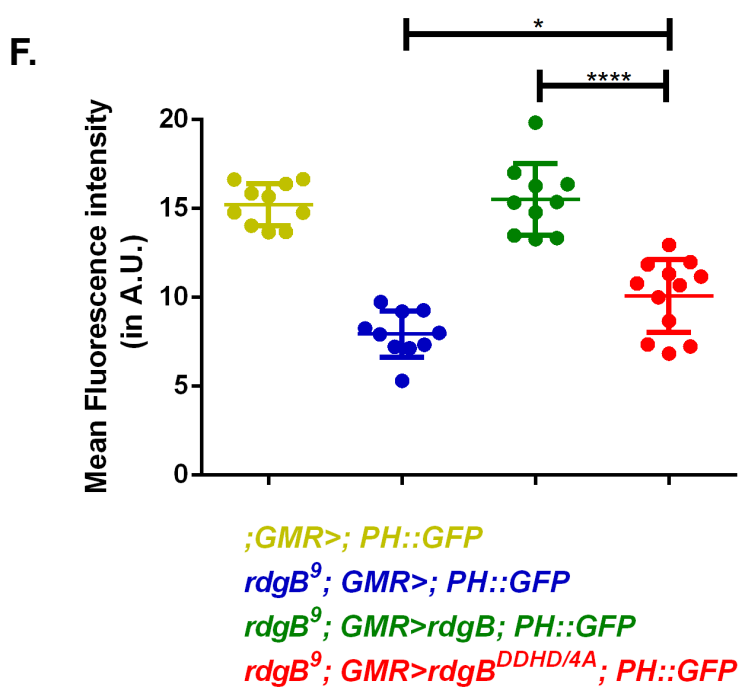
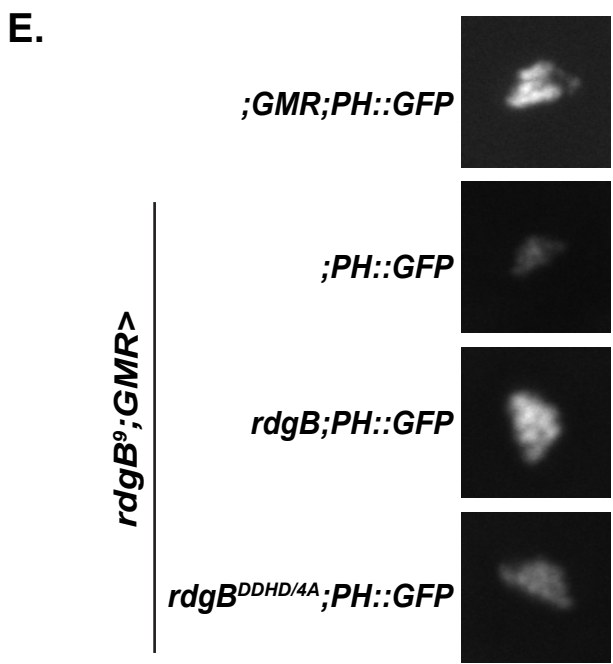
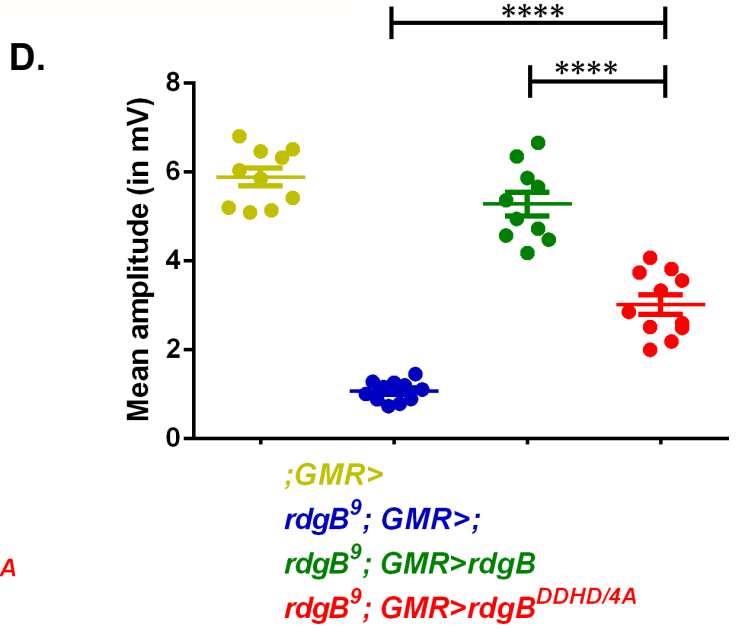
