



Workshop on the Regional Rice Initiative (RRI)

Strategic Objective 2 of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Room Athenaeum 3, Level 6, Plaza Athénée Bangkok, 61 Wireless Road
(Witthayu), Bangkok, Thailand

25-26 November 2013

Background

The Regional Rice Initiative (RRI), a pilot project of the Strategic Objective 2 of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, is designed to focus on the importance of goods and services produced by and available from rice ecosystems, and to identify and practice sustainable rice production practices to enhance resilience and increase efficiencies in rice production to improve food security. It was formulated jointly by Headquarters and RAP in collaboration with FAO Representations in the three pilot countries, i.e. Lao PDR, Indonesia and the Philippines, in its endeavor to support the objectives of Strategic Objective 2 through assisting the member countries in Asia.

The pilot project was also designed to contribute to not only the SO2 objectives but also Rice Strategy for Asia which RAP has been formulating since the beginning of this year in response to a recommendation of the 31st Asia Pacific Regional Conference convened in Hanoi in March 2012. In reviewing the FAO Programme of Work and Budget 2012-13 and Areas of Priority Actions for Asia and the Pacific Region for the biennium 2014-15, the Conference suggested that FAO coordinate the development of a regional rice strategy. RRI outputs, for example, its tools and methodologies developed and policy studies conducted, will be contributed to the formulation of a regional rice strategy.

To address diverse rice related issues, an interdisciplinary team was formed consisting of various technical departments and units and decentralized offices, and the FAORs in the three pilot countries have been involved in the implementation of the pilot project. Currently 15 technical officers involved from 7 different units at HQs and RAP, and budgets are allocated to 12 different technical officers. Furthermore, partnerships have been developed with over 10 national and international entities.

Key Components of the RRI

The RRI addresses more than just rice. For example, in rice fields, we can find more than 100 aquatic organisms that play a significant role in food and nutrition security of local people. We must recognize a range of multiple uses and services including ecosystem services provided by rice-associated biodiversity. Thus, the RRI is comprised of four different Components addressing:

Component 1 – conducting assessments of ecosystem services produced by fisheries and aquaculture within rice-field production systems, and improving water management practices that are able to take into account the changing irrigation and drainage services required by farmers for the adoption of sustainable management practices in dynamic economic and water resources settings

Component 2 - building knowledge and capacity in the form of tools, training and analysis for integrated management of biodiversity, landscapes and ecosystem services to enhance

sustainability in rice ecosystems, including studies of “Trees outside Forests” , or trees in rice fields.

Component 3 – focusing on capacity building of farmers adopting and practicing “Save and Grow” and sustainable intensification of rice production through Farmer Field Schools (FFS)

Component 4 – developing information and knowledge products for policy makers to better manage climate risks in the rice sector and to identify adaptation needs for the rice sector at national and regional levels with support from the AMICAF (Analysis and Mapping of Impacts under Climate Change for Adaptation and Food Security). This component also promotes understanding and awareness of the importance of paddy ecosystems, associated knowledge systems, biodiversity, landscapes and cultures through the Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) Initiative.

Progress/Achievements to date

Although the substantive field activities began only in May/July 2013, and despite the limited project formulation time and duration, the RRI has produced a number of outputs to date and on-going activities, as follows:

- National needs and target areas were clearly identified through national planning workshops in the 3 countries
- Assessment tools were developed and applied in the three countries such as a rice ecosystem assessment methodology, climate change impact models, a trees outside forests methodology
- 30 FFS initiated in Indonesia and Philippines, and over 600 farmers trained with new curriculum developed on Save and Grow
- Assessments of aquatic biodiversity in rice field for food and nutrition security in the three countries
- Policy analysis of pesticide-related regulations in the Philippines
- Trees outside Forests assessment in the 3 countries
- GIAHS assessment in Ifugao province, Philippines
- Climate change impact study in Lao PDR
- Refinement of the AMICAF model in the Philippines and its application to an economic assessment of rice sector and food security at national and regional levels under a changing climate.

