

## Advisory Committee Meeting 2/18

21 March 2018 15:30-17:00 SE Asia Standard Time

Venue: <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/372823461>

### Participants

Mark Radka	UN Environment	Jackie Hughes	IRRI
Bruce Tolentino	IRRI	Matthias Bickel	GIZ
Jai Sheel Oberoi	LT Foods	Luc Beerens	Mars Food
James Lomax	UN Environment	Wyn Ellis	SRP Secretariat
Peter Sprang	SRP Secretariat	Lea Las Pinas	SRP Secretariat

### Alternate

Ashutosh Kumar Singh	LT Foods
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### Apologies

Ladda Viriyangkura	Thailand Rice Department	Christ Vansteenkiste	Rikolto
Hammad Naqi Khan	WWF Pakistan		

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## (Draft) Meeting Report

### 1. Chairperson's remarks

- A quorum was established, and the Advisory Committee meeting 2/18 was called to order at 15:30 SE Asia Standard Time.
- MR welcomed Jackie Hughes (JH), Deputy Director General (Research) at the International Rice Research Institute as the new Advisory Committee Co-chair, representing IRRI.
- He also expressed his thanks on behalf of the Advisory Committee to BT as outgoing Co-Chair. Through his leadership and commitment, BT's contributions have been invaluable to the progress and strategic direction of the initiative.
- MR also thanked JH, BT and IRRI staff for a productive IRRI-UN Environment coordination meeting, held on 6-7 February 2018 in Los Banos.

### 2. Approval of report of last meeting (Annex 1), and adoption of agenda

- The draft report of the last Advisory Committee meeting (1-18) held on 23 January 2018, was approved without amendment, and will be posted on the Members' Area.
- LB inquired if Agenda Item 9 on the review of dues structure would be discussed or deferred to the next meeting. MR proposed an initial discussion, time permitting, in order to inform subsequent discussions on this topic. This was agreed by all.
- With no proposed changes, the agenda was adopted unanimously.

### 3. Secretariat Report for February – March 2018 (Annex 2)

- WE, LLP, JL and PS reported updates and recent activities of the Secretariat and the three Working Groups, as outlined in the Secretariat Report for February – March 2018 (Annex 2).
- Key points raised were as follows:
  - WE highlighted some most recent developments, as follows:
    - 1) Start of the Strategic Visioning Exercise;
    - 2) Strengthening of country-level programmes, particularly in relation to WAPRO initiatives in India and Pakistan, and meeting with Viet Nam's Vice Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (Dr Le Quoc Doanh);
    - 3) NORAD appraisal mission in Myanmar, with a decision on funding expected by end May;
    - 4) GEF-7 Impact Programme proposal development;
    - 5) Outcome of Oxfam-commissioned research review of rice-relevant sustainability standards, which reinforces the robustness of the SRP Standard and the alliance as a multi-stakeholder platform (Annex 5).
    - 6) Development of proposals for engaging with retailer groups, and for strengthening the functions of the Working Groups, and establishment of an ICT Task Force (see Agenda Item 7, Annex 8)
  - MB added that Dr Thomas Jaekel has recently been appointed as a GIZ expert to support the International Cooperation Department of Thailand's Rice Department. He will be involved in German-supported rice projects and SRP-related coordination.
  - A new financial template has been devised in consultation with MB and finance officers of both UN Environment and IRRI. The template is consistent with the Public Sector Reporting Standards used by the UN. SRP's financial updates to the Advisory Committee will present a statement of quarterly income and expenditures. MB followed up on outstanding dues for 2017, and MR assured the members that the team is doing its utmost to secure timely collection of arrears. However, payment depends on the members' internal procedures and commitment to remit their contributions on time.
  - WG1 reported the drafting of a retailer engagement plan, and LB informed of Mars' continuing exploratory meetings with key retail groups. Communication materials will be provided to support these efforts by members, and feedback from retailers will be used to refine the SRP's retailer engagement plan.
  - WG2 highlighted strategic partnerships and developments such as: 1) the Climate & Clean Air Coalition proposal, focusing on climate change mitigation; 2) Potential NORAD support in Myanmar; and 3) a possible back-to-back workshop on rice sector landscapes with FAO. JL stressed that the working group's capacity needs to be strengthened to ensure effective delivery of its mandate, and proposed hiring of an external consultant to manage and coordinate WG2 activities (Agenda Item 7, Annex 8).
  - WG3 updated the Advisory Committee on the timeline for completion and launch of the SRP Assurance Framework, as well as the SRP Standard and Performance Indicators. PS and WE proposed to re-engage Sandra Khananosit as a short-term consultant to provide the much-needed capacity to ensure timely completion and launch of these SRP tools.

