



SRP

**10 years of transforming
the global rice sector**
Anniversary Report



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Reflections from the Chairperson, Matthias Bickel



Matthias Bickel,
Chairperson

I remember talking about the concept of sustainable rice or a sustainable rice platform one decade ago, and many people saying it would not work. But there were also those who believed in the concept, and that is how the Sustainable Rice Platform came into existence. Today, as Chairperson of the SRP Board, I am proud to have been a part of this initiative since its beginning and seen all its achievements to date.

I would like to take this opportunity to give kudos to one individual, someone who is not to be forgotten, whom I call "one of the fathers" of what we know today as the SRP Standard for Sustainable Rice Cultivation - Rajeev Raina, at that time the Global Head of Farming at Olam International. During a coffee break at the SRP 4th Plenary Meeting and General Assembly, I approached Rajeev with the request to table EUR 50,000 from the private sector, which we would then match with the same amount from public resources to fund the development of the first version of the SRP Standard. Without hesitation, he responded: "Let's do it". Having mobilized the necessary resources and with the invaluable expertise of the International Rice Research Institute as our technical lead, UTZ as our early assurance lead and members active in our former Working Group on Standards, Assurance and Impact, the SRP Standard came to life. Sincere thanks to the many helping hands that have driven SRP forward!

With the ever-increasing effects of climate change, now, more than ever, the importance of sustainable rice

production and the strengthening of alliances to scale its implementation is clear. Rice is vital to global food systems and at the same time has one of the biggest global methane and water footprints among all food crops.

I therefore firmly believe that SRP and its mission will continue to grow in relevance. The work of all SRP members, Registered SRP Projects, SRP Authorized Training Providers and Trainers, partners and especially farmers implementing the SRP Standard is crucial in order to support smallholder farmers with improving their yields and income, protecting our environment and securing the rice supply for future generations, sustainably.

Faced with the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic since 2020, I was and still am very impressed to see how SRP members and farmers managed to find innovative ways and start new initiatives to continue expanding adoption of the SRP Standard and delivery of impacts despite unprecedented challenges.

I am confident that SRP will keep growing, developing further tools and engaging with more and more farmers in the coming years.

I would like to thank everyone for all their hard work and effort over the past decade and already look forward to our next one together, as we continue to transform the global rice sector.

Reflections from the Executive Director, Wyn Ellis



Wyn Ellis, Ph.D.,
Executive Director

Today is a very special day for SRP. We are proud to be marking our 10th anniversary since SRP's establishment in December 2011 at the International Rice Research Institute, and to reflect on our subsequent journey from a small, informal stakeholder coalition with a vision to transform the global rice sector.

One decade ago, rice was conspicuous by its absence

from the global debates on climate change, water and sustainable food systems. Today, linkages have increasingly been recognized between rice and some of the most critical challenges facing humanity - food and water security, poverty alleviation, climate change, and more.

Over this period, SRP evolved to occupy its place today as a global alliance with over 100 institutional members across the stakeholder spectrum, including four UN agencies and over 440,000 farmers participating in our 22 Registered SRP Projects around the world.

Our vision: "Feed the world. Sustainably." encapsulates the ambition to catalyze a transformation of the global rice sector, and we are proud of the endeavors and commitment of our members and dialogue partners in co-developing the world's first and only standard for sustainable rice cultivation, together with performance indicators linked to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) launched in 2015.

Now in their second revision, these serve as robust and widely-recognized tools for defining and monitoring farm-level sustainability. They also offer a practical approach to drive adoption of climate-smart best practice through scaling partnerships including those funded by the Global Environment Facility, and the Green Climate Fund via the Sustainable Rice Landscapes initiative, of which SRP is a founding member.

We are of course especially proud that SRP-Verified rice is now available and gaining traction as a choice for consumers in several EU markets, with the SRP Assurance Scheme managed by GLOBALG.A.P. linking buyers in global markets to farmers who manage their land and production sustainably.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my heartfelt thanks to all SRP members, partners, supporters as well as our esteemed Board members and dedicated Secretariat team, whose commitment has established SRP as a focus for collaboration and a force for change. We are especially indebted to UNEP, IRRI and GIZ for their leadership and support from the outset, and to the Federal Government of Germany, which through the develoPPP.de programme, is providing additional resourcing and funding to build SRP's organizational capacity, governance and programs.

This is an opportune time for us all to redouble our efforts to address the critical challenges facing the global rice sector in pursuit of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and to work together towards our shared goal of reaching one million farmers by 2023 and 10 million by 2030.

On behalf of the entire Secretariat team, I extend our personal thanks to all of you for your support and contributions; we look forward to working with you to build on our accomplishments.

The Sustainable Rice Platform – Our Story in Brief



SRP was established in December 2011 with the vision to transform the global rice sector. It was originally co-convened by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH as a global multi-stakeholder initiative to promote resource efficiency and sustainability in the global rice sector through an alliance that links research, production, policymaking, trade and consumption.

In the years following its establishment, SRP members from across the stakeholder spectrum co-developed a working definition for sustainable rice production that integrates practices and impacts, and a platform that assists rice farmers with adopting these practices.

In 2015, SRP launched the SRP Standard for Sustainable Rice Cultivation, the world's first standard for sustainable rice cultivation, together with a set of SRP Performance Indicators. Over the years, the SRP Standard for Sustainable Rice Cultivation has been piloted and revised, and the SRP Assurance Scheme and other normative documents enabling sustainable rice production throughout the value chain have been added and made available for use.

Following a strategic visioning exercise in 2018 to clarify the future direction of the organization, SRP was legally incorporated in January 2020 as an "eingetragener Verein" (e.V.) in Germany as an independent, voluntary membership association in which members are the primary constituents.

Over the past decade, SRP has evolved and also worked hard to scale its mission to transform the global rice sector. This anniversary report celebrates our achievements during SRP's first ten years.