Objectives of the Workshop

With the RRI expected to be concluded and finalize its operations in end-December 2013, the regional Workshop is aimed at:

1. Reviewing and discussing the outputs produced or deliverables to date as well as new and innovative findings and approaches that contribute to achieving the goals of the SO2 *“Increase and improve provision of goods and services from agriculture, forestry and fisheries in a sustainable manner”*;
2. Identifying and discussing lessons learned, including positive outcomes and constraints encountered;
3. Also identifying and discussing the synergies created (or to be created) by the different components and sub-components of the RRI;

4. Forging and providing policy recommendations and advice to other existing regional initiatives in Asia (or ASEAN), especially a Regional Rice Strategy to be formulated by RAP; and
5. Proposing key elements and components of the RRI Phase II to be formulated and implemented in the next biennium 2014-15.

Participants

The regional Workshop will be attended by the FAO technical staff involved in the RRI at Headquarters and RAP, key government officials from the participating governments in the three countries (one DG level and another at technical level), and selected external partners.

Venue

Plaza Athénée Bangkok (www.plazaatheneebangkok.com)
Bangkok Room, Level 02, Athénée Tower



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PROVISIONAL AGENDA

DAY 1 – Monday 25 November 2013	
13:00	REGISTRATION
13.30	WELCOME ADDRESS Mr. Hiroyuki Konuma, Assistant Director-General/Regional Representative, FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (RAP)
13.40	OPENING REMARKS Mr. Indroyono Soesilo, Director, Fisheries and Aquaculture Resources Use and Conservation Division, FAO Rome
13.50	INTRODUCTION OF PARTICIPANTS
14:00	INTRODUCTION TO THE WORKSHOP AND OVERVIEW OF THE REGIONAL RICE INITIATIVE Ms. Caterina Batello, Senior Officer, Plant Production and Protection Division, FAO Headquarters (HQs), and Mr. Naoki Minamiguchi, Food Security Consultant, Economic, Social and Policy Assistance Group, FAO Bangkok
14.20	REVIEW OF PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF COMPONENT 1 Mr. Matthias Halwart, Senior Aquaculture Officer, Fisheries and Aquaculture Resources Use and Conservation Division, FAO HQs, and Mr. Thierry Facon, Senior Water Management Officer, Natural Resources and Environment Group, FAO Bangkok
15.00	COFFEE BREAK
15:20	REVIEW OF PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF COMPONENT 2 Mr. Douglas McGuire, Coordinator, Forest Assessment, Management and Conservation Division, FAO Rome
16.00	REVIEW OF PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF COMPONENT 3 Ms. Manuela Allara, Programme Specialist, Plant Production and Protection Division, FAO HQs, and Mr. Johannes Ketelaar, Chief Technical Adviser, Pesticide Risk Reduction in South-East Asia: IPM Component, RAP
16.40	REVIEW OF PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF COMPONENT 4

	Mr. Hideki Kanamaru, Natural Resources Officer, Climate, Energy and Tenure Division, FAO HQs, and Professor David Roland-Holst, Departments of Economics and Agricultural and Resource Economics, University of California–Berkeley
17.40	OTHER MATTERS
18.00	END OF DAY 1
18:30	COCKTAIL RECEPTION Princess Vlaya Alongkorn Drawing Room

DAY 2 – Tuesday 26 November 2013

08.30	REPORT ON PROGRESS OF A RICE STRATEGY FOR ASIA Mr. Naoki Minamiguchi, Food Security Consultant, Economic, Social and Policy Assistance Group, FAO Bangkok
08.50	GROUP WORK Working Group 1 – Lesson learned and synergies across RRI Components (a draft to be further discussed at national workshops) Working Group 2 – Contribution to Regional Rice Strategy formulation and to other regional initiatives in Asia – tools, methodologies, policy advice, etc. COFFEE BREAK
11.15	WORKING GROUP PRESENTATIONS
12:00	LUNCH
13.30	ZERO DRAFT PROPOSAL ON THE RRI – PHASE II 2014-2015 Mr. Naoki Minamiguchi, Food Security Consultant, Economic, Social and Policy Assistance Group, FAO Bangkok
14.00	NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE FOR PHASE II 2014-2015 AND POLICY/PRIORITY MATTERS ON RICE Representatives of Indonesia, Lao PDR and the Philippines
15.00	COFFEE BREAK
15.20	DISCUSSION ON PHASE II <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Key components - Target countries - Coordination and implementation mechanism (TORs) - Budgets - Time line / Work Plan - etc.
17.00	OTHER MATTERS
17:30	CLOSING SESSION Closing remarks