

Sustainable Rice Platform

‘Rice for Tomorrow’ Symposium and Third Annual Plenary Meeting

Bangkok, 25-26 November, 2013

Meeting Report

1. Key Outcomes

The ‘Rice for Tomorrow’ Symposium was opened by the UNEP Regional Director, Dr Young-Woo Park and the Director General of Thailand’s Rice Department, Mr Chanpithya Shimphalee. The Third Annual Plenary Meeting of the SRP realized a number of key outcomes:

- Endorsement of a 4-year SRP Roadmap from 2013-2016
- Review and endorsement of Guidelines for sustainable rice production
- Review and endorsement of strategy to field-test incentive mechanisms
- Election of new members of the SRP Advisory Committee
- New members of SRP- Punjab Agricultural University and International Finance Corporation, with additional commitments from Indonesia, Lao PDR and Sri Lanka.

2. Event Organization

- The event was organized by the SRP Secretariat, and co-hosted by Thailand’s Rice Department. Registration support was provided by UNEP-ROAP staff.
- 85 registered participants, including 7 UNEP-sponsored senior level delegates (participant list available).
- The final programme comprised an open Symposium on Day 1, opened by Dr Young-Woo Park (UNEP Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific) and Mr Chanpithya Shimphalee (Director General, Thailand Rice Department).
- Keynote addresses by James Lomax (UNEP Agri-Food Programme Officer) and Dr Bas Bouman (Director of GRIIP, IRRI).
- Day 2 comprised the Official Plenary Session for SRP Members and observers.
- The Final Programme and all presentations will be available on the SRP website from 3 December 2013.

3. Official Plenary Session (26 November 2013)

3.1. SRP Status Report 2013 and Roadmap 2013-2016 (WE)

- The SRP Report for 2013 presented progress in the areas of organization and management, membership base, participation in Advisory Committee, Working Groups and Secretariat, and stakeholder engagement/funding.
- Key milestones for 2013 were listed as follows:
 - Organization, management/governance structures revised, and documentation in place. All documents and meeting reports are available via SRP website Members’ Area.

- Secretariat established as a management team, managed by SRP Coordinator, with 2-weekly meetings.
 - Membership system functioning, with 12 official members (including UNEP and IRRI as founding partners and co-conveners).
 - Website functioning and internal communication strategy agreed.
 - SRP Draft Guidelines – 3rd round of consultations completed and new draft is presented for review by Plenary.
 - Proposal for Incentives Mechanisms Feasibility Study submitted for Plenary endorsement.
 - Field Implementation Strategy (to test Guidelines, incentives and outreach mechanisms) drafted; concept discussed with member companies who have confirmed interest.
 - Expression of Interest submitted to IRRI to convene a 1-day Symposium: ‘MAINSTREAMING SUSTAINABLE RICE - RICE VALUE CHAIN GLOBAL TRANSFORMATION’ at the International Rice Congress, 27-31 Oct, 2014.
- SRP Roadmap and indicative Budget 2013-2016 drafted for endorsement by the Plenary.
 - Targets for 2014 were agreed as follows:
 - Increased Secretariat capacity to coordinate field implementation activities across countries
 - Paid membership to be expanded, with target of US\$ 150k to be raised via membership dues.
 - Funding of US\$500-700k to be raised for field implementation activities
 - Field implementation activities to be launched
 - Public consultation launched on guidelines
 - Quarterly updates for members to commence Q1/14
 - External visibility to be raised via participation in at least 6 regional / global events
 - Points of clarification:
 - SRP welcome membership by associations as well as their individual corporate members.
 - SRP membership by research institutes and governmental members does not require cash contribution, but in-kind contribution (e.g. facilities, staff allocations) are expected.

3.2. SRP Guidelines and Criteria (JWM)

- Following detailed open review of the text of the Guidelines on Day 1, a number of amendments were proposed to the principles, criteria and practices.
- The revised draft will be circulated to Members by 7 December for comment, with a deadline of 15 December for submission of further comments by Members.

3.3. Tools for implementing guidelines (TS)

- Dr Takahiro Sato (TS) presented IRRI’s progress in developing farmer-friendly decision-guidance tools, including the Field Calculator.