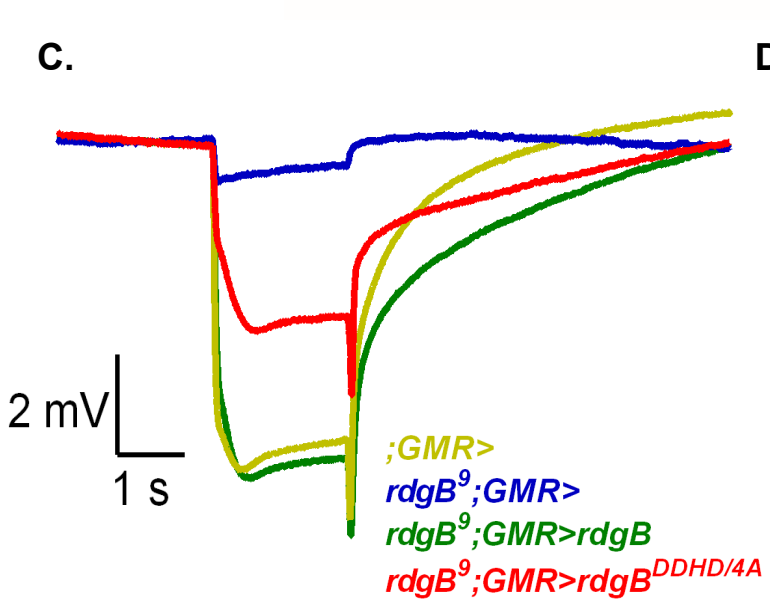
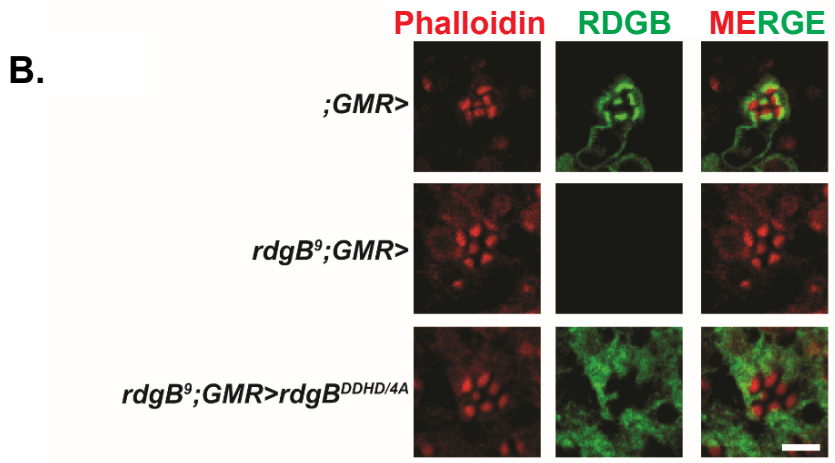


