

# Protocol for Development of SRP National/Regional Interpretation Guidelines v 2.0

## Introduction

This document outlines the process for development, review and endorsement of National/Regional Interpretation Guidelines for the SRP Standard for Sustainable Rice Cultivation. Such drafts are to be developed via an in-country multi-stakeholder consultative process and submitted by an appropriate Guideline-setting organization (e.g. National SRP Chapter or Working Group) to the SRP Secretariat for review and endorsement by the SRP Executive Board.

## Background

Following its launch in 2015, the SRP Standard on Sustainable Rice Cultivation has been field-tested in several countries around the world. While the Standard offers normative guidance, practitioners need locally relevant guidance on appropriate best practice recommendations that support the requirements of the Standard.

It is important to protect the integrity and core principles of the SRP Standard, while maximizing its relevance and practical applicability within diverse national contexts- including production systems, agroecological environments, socio-ecological circumstances and legal and regulatory frameworks. National/Regional Interpretation Guidelines are therefore designed to serve as a bridge between the global standard and local field application.

This document sets out the principles and process through which national-level SRP partners can develop nationally or regionally appropriate interpretations of the SRP Standard, that are (a) credible across stakeholder groups; (b) locally accepted; and (c) that can be officially recognized by the SRP. This common process will help avoid proliferation of multiple "SRP Standards" in different countries, allow equivalence of claims across countries and protect brand value.

## Ensuring consistent outcomes across countries

The ISEAL Code of Good Practice (Clause 6.3, Consistent Interpretation Desired Outcome) defines how a standard can be consistently interpreted and applied across its full geographic scope. For SRP, the ISEAL-based requirements for interpretation of the SRP Standard are as follows:

- The global SRP Standard in its current approved version shall be used as the basis for developing corresponding national or regional Interpretation Guidelines, except where they would be ineffective or inappropriate.
- National/Regional Interpretation Guidelines shall be as consistent as possible with the global SRP Standard and at least as stringent.
- Any SRP National/Regional Interpretation Guidelines must maintain the global scoring system and minimum thresholds in order to ensure equivalence of claims. National/Regional Interpretation Guidelines may only provide additional specifications according to the provisions of the relevant national legal and regulatory framework.

## Principles

- An inclusive, multi-stakeholder process
- Transparent, collective decision-making, including public consultation (according to the ISEAL Code of Good Practice)
- Adheres to SRP principles and values
- No product endorsement
- Recognizes SRP Secretariat as the Standard owner and final arbiter, and involves SRP Secretariat in all relevant dialogue and activities throughout.

- Uses the SRP's name and logo in association with the National/Regional Interpretation Guidelines only with prior approval of the SRP Secretariat.
- Any claims based on the National/Regional Interpretation Guidelines must follow the rules laid out in the SRP Assurance Framework. Any approved and successful claim by an individual entity within the specified geographical scope of the National/Regional Interpretation Guidelines does not confer any additional claim capability by any other member of the National/Regional Interpretation Guidelines team.
- The scoring and threshold levels are consistent with the minimum requirements of the SRP Standard.

### **NIG Task Force**

The SRP will establish a standing Task Force to be activated by the SRP Secretariat when needed. The objective of the Task Force is to review draft National/Regional Interpretation Guidelines submissions and recommend a course of action to the SRP Secretariat.

The Task Force will be comprised of two organizations (SRP Secretariat and GLOBALG.A.P.) and may include additional invited key experts as required. The Task Force will have the necessary specialized expertise to provide sound science-based review of National/Regional Interpretation Guidelines submissions as well as facilitate responses to feedback from the public consultation process.

