

Advisory Committee Meeting 2/17

6 March 2017 15:00-16:30 SE Asia Standard Time

Venue: <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/899206013>

Participants

Bruce Tolentino	IRRI (Co-Chair)	Matthias Bickel	GIZ
Christ Vansteenkiste	Vredeseilanden-VECO	Paul Nicholson	Olam International
Hammad Naqi Khan	WWF-Pakistan	Peter Sprang	SRP Secretariat
Wyn Ellis	SRP Secretariat	Lea Las Pinas	SRP Secretariat

Apologies

James Lomax	UN Environment (Chair)	Luc Beerens	Mars Food
Ladda Viriyangkura	Thai Rice Department		

Meeting Report

1. Adoption of agenda

- Bruce Tolentino chaired the meeting; WE requested that Agenda item No 6 (Conference preparations) be omitted, as this topic will be covered in the Secretariat update. The agenda as amended was adopted unanimously.

2. Secretariat and Working Group Reports (WE/LLP/PS, Annex 1, for info)

- WE presented an update on the work of the Secretariat, followed by summaries of Working Groups 1-3 by LLP, WE and PS, respectively. HNK expressed WWF Pakistan's interest to be represented in WG3.
- BT reported that Reiner Wassman, who leads IRRI's climate change research group, assisted by IRRI's IRRI's Donor Relations of Project Coordination (DRPC) unit, is reviewing the project pipeline. MB emphasized that pipeline projects should ensure a significant financial contribution to the Secretariat.
- WE reported progress by the Conference Steering Committee, which is organizing the Sustainable Rice Platform's First Global Rice Sustainability Conference, as follows:
 - Date/venue: 4-5 October 2017, UN Conference Centre, Bangkok
 - Organizer: IBC Asia. At this time SRP is not a legal entity, so IRRI will act on SRP's behalf in signing a the management agreement with IBC.
 - First Announcement has been drafted; website is ready for launch.
 - IBC will seek VIPs, speakers, participants and sponsors; Mr Erik Soldheim (Executive Director, UN Environment) and Dr Matthew Morell (Director General, IRRI) have confirmed their ability; Mr Sunny Verghese (CEO, Olam International) has also been invited.
- The timing of forthcoming workshops in Pakistan (National Dialogue) and Philippines (Training Needs) was also discussed.

[WE to liaise with workshop organizers and report final dates to AC]

[WE to liaise with IRRI re resource mobilization]

[WE to seek additional private sector participation in WG1]

[PS to invite WWF Pakistan representative to the next WG3 meeting]

3. Proposal for legal entity / financial operations (Annex 2, JL/BT)

- BT presented a proposal drafted by JL in response to the discussion on organizational entity at the last AC meeting 1-17 on 31 January 2017.
- He noted the call from Thai and Cambodian government representatives for strong participation and leadership of the SRP by UN Environment and IRRI, and to that end, the draft MOU between UN Environment and IRRI is being revisited.
- BT indicated that IRRI is in principle willing to establish an agreement with UN Environment to undertake a number of tasks including filing for trademark protection, on the understanding that it is transferred to SRP once a legal entity has been established.
- Responding, PN commented that the proposal introduced new ambiguities and appeared cumbersome to implement. BT confirmed that the proposal is intended as an interim arrangement until a legal entity can be established.
- PN also inquired as to the potential implications for, or constraints to, the work of the Working Groups: BT responded that it is too early to know how it might affect the WGs and also too early to know the likely longevity of the interim arrangement.
- In regard to the MOU, PN inquired as to the reason for the failure to conclude the original draft, and might the new MOU also be similarly delayed?
- HNK expressed his concern and questioned the justification for a new proposal that differs significantly from the approach already adopted by the AC. He expressed particular concern over complications to governance, as well as the legal implications for fundraising.
- BT pointed out that from UN Environment's perspective SRP remains a project. If creation of an independent entity is expected to take a long time, the proposed approach would be acceptable as an interim arrangement, provided a fixed duration is specified and the roles and functions of both organizations are clearly defined, making use of each organization's comparative advantages on behalf of the membership.
- PN responded that as an interim measure, IRRI's custodianship of SRP's assets would be acceptable. MB agreed, emphasizing that SRP needs a 'caretaker' for its assets and financial flows.
- PN stressed that our efforts to create a legal entity must not be jeopardized or delayed, as now seems possible. MB agreed on the need for a legal entity; however, he noted that this cannot be created under the terms of a MOU (which is not a legally binding instrument).
- PN raised additional concerns that IRRI and UN Environment would need a contract, not an MOU, to assign the proposed functions to IRRI. This is an unstable solution and raises new legal issues regarding asset ownership and revenue sharing. Once we have assigned a trademark, does UNEP realize the implications? How much of a guarantee can UN Environment and IRRI offer the membership that this modality will work?
- In PN's view, the simplest alternative option remains undiscussed. UN Environment, the current legal entity, could simply assign IRRI as the legal entity for all matters relating to SRP.
- The meeting agreed that additional detail will be needed to assess the feasibility of this proposal, and requested that JL present the issue to the next AC meeting in more detail.

[JL to arrange discussion between legal officers of UN Environment and IRRI]

4. IP protection proposal (BT, Annex 2, for decision)

- (Covered in Agenda Item No 3).

5. Membership dues for International NGOs (for decision)

- WE proposed discretionary contributions only should be required for international NGOs.
- The meeting resolved that international NGOs be required to make annual member dues contributions of US\$5,000 in cash, with the proviso for a waiver on request, whereby only in-kind contributions would be required.

[WE to amend the Application Form and inform members]

6. Conference update (for info)

(covered in Agenda Item No 2- Secretariat update)

7. Communication (LLP, for info)

- Draft Communications Strategy will be presented for approval at the next AC meeting, though this will contingent upon the outcome of the Visioning Workshop to be held.
- SRP web platform to be relaunched upon finalization of the SRP video (<https://sustainablericeplatform.github.io>)
- AV draft has been circulated for review; LLP thanked all participants for their comments, which have been consolidated and passed to the producer for incorporation. Further fact-checking is proceeding. A new version will be circulated within 2-3 weeks.
- SRP will participate as an exhibitor at the Pavilion of Partnerships during the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development 2017 in 29-31 March 2017 at the UN Conference Centre, Bangkok, Thailand. The event is an inclusive intergovernmental forum preparatory to the annual High-Level Political Forum.
- In response to a question by PN, LLP clarified that her topmost priorities at present were (1) Stakeholder engagement; (2) Strengthening the member network; (3) website and AVP launch; and (4) Quarterly newsletter.

8. AOB

- Returning to the discussion on governance, it was agreed that a wider discussion was needed with senior-level UN Environment colleagues, at an early stage.

[JL is requested to invite Ligia Noronha (Director, Technology, Industry and Environment, UN Environment) to participate in next AC, to be dedicated to this item]

Annexes:

1. Secretariat Update Feb 2017+ 6 Appendices (WE)
2. Proposal for joint IRRI-UN Environment ownership of the Sustainable Rice Platform (JL)
3. Proposal for trademark protection of SRP logo by IRRI (BT)