



Sustainable Rice Platform

Get verified and support farmers in adopting more sustainable farming practices

Growing rice consumptions

Rice is a staple for over 3.5 billion people worldwide. The International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) estimates that rice production must increase by at least 25% within 25 years to meet global demand.

Studies have shown that rice cultivation occurs on 160 million hectares of land, uses about 40% of the world's irrigated water, and accounts for 10% of global methane emissions. In Asia, millions of smallholder rice farmers rely on rice production for food and household income, and a majority of Asian rice is traded and consumed there. However, rice cultivators are highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, such as flooding, drought, sea-level rise, and increased temperatures.

Improving rice production

Increasing the total rice production is a must to ensure food security to keep up with the global demand. Rice producers must adapt to the impacts of climate change, particularly greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and mitigate the negative effects of rice growth on the climate and our environment. It is also crucial for them to change their cultivation practices and manage resources more effectively to reduce the environment and climate footprint of rice cultivation.

Rice production will have to be profitable enough to improve the incomes of millions of poor people involved in rice farming while keeping rice affordable for the millions of rural and urban consumers.

What is SRP?

The Sustainable Rice Platform (SRP) is a global multi-stakeholder alliance established in 2011. Originally co-convened by the IRRI, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ), SRP is now an independent membership association.



The alliance aims to transform the global rice sector by:

- Improving smallholders' livelihoods
- Reducing the social, environmental and climate footprint of rice production
- Offering the global rice market an assured supply of sustainably produced rice to meet the growing global demand for rice.

Benefits of SRP adoption

- ✓ Saves cost as fewer fertilisers are needed and encourage efficient water drainage
- ✓ Increased global awareness of the need to mitigate GHG emissions from rice cultivation

According to SRP, on average, farmers who adopt the SRP Standard earn **10% higher net income**, reduce water use by **20%**, and cut GHG emissions by **50%**.

SRP's Standard for Sustainable Rice Cultivation is the world's first voluntary sustainability standard for rice production.



SRP Standard for Sustainable Rice Cultivation

SRP's Standard for Sustainable Rice Cultivation is the world's first voluntary sustainability standard for rice production. The Standard applies to rice production, including post-harvest processes that remain under the control of individual farmers, smallholder groups and large farms. A chain of custody verification is needed to support the traceability of commercial rice trade back to the source of production.

Climate-smart agricultural production

SRP offers the global rice supply chain a set of instruments to support the widespread adoption of best practices in climate-smart rice cultivation. SRP's guidelines for sustainable rice cultivation provide a framework for best practices incorporating more than 160 recommended practices developed and approved through an intensive consultative process with SRP members.

Provide credibility via the SRP label

As responsibly produced food is becoming an increasing demand among consumers, the SRP-Verified Label provides credibility to sustainable best practices claims. This UN-backed ecolabel symbolises a seal of approval, illustrated through the graphic stylisation of a rice plant as a checkmark. The label can be used for on-pack communications, such as on retail rice packs and bulk rice sacks or boxes, supported by a specific claim. Through this, consumers can confidently choose sustainable rice while farmers benefit from reduced input costs, more secure market access and, ultimately, improved livelihoods.

SRP-verified products are now available in more than **20 countries in Europe** as well as **countries outside of Europe** such as **Singapore and the USA**.

Why should rice farmers join the SRP?

SRP directly addresses greenhouse gas emission reductions in rice fields. Smallholder farmers can achieve social and economic benefits when applying SRP practices due to the reduced consumption of fertilisers, efficient water drainage, and other cost-saving measures. These benefits may allow SRP models to commercialise without requiring significant financial support more quickly during the incubation stages.

Get verified by Preferred by Nature

We are the first verification body to receive a license under the new verification scheme, the Sustainable Rice Platform, to verify farms across the world and supply chain actors.

By starting your verification with us, we will assign a Preferred by Nature contact person to your company, who will support you in understanding the requirements. Our specialists are always at hand to answer your queries on the system rules and requirements.

Bringing change to the global rice sector

In line with one of our strategic goals for 2020-2025 – **'Reach and Impact – Promote sustainable practices in landscapes and supply chain'** – Preferred by Nature focuses on supporting the increased adoption of sustainable practices in these areas where the greatest potential for positive change lies.

Some of our efforts include raising awareness and educating the public on sustainable rice cultivation while empowering smallholder farmers and engaging them in a sustainable supply chain.

Service with experience

Preferred by Nature is an international non-profit organisation working to support better land management and business practices that benefit people, nature and climate in 100+ countries. We do this by supporting other organisations and businesses to take responsible approaches.

We constantly seek to improve the systems that we work with. With 30 years of experience, we have certified and verified various organisations, businesses, and smallholders against international sustainability standards. To date, we have certified over 950,000 farmers around the world.

Contact

If you would like to learn more about SRP verification or are interested in collaborating with us, please [get in touch](#) with us.