JSO added that WG3 is the 'heart' of SRP programmes and urged the WG to remain on track with its indicative timelines.

- Peterson Consulting conducted a trainer training programme on SRP in Bangkok on 12-14 March, building on the assurance framework. Rachel Zedeck's report is to be shared with WG3.
- Peterson is also working with SunRice to develop National Interpretation Guidelines for implementation of the SRP Standard at a national level in Australia. First pilot audits begin this month. SunRice aims to certify its entire production in Australia under the SRP Standard.
- WE added that Marina Bay Sands Hotel (venue of the International Rice Congress) has requested support in supplying the hotel with SRP-certified rice. This is to be undertaken via GIZ and Olam in Thailand.

#### **4. Strategic Visioning exercise**

- WE thanked IRRI for the execution of the contract with Rogers MacJohn. The visioning exercise is now underway, in close coordination with the SRP Secretariat. Advisory Committee members and a sample of the membership will be invited to be interviewed, and a Strategic Visioning Workshop is tentatively scheduled for 8-9 May, following the contract timeline. In preparation for the workshop, JH enquired about work needed to be done in advance. More details will be sent to the Advisory Committee as soon as possible, as the exercise proceeds.
- BT acknowledged AJ Poncin (Head, IRRI Portfolio Management), who has been instrumental in the finalization of the contract with Rogers MacJohn. WE echoed his thanks for the excellent collaboration and support from AJ Poncin.

**[Action: LLP to launch a Doodle poll to determine availability of Advisory Committee members for the SRP Strategic Visioning workshop]**

#### **5. Advisory Committee composition (Annex 6)**

- WE presented a proposal to expand the Advisory Committee by adding an additional seat for a government representative (submitted as Annex 6). WE underlined the strategic importance of giving voice to national members who are underrepresented in the alliance, and relayed the intention expressed by the Ministry of the Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) of Vietnam to renew its commitment and engagement.
- MR noted that the active involvement of current public sector Advisory Committee members during strategic discussions would be most desirable. WE reported that LV had nominated Dr Varapong Chamarerk (Rice Biotechnology Expert) as her alternate to represent the Rice Department, Thailand; however, it is not clear whether his participation can be expected on a regular or on an exceptional basis as intended.
- MB opined that expansion of the Advisory Committee may not fully address the issue, and careful consideration should be given to ensure this does not become an open-ended process and expectation as and when new governmental partners join the SRP.
- JH reiterated the need to decouple the current proposal from the issue of non-participation of existing members. A need was raised to develop a separate approach to deal with non-participation of incumbent Advisory Committee members.

- JL expressed support for the proposal to expand the Advisory Committee, noting that he did not see that the proposal would lead to undue bias against private sector interests.
- BT seconded the motion, adding that geographic scope could also be considered (e.g. South Asia and/or Southeast Asia) to ensure fair representation.
- A unanimous consensus was reached to create an additional seat for a new government representative on the SRP Advisory Committee.

**[Action: WE to make an announcement to the membership]**

**[WE/MB to discuss Rice Department representation to the Advisory Committee]**

## **6. Approval of SRP-UTZ Third Party Audit Protocol (Annex 7)**

- PS reported that all comments from Advisory Committee members have been collated and incorporated into the latest draft (shown as track changes in Annex 7). The current version of the document is now aligned with WG and Advisory Committee comments. PS reiterated that the document will only apply for pilots.
- LB sought clarification on Section 1.8 (Pilot Objectives, page 6) regarding compliance impacts on child labour. PS explained that the clause may have been taken from UTZ' experience with other commodity standards and clarified that this is not a binding requirement.
- JL enquired if UTZ will change its name following the merger with Rainforest Alliance. PS clarified that the merged organization will be named the UTZ-Rainforest Alliance. However, UTZ will retain its name for the SRP-UTZ Third Party Audit Protocol, as this was a document developed before the merger.
- Receiving no further comments or suggestions, the SRP-UTZ Third Party Audit Protocol was duly approved.