"As a co-convenor of the Sustainable Rice Platform UNEP was involved from its inception, together with partners from IRRI, GIZ and the private sector. We offer our warmest congratulations on the occasion of SRP's 10th Anniversary, and are particularly proud to have helped to shape and lead a movement that offers such a sound approach to making the global rice sector sustainable. We fully support SRP's efforts to address the challenges posed by climate change to the agricultural sector, the urgency of which was heightened during COP26. Rice has many other touchpoints across the UN Sustainable Development Goals, of course, and UNEP looks forward to working with the SRP as it moves into its second decade."



Mark Radka,
Chief of the Energy and Climate Branch,
United Nations Environment
Programme (UNEP)

"My warmest congratulations to the Sustainable Rice Platform on the occasion of its 10th anniversary!

As one of the original convenors of the Platform alongside UNEP and GIZ a decade ago, the International Rice Research Institute is immensely proud of our partnership in this visionary initiative which is growing from strength to strength.

The SRP Standard and Performance Indicators, which leverage IRRI's 60 years of extensive rice research, provide robust science-based tools and best practices for productive and sustainable rice cultivation.

Through this shared framework, stakeholders can work together to foster food systems transformation, helping to ensure food and nutrition security, boost the livelihoods of smallholder farmers, and reduce the environmental impacts of rice production.

Now with over 100 global members, 24 projects in 19 countries, and over 400,000 farmers committed to sustainable practices, the Platform has made significant strides in 10 years. But more still remains to be done. IRRI remains steadfast in its commitment to SRP as it continues to bring stakeholders together through a common vision and goals.

As the world struggles to meet SDG targets amid a myriad of global challenges, initiatives like the SRP are needed now more than ever. With the Platform's strong progress, I believe the initiative will continue to deliver significant impacts for many years to come.

Happy anniversary and I look forward to future milestones!"



Jean Balie,
Director General,
International Rice Research Institute (IRRI)



Why Sustainable Rice?

One of the world's largest staple foods

Over 3.5 billion people around the world rely on rice as a staple part of their diet, making rice an integral part of global food systems. Yet almost 60% of people globally who experience hunger live in rice-dependent geographies where rice represents more than 40% of their annual cereal diet.

A livelihood for one billion people

Rice provides livelihood for nearly one billion people, but that livelihood lacks resilience. The majority of rice producers are smallholder farmers who are especially vulnerable to impacts of the economy, climate change and health crises, including the current COVID-19 pandemic. Women farmers, who contribute up to 80% of farm labor while also overseeing the education and health of family households, go unrecognized for their essential contributions and remain systemically excluded.

Rice and climate change

Rice production is highly vulnerable to the negative impacts of climate change, including rising sea levels and droughts. Paradoxically, rice production itself is a contributing factor to climate change: rice cultivation is a leading driver of habitat loss in wetlands and forests, uses one-third of the world's freshwater, and is responsible for 10% of man-made methane emissions globally.

Our Vision & Mission



SRP is a global multi-stakeholder alliance comprising over 100 institutional members from public and private stakeholders, research, financial institutions and NGOs. Together with its members, SRP aims to transform the global rice sector by improving smallholder livelihoods, reducing the social, environmental and climate footprint of rice production, and by offering the global rice market an assured supply of sustainably produced rice. Our vision is to “Feed the world. Sustainably”.

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

SRP’s goal is to drive wide-scale adoption of climate-smart, sustainable best practices among rice smallholders and to enlist a total of one million farmers adopting the SRP Standard by 2023.

“We are proud to have been a founding member of SRP since 2011. During our decade of partnership, we have together helped to drive more sustainable rice farming practices that increase yield and income, while reducing water use and carbon emissions. This helps us to deliver a better world tomorrow, through better food today.”

Denis Winkler,
Global VP of Supply Chain, Mars Food



A Decade of Transforming the Global Rice Sector

SRP Milestones Throughout the Decade



2011

SRP co-convened by the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ) in December

2011-2015

Alignment/co-development of a definition for sustainable rice production that integrated practices and impacts

2015

Launch of the SRP Standard for Sustainable Rice Cultivation (the world's first sustainable rice standard), together with a set of SRP Performance Indicators



2016

First ton of rice compliant with the pilot SRP Standard produced in Thailand by Better Rice Initiative Asia (BRIA)

2016-2017

- Piloting of the SRP Standard and PI tools by SRP members and partners
- Evaluation of field implementation by IRRI
- Revisions made to the SRP Standard and Performance Indicators

2021

- First supply of SRP-Verified rice made available to consumers in supermarkets in Germany, Denmark, Italy and the Netherlands
- New SRP website



2020

- SRP was successfully incorporated as an "eingetragener Verein" (e.V.), i.e. a registered voluntary association
- SRP receives support from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) through GIZ and private sector partners (Ebro Foods, Mars Food and Olam International) under the developPPP.de programme's "Mainstreaming Sustainable Rice through the SRP" project to foster the long-term capacity of the SRP e.V.
- Launch of the SRP Assurance Scheme and the SRP-Verified Label to link rice producers who manage their land and production sustainably with buyers in global markets
- Launch of the new SRP Organizational Logo



2019

- Revised SRP Standard and Performance Indicators released
- Launch of the SRP Assurance Scheme and SRP Training Programme
- Beginning of the evolution of SRP into and officially incorporated, independent membership organization
- The Founding Meeting in September also served as the 1st Annual General Assembly Meeting



2017

- First Global Sustainable Rice Conference and Exhibition held in Bangkok
- Ben's Original (formerly Uncle Ben's), the world's largest rice brand by Mars Food, commits to sourcing only SRP-Verified rice by 2020

SRP Achievements – An Overview



- Over 100 global SRP members



- 24 SRP registered projects:
22 active projects in 19 countries;
2 completed projects

- 423,106 farmers committed to adopting the SRP Standard



- 2 approved training courses, with 2 more in development

- 3 Authorized Training Providers

- 271 SRP Authorized Trainers



- National Chapters: Cambodia, Nigeria, Thailand, with other countries currently in process

- National Interpretation Guidelines: USA, Thailand (in progress)



- SRP-Verified rice available in supermarkets in Europe (Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark + more to follow)

- Retail/Brand engagement for more awareness of SRP-Verified rice



Note: All numbers and details are based on internal tracking and/or member self-reported information as of 16 Nov 2021.