- HdG commented that such tools could be linked to verification programmes to help reduce transaction costs through self-assessments, while Dr Joe Rickman (IRRI Thailand) stressed the need for a ‘bottom-up’ approach to arrive at some agreed definition of the ‘Sustainable farmer’, benchmarked for different farm types and environments. JL affirmed this was indeed the SRP’s approach, and stressed the need for simplicity in the user interface. WE noted that SRP will need farmer representation and inputs into this process to ensure grass-roots relevance.
- MZ noted that we can learn a great deal from traditional rice systems such as the Subak irrigated rice system in Bali. This scheme is culturally integrated, sustainable, with decisions made collectively. He stressed the importance of public policy dialogue and outreach with farmer groups.

3.4. Proposal for feasibility study of Incentive Mechanisms (AK)

- AK presented a proposal for testing two incentive mechanisms: the Book & Claim Model, and the Segregation Incentive Mechanism. Whilst a number of private sector partners have expressed interest in the segregation mechanism, segregated supply chains will represent only a very small market share.
- In consideration of the B&C model, which carries more universal potential, the key role of government was noted as a potential buyer of credits (since the majority of rice grown is sold domestically). Therefore it will be necessary to analyze the incentives for governments to buy sustainability credits. In BB’s view, purchase of credits by governments is an uncertain prospect, while domestic private sector VC actors more likely to be willing to engage.
- LB noted that currently, there is no consumer pull for ‘sustainable rice’; at present, only corporate vision drives this ambition.
- However, according to GH, private sector actors in other high-impact non-agricultural sectors (e.g. mining, hotels) could offer an attractive primary target for purchasing sustainability credits as offsets. MG added that secondary public sector actors impacted (e.g. in India, the Punjab Electricity Board) should be considered as potential buyers.
- JL stressed the need to demonstrate the business case at key stages in the value chain, from farmer-level to macro (policy) level, as a means of using sustainability credits to replace traditional incentives- a reward for best practice.
- HdG suggested that the best incentive would be a workable, certifiable standard, putting farmers first. However, Isabelle Vagneron (CIRAD-Lao) urged SRP to take into account questions such as barriers to compliance for smallholders.
- LV believed that for Thailand at least, under the current policy it is unlikely that the government would consider buying credits. However, the B&C system could be positioned as a research project to create links with local traders and encourage their participation. This will be quicker than attempting to influence policy. Nevertheless, MB believed that B&C could work in Thailand and other countries in Asia; in light of the ongoing revision the MDGs, the B&C system could be positioned to assist governments in achieving the new Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs).

3.5. Field implementation activities (JWM)

- JWM presented the SRP’s Field Implementation Strategy. He indicated that next steps will be to clarify interest by SRP members, establish activities and types of activities, identify needed technical and financial support, and draft technical and funding proposals and approach potential donors. Moreover, a monitoring and learning approach is needed to ensure coherence and comparability across countries. In particular, it will be important to develop implementation support capacity within the Secretariat.

- The Field Implementation Strategy is based upon member driven projects with strong SRP support. Under this alignment model, members take responsibility for certain projects, and depending on specific needs, SRP may offer technical and/or financial support. There is a need to develop Secretariat capacity to provide such support, to ensure activities are aligned and meet study objectives and overall goals, and also to access external co-funding.
- In terms of implementation, it is expected that the host company / institution will have the facilities, expertise and capacity to take responsibility for managing FIS activities aligned with their own organizational priorities.
- It was proposed that a 'Pool of Excellence' (POE) be established to provide specialist technical guidance and training in support of implementation. BB noted that this would dovetail with current thinking at IRRI, which is currently establishing such a team of experts who would be available on a consultancy basis. Further clarification will therefore be needed on the business model for the POE (e.g. would the POE be SRP-funded, or would SRP facilitate identification of key expertise for companies to contact directly?)
- Commenting on the Guidelines, MB noted that implementable standards will need to be established for on-farm trials. He confirmed GIZ's interest in offering support for establishment of 1 implementable standard on which FIS can be based. This proposal was supported by several delegates (need to define target groups, architecture).
- JWM noted that we still need to develop these protocols, both for implementation and for M&E. Both these will represent major undertakings for SRP.
- BB informed the meeting that IRRI's CORIGAP project was established to contribute to the work of SRP (WG1), in 6 countries- China, Indonesia, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam. IRRI therefore considers CORIGAP as part of IRRI's in-kind contribution to SRP.
- Aside from organizations and companies that have already expressed interest in participating in FIS activities (IRRI/CORIGAP, Kellogg's, Mars, Nestlé Paddy Club, GIZ, Olam, UTZ Certified), during the meeting the following additional parties also expressed interest in participating:
 - Lao PDR (Mr Phoumy Inthapanya, National Agriculture Research Institute, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry)
 - Indonesia (Dr Hasil Sembiring, ICFORD Indonesia)
 - Punjab Agricultural University (Prof Surinder S Kukal)
 - Sri Lanka: Dr Manel Dassanayake (Additional Director General, DOA) noted that SL farmers do not practice GAP, and suffer problems due to excessive use of inputs.
- JL informed that SRP has been in discussion with GEF for 4 months, to identify possibilities of incorporating rice into certain GEF programmes. Max Zieren (GEF Coordinator for Asia-Pacific Region) informed that the GEF-6 funding period will start next year, with growing interest in supply chains, sustainability, and commodities such as oil palm and soybean, but not yet rice. However, there is some alignment at landscape level, since rice contributes ecosystem services, especially in the area of water management. It may be feasible to work via a multi-focal area project. Now that SRP's organization is clearly established, MZ is ready to work with SRP in the coming year to identify GEF-fundable activities.
- MZ also proposed that in order to make SRP sustainable as an entity, SRP needs to establish a tangible outcome/product with value for business (e.g. a sustainability certification for rice), and that this should perhaps be incorporated as an objective in the Master Plan.
- BB stressed that much can be learned from existing work, and from existing ongoing projects (e.g. CORIGAP (S and SE Asia, ICM in Indonesia, the 'Three Controls' in China, and the 'Three