**[PS to circulate a clean version of the document with the meeting report, and post on the SRP website]**

**[LLP to announce the approval to the membership in next Newsletter]**

## **7. Working Group Implementation Proposal (Annex 8)**

- WE reported that over the past year, the three Working Groups have made significant progress in broadening participation of SRP members. However, all three groups now face increasing capacity constraints that need to be addressed on an urgent basis in order to provide continuity in driving the respective mandates of the working groups. WE therefore presented a proposal for the Advisory Committee's consideration (submitted as Annex 8).
- JH restated the required support for each working group as follows:
  - WG1: Stronger participation from members, particularly members with dynamic corporate communication resources.
  - WG2: External short-term consultant to support delivery of WG2's mandate.
  - WG3: External short-term consultant to support completion and launch of revised SRP Standard, Performance Indicators and Assurance Programme.
  - ICT Task Force: a new specialist group to be formed to support the ICT needs of the three Working Groups and propose an overarching ICT strategy for the SRP.

- Comments from Advisory Committee members were as follows:
  - MR proposed to remove the resource mobilization function from WG1, as communications and resource mobilization require different skillsets.
  - LB inquired about cost implications: WE responded that the Advisory Committee approved a 40k allocation for each Working Group during the 2017 Annual General Assembly. The two consultants would each require budgets of approximately 30k for a 6-month appointment.
  - MB recommended that changes be deferred until after the Visioning Workshop. He anticipated that following completion of the revision process, the workload for WG3 may be reduced.
  - WE noted that Paul Nicholson (Olam) has volunteered to lead an ad hoc ICT Task Force.
  - WE added that he would not support the creation of new subgroups for WG3 at present. However, there is a pressing need for effective leadership and support to drive delivery of the revised Standard, Performance Indicators and the Assurance programme. The re-hiring of Sandra Khananusit on a short-term consultancy basis is a critical operational need at this time.
- After reviewing the proposal, it was agreed that:
  - Resource mobilization will be removed from the WG1 mandate.
  - The decision on engaging external consultants for WG2 and WG3 will be deferred until the Visioning Workshop.
  - Convene an ICT Task Force as proposed.

**[Action: WE to coordinate with PN in the formation of the ad hoc ICT Task Force]**

## **8. Status Report: SRP 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Plenary Meeting and General Assembly**

- BT, as Chair of the 5th International Rice Congress (IRC) Steering Committee, emphasized that the SRP 8th Annual Plenary Meeting and General Assembly would be held as a side event/parallel session at the 5th IRC in Singapore on 14-17 October 2018. He reported that WE has already submitted an application form for inclusion of the event in the programme.
- WE reported that a number of SRP members have sought clarification on registration procedures. BT noted that registration to the IRC under a day pass will enable SRP members and participants to gain access to all other sessions and activities at the conference. Nevertheless, SRP received feedback from some members of their limited financial capacity to participate in a paid event. BT requested WE to detail the issue, which can be taken up at the next meeting of the IRC Steering Committee on Friday 23 March.

**[Action: WE to write to BT indicating SRP member feedback requesting free access to the Annual Plenary and General Assembly; BT to clarify/propose options]**

## **9. Review of dues structure (Annex 9)**

- In view of feedback received and observations from the implementation of the new SRP dues structure in 2017, a compilation of key issues was submitted as Annex 9.

- In the interests of time, this agenda item was deferred to the next Advisory Committee meeting for consideration.

## **10. Any Other Business**

- JH asked participants for their views on the optimal frequency of future meetings of the Advisory Committee.
- LB commented that the current bimonthly frequency currently works well for the committee; quarterly meetings could impede decisions and actions.
- A consensus was reached to continue with the current two monthly frequency.
- JH thanked all members of the committee and echoed the Advisory Committee's recognition of BT's many contributions and commitment during his term as Co-chair.
- The meeting adjourned at 17:00 SE Asia Standard time.

**W W Ellis**

**29 March 2018, Bangkok**

## **Annexes**

Annex 1: Meeting Report – Advisory Committee Meeting 1-18 23 January 2018  
Annex 2: Secretariat Report (February-March 2018)  
Annex 3: SRP Financial Statement Q1 2018  
Annex 4: SRP Assurance Protocol – updated TORs and timeline  
Annex 5: Oxfam Research Report – Implications of Sustainable Rice Production Standards and Initiatives for Small-scale Rice Producers  
Annex 6: Proposal on Advisory Committee Composition  
Annex 7: SRP-UTZ Third Party Audit Protocol  
Annex 8: Working Group Implementation Proposal  
Annex 9: Compilation of feedback from 2017 implementation of new SRP dues structure