SRP Membership



SRP's membership underpins the organization's commitment towards promoting smallholder livelihoods and environmental sustainability in the global rice sector in accordance with their particular organizational mandates and capacities.

Since its inception, SRP's membership has grown steadily across all four stakeholder categories: supply chain actors; service, input and equipment providers; public sector/research and civil society organizations. This strong and diversified membership base facilitates consultation across the stakeholder community and ensures SRP's approaches and tools are informed by perspectives across the spectrum.

SRP Member: Rice Exchange

Rice Exchange supports SRP's initiatives to raise awareness of the need for sustainable rice production and the benefits it brings to producers, the environment and consumers.

Joining SRP in 2018, Rice Exchange committed to bringing sustainable rice into shops and kitchens across the globe using the blockchain technology that Fujitsu deployed to build the Rice Exchange digital platform. Blockchain technology can provide assurance on rice provenance, and track and trace solutions. Rice Exchange has seen a growing buying interest for SRP-Verified rice on the Rice Exchange platform.



Photo: Stephen Edkins, CEO of Rice Exchange, speaking at the Business Unusual 2nd Global Sustainable Rice Conference & Exhibition in 2019

Source (text and picture): Rice Exchange

Partnerships



Launched in 2018 and announced in 2019, the Sustainable Rice Landscapes Initiative (SRLI) consortium was established to support sustainable production of rice in Southeast Asia and to assist farmers and supply chains adversely impacted by regional climate change. The initiative works at a landscape level and is led by the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), UNEP, IRRI, GIZ and SRP.

The SRLI consortium is working with support under the Global Environment Facility and other multilateral instruments to deliver scalable solutions at country level and is also engaged in developing innovative financing mechanisms to drive replicable solutions for rice landscapes covering several Southeast Asian countries.



SRP Member: Battambang Rice Investment Co., Ltd (BRiCo)
Partner of Registered SRP Project: Sustainable Jasmine Rice Production
Country: Cambodia

The partnership between the International Finance Corporation, Mars Food, and BRiCo has been a fruitful collaboration for boosting sustainable farming practices in Cambodia. Under the agreement, BRiCo supplies milled rice to Mars Food, while the three entities work together to support farmers in adoption of sustainable agricultural best practices, as well as advanced agricultural technologies.

Since 2019 BRiCo has been working with 16 agricultural cooperatives in three major agricultural provinces (Battambang, Banteay Mean Chey, and Kompong Thom) on production of SRP-Verified Jasmine rice. BRiCo is also actively involved with all its relevant stakeholders/partners on technical field training on the SRP Standard, with the important goal of ensuring that participating agriculture cooperatives understand all 12 SRP Performance Indicators and eight key themes. Compliance with the SRP Standard also contributes to compliance status with local & EU regulatory requirements.

Besides technical field training, all agricultural cooperatives and other stakeholders are regularly invited to join additional training on production processes to ensure that a clear understanding among parties can be established prior to any supply agreement.



Source (text and pictures): BRiCo

SRP Standard for Sustainable Rice Cultivation, and SRP Performance Indicators



The SRP Standard for Sustainable Rice Cultivation, the world's first sustainable rice standard, was launched in 2015 together with a set of SRP Performance Indicators. In January 2020, SRP completed its revision of both normative documents and launched Version 2.1 based on feedback from farmers, users of Version 1.0 and Version 2.0, and on extensive consultation among members and external stakeholders. Version 2.1 provides clarification on requirements and methodologies as part of our ongoing efforts to improve robustness, relevance and ease of use by farmers and practitioners.

The SRP Standard comprises 41 requirements structured under eight main themes: farm management, pre-planting, water use, nutrient management, integrated pest management, harvest and post-harvest, health and safety, and labor rights.

To date, the SRP Standard and SRP Performance Indicators provide the only recognized working definition for sustainable rice production, together with a practical impact monitoring framework linked to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

According to an evaluation of SRP field pilots conducted by IRRI, switching to sustainable practices can boost farmers' net incomes by 10-20% through reduced input costs, reduce water use by up to 20% and cut methane emissions from flooded rice fields by up to 50%.

SRP Assurance Scheme



In September 2020, SRP launched the SRP Assurance Scheme which defines rules for actors engaged in measuring compliance or improvements and providing demonstrable evidence of compliance with the SRP Standard and use of SRP trademarks (Claims, Logos or Label) upon achieving verification. The scheme focuses on verification rather than certification, is built on strong internal assessment and provides farm registration and self-assessment as a starting point. SRP joined hands with GLOBALG.A.P. to manage the scheme's operations.

Key Features

- Three levels of verification, with registration and self-assessment as a starting point
- Focus on verification rather than certification
- Encourages use of producer group internal control mechanisms using an Internal Management System (IMS) Standard
- Complemented by a Chain of Custody Standard
- Managed in partnership with GLOBALG.A.P.

Key Benefits

- A robust, cost-effective and transparent path to sustainable procurement
- Enables value chain actors to de-risk their supply chains and make measurable contributions to corporate sustainability commitments
- Empowers consumers to help farmers and the environment by choosing SRP-Verified rice
- Catalyzes wide-scale shift to sustainable practices by small farmers, boosting incomes and contributing to the UN Sustainable Development Goals

"At GLOBALG.A.P. our vision for the future is a world in which farms are recognized for their efforts to continuously produce enough safe food, while also safeguarding our environment and the welfare of farming communities. Rice, as one of the world's staple foods, plays an important role in this vision. By partnering with SRP we have been able to make big progress in the rice sector. Together, we are making a real difference by **scaling** up the adoption of SRP verification and consequently the availability of sustainable rice globally. We are grateful for the trust which SRP has given us. Congratulations on your ten-year milestone. We wish you continued success in the future!"