Organization	Expertise and Contribution	Remarks
SRP Secretariat / NIG Task Force	To efficiently confirm deviations with the global SRP Standard	The SRP is the recognized Standard owner and final arbiter; the SRP Technical Coordinator will serve as Secretary of the Task Force
GLOBALG.A.P.	To confirm verifiability of proposed deviations	GLOBALG.A.P. manages the SRP Assurance Scheme

### **Process**

The steps for developing National/Regional Interpretation Guidelines are set out as follows:

1. The local interpretation Guideline-setting organization (for example an SRP National Chapter) comprising a balanced representation of private and public sector stakeholders as well as technical experts and civil society, evaluates the applicability and adaptability of the international SRP Standard to the local context, and the need for National/Regional Interpretation Guidelines. Balanced representation is reached when each group (private/public/technical/civil society) is represented by at least one person.
2. The Guideline-setting organization requests the SRP Secretariat for its endorsement to develop the National/Regional Interpretation Guidelines, specifying the geographic scope and declaring any potential conflicts of interest.
3. The SRP Task Force evaluates the request and responds within 20 days with an approval decision endorsing the proponent as a Guideline-setting organization qualified to manage the process of developing the National/Regional Interpretation Guidelines.
4. The Guideline-setting organization and the SRP Task Force jointly define Terms of Reference (TORs) for the process, including a timeline, cost sharing for any required review and/or scientific consultation, and target deadline for the process to be concluded.

5. The Guideline-setting organization executes the agreed TORs, beginning with an analysis of existing standards and applicable legislation as a basis for developing a draft National/Regional Interpretation Guideline following the ISEAL Code of Good Practice (following the principles of transparency, inclusivity and open public consultation).
6. The Guideline-setting organization submits the draft National/Regional Interpretation Guideline to the Task Force via the SRP Secretariat, including a full listing of deviations and a report on the guideline-setting process for review and clarification of any open questions.
7. The SRP Secretariat will post the draft of the National/Regional Interpretation Guidelines on the SRP website for public comment for a 30-day period.
8. The SRP Task Force will review and address all comments submitted and post these on the SRP website. present its findings to the SRP Secretariat and Guideline-setting organization.
9. The SRP Secretariat recommends one of the following courses of action:
  - a. Endorse draft National/Regional Interpretation Guidelines and request the Task Force to prepares a justification with responses to public comments
  - b. Suggest modified draft National/Regional Interpretation Guidelines and request the Task Force to prepare a list of requested changes with responses to public comments.
10. The SRP Secretariat (with endorsement of the SRP Board) and Guideline-setting organization agree on the final version of the National/Regional Interpretation Guidelines and post the final Guideline on the SRP homepage as an SRP-approved Interpretation Guideline and announce the document to the membership. An SRP-approved Interpretation Guideline can then be used in conjunction with the SRP Standard within the defined geographic scope as a basis for audit.

These steps are illustrated schematically in Figure 1 below.



*Figure 1: Ten steps to develop National/Regional Interpretation Guidelines*

**Note:** An additional option offers the use of the SRP Standard as an Add-On to an existing standard (e.g. GLOBALG.A.P., Fairtrade or organic) where the combination would create synergies. In this case the same principle applies, that the SRP scoring and minimum thresholds are maintained.

### Validity

National Interpretation Guidelines shall be valid until the next revision of the SRP Standard. Following release of a revised Standard, review of National Interpretation Guidelines shall also be triggered. In the interim, the Guideline-setting organization shall monitor any minor revisions to the Standard and at its own discretion take appropriate action to amend the National Guidelines, keeping the SRP Secretariat informed of any and all such revisions.

### Disputes

In case of dispute over any aspect of the process or outcome, the independent ISEAL Alliance or GLOBALG.A.P. shall be consulted as an independent organization with the required expertise and impartiality. Costs of such an independent review will be covered by the entity initiating the National Interpretation, while the SRP Secretariat will facilitate the process.

## **Reference Documents**

SRP Assurance Scheme v 1.0 (2019)

SRP Standard on Sustainable Rice Cultivation v 2.0 (2019)

SRP Performance Indicators for Sustainable Rice Cultivation v 2.0 (2019)

ISEAL Code of Good Practice Setting Social & Environmental Standards v 6.0 (2014)

Date: 13 November 2019