SRP Standard and Performance Indicators

Together with its over 100 institutional members from public and private sector stakeholders, research, financial institutions and NGOs, SRP aims to transform the global rice sector. SRP offers the global rice supply chain a set of instruments to facilitate the wide-scale adoption of sustainable best practices in the global rice sector:

1. [SRP Standard for Sustainable Rice Cultivation](#)
2. [SRP Performance Indicators for Sustainable Rice Cultivation](#)
3. [SRP Internal Management System \(IMS\) Standard](#)
4. [SRP Assurance Scheme](#)
5. [SRP Chain of Custody \(CoC\) Policy and Standard](#)

Click [here](#) to access SRP's other key resources.

1. The SRP Standard for Sustainable Rice Cultivation

SRP's Standard for Sustainable Rice Cultivation is used as an inclusive tool for practitioners in public and private sectors to drive wide-scale adoption of sustainable climate-smart best practices among rice smallholders. The Standard can be applied by individual farmers, smallholder farmer groups, as well as larger farms, and focus on ensuring relevance, practicality and impact, especially for smallholder farmers in developing countries.

The Standard contains 41 requirements structured under 8 themes, each aimed at achieving a specific sustainability impact. It is designed for farm-level impact at producer level, each requirement is relevant, practical and under the farmer's control. These themes are as follows:



Farm Management

Crop calendar
Record keeping
Training



Pre-planting

Heavy metals
Soil salinity
Land conversion and biodiversity
Invasive species
Levelling
Pure seed quality



Water Use

Water management
Irrigation system at the community level
Inbound water quality
Groundwater extraction
Drainage



Nutrient Management

Nutrient management (organic and/or inorganic)
Organic fertiliser choice
Inorganic fertiliser choice



Integrated Pest Management

Weeds
Insects
Diseases
Molluscs
Rodents
Birds



Post-harvest

Timing of harvest
Harvest equipment
Drying time
Drying technique
Rice storage
Rice stubble
Rice straw



Health and Safety

Safety instructions
Tools and equipment
Training of pesticide applicators
Personal protective equipment
Washing and changing
Applicator restrictions
Re-entry time
Pesticide and chemical storage
Pesticide disposal



Labour rights

Child labour
Hazardous work Education
Forced labour
Discrimination
Freedom of association
Wages

2. The SRP Performance Indicators for Sustainable Rice Cultivation

The SRP Standard for Sustainable Rice Cultivation is complemented by a set of 12 quantitative Performance Indicators (PIs). These PIs are **Profitability; Labour productivity; Productivity; Water productivity and quality; Nitrogen-use-efficiency; Phosphorous-use efficiency; Biodiversity; Greenhouse gas emissions; Food safety; Health Safety; Child labour and youth inclusion, and Women empowerment**. Additionally, these PIs offer a framework for benchmarking and monitoring the impacts of on-farm adoption of sustainable best practices and include three data measurement levels for each indicator: **Basic, Intermediate and Advanced**.

3. The SRP Internal Management System (IMS) Standard

SRP has developed an Internal Management System (IMS) Standard for the producer group or the individual producer with multiple plots to demonstrate compliance with the SRP Standard. The IMS Standard supports farmers in implementing the Standard, measuring results and identifying gaps for continuous improvement. There are also [Guidelines for the SRP Internal Management System for Producer Groups](#) for group administrators to function the IMS.



4. SRP Assurance Scheme

The SRP Assurance Scheme includes a set of processes, procedures, and standards designed to provide assurance or confidence within SRP operations. The scheme implementation is to ensure compliance with specific standards and regulations.

The updated version of the SRP Assurance Scheme V2.0 is a robust, cost-effective, and transparent approach to sustainable procurement. It not only enables value chain actors to de-risk supply chains but also, makes measurable contributions to sustainability commitments. It empowers consumers to help small farmers and the environment by choosing SRP-Verified rice. Moreover, it catalyses a wide-scale shift to sustainable practices by small farmers, boosting incomes and contributing to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. The key features of the SRP Assurance Scheme include:

- The Assurance Scheme is directly overseen by SRP and includes internal assessment and farm registration via a third-party CAB (Conformity Assessment Body) as a starting point.
- The scheme focuses on verification rather than certification.
- It covers the stepwise approach to scoring, claims and label usage.
- The scheme also encourages the use of producer group internal control mechanisms using an Internal Management System (IMS) Standard.
- It is also complemented by a Chain of Custody Policy and Standard.

The **Assurance Scheme serves as a validation of compliance** with specified criteria. The scheme enables rice farmers and producer groups to show proof of compliance with the SRP Standards by supporting three possible assessments:

- **Internal assessment:** This includes assessment of compliance with the SRP Standard for Sustainable Rice Cultivation which peers, members of an IMS team or an appointed external party (other than an approved CAB)) conducts on behalf of the producer.
- **Second-party assessment:** The assessment activity that is performed by an entity or a person that is linked to the producer or producer group being assessed.
- **Third-party assessment:** The assessment activity that is performed by an approved CAB that is independent of the producer or producer group being assessed.