Dr Kristian Moeller,
Managing Director at GLOBALG.A.P.

SRP-Verified Label



The on-pack SRP-Verified Label was launched in September 2020 to bring verified sustainable rice to consumers while helping smallholder farmers connect to stable and rewarding markets, enabling brands and retailers to lead from the front.

The label allows consumers to choose products that directly support SRP efforts to increase farmer incomes and to reduce the environmental impacts of rice production in alignment with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

SRP-Verified rice is now available through retailers in a number of EU countries



SRP Member: Preferred by Nature

Preferred by Nature (formerly NEPCo) was the first Verification Body (VB) approved in September 2020 by SRP to verify rice fields across the world after the launch of the SRP Assurance Scheme. In December 2020, Preferred by Nature verified the first rice fields compliant with the SRP Standard.

Peter Feilberg, Executive Director of Preferred by Nature, said then: "The Sustainable Rice Platform has the potential for significantly improving the lives of rice farmers, while reducing emissions and improving our climate."

Photos from the very first remote audit in India, conducted when there were strict travel restrictions. Preferred by Nature's auditors were in front of the screen and connected with a consultant who was visiting rice fields and talking with farmers:



Source (text and pictures): Preferred by Nature

Registered SRP Projects

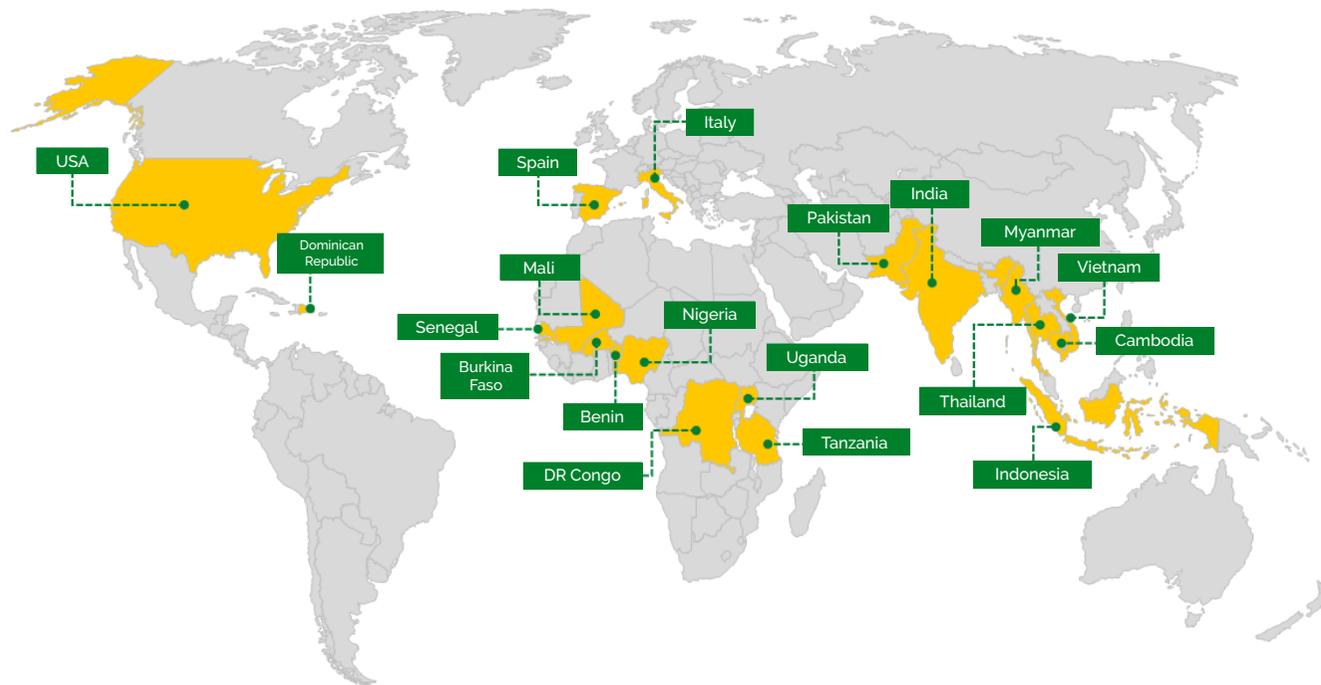


Figure 1: Countries in which Registered SRP Projects are implemented

Registered SRP Projects are initiated and managed independently by SRP members. To date, a total of 24 Registered SRP Projects have been enrolled, with 22 currently holding “active” status and two completed. These projects are implemented at varying scales in 19 countries across Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas, and use SRP tools to incentivize and document their rice farmers’ shifts to sustainable farming practices. Together, they have a cumulative of over 423,106 farmers, contributing significantly to SRP’s goal to reach one million farmers adopting climate-smart, sustainable practices by 2023.

