

Entry No. IRRC-0070

Category	: International Rice Research Conference
Select Theme	: Sustainable and equitable farming systems
Endorsement email	:
Keyword 1	: Sustainable management practices
Keyword 2	: Decision support tools
Keyword 3	: Livelihood and social equity
Title of Entry	: Certification and beyond: how different approaches to performance monitoring & assurance can make the rice sector more sustainable
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Select only one type of presentation	: 15 minute oral presentation
Abstract	: Certification has proven it play a role in driving change in sectors like coffee and cocoa. But we're running into its limitations. To truly transform staple crop sectors, like rice, we need to move beyond. Sustainability standards, such as the SRP Standard, are moving to performance based progress tools (where they used to be compliance or 'pass/fail' based). If public and private actors can convincingly prove performance improvement, it can lead to 'Result Based Finance'. But result based finance required proof. And proof needs to be externally verified to truly become valuable. Rainforest Alliance (RA and UTZ) is well positioned to play a

major role in the provision of verified results ('assurance') which can lead to Result Based Finance. Some examples: 1. A supply chain partner or retailer prepared to pay for certification of his produce because it defends him against reputational risks or because it gives him market advantage; 2. Access to subsidized programs for landscape improvement through Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); 3. Result-based finance/ Access to finance, through green, insurances (pay less insurance if you can prove you're producing more sustainably), Sustainable Development Goals (e.g. climate finance through Paris Agreements), tariffing policies (see annex 1 example 2), etc. RA/ UTZ has developed a draft assurance protocol composed of 3 assurance levels, that suit the different needs and realities: • 1st level: self-assessment and internal inspections, with focus on learning and continuous improvement • 2nd level: verification by an external party, this can include Participatory Guarantee Systems and Customized Programs, and could give access to result based finance. • 3rd level: audits by an approved certification body (i.e. 'traditional' certification). SRP has adopted this concept of 3 assurance levels. Together we've been piloting these over the past two years and reached over 2,200 farmers who produced over 50,000 tons of rice (compared to 302 farmer and 3,300 tons in 2016). Especially the 2nd level assurance contributed to the strong growth rate.

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