Reductions, Three Gains (3R3G)' and 'One Must Do, Five Reductions' Programs in Vietnam). How might SRP capitalize on these existing programmes?

- BW noted that IFC has been working with UNEP for 5 years on the Biodiversity and Agricultural Commodities Program. It is therefore now appropriate to consider inclusion of SRP; such a move could also offer new opportunities for institutional funding.

3.6. Impacts and indicators (JWM)

- JWM presented the rationale for defining impact indicators, key considerations, a potential framework, and suggested that performance indicators could provide a basis for defining sustainability targets. Such targets could be set on a pre-competitive basis (e.g. SRP) or by individual stakeholders.
- In progressing from identifying indicators to setting quantified targets, JWM indicated that next steps would be first to develop appropriate impact indicators and develop a data collection protocol. This will be followed up with collection of empirical impact data at field level, and secondary impact data from the literature. These data would then be used to define default impact values (proxies). Such data would then allow farmers to use make informed choices on best sustainable practices.
- There was an overall consensus to keep the number of indicators to a minimum, focusing on those which are most relevant in the rice sector.
- FT asked how might the many different needs be prioritized in determining “best” practice? (e.g. is it more sustainable to use less water or reduce methane?) Prof Surinder Kukal (PAU) BB- this is part of the tools that we hope to develop, in order to minimize footprint. Musts and wants will depend on location.
- MZ noted that it would be important from a whole value chain perspective to define downstream indicators that might help stimulate adoption. This would require moving beyond the current scope, and embrace the main Green Economy principles (e.g. low carbon, equity, externalities, sustaining ecosystem services. While this is not an immediate priority, SRP has the ambition to address this in the coming years.
- BB proposed that SRP needs to move towards quantitative impact indicators, GRI SP is embarking on a huge programme for developing impact indicators in various areas. However, SRP's objectives might be better serve in the short term by a 'learning by doing' approach. JL agreed, commenting that this approach would broaden understanding. MB confirmed that GIZ would be ready to work with UTZ/SRP on this topic, applying existing knowledge. Indicators can be later changed and amended according to lessons learned.
- RL / IV / BW / HdG/ DJ / MB expressed interested in participating in an 'Impact Work Group' to identify a minimal set of key indicators.
- There was a broad-ranging debate on standards and targets, and whether SRP should set targets, or at this stage only 'endorse' practices, e.g. AWD/DS/SSNM? BB saw a role for SRP in endorsing such technologies, and also in develop protocols to work with stakeholders to select and prioritize practices. These would not be static, but would necessarily change over time, requiring periodic review.
- Additionally, RN raised the possibility of subscribing to modules that form part of a standard, rather than the entire standard. He also questioned the need for developing new impact indicators, given the availability of existing indicators. Kh Pisan Pongsapitch (Office of Standards Development, National Bureau of Agricultural and Food Commodity Standards,

Thailand) also suggested that baselines need to be established for each location, in order to measure subsequent improvements due to SRP-driven interventions.