Progress towards SRP’s goal of reaching one million farmers

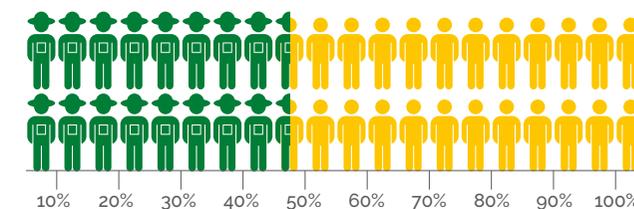


Figure 2: Progress towards SRP’s goal of reaching one million farmers

Project Highlights – Africa

Registered SRP Projects



Project Name: Rikolto Rice Cluster for Sustainable Rice Sector Transformation Programme
Lead Organization: Rikolto
Countries: DR Congo, Tanzania, Uganda, Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, Senegal, Indonesia and Vietnam

Rikolto joins hands with farmer organizations, private actors, governments and other partners in nine countries to promote sustainable rice farming. Rikolto's Global Rice Programme Team defined a global rice strategy which was contextualized into each country's program to promote peer-to-peer learning and monitoring, facilitate knowledge exchange and enable collaboration with regional and international rice stakeholders. Along with promoting the use of the SRP Standard, Rikolto supports development of policy and legal frameworks and inclusive business models to:

- Provide safe, healthy, sustainable and quality rice to consumers
- Generate decent profits and jobs for all actors along the value chain, especially smallholder farmers, taking particular account of gender equity and youth inclusion.
- Reduce the environmental impact of rice cultivation and preserve the environment for future generations

Spotlight on Uganda

In Uganda, Rikolto piloted the SRP Standard in two rice irrigation schemes in Butaleja district in Eastern Uganda: Doho Irrigation Scheme Farmers' Cooperative Society (DIFACOS) and Manafwa Basin Farmers' Cooperative Society (MBRFC).

In 2017, Rikolto carried out a baseline study to assess the SRP score of farmers prior to starting the pilot projects. From analysis of data gathered from the pilot projects conducted during 2018 and 2019, an impressive increase in SRP scores for both irrigation schemes were noted (from an average of 58 to 87 for DIFACOS and from 59 to 72 for MBRFC). There was also a decrease in the number of missed thresholds (from an average of 13 down to 1 and 5 respectively for

DIFACOS and MBRFC). The improvement in SRP scores and reduction in missed thresholds were likely the result of farmers adopting sustainable rice cultivation practices following training and coaching on the SRP Standard.

The success of these pilot projects encouraged Rikolto to step up its engagement with the Ugandan government to secure recognition for the SRP Standard at national level. Two national strategies are key to this recognition: the National Rice Development Strategy and the Agriculture Sector Strategic Plan. After discussions with the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, the first success at national level came with the inclusion of the SRP Standard in the Agriculture Sector Strategic Plan III (2020-2024).



Photo Credit: Jele Goossens

Source (text and picture): Rikolto

"During a stakeholder meeting chaired by Alex Lwakuba, Commissioner of Crop Production, Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, I advocated adoption of the SRP Standard in the new National Rice Development Strategy to make rice farming more sustainable and address the challenge of increasing production while protecting the environment and mitigating the impact of climate change." - John Ereng, Rice Programme Coordinator, East Africa."

Project Highlights – South Asia

Registered SRP Projects



Project Name: WAPRO Pakistan

Partners: HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation, Galaxy Rice Private Limited, Mars Food, Rice Partners Pvt Ltd (wholly owned subsidiary of Better Grain Ltd), Westmill Foods Co Ltd, SRP

Funding agency: Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

Country: Pakistan

More than 20 actors from the private sector, public sector and civil society organisations formed a consortium under the lead of HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation to address the water productivity challenges in the rice and the cotton sectors. In Pakistan, the implementation of the SRP Standard is an essential element to ensure the long-term sustainability of the rice production in relevant rice producing regions, with focus on more sustainable production of Basmati rice.

“Previously we could barely make ends meet, excessive capital requirements rendered us helpless and our crops suffered. After attending trainings supported by Helvetas we are now more in control of our crops outcome”, said Muhammad Arif. Arif is one of the thousands of farmers who have benefited from SRP training conducted by Helvetas through its private sector partners.

Together Helvetas and its partners have improved the capacity of rice growers to adopt innovative water-efficient techniques, certified seed, and responsible use of pesticides to reduce their cost of production, harvest losses and increase their paddy yield. Helvetas has also spearheaded efforts to provide extension services to farmers for promoting resource efficiency through laser land leveling, mechanical transplanting of rice, alternative wetting and drying (AWD), and use of specialized rice harvesters.

The partners have also focused on improving working conditions at farms particularly for women and children. “We don’t think about monetary empowerment of farmers alone; safety, health, education and peace of mind are as important contributors to productivity as financial gains,” says Mr. Zahid Program Manager of the Water Productivity Program. Helvetas’ focus on women and children not only is mandatory under the SRP Standards, but it is also a key priority for their partner businesses to create meaningful social impact. Female farm labor and their children have been provided better access to health and education facilities and awareness regarding their rights. This has helped improve overall work-related performance and mental health for both men and women in farming communities. Not only do they earn better compensation for their hard work through improved crop quality and yields, farmers also enjoy safer working environments and a brighter future for their children.

Source: HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation

Project Highlights – South Asia

Registered SRP Projects



SRP Member: Rice Partners Pvt Ltd (wholly owned subsidiary of Better Grain Ltd)
Partner of Registered SRP Project: WAPRO Pakistan
Country: Pakistan

Since 2011, Rice Partners Pvt Ltd (RPL) has worked closely with its contracted small-hold basmati rice farmers in Pakistan to improve their farming practices, yields, water usage and income. Training sessions on the SRP Standard are being conducted on a regular basis in farmer communities, with 800 farmers (6,368 hectares of land) audited for the last 4 consecutive years and earning an SRP score of above 90% every year.

Improving water efficiency:

- 1,050 farmers' land was leveled through laser land leveling (11,282 hectares) and 6,000 more farmers were inspired to follow
- 400 direct seeded (DSR) demo plots were established and 8,000 more DSR plots were inspired to follow, saving up to 25% water in the rice fields
- 12,000 AWD tubes were disseminated to 6,000 farmers (7,284 hectares) saving up to 15% of water

Social programs and education:

- 12 child facilitation centers established over the past 5 years, to keep children of rice transplanting families safe from child labor and weather hard conditions
- 80 trainees, both girls and boys, enrolled and 60% have already started small businesses to earn a livelihood for their families
- supported the training of 400 teachers in 20 schools on child rights, human rights, women economic empowerment and climate change, reaching 5,000 students and 1,000 community members



RPL field Officer Mr. Shahzad is giving briefing to contracted farmer Mr. Malik Aslam, on how to identify the weeds from plants

Source (text and picture): Rice Partners Pvt Ltd (RPL)

Project Highlights – South Asia

Registered SRP Projects



SRP Member: LT Foods Ltd
Partner of Registered SRP Project: WAPRO (India): SRP + Water Productivity
Country: India

LT Foods/Daawat Ltd has had much success raising awareness of farmers on sustainable rice production using the SRP Standard, using a mobile van equipped with both audio and visual training aids. The van visits all villages in which farmers are located and its

arrival is met with enthusiasm. Farmers, their labor/employees and families learn about SRP and the values and benefits it provides, at their doorstep and in their dialect.