The **Assurance Scheme 2.0 uses third-party assessment** as its basis for compliance. Internal assessment will remain as part of the process for the third-party assessment, on which a claim and label use are based. Producers conducting internal assessments alone without engaging a CAB shall not make any SRP claim or use the SRP-Verified Label. The provisions for second-party assessment are covered by additional rules that is currently, under development. The **audit process** under the Assurance Scheme covers the following steps:



5. The SRP Chain of Custody (CoC) Policy and Standard

A chain of custody verification is needed to support traceability of commercial rice from the shelf to the source of production. The SRP Chain of Custody Policy and Standard is intended to be used in conjunction with the SRP Standard, PIs and Assurance Scheme to enable market actors to make verifiable sustainability claims for rice produced using proven, climate-smart, sustainable best practices. The Standard specifies requirements for all Chain of Custody-verified and applicant organisations for sourcing, processing, labelling and sale of rice-based products as SRP-Verified.

All organisations in the supply chain – from farmers to the entity implementing the final packaging of products carrying an SRP claim – shall be covered by the SRP CoC verification system, to be managed by an SRP-approved CoC verification body.



Sustainable Rice Platform Q&As

Which certification standards apply to my company?

The latest version of the certification standards is applicable to your company. To learn more about this, please contact us.

What is the cost structure?

The total verification cost consists of the costs related to the auditing services and the SRP Programme Fee. The auditing fee depends on the size and complexity of the company and farm. This is specified in our proposal when you express your interest to be verified by Preferred by Nature.

When is a certification refused?

Certification is refused when Preferred by Nature concludes that the audited company does not meet the Standard's requirements.

How can I maintain my active certification status?

Certification is maintained when the company complies with the conditions and requirements of the certification. Preferred by Nature and/or the scheme owner may conduct additional audits without announcements, for example, if we have reason to suspect a major breach of the certification rules. We may also carry out random spot audits. During the validity period (3 years), you need to undergo annual audits where we verify your continued compliance. The annual audits will focus on any weaknesses identified during previous evaluations and on your fulfilment of the certification requirements.

We help you stay up to speed on the requirements between the audits by providing regular updates on any system changes. If we identify non-conformities in your system during the audits, you need to take appropriate and effective action to address them.

After completing a full certificate validity period, you need to undergo re-assessment (a new full assessment) to remain certified. If the result of the re-assessment is positive, a new certificate is issued including the same certificate registration code as in your previous certificate. Please note that the reassessments cannot be delayed, and they must take place prior to the anniversary date of your certificate issuance, otherwise your certificate will be automatically terminated.

When is a certification suspended?

Certification may be suspended for the following reasons: 1. Failure to address one or more non-conformances by the specified timeline, 2. Severe breaches of the certification requirements, 3. Lack of payment of applicable fees and invoices, 4. Lack of willingness to plan and undergo scheduled audits, 5. Force Majeure (e.g. natural disasters that affect the destination, the political unrest that forces to operation shut down, etc.). A suspended certificate may be reinstated when the company has addressed the issues that led to the suspension, and we have conducted an audit verifying the compliance within the required timeline.

When is a certification terminated?

A certificate may be terminated for the following reasons: 1. Failure to sufficiently address the issues leading to suspension within the suspension period, 2. Failure to undergo a renewed assessment within the suspension



period after addressing the issues leading to suspension, 3. Failure to address one or more non-conformances by the specified timeline, 4. Deliberate fraud or very serious breaches of the certification requirements, 5. Failure to undergo a renewed assessment prior to certificate expiration, 6. Failure to undergo reassessment once the suspension period has reached its deadline.

If a certificate has been terminated, the company needs to undergo a renewed assessment to have a new certificate issued. It is not possible to reinstate the previous certificate. After a certificate has been suspended or terminated, the company may not make any claims regarding the conformance with the certification standard(s) and may not sell previously labelled products until certification trademarks are removed.

Can I change the certificate scope?

As a certificate holder, you may expand or change the scope of your certification in conjunction with your annual audit or in between audits. You need to notify Preferred by Nature about any of the following situations which may require formal changes in the scope of your certificate: • Additional product lines which you wish to sell as certified, • Use of new types of inputs not covered by your current scope of certification, • Changes in the system used for controlling claims, • Expansion or removal of sites or production areas covered by the certificate. An additional audit is usually required for scope changes outside the scheduled annual/certification audits. Depending on the nature of the change, the audit may be conducted as an on-site or desk audit.

What are the rights and duties of applicants and clients?

To learn about Preferred By Nature's clients' rights and duties, please check the [Certification Agreement](#).

What is the procedure for complaints and appeals?

For complaints management, all complaints and appeals will be processed using the Preferred by Nature's [Dispute Resolution Policy](#).

What about impartiality and confidentiality?

Preferred by Nature's Quality Management System includes [several policies](#) that allow our organisation to provide assurance services credibly in compliance with accreditation requirements. These include the [Impartiality Policy](#), which ensures impartiality, transparency and independence in all of our activities, and the [Confidentiality Policy](#), describing our rigorous approach to safeguarding confidential data and information provided by our clients.