- BB noted that under GRiSP, many groups are currently working towards developing sustainability indicators for rice. GRiSP will be conducting a series of workshops with national governments to establish national targets over the coming 1-2 years.

4. Formal Agenda Items

4.1. Approval of SRP Guidelines document

- The Draft Guidelines were endorsed by the Plenary, subject to incorporation of proposed amendments (to be circulated to Members by 7 December for comment, with a deadline of 15 December for submission of further comments by Members).

4.2. Approval of SRP Report for 2013 / Roadmap and funding 2014-2016

- The SRP Report 2013 and Roadmap 2013-2016 were unanimously endorsed by the Plenary.

4.3. Approval of activities and priorities for 2014

- SRP Activities and Targets for 2014 (as presented) were unanimously endorsed by the Plenary.

4.4. Approval of (a) change of composition of Advisory Committee (to allow flexibility for participation of international development / funding agencies); and (b) terms of office for Advisory Committee members

- (a) In order to allow flexibility in eligibility for election to the Advisory Committee, it was proposed to amend the text of Section 4.1.1 of the SRP Business Model (Composition of Advisory Committee) to include the additional category of 'International Agencies'.
- The motion was unanimously carried, and the new wording of Business Model Section 4.1.1 (bullet point 3) will be amended to read "2 x social and/or environmental NGO/ research members / international agencies".
- (b) Term of office for Advisory Committee members is not specified in the current Business Model. It was therefore proposed that for elected AC members, a Term of Office of 2 years (renewable) should be specified in Section 4.1.1., with a further 1 year in office allowed for incumbents. The motion was unanimously carried (noting that UNEP, IRRI and SRP Coordinator roles in the AC are not elected positions).

4.5. Election of Advisory Committee members for 2014

- Nominations were received via a Member survey conducted immediately prior to the Plenary Meeting. It was noted that only SRP member institutions are eligible for consideration for membership of the Advisory Committee.
- Mr Richard Burkinshaw (Kellogg's) (incumbent AC member will remain on the AC for a further 1 year period.
- The second private sector representative was selected by secret ballot of eligible SRP members, following statements by the two final nominees (Mr Rajeev Raina, Olam; Mr Mahesh Girdhar, Bayer).

- One of the two currently vacant NGO/research positions was filled by Prof Surinder S Kulkar of Punjab Agricultural University, who confirmed that PAU's SRP membership application is now in the process of submission.
- The second NGO position was left vacant.
- The 2013-2015 Advisory Committee is thus comprised as follows:

1. Chair (UNEP)	James Lomax
2. Co-Chair (IRRI)	Bas Bouman
3. Private sector (1)	Richard Burkinshaw (Kellogg's)
4. Private sector (2)	Rajeev Raina (Olam)
5. NGO/research (1)	Surinder Kukal (PAU)
6. NGO/research (2)	(Vacant)
7. Public sector (gov't) (1)	Ladda Viriyangkura (TH)
8. Public sector (gov't) (2)	Pham Van Du (VN)
9. SRP Coordinator	Wyn Ellis

4.6. Date and location of 4th SRP Annual Plenary Meeting 2014

- It was proposed to hold SRP's Fourth Annual Plenary in conjunction with the 2014 International Rice Congress (IRC2014) in Bangkok (27-31 Oct, 2014). SRP-Kellogg's have proposed a joint 1-day 'Symposium on Mainstreaming sustainable Rice' during the event (date not yet set).
- Proposed provisional dates are Thursday - Friday 30-31 October, 2014.
- The motion was carried, with exact dates to be confirmed.

The official meeting was adjourned at 15:30.

Report by Wyn Ellis, SRP Coordinator

Email: Secretariat@sustainableice.org

30 November 2013

ABBREVIATIONS:

AK : Anke Kampshreur, UTZ Certified
 BB : Bas Bouman, GRISP/IRRI
 BW : Bruce Wise, IFC
 DJ : Damien Jourdain, CIRAD
 HdG : Han de Groot, UTZ Certified
 IV : Isabelle Vagneron, CIRAD-Lao
 JL : James Lomax, UNEP
 LB: Luc Beerens, Mars
 JWM: Jan Willem Molenaar, Aidenvironment
 MB: Matthias Bickel, GIZ
 MZ: Max Zieren, UNEP
 RL: Ruben Lampaya, IRRI
 TS: Takahiro Sato, IRRI
 WE: Wyn Ellis, SRP Coordinator, UNEP