Source (text and pictures): LT Foods Ltd

Project Highlights – Southeast Asia

Registered SRP Projects



Project Name: Climate Smart Rice Project
Partners: HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation, UNEP, Prime Agri, SRP
Funding agencies: Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD); SDC
Country: Myanmar

The Myanmar Climate Smart Rice Project envisions wider scale adoption of climate-smart and resource-efficient technologies and aims to increase incomes of rice farmers by increasing yields and improving value chain efficiency. Adoption of sustainable best practices such as alternate wetting and drying, efficient application of fertilizer, discouraging straw burning, will contribute to reduction of GHG emissions.

In partnership with private sector partners, the project works to establish an outgrower scheme for sustainably produced rice with smallholder farmers. It supports rice millers to establish and provide advisory services on sustainable rice cultivation following the SRP Standard. Extension agents of the private sector (agro technicians and agronomists) are trained on the SRP Standard who then train farmers. To date, the project has trained 3,200 smallholder farmers on sustainable rice cultivation following the SRP Standard. Trained farmers are further coached for the adoption of the SRP Standard and SRP-Verification audits following the SRP Assurance Scheme. 472 farmers in Shan State were Level 3 SRP-Verified by a third-party verification audit conducted by Preferred by Nature in December 2020. The project plans to conduct verification (both level 2 and 3) of additional trained farmers and establish value chains for SRP-Verified rice both in the domestic and export markets.

Farmers adopting the SRP Standard benefit from optimization (inputs, plant protection products, water, labor etc.), increased yields (use of certified seed and better fertilizer management) and labor saving technologies, while adverse weather conditions. Millers and traders also benefit from access to better quality rice (varietal purity) and larger volumes.



November 2020, Farmer assessing the quality of rice during rice harvest

Source (text and picture): HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation

Project Highlights – Southeast Asia

Registered SRP Projects



Project Name: Better Rice Initiative Asia (BRIA II)

Partners: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Olam International

Countries: Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia

The BRIA II project works on reducing pesticide residues in the rice value chain and is introducing a quality assurance system. These measures support compliance with food safety laws, international conventions and national regulations regarding social and environmental criteria for sustainable rice production and processing. The main strategy is to establish long-term business partnerships and to facilitate effective collaboration between relevant actors.

The project also supports the establishment of learning centers and demonstration plants for seed production, to create additional sources of income for rice farmers.



In Vietnam, the BRIA II project, backed by the Vietnamese Government and Olam International with GIZ support, has entered its second phase to improve market access for rice farmers in four provinces of the Mekong Delta: Can Tho, An Giang, Dong Thap, and Bac Lieu. The project's objective is to raise the living conditions of farmers in Asia by improving the quality of the rice they grow and helping them reduce their investment cost.

Project achievements in numbers:

- 9,226 smallholder farmers (4,225 male farmers and 5,003 female farmers) in Thailand, Indonesia and Vietnam have been trained about sustainable rice production and received access to a sustainable value chain, with the result that their income has increased by 20%.
- 4,291 smallholder farmers in Thailand have been certified for the SRP Standard and received a 93.86% compliance score on average, meaning that they are producing rice with sustainable cultivation.
- 19,413 hectares of rice fields are now cultivated sustainably, producing 67,780 tons of sustainable rice paddy that is delivered to the sustainable rice value chain.
- 34 organizations (public, private, local and capital) are collaborating on improving the sustainable rice value chain.

Source (text and pictures): BRIA II

Project Highlights – Southeast Asia

Registered SRP Projects



Project Name: Market-oriented Smallholders Value Chain Project Thailand (MSVC TH)

Partners: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Olam International, Thai Rice Department

Country: Thailand

Initiated in 2018, the MSVC TH project enhances the importance of connecting farmers with the market, and fully supports driving the market through capacity building among farmers and systemizing sustainable rice cultivation practices. The project was piloted in Ubon Ratchathani province, home to Thailand's largest rice growing area at 4.1 million rai (656,000 hectares).

Through the project, more than 10,000 farmers in Ubon Ratchathani and Surin provinces have been trained on the SRP Standard. Developed together with supply chain actors, governments, development organizations and the farmers it aims to benefit, the standard enables objective comparison of all rice systems. For Thailand, it provides a framework for continuous improvement that is applicable to both irrigated areas in the Central Plains and rainfed cultivation areas in the Northeast.

The MSVC TH project also aims to find markets for 60,000 tons of unmilled Thai Hom Mali Rice produced under the SRP Standard by 2020.

Up to 4,290 smallholders in Ubon Ratchathani and Surin provinces have successfully received SRP verification by external auditors, with their accumulated rice cultivation of a total of 72,590 rai (11,614 hectares) of land scoring up to 93 out of 100 against the SRP Standard since 2019. Nearly 30,000 tons of rice produced by these farmers has been categorized as "sustainably cultivated and grown in compliance with the SRP Standard".



Source (text and pictures): GIZ Thailand, MSVC TH

Farmer Stories

Farmers share their positive experiences after adopting the SRP Standard for Sustainable Rice Cultivation



Increased grain yield



Farmer's Name: Rana Mehboob
Country: Pakistan

Rana Mehboob, from the village Mandiala Pinach, is a veteran rice grower with 15 acres (six hectares) of rice fields that are a shining example of increased productivity from adherence to good agricultural practices (GAP).

