
SRP's Theory of Change narrative

Executive Summary

The SRP's Theory of Change (ToC) is built to portray how SRP could achieve its aspiration to catalyze transformation and change in the global rice sector, within its Vision to "Feed the world sustainably" which conveys the SRP's The ToC illustrates how changes can occur to create the intended impacts over time through the logical flow from strategies via activities, outputs and outcomes.

This ToC revision is being conducted in line with ISEAL Impacts Code 2.0¹. Such a ToC is used by ²ISEAL members to stimulate strategic thought, improve efficiency, provide a communications tool and as an excellent basis for monitoring and evaluation and for risk management.

The rationale for the SRP ToC refresh

This **revised** SRP ToC:

- Is based on SRP's present ToC.
- Reflects analysis of the pathways that could link actions to impact, the underlying assumptions and the influencing factors.
- Is not intended to capture all of the details or nuances of the change theory. More technical detailed versions of the key causal chains were developed by SRP staff and used for developing the overall ToC. These are not part of this document.
- Activities are grouped into strategic themes, to make the ToC easier to follow.
- Highlights three inter-dependent dimensions of change to reach SRP's desired impacts: **Increased Supply**, **Increased Demand** and the **Enabling Environment** (both internal and external). And shows SRP strategic roles: Policy Influencer (policy and advocacy interventions, National Chapters), Scheme Owner (normative tools and capacity building) and Convener (sector dialogue and leadership).
- Shows (**in brown**) the elements and pathways proposed to be added or strengthened to enhance SRP's impacts, including those related to production for domestic consumption, and linking sustainable rice *production* (as distinct from sustainably produced *rice*) to markets for ecosystem services will be used as a basis for developing SRP's Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) System to provide insight into the effectiveness of strategies and activities.
- Will be used as part of best practice, to engage with internal and external stakeholders to ensure support and alignment. See timeline chart on page 2.

The **outputs** refer to the immediate results of activities and investments by SRP, SRP members and partners (interventions):

- Men *and women* rice farmers and other stakeholders equipped with SRP tools, technologies, best practices, incentives and capacity

¹ [ISEAL's Code of Good Practice for Assessing the Impacts of Social and Environmental Systems](#)

² SRP follows ISEAL's Codes of Good Practice to achieve the goal to be the effective and credible sustainability system. The ISEAL Impacts Code is one of Codes of Good Practice which provides standards for a robust monitoring and evaluation that help systems to measure progress against sustainability goals to improve practices over time. For more information please visit ISEAL Codes of Good Practice (isealliance.org)

- Industry-wide commitment to a unified standard and assurance regime for rice throughout sustainable value chains
- Consumer consciousness of environmental footprint and climate change impacts of rice, to stimulate market demand for sustainable rice products
- Recognition of SRP standard as a carbon management tool (new added output)
- Evidence-based policy frameworks and sector policy analyses at national and regional levels that prioritize and incentivize climate-smart sustainable best practices

These together lead to the **outcomes**:

- More sustainable consumption and production of rice through partnerships (SDG 12, 17)
- Men and women rice farmers adopt sustainable, climate-smart, resource-efficient technology packages at scale
- Markets for sustainable rice in key **export** destinations are established (verified label sustainable rice)
- Demand for the local sustainable rice **product** (split outcome)
- Provided business opportunities for the sustainable rice cultivation **process** (new added outcome)

Leading to the ultimate intended **impacts**:

- **Economic**: Sustained productivity, enhanced food security, increased income and improved livelihoods for rice smallholders (SDG 1,2)
- **Social**: Enhanced gender equality, social equity and inclusive growth for rice smallholders. (SDG 1,2,5)
- **Environmental**: Enhanced environmental outcomes in rice production systems including climate change mitigation and adaptation, increased resource use efficiency, enhanced biodiversity and ecosystem services (SDG 6,13,15)