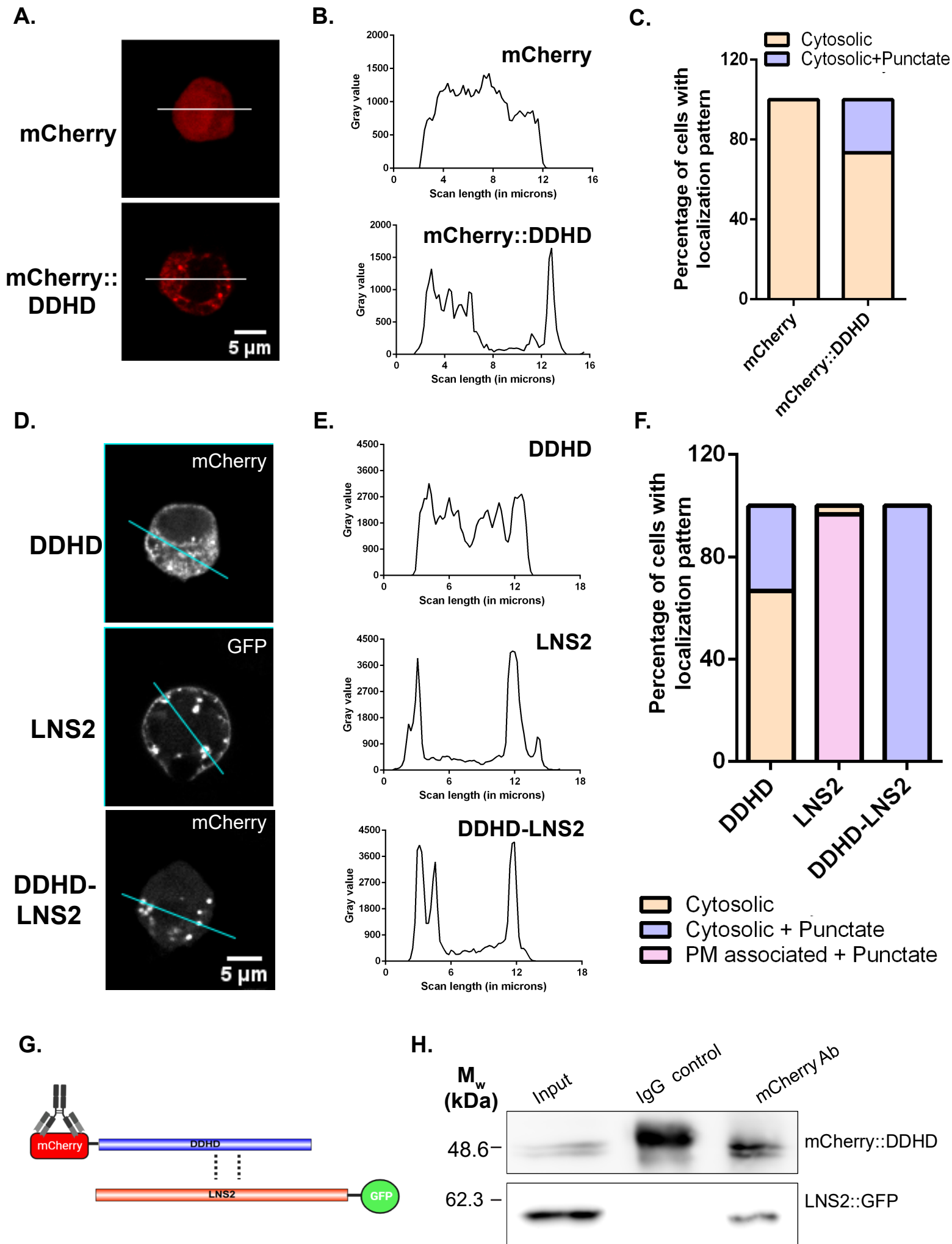
**A.**

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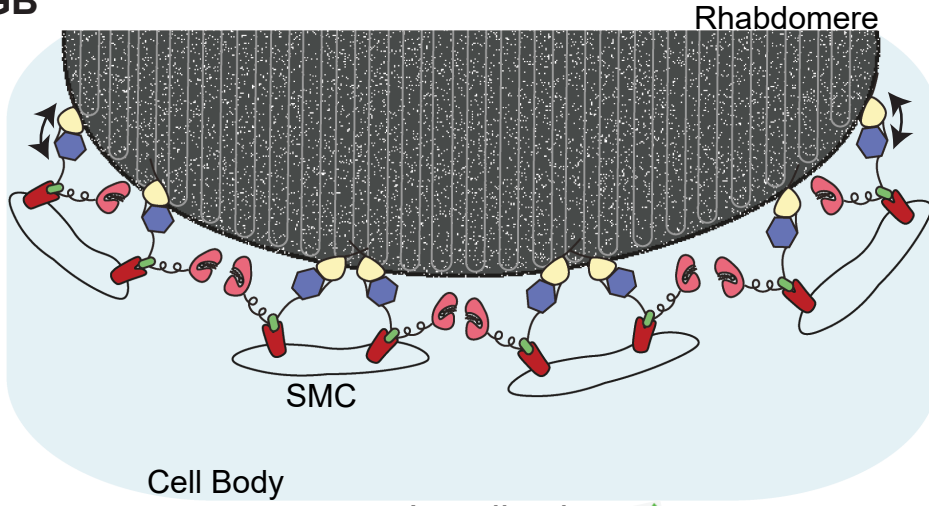
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PA-PLA1-DDHD      PSPVTSPLSRHYGESITNIGKASILGAASIGKGLGMLFSRFGRSSTTQSSETS KDSM
                    *      *      *      *      *      *
RDGB-DDHD          -----VSLSTIH-----ALQNKWGTGRDLDYALYCEGLSNFPAHAL.PHLF
PA-PLA1-DDHD      EDEKPKVASPSATTVGTQLPHSSSGFLDSALELDRIDFEL--REGLVESR-YWSAVTS
                    *      *      *      *      *      *
RDGB-DDHD          ●    ●
PA-PLA1-DDHD      HASYWESPQVIA
                    HTAYWSSLD---
                    *      *      *      *      *