When asked about his experience, Rana said, 'When I started following SRP practices I was cautioned by my fellow farmers that it would be an unfruitful exercise. But I thought differently and was determined to follow my instincts. Techniques such as AWD, Bird Perch, pest

scouting, and land levelling have greatly increased the fertility of my land without degrading it. These practices are not only environmentally friendly, but they are also cost-effective.

"The yields of my harvests have been outstanding and I can say with confidence that the SRP and its tools are indeed life-changing for the farming community".

Source (text and picture): Atlas Foods (Pvt) Ltd
Project Name: Promotion of Sustainable Rice Production and Standards by SRP in Rice Sector of Pakistan

Increased water productivity



Farmer's Name: Sinsamut Kongprayot
Country: Thailand

Sinsamut Kongprayot, a rice farmer in Ayutthaya, has adopted the laser land leveling (LLL) method for his 25 rai (four hectares) of fields. He said, "The LLL technology helps me manage my rice fields and save water effectively. Now, I do not have to pump water all day and night for use in my rice fields. Such low-carbon rice farming technologies should be accessible for all Thai farming communities, so that farmers can then be able to help transform the rice sector into a sustainable one".

Photo: Sinsamut Kongprayot (right) and Thai Rice NAMA staff are presenting a weed control method to farmers.

Source (story and pictures): Thai Rice Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action (Thai Rice NAMA)
Lead Organization: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)

Farmer Stories



Increased income (profitability)



Farmer's Name: Sorn Sokhorn
Country: Cambodia

"I'd like to celebrate the 10th anniversary of SRP by telling my short story," Sorn Sokhorn said. "The first thing that attracted me to the program back in 2016 was that Sansom Mlup Prey (SMP Cambodia) clearly explained the correct ways of cultivation following the SRP Standard. They also explained that my rice would be purchased at a reasonable price but only if my family and I followed the exact SRP methods. That was what

motivated me the most. To be expected, there was training involved, farm checkups, and other procedures throughout the rice cultivation process.

"What is more important is that now I don't have to worry about seeking markets and can focus fully on the rice production process. Being part of this program really supports my family's livelihood, and I cannot thank SMP Cambodia enough for selecting me to be part of the SRP."

Source (text and pictures): SMP Cambodia

Increased labor productivity & better health & safety awareness



Farmer's Name: Budi Harsanto
Country: Indonesia

Budi Harsanto, a rice farmer in Boyolali, shared his experience as a participant in this SRP pilot project. He said that he started adopting a number of new rice cultivation practices, the first of which was documenting planting cycles. "I already had a crop calendar, but I rarely updated it. Now I start using it to plan the next planting cycles." Budi also said that he initially struggled to change his old practices because he was used to doing

things a certain way, such as not wearing protective clothing, Now, however, he does. "I received clear information about what pesticides can do to the human body and the environment, and that worries me a lot, so I now wear a safety mask and gloves when handling chemical products, especially when spraying pesticides," he said.

Source (text and picture): Rikolto
Project Name: Rikolto Rice Cluster for Sustainable Rice Sector Transformation
Programme - Promoting Sustainable and Inclusive Rice Value Chain in Indonesia

Mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions, labor productivity & better health & safety awareness



Photo: Mr. Nguyen Van Loi (Ba Loi) is observing his rice field (September 2020)



Photo: Mrs. Ba Loi is sharing her experience in avoiding burning rice straw at the crop-cutting event

Farmers' Names: Mr & Mrs Ba Loi
Country: Vietnam

Mr & Mrs Ba Loi at Vong Dong commune, Thoai Son district, An Giang province are considered the "innovative farmers" of Vong Dong Cooperative. With 30 years' experience as rice growers, they have been quick to volunteer to adopt the newest agricultural technologies during the last 15 years, whenever agriculture extension programs of the government, international development agencies as well as private firms came to introduce the latest innovations for improvement.

In August 2020, the couple participated in the training course on the SRP Standard organized by GIZ and An Giang Agriculture Extension Center and were one of the first rice farming households to implement SRP practices in An Giang. They allocated two hectares of paddy field for implementing the SRP Standard in combination with Maximum Residue Level control of pesticides.

Receiving visitors and neighboring farmers at SRP training in crop-cutting in 2021, Mrs Ba Loi enthusiastically shared her experiences and observations of the positive changes from adopting new, suitable SRP practices. Besides the prominent benefits of reduced costs for pesticides, reduced labor required for spraying pesticide, and reduced pesticide exposure and risks to farmers' health and environment, she emphasized the important benefits

from recycling rice straw and rice stubble.

"One of the SRP Standard requirements that many farmers hesitate to apply is not to burn rice straw and rice stubble. However, it brings more benefits than drawbacks," she said. "Farmers typically think that burning their fields destroys pests and disease, and that the ash provides a source of fertilizer for the next season. But since learning about the benefits from extension programs on television and from agriculture experts, I stopped burning straw and stubble and now plough my fields right after harvesting to allow the stubble to totally decompose. The soil then becomes very rich with high levels of nutrients from the decomposed stubble, and I no longer need to apply more fertilizer for the next planting season, which I needed to do before. Additionally, I earn an additional income of VND 1,4 million from selling rice straw to the baling service, and another VND 1,2 million from renting out my harvested fields for duck-raising."

This compelling testimony from Mr and Mrs Ba Loi, together with the crop-cutting demonstration at their successful fields, encouraged her neighbors and other farmers who attended the SRP training to also make changes for improvement.

Source (story and pictures): Better Rice Initiative Asia (BRIA II)
Lead Organization: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)

SRP Training Programme



Launched in 2019, the SRP Training Programme offers guidance, training and technical assistance to farmers, implementation partners and extension services to support upscaling of adoption of environmentally and socially sustainable rice production technologies using SRP tools.