Key Assumptions

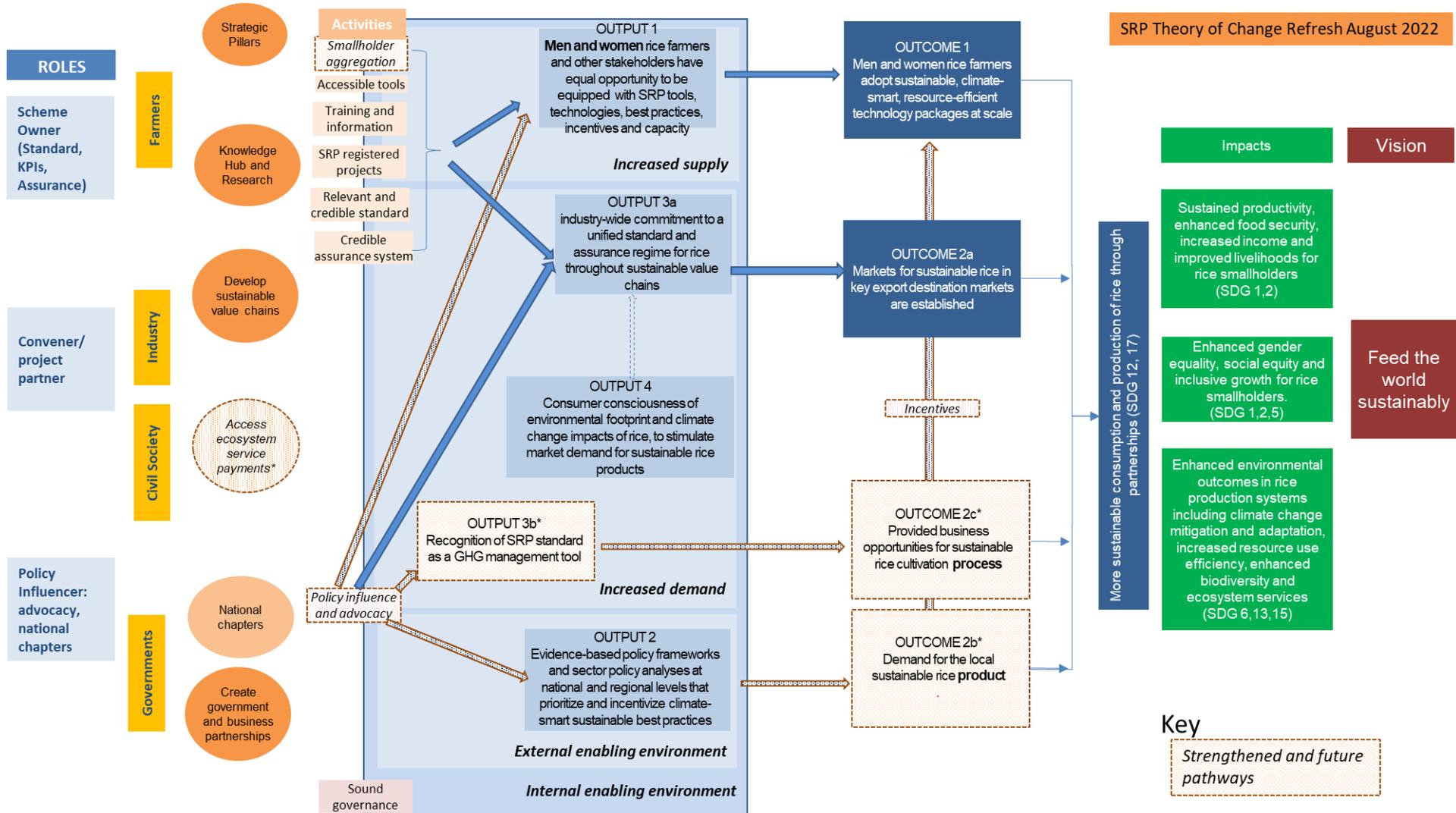
Arrows between and among the different components reflect assumptions on which the ToC is based, and which need explicit consideration for ISEAL Code compliance. Some key assumptions include:

- Adequate **organization of smallholders** for the delivery of inputs, services and connection to markets (value chains, registered projects, jurisdictional approaches, formal/informal) including eliminating barriers for women
- Sufficient **incentives for smallholders**
- Suitable **partnerships with GHG certification systems**

The reasons of new added output and outcomes.

