FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

SUSTAINABLE RICE PLATFORM

What are the sustainability issues in rice?

Meeting the world's future food and nutritional needs in a sustainable way presents critical development challenges, underscoring the urgent need for action to enhance production while minimizing the environmental footprint of rice systems and their vulnerability to climate change.

Why was the Sustainable Rice Platform created?

The Sustainable Rice Platform (SRP) was launched to promote adoption of climate-smart sustainable best practices in rice production, while protecting the environment by boosting the use efficiency of resources such as water and agrochemicals, and while safeguarding the livelihoods of rice smallholders.

Who initiated the SRP?

The SRP is co-convened by UN Environment and the International Rice Research Institute. It was launched in December 2011 as a global multi-stakeholder partnership open to governments, international organizations and development partners, private sector actors, research institutes and civil society organizations.

What does the SRP do?

The SRP pursues public policy development and voluntary market transformation initiatives to provide private, non-profit and public actors in the global rice sector with sustainable production standard and indicators, capacity building and outreach mechanisms. These mechanisms contribute to increasing the global supply of affordable rice, improved livelihoods for rice producers, and reduced environmental impact of rice production.

Why do we need a rice sustainability standard?

The SRP Standard for Sustainable Rice Cultivation supports 2 objectives:

1. To define what is 'sustainable': The SRP Standard offers a clear definition of sustainability in line with international norms. It can be the basis for enhance assurance in supply chains and most importantly, it can provide a benchmark for policy making.
2. To promote improvement: The SRP recognizes that improving sustainability performance is a journey that itself deserves recognition. However, improvement must be ongoing in order to maintain a claim of improvement.

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

Who can use the Standard & Performance Indicators?

The SRP Standard and Performance Indicators for Sustainable Rice Cultivation have been designed for use by extension agencies, farmer organizations, supply chain actors, researchers and policymakers, to promote wide-scale adoption of climate-smart sustainable best practices.

By promoting compliance among producers, supply chain actors benefit from reduced supply risks and improved market confidence. These SRP tools also offer companies a route to meeting corporate commitments to sustainable sourcing. Ultimately, farmers will benefit directly through reduced input costs, improved stability of production, greater market access, and enhanced livelihoods. By improving management of farm inputs, compliance will also contribute to efficient use of resources, and reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

What incentives can encourage farmers to adopt best practices?

The ongoing field validation work enables us to understand the benefits to farmers, and the economic value they derive from adoption of sustainable best practice. By taking guidance from the Standard, farmers can optimize input efficiency while maintaining yield and increase profits. Other incentives are being explored depending on local policy and market contexts.

How will it drive sustainability at all levels of production?

The Standard offers an objective means of benchmarking and comparing the sustainability of any rice production system. It allows farmers, managers, researchers and extension workers to focus field interventions and training more effectively and to tailor them to actual needs.

How is the SRP Standard being validated in the field?

The current SRP Standard is intended as a practice-based instrument that will be validated through an extensive multi-country programme of farmer field trials. So far, pilots have been implemented in Brazil, Cambodia, India, Pakistan, Philippines, Vietnam, Thailand and USA.

Pilot field implementation 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

How will SRP scale up its initiatives?

As well as serving as basis for certified value chains, the Standard provides a definition of sustainability, which can be used to support policy-making. In its capacity as Co-Chair of the SRP, UN Environment also supports several national-level proposals to scale up climate-smart rice production using the SRP Standard.

What's next?

The SRP aims to offer the global rice supply chain a proven system of modular sustainability standards, technology packages, tools and impact indicators, as well as innovative incentive mechanisms to drive wide-scale smallholder adoption of sustainable best practices in key rice-producing countries.
The SRP Standard and Performance Indicators are intended to serve both as a basis for supply chain governance and as input for policymaking and farmer extension programmes

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Our work contributes to...

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