To date, SRP has endorsed three **Authorized Training Providers** (Academy for International Cooperation (AIZ), GLOBALG.A.P. Academy, International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) Education) to deliver SRP-approved training courses on the SRP Standard, SRP Performance Indicators and SRP Assurance Scheme, and to administer course exams that lead to a certificate of recognition as an **SRP Authorized Trainer**.

SRP Authorized Trainers are assigned a unique certification number and are qualified to conduct farmer outreach, training and verification activities in support of SRP objectives. To date, SRP has recognized 271 SRP Authorized Trainers based in 30 countries and a total of 100,789 farmers in Registered SRP Projects have received training.

Project Name: Thai-German Climate Programme – Agriculture (TGCP-Agriculture)
Partners: Thai Rice Department, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)
Country: Thailand

The TGCP-Agriculture project's objective is to support the assessment of mitigation and adaptation potential of the agriculture sector in Thailand, notably rice farming, and developing the first measurement, reporting and verification (MRV) system for GHG emissions in the rice sector.

TGCP-Agriculture collaborates with the Thai Rice Department and the National Bureau of Agricultural Commodity and Food Standards (ACFS) in developing a publicly-owned, voluntary Thai Sustainable Rice Standard (GAP ++) to integrate climate change-related aspects into the existing Rice GAP Standard. The development proposal of the GAP ++ was approved by the Deputy of Minister of Agriculture and Cooperatives in September 2020, and the GAP++ Standard draft is currently under review. The final draft is expected to be submitted to the Agricultural Standard Committee of the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperative (MoAC) at the beginning of 2022.

SRP is a component of the TGCP Agriculture project and the SRP Standard is used as a tool to enhance farmers' capacity for climate change adaptation and GHG mitigation.

TGCP-Agriculture has rolled out nationwide training in compliance with the SRP Training Programme to enable Thailand's rice sector to shift to low-emission, climate-smart practices in growing rice. The training programme includes:

- SRP Authorized Training (by SRP-endorsed training institutions) hosted by the National Working Group of the SRP National Chapter Thailand;
- Training of "Smart Officers" from Rice Department's Rice Seed Centers, Rice Research Centers, GIZ and partner companies in the rice value chain, designed and delivered by SRP Authorized Trainers (individual trainers certified by SRP); and
- Training of "Smart Farmers" who commit to implementing SRP to demonstrate its benefits and to further communicate know-how to their community, designed and delivered by Smart Officers. Smart Farmers have taken up this mission – including serving as co-trainers alongside Smart Officers to share their direct experiences – with positive results due to having high trust and credibility with peers.

Source: GIZ Thailand, TGCP-Agriculture

National-Level Activities



SRP works to build commitment at local level and to embed the principles of sustainable rice production in national policy and practice through the support of national-level rice stakeholders from research, public and private sectors, as well as civil society and the development community via SRP National Chapters and development of SRP National Interpretation Guidelines.



SRP National Chapters to upscale local adoption and national-level impact

Thailand: In 2019, GIZ Thailand received the SRP Secretariat's endorsement to work toward establishing a SRP Thailand National Chapter. The SRP Thailand National Working Group (NWG) was subsequently formed, and GIZ was endorsed by the SRP Board as the host organization. An inaugural NWG meeting was held to agree on the vision, mission and working arrangements. In 2020, momentum continued to grow with the NWG working in subgroups to define priority topics, culminating in agreement of goals and activities, and submission of an initial work plan to the SRP Secretariat.

In 2021, the SRP Thailand National Chapter has made good progress: partnerships within the chapter have been strengthened through member engagement activities throughout the year. The official English-Thai translation of the SRP Standard was approved by SRP, and the first SRP Authorized Training Course in Thai Language was organized in November 2021 to grow the cadre of local SRP Authorized Trainers to engage rice sector stakeholders and smallholder farmers to adopt sustainable rice production practices in Thailand.

Cambodia: In 2020, the General Directorate of Agriculture (GDA) submitted a proposal to initiate establishment of a SRP Cambodia National Chapter. This request was endorsed by the SRP Secretariat in the same month. In June 2021 the GDA, Cambodia Rice

Federation (CRF), Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), CIRAD and Swisscontact signed a Memorandum of Agreement to support the establishment of a SRP Cambodia National Chapter.

Nigeria: In 2021, GIZ Nigeria, working through the Competitive African Rice Initiative (CARI) and with the support of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, received approval from the SRP Secretariat to lead the establishment of a SRP Nigeria National Chapter.

SRP National Interpretation Guidelines

The SRP National Interpretation Guideline for the USA has been developed, and the guidelines for Thailand and Cambodia are currently in progress through their respective National Working Groups.



What's Next?



Over the past decade, SRP has evolved from a project originally co-convened by the IRRI, UNEP and GIZ into an officially incorporated, independent membership association with over 100 members.

Together with its members and through member-led Registered SRP Projects, SRP has enlisted over 400,000 farmers in various countries who are committed to adopting the SRP Standard. SRP's goal is to enlist a total of one million farmers within the next two years to drive wide-scale adoption of climate-smart, sustainable best practices among rice smallholders. Once that goal is reached, the subsequent goal will be to enlist 10 million farmers by 2030.

In line with the SRP Strategic Plan (2021–2025) that provides a roadmap for the coming five years, SRP will focus on three strategic pillars i.e., to develop sustainable value chains, create partnerships and incentives for scale, and serve as a knowledge hub in order to achieve transformative change within the global rice sector.

SRP will continue to support market-led initiatives to promote broad-scale uptake of sustainable rice in key markets around the world through the SRP Assurance Scheme, while working with governments and development partners around the world to transform the global rice sector, focusing on the critical role of rice in addressing climate change and global food security within the framework of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. We are also committed to working with the financial sector to facilitate innovative financial instruments as a vital enabler of this transformation.



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1 December 2021