With 90% of rice farmers considered smallholders, many at or below the poverty line. Only 40% of rice farmers have access to market while 60% of them have limited access to financial, knowledge and other resources.³ Targeting provided business opportunities for the sustainable rice cultivation process and the demand for the local sustainable rice would expand the target to cover the farmers who are living in the conditions which are not the sustainable rice for export market. With these changes, a great number of farmers would be included in the sustainable development and adopt the SRP best practice in the large scale to improve their lives which is the ultimate goal of SRP.

³ based on SRP 2018 Visioning Workshop @Rogers MacJohn LLC



ToC Narrative- Details

Theory of Change

The Theory of Change (ToC), through the infographic and supporting narrative, describes the impacts or change SRP is intending to achieve and how its work brings about that change.

It is both a *process* and *product*. The *product* provides a roadmap or visual mapping explaining how we are going to achieve the goal. It helps to explain the logic behind SRP's activities about how they lead to the intended impacts.

The *process* helps to:

- Stimulate strategic thought,
- agreeing on what is our priorities, what is the outcomes we expect to see in short-term and in longer-term,
- provide greater clarity as to how our actions/interventions will help us deliver on our outcomes,
- prioritize metrics, monitor and evaluate progress over time, and
- communicate about goals, strategies and learnings.

The ToC provides a guiding **framework** for the SRP Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) System to provide insight into the effectiveness of strategies and the supporting activities. Based on the ToC and causal chains, **indicators** will be identified to monitor and evaluate progress from direct **outputs** to **outcomes** and **impacts** on critical pathways, as well as to develop **key evaluation questions**. The indicators also use reference points such as **the ISEAL common core indicators** and **the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**. Through monitoring and evaluation, SRP will be able to assess progress, performance, and impact, as well as provide the evidence and insights to validate or negate assumptions.

This document was developed in line with ⁴ISEAL Impacts Code 2.0.

Working Towards Change

Current State. Where we are today...

Rice is key to global food security as a main staple of half of the world's population. It is highly sensitive to climate change and thus a key factor of social stability. Rice also has a large environmental footprint in water usage (40% of world's irrigation water) and harmful GHG emissions (with the highest GHG emissions per calorie of any staple crop and emitting 10% of global methane emissions).

- Dominated by 150 million **smallholder** farmers, a number far higher than for any other crop (90% production) *
 - The majority poor
 - Most farms less than one hectare with low productivity*
 - Sixty percent (60%) of rice smallholders are outside the formal markets limiting access to inputs, knowledge and finance (60%) *

⁴ <https://www.isealalliance.org/get-involved/resources/iseal-impacts-code-good-practice-version-20>

- Majority of production local consumption or subsistence*
- Insufficient **investment** in irrigation and infrastructure (sub-optimal yields and wastage) *
- Women with unequal access to inputs*
- Harmful government subsidies in some countries (source International Rice Research Institute IRR)
- Limited government engagement in key producing countries as a lever for enabling policies and creating legal frameworks for smallholders.
- Global supply chain actors expect credible assurance and traceability
- Increasing government and commercial GHG commitments and legislation and regulatory requirements of companies for GHG targets and HREDD within their supply chains

**based on SRP 2018 Visioning Workshop @Rogers MacJohn LLC*

SRP Future state - where we want to be....

- Smallholder rice growers have adopted climate smart sustainable practices lowering soil, water, and land usage as well as reduced energy and greenhouse gas emissions supported by a viable economic model of production and trade that provides them security and livelihoods
- Countries' nationally determined contributions (NDCs) commitment to reduce GHG emissions from rice paddies provide incentives to achieve these targets
- Public programs incentivize farmer adoption of sustainable management practices and protection of biodiversity in rice landscapes
- Ecosystem markets maximize the value returned to producers while meeting multiple market needs of diverse buyers
- Gender equality and empowerment in rice producing households and communities. Women are empowered in access to the information, resources and the equal opportunities of social and economic development.
- Climate change resilience achieved and climate impacts of rice production mitigated
- Consumers recognize and reward sustainable rice