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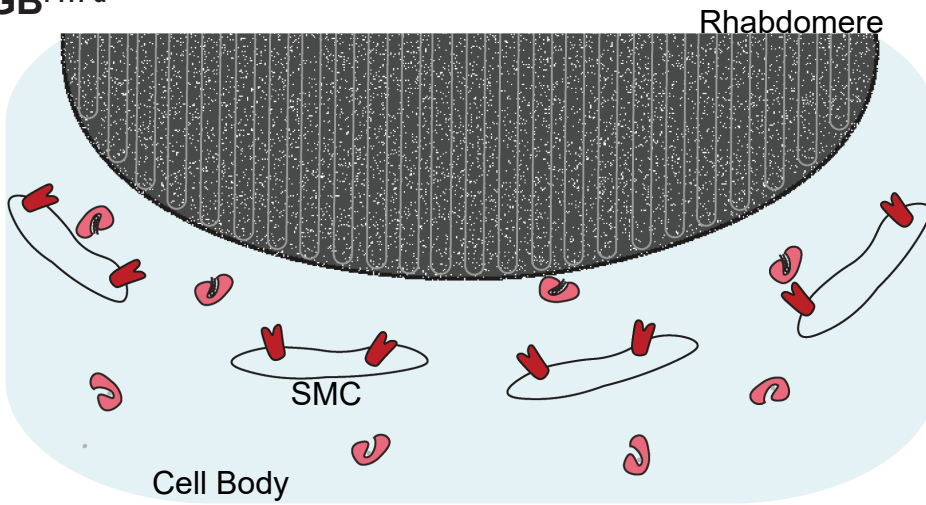


**A. RDGB**



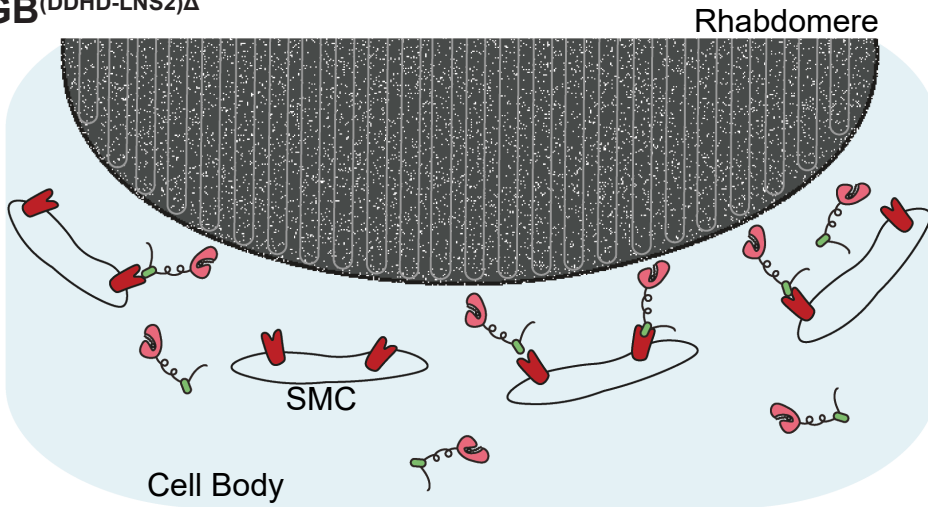
Localization: ✓  
Function: ✓

**B. RDGB<sup>PITPd</sup>**



Localization: ✗  
Function: ✗

**C. RDGB<sup>(DDHD-LNS2)Δ</sup>**



Localization: ✗  
Function: ✗

