ENABLING CLIMATE-SMART RESOURCE-EFFICIENT SUSTAINABLE RICE

RICE is key to climate resilience and food security.

A global challenge

Rice is the main staple for 3.5 billion people, and it provides livelihoods for 1.5 billion people worldwide.

However, we pay a high environmental price for our rice. Up to 40% of the world's irrigation water is used for rice production, and up to 10% of global methane emissions come rice fields.

To feed a growing population, the International Rice Research Institute estimates that production needs to increase by 25 percent over the next 25 years.

Inasmuch as rice contributes to climate change, it is also highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Rice farmers are increasingly suffering from adverse impacts such as drought, rising temperature, flooding and salinity.

A transformation, therefore, in the global rice sector is needed if we are to meet future global demand in a sustainable way.

Sustainable Rice Platform

Co-convened by UN Environment and the International Rice Research Institute, the Sustainable Rice Platform (SRP) is a multi-stakeholder alliance to promote resource efficiency and sustainability both on-farm and throughout rice value chains.

The alliance works with over 80 institutional partners in the public and private sectors as well as international organizations, NGO and the international research community to promote climate-smart best practices among rice smallholders in developing countries.

The world's first rice sustainability standard

In 2015 we launched the world's first Standard for Sustainable Rice Cultivation, together with a set of Performance Indicators to enable monitoring of progress and impact.

Together, the Standard and Indicators can serve as a working definition for sustainable rice production, and enable benchmarking and objective comparison of the sustainability of any rice system.

The Standard can thus offer policymakers a practical and widely-accepted normative basis for policy and incentive measures.

The launch of the Standard triggered commitments by a number of private sector actors to achieve 100% sustainable sourcing within their global corporate supply chains.

Lessons learned:
Drawing on experience with other agri-food sustainability initiatives, the SRP Standard was developed over a 2-year period with broad stakeholder participation.

A tool for improvement:
An inclusive tool for practitioners to drive wide-scale adoption of climate-smart sustainable best practice among rice smallholders, for benchmarking and as a basis for policy-making.

Compact standard:
46 requirements structured under 8 themes, each aimed at achieving a specific sustainability impact

Keeping it real:
Designed for smallholders, all requirements in the SRP Standard were selected for their relevance and practicality.

Measuring impact:
SRP's quantitative Performance Indicators enable users to identify 'hotspots' and readily monitor impacts of adoption

Pilot field implementation of the SRP Standard in 2016-17 was evaluated by IRRI, and saw examples of real benefits to rice farmers and the environment, such as:

20%	savings in water
50%	reduction in greenhouse gas emissions
10%	increase in farmer's incomes

International Rice Research Institute

International Rice Research Institute

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Our work contributes to...

Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The Sustainable Rice Platform (SRP) aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through adoption of climate-smart and sustainable best practices. Rice is a major contributor to anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions from the agriculture sector of producing countries, amounting to an estimated 500 million tons CO_2e/year, representing up to 50% of agricultural emissions in some rice-producing countries and 10% of all agriculture sector emissions worldwide.

Reduced methane emissions from rice fields can make a significant contribution to Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) targets of rice growing countries.

Adoption of best practices also contributes to adaptation goals through more resilient rice cropping systems that are less vulnerable to climate change risks.

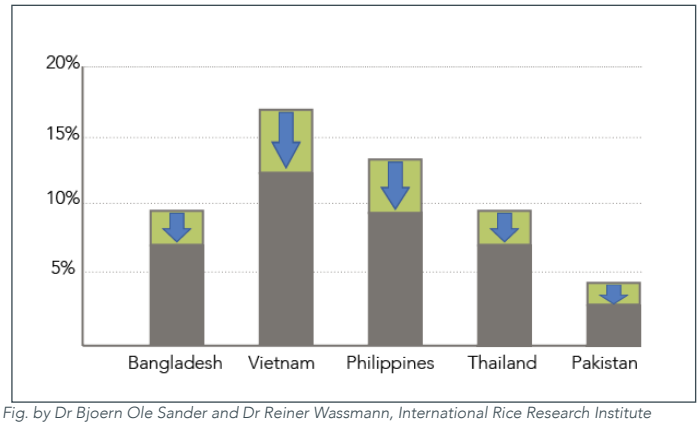

Fig. by Dr Bjoern Ole Sander and Dr Reiner Wassmann, International Rice Research Institute

The figure above shows greenhouse gas emissions from the rice sector as share of total national greenhouse gas emissions of each country. The GREEN bar symbolizes the mitigation potential of alternate wetting and drying (AWD), a low emissions practice included in the SRP Standard.

To get involved, please contact:

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Sustainable Rice Production in Action

CAMBODIA

The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) trained 150 farmers in Kampong Thom Province to produce rice according to the SRP Standard. Working with Battambang Rice Investment Co. and Mars Food, WCS developed a farmer diary in Khmer to record farm operations.

AMRU Rice, with support from the International Finance Corporation launched a 3-year joint project to implement the SRP Standard into the company's supply chain. This partnership aims to equip 2,000 farmers with knowledge and tools that will allow rice growers to respond to an emerging market demand for sustainably produced rice.

INDIA

Rice farmers in Haryana state were invited to field-test the SRP Standard. Mars, in collaboration with UTZ, piloted implementation of a farm management system and an Internal Management System to strengthen the capacity of participating farmers and millers to adopt sustainable practices in rice production.

PAKISTAN

In Pakistan; Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation, Mars Food and Rice Partners Ltd, are implementing the Water Productivity Project (WAPRO) with 500 Basmati farmers, focusing on supply chain development and policy interventions, using a digitized data entry system to assess compliance with the SRP Standard.

THAILAND

Thailand's Rice Department partnered with GIZ Better Rice Initiative Asia (BRIA), Olam International and UTZ to pilot test the SRP Standard among 2 farmer groups in Ubon Ratchathani. This activity was one of BRIA's interventions to improve market access for resource-poor rice farmers.

VIETNAM

Loc Troi Group identified 3 provinces in the Mekong Delta to implement the SRP Standard. Preliminary findings include higher profits and productivity, as well as improved nutrient-use efficiency among participating farmers.

Together with the International Finance Corporation and the International Rice Research Institute, Loc Troi Group aims to expand its project to reach 4,000 farmers, and develop a certified sustainable rice value chain for export markets.