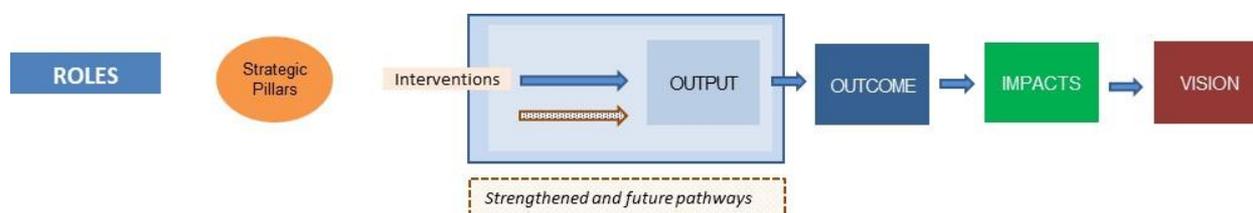
SRP Roles

- SRP is the respected leader and convenor in sustainable rice production
- National chapters bring members and other actors together to collaborate and address challenges and innovation
- Effective funding and finance mechanisms allied to verification to support farmers' sustainable production of rice.

The SRP ToC Framework. (ISEAL 7.2.1, 7.2.2)

How to read the Theory of Change

On the far right is the SRP *Vision*, our overarching guide.



The ToC map outlines the basic framework, starting on the left with the SRP *Roles* and *Strategic Pillars* as outlined in the Sustainable Rice Platform 2021-2025 Strategy.

Interventions are the sets of activities and investments by SRP, members and partners.

Outputs are the shorter-term **direct** results of SRP activities and investments. Over time and as more actors are involved, these lead to longer term results, also known as *Outcomes*. SRP can influence these, but there are many other factors that affect whether these are achieved. There are also preconditions affecting the happening of outputs and outcomes which identified as key assumptions. These are multiplied (scaled) and supported by other enabling efforts leading to ultimate *Impacts*.

The framework does not capture all of the details or nuances of the change theory. More technical detailed versions of the key causal chains were developed by SRP staff and used for operationalizing the ToC. These are not part of this document.

Defining the Elements of the Theory of Change

Our vision is to “Feed the world. Sustainably”, transforming the global rice sector through an alliance that links research, production, policy making, trade and consumption. The vision articulates a new norm in rice, where the sector delivers healthy, high-quality, nutritious rice to consumers, helps farmers achieve better lives, and protects the environment.

Our mission is to catalyze global rice sector transformation by developing tools and mobilizing rice stakeholders to promote on-farm adoption of sustainable best practice, link farmers to markets and offer an objective normative basis for policymaking.

Roles (SRP 2021-2025 Strategic Plan)

SRP plays three key roles to leverage SRP's assets to achieve transformative change within the global rice sector:

1. Policy influencer (policy and advocacy interventions, National Chapters)
2. Scheme owner (SRP Standard, PIs, Assurance Scheme and capacity building)
3. Convener / Project partner (sector dialogue and leadership)

Strategies

SRP's vision, mission and goals require a cross-cutting, collaborative approach to leveraging resources across the stakeholder community and driving transformative change. With interventions needed from farm to policy level, the three strategic pillars from the SRP 2021-2025 Strategic Plan provide an overarching framework for action.

- ✓ Develop Sustainable Value Chains
- ✓ Create partnerships and incentives for scale
- ✓ Serve as a knowledge hub

These are complemented with the proposed *addition of Accessing Ecosystem Services*. The operationalizing of the SRP strategic roles across the strategic support the purpose of SRP under its Articles of Association with the Promotion, and wide-scale adoption of sustainable, resource-saving and environmentally friendly rice cultivation; environmental protection through resource-saving and environmentally friendly rice cultivation, upbringing, adult education and vocational training; and development (and international) cooperation.

Intended Impacts and Outcomes (ISEAL 7.1.1, 7.1.2)

Impacts

Impacts are the positive and negative long-term effects resulting from the implementation of SRP strategies, either directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. (ISEAL, adapted from OECD Glossary, 2002). SRP's intended impacts:

- **Economic:** Sustained productivity, enhanced food security, increased income and improved livelihoods for rice smallholders (SDG 1,2)
- **Social:** Enhanced gender equality, social equity and inclusive growth for rice smallholders. (SDG 1,2,5)
- **Environmental:** Enhanced environmental outcomes in rice production systems including climate change mitigation and adaptation, increased resource use efficiency, enhanced biodiversity and ecosystem services (SDG 6,13,15)

For SRP, the three key dimensions of change to reach these impacts are Increased Supply, Increased Demand and the Enabling Environment as outlined in the box.

