

TRANSFORMING RICE PRODUCTION IN PAKISTAN

Strengthening Sustainable Rice Production in Pakistan for Climate Resilience, Food Security, Export Enhancement, and Inclusive Economic Growth

June 2023, Islamabad, Karachi and Lahore, Pakistan

In conjunction with launch of the Sustainable Rice Platform – Pakistan National Chapter



Pakistan's economy relies heavily on water, with 80% of the country's exports depending on this vital resource. The agricultural sector plays a significant role, as Pakistan produces water-intensive crops such as cotton and rice. In fact, Pakistan is ranked among the top 10 exporting countries globally for these products. The country's agricultural exports heavily rely on its water resources. However, Pakistan faces numerous challenges related to water scarcity and the inefficient use of water in agriculture, leading to a situation of water stress. Despite the government's substantial investments in irrigation and agriculture, the productivity of water remains remarkably low. Groundwater is a crucial source, accounting for nearly 40% of the country's irrigation water requirements. This makes Pakistan the fourth-largest user of groundwater worldwide, after India, the USA, and China. Additionally, climate change, which is further intensified by human activities, adds additional stress to water resources and necessitates adjustments in the resources needed for food production in Pakistan.

Pakistan's Vision 2025 emphasizes the importance of water for Pakistan's socio-economic development and highlights the need for integrated water resource management in all sectors and aims to achieve water efficiency by 20%. The **National Water Policy** (2018) aims to enhance water productivity and the efficient use of water in the agricultural sector using various water productivity techniques and incentives. The policy recognizes the role of the private sector, particularly in case of agricultural, in achieving sustainable water management. The significance of rice in the context of climate change adds further importance to the efficient management of water resources in the country. The international private sector sourcing agricultural products from Pakistan is increasingly aware of the risks faced by various value chains in the context of looming water scarcity in Pakistan and sees an equal interest in efforts that lead to water efficiency in agriculture, notably in the rice sector. Several studies in recent years have been conducted to explore how the rice value chain may be managed in the best possible ways to minimize environmental footprint without any revenue losses for smallholders and the country.



Water Productivity in Rice (WAPRO); a project implemented by Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation in partnership with Mars Foods NL, Westmill UK, Rice Partners Limited and Galaxy Rice Mills, achieved ground-breaking results in achieving rice production by applying water efficient and sustainable agronomic techniques



WAPRO not only proves that water productivity is possible with improved technology – it also confirms the interest of the private sector in investing to achieve this and that a multi-stakeholders initiative with public, private, NGO participation can work to success



Pivoting agricultural growth on Value Chain Standards

The Sustainable Rice Platform (SRP) Standard for Sustainable Rice Cultivation is the world's first voluntary sustainability standard for rice. Drawing on the experiences of other agri-food sustainability initiatives, the SRP Standard was developed over a two-year period with extensive stakeholder participation. In Pakistan SRP standards were first introduced through WAPRO and today several rice export companies are affiliating with SRP standards. Sustainable Rice Platform Secretariat, Helvetas and Pakistan Basmati Heritage Foundation agreed to systemically take the process forward and establish SRP National Chapter for Pakistan. Helvetas will serve as a Coordinator and Convener of the National Chapter.

This workshop is co-financed by ADB and Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation in collaboration of Government of Pakistan. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) supports projects in developing member countries that create economic and development impact, delivered through both public and private sector operations, advisory services, and knowledge support. The ADB sees these developments with great interest and wishes to utilize the opportunity for serving smallholder farmers by improving their access to and scaling up of affordable water efficient technologies to ensure their food security.

The core purpose of the workshop is to formally launch the National Chapter of SRP and establish a future roadmap, rationalize expectations towards the National Chapter, and set an agenda with the Chapter and other partners to upscale successful pathways to support rice value chain.

For further information, please visit:

- twitter.com/HelvetasP
- sustainableice.org/srp-national-chapters/
- facebook.com/profile.php?id=100075992233437

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Co-organizers:



Key objectives of the workshop

1. Foster connections within the rice production community in Pakistan through the Sustainable Rice Platform.
2. Launch the National Chapter of Sustainable Rice Platform
3. Provide an understanding of SRP standards and their relevance to Pakistan
4. Explore the adaptability and adoptability of SRP Standards in Pakistan
5. Identify partnership opportunities to overcome barriers and challenges in the adoption of SRP standards

Contents (speakers, panel discussions)

1. Contextual setting – water, agriculture, climate, food security and economy nexus
2. Benchmarking rice value chain and how far is Pakistan in sustainable rice agro-ecology
3. Understanding sustainable business is a joint public-private interest
4. Vision for the rice sector in Pakistan from the eyes of private sector and support actors
5. SRP contribution in meeting global climate commitments of Pakistan
6. Value addition of SRP for rice economy of Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan and KP
7. Enabling conditions needed to be created to benefit from SRP in the provinces
8. Stakeholders' expectations and concerns regarding Pakistan National Chapter