

SRP Assurance Scheme v 1.3
Information Note No 2
15 June 2021

1. Introduction

1.1. This Information Note No 2 has normative status and is intended as notification of amendments to the SRP Assurance Scheme v 1.3 and shall be used in conjunction with this and other related documents governing the SRP Assurance Scheme. All such documents are made publicly available for download at the SRP website. The scope of this document includes the following topics, covered in Sections 2-6 below:

- **SRP Chain of Custody Certification System**
- **Qualifications of data collectors**
- **Qualifications of auditors**
- **Producer registration fees**
- **Approval of on-pack labels**

2. SRP Chain of Custody Certification System

2.1. The SRP Assurance Scheme version 1.3 was released officially in September 2020. It was then followed by the Chain of Custody Policy and Standard version 1.0 published in December 2020 to ensure the integrity of the SRP Assurance System beyond the farm gate.

2.2. The SRP Chain of Custody operates as a certification system. When a certification audit is completed and results show compliance, a SRP-approved certification body issues a SRP CoC compliance certificate. The Chain of Custody (CoC) certification system is still under development and License and Sublicense Registration Agreements (LRA and SRA) for SRP CoC services will be available in the coming months.

2.3. SRP Assurance Info Note No. 1 stated as follows:

- Assessment of the full supply chain is accepted as 'complete' only after the assessment of compliance against both SRP farm and CoC standards. The two audits may be conducted simultaneously by auditors approved for both standards but it is not required to perform the two audits simultaneously, i.e. they may be conducted in series.
- *Producer audits:* An approved Verification Body (VB) can begin to perform audits for SRP producers and IMS (Internal Management System) as soon as they receive official approval from GLOBALG.A.P., even when the Chain of Custody Standard remains as a draft (as posted on the SRP website). Scores and audit decisions resulting from these audits will be recognized. This means that farmers who are compliant with the minimum requirements as verified by such audits will be accepted to use the SRP-Verified label as stipulated in the SRP Assurance Scheme v 1.3.
- *Chain of Custody audits:* VBs approved to conduct SRP CoC audits may perform CoC audits after publication of the final version of the CoC Standard. In the meantime, until the CoC Standard is finalized, VBs approved for the SRP Standard may perform CoC audits based on the draft version of the CoC Standard and assign auditor(s) with CoC qualifications from other agricultural or forestry schemes.

2.4. Until LRAs and SRAs are operationalized, SRP is introducing an interim measure that authorizes VBs approved to conduct SRP farm audits to also conduct CoC audits based on the CoC Standard

v1.0. Any Verification Body that has completed a SRP CoC certification audit is authorized to issue a SRP CoC compliance certificate to companies deemed to be in compliance with the CoC Standard. These SRP-CoC certified companies may make SRP on-pack claims and use the SRP-Verified Label following the rules published in Annex 7 of the SRP Assurance Scheme v 1.3, and in compliance with the SRP Brand Manual.

- 2.5. Companies producing and selling SRP-Verified rice may only market SRP-Verified product after having successfully been issued with a Certificate of CoC compliance by an authorized CoC certification body.
- 2.6. This interim measure will apply until superseded by finalization of the LRAs and SRAs under GLOBALG.A.P.

3. Qualifications of data collectors

- 3.1. **Background:** Under the SRP Assurance Scheme the Data Collector is responsible for collecting registration data and self-assessments from producers applying for assurance Level 1 and uploading them onto the SRP Database provided by the ASP (GLOBALG.A.P.) The data collector must sign an agreement with the ASP for these activities. A data collector may be a farm assurer, a research institute, company, extension worker, project owner, group manager or miller.
- 3.2. **Issue:** However, establishing a contractual relation between data collectors and the ASP implies to develop a separate evaluation approval processes and creating additional annual administration fees from the ASP to the SRP program. On the other hand, the Assurance Scheme does not indicate any specific qualification requirements for data collectors (e.g. data management skills) that can assure the quality of data transfer and maintenance in the ASP Database. These may cause integrity burdens for SRP when transferring data to the Verification Body in cases when Producers or Producers Groups decide to move from Level 1 to Level 2 or 3.
- 3.3. **Amendment:** Therefore, Data Collectors shall be responsible ONLY for collecting registration data as required in Annex 2 as well as the self-assessments reports from producers and producer groups applying for Level 1. They are required to contact an approved SRP VB in order to upload the data to the SRP Database provided by GLOBALG.A.P.