Enabling Environment

The enabling environment is both *internal* (good governance, effective data management systems, etc.) and *external*. The external enabling environment relates *inter alia* to public and private dialogue and actions to realize effective national and international regulations, incentives for sustainable production, technical assistance, and investments to create a conducive and enabling environment for *inclusive* smallholder participation. Laws, regulations, policies, international trade agreements and public infrastructure can facilitate, or hinder, the scaling for sector transformation.

Outcomes

Outcomes are the likely or achieved short-term and medium-term results from the implementation of a SRP's strategies. (ISEAL, adapted from OECD Glossary, 2002). These include changes in social, environmental, and farm productivity outcomes, and in policies/business practices.

- More sustainable consumption and production of rice through partnerships (SDG 12, 17)

- Men and women rice farmers adopt sustainable, climate-smart, resource-efficient technology packages at scale (Outcome1)
- Markets for sustainable rice in key **export** destinations are established (Outcome2a)
- Provided business opportunities for sustainable rice cultivation **process**. (Outcome2c)
- Demand for the local sustainable rice **product**. (Outcome 2b)

Precondition for longer term Outcomes
Incentives for sustainable rice and sustainable rice **production**

Outputs

Outputs are the products, capital goods, and services that result directly from the SRP, members and partners activities and investments.

Increased Supply

- Men *and* women rice farmers and other stakeholders equipped with SRP tools, technologies, best practices, incentives and capacity

Increased Demand

- Industry-wide commitment to a unified standard and assurance regime for rice throughout sustainable value chains
- Consumer consciousness of environmental footprint and climate change impacts of rice, to stimulate market demand for sustainable rice products
- Recognition of SRP standard as a carbon management tool

Enabling Environment

- Evidence-based policy frameworks and sector policy analyses at national and regional levels that prioritize and incentivize climate-smart sustainable best

Precondition for **Increased Supply**
Smallholder aggregation. With 90% of rice farmers considered smallholders, many at or below the poverty line, many women, the organization (formal or informal) of smallholders is essential to move beyond niche.

practices

Activities

Members, partners and other stakeholders) will implement a wide range of activities and investments to produce results (outputs). These interventions are grouped into strategic themes to make the ToC easier to follow. These include, but are not limited to: tools, training, information, capacity building, SRP registered projects, standards and assurance systems, policy and advocacy and sound governance.

Key Assumptions

Arrows between and among the different components reflect assumptions on which the ToC is based, and which need explicit consideration for ISEAL Code compliance. Some key assumptions include:

- Adequate **organization of smallholders** for the delivery of inputs, services and connection to markets (value chains, registered projects, jurisdictional approaches, formal/informal) including eliminating barriers for women..

- Incentives for a balanced number male and female membership of farmer organization.
- Sufficient **incentives for smallholders**
- Suitable **partnerships with GHG certification systems**

Data and analytics

- **Evidence based** decision-making for companies and policy makers
- **Quality assured data** for market-based incentive mechanisms including GHG accounting

Unintended effects (ISEAL 7.3.1)

SRP operates in a complex environment and while the ToC outlines the anticipated changes, it is important to identify and monitor both positive and negative unintended effects. These can be spillover effects, the result of SRP direct actions or longer-term effects that SRP has limited direct control. Positive effects can be opportunities for learning and duplicating. Negative unintended effects need to be mitigated and may be part of the risk management plan.

In order to identify the unintended effects of SRP interventions, the ToC will be consulted on with stakeholders. Additionally, as part of regular standard setting processes and the oversight on implementation, SRP will collect feedback from stakeholders on unintended effects. From 2022, the unintended effects will be explicitly mentioned in the consultation with stakeholders identified as relevant to MEL and in the SRP Registered Project annual reports. These will be monitored through the MEL program in the future for learning and improvement to mitigate negative unintended effects.

For questions or comments on this document or the SRP Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning program, please contact:

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