4. Qualifications of auditors

- 4.1. VBs must ensure minimum qualifications and level of experience when recruiting auditing staff. Annex 5 (Section 2i) of the SRP Assurance Scheme v.1.3 and Section 1.4.4. of the CoC Policy and Standard provide relevant guidance. The Assurance Scheme requires a bachelor degree in agriculture or other crop-based discipline as one of the eligibility requirements for SRP auditors. The SRP Technical Committee has decided to accept academic qualifications in forestry within the definition of a 'crop-based discipline', provided this is accompanied by a minimum 1 year of experience in auditing agricultural commodities (not necessarily rice), as already stipulated in Annex 5 (2ii).
- 4.2. This broadening of eligibility criteria hereby clarifies interpretation of Annex 5 of the SRP Assurance Scheme covering SRP verification auditors and Section 1.4.4 of the CoC Policy and Standard as applying to CoC auditors.

5. Producer registration fees

- 5.1. Annex 6(i) of the SRP Assurance Scheme v 1.3 (SRP Fees) stipulates 6 tiers of fees for progressive ranges of farm size. This is now replaced by a single fee level of €2.50 per hectare, regardless of farm size, effective as of 1 July 2021.

6. Approval of on-pack labels

- 6.1. Retailers and brands must comply with SRP labelling requirements specified in the SRP Brand Manual and SRP Assurance Scheme version 1.3 (section 13.1 & Annex 7). Proposed label layouts and claim language must be approved by SRP before printing. In order to facilitate an impartial, transparent and timely approval process, the following approval process has been defined.

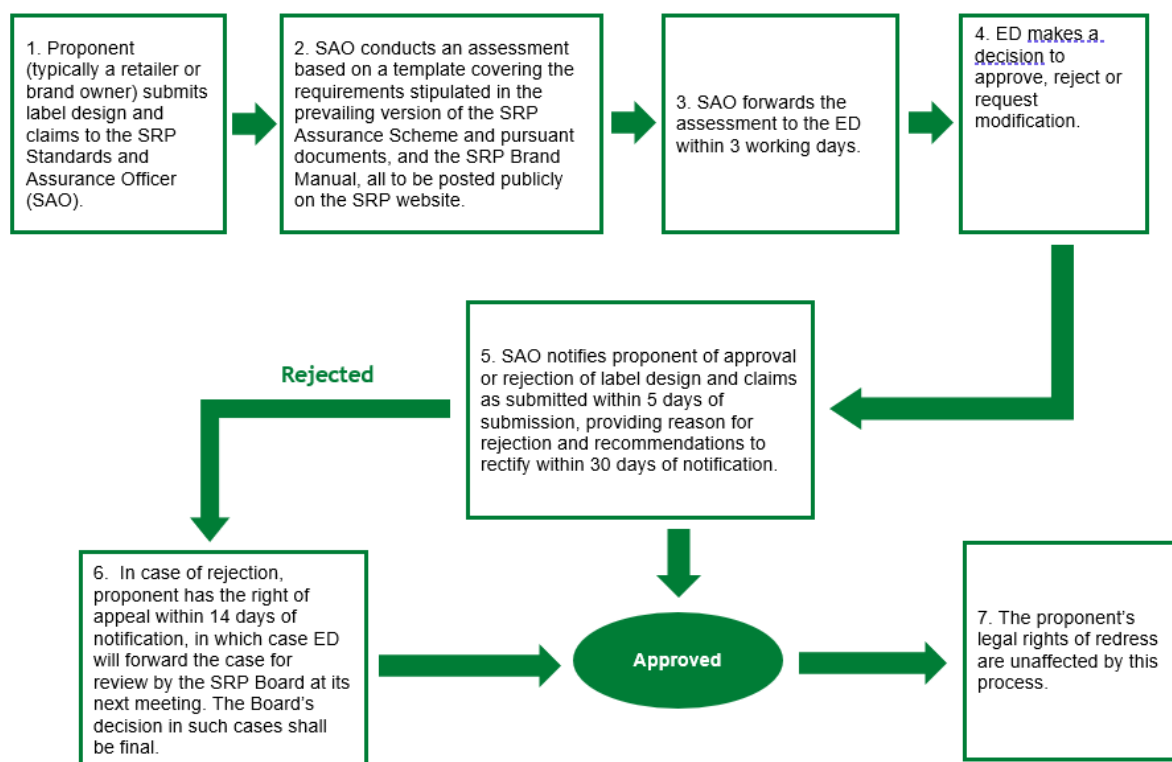


Figure 1: Label approval- process and timeline

For further information contact Secretariat@sustainablerice.org or visit www.sustainablerice.org