

## Terms of Reference

### **Research of Producer Group Management Model and Assurance: Implications for Small-scale Women and Men Rice Producers**

**Research Project Manager:** tbc

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**Client(s):** GRAISEA program and country teams.

**Peer Review and Sign-off Coordinator:** Roland Charles, Graisea Programme Manager

**Key Words:** rice sector, small-scale women and men producers, group management, standard certification, assurance, women empowerment.

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#### **1. Background to the Research**

GRAISEA is an Oxfam flagship program. Drawing on progress and lessons from the first phase, GRAISEA 2 aims to transform opportunities for marginalised women and men in the agriculture sector in Asia by acting as a catalyst for the emergence of inclusive value chains and responsible business practices that respect human rights and drive women's economic empowerment and climate resilience. It is funded by the Swedish International Development Agency. Phase 2 works in ASEAN countries including Philippines, Indonesia, Cambodia and Vietnam; as well as Pakistan in South Asia.

GRAISEA 2 aims to bring about systemic change at scale through influencing at four levels: i) value chains of rice and shrimp; ii) Multi stakeholder initiatives, including the Sustainable Rice Platform, the Asian Seafood Collective Initiative, the Aquaculture Stewardship Council; iii) National policy influencing on sector-based policy as well as on national frameworks for the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) and the SDGs; and iv) ASEAN regional policy: integration of gender considerations into the regional strategy on business and human rights and policy frameworks supporting SMEs.

For rice, this program responds to the need for urgent collaborative actions at the local, national and regional levels in order to reduce social, environmental and carbon footprints of rice systems through safeguarding smallholder livelihoods and gender equality rights, adopting responsible rice practices and enhancing resource use efficiency.

Rice is the most important crop grown in Asia, providing livelihoods for millions of farmers, and up to 70% of calories for the poorest people across the region. Roughly 90% of the world's rice is grown in Asia, and most of it is consumed there. Small-scale producers are responsible for the rice supply, but they are challenged in meeting their own food and income security due to increased pressures and competition for land, water, and inputs.

Women play a major role in rice farming in all countries in Asia. Traditionally, women have been responsible for specific tasks, such as transplanting, weeding and harvesting, while men take roles in land preparation, crop management and marketing. However, women are rarely listed alongside men as owners of the farm, so their work is unrecognized. Without assets in their name, they cannot access finance, extension services or other technical support. Even when national laws give men and women equal rights to own and control land, social norms and customary laws often prevent women from fully owning land.

Women are often also confined to the production stage of the value chain. They are often excluded from decision-making roles and are paid less than men for the same work. Even when women have sole responsibility for rice production, they are excluded from access to critical productive resources and services, including credit, farm inputs (e.g. seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides), marketing facilities, extension and information. All these leave women struggling to feed themselves and their families. Oxfam research found that in 2017 more than 8 out of 10 women workers and farmers growing rice in Pakistan were severely food insecure. They face systematic inequalities in rice value chains and are disadvantaged by huge asymmetries of power.

GRAISEA 2 recognizes the extreme vulnerability of rice to the impacts of climate change. At the same time, rice growing is a major contributor to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, particularly methane. Both sides of this coin have important implications for the livelihoods of poor rice producers across Asia.

### **GRAISEA 2 pathways of changes**

The regional rice value chain work aligns with and contributes to three pathways of GRAISEA 2, as follows.

#### **Change pathway 1: Strengthening the capacity, agency and voice of women and other small-scale producers to engage with and shape markets and business practices.**

This will include (1) strengthening rice farmers' group management to function as both economic and social platform for women economic empowerment; (2) promoting systematic, sector-wide approach to climate resilience – adopting low external inputs, low-emission, sustainable and best practices and standards such as interventions in adopting Sustainable Rice Platform's Standard, System of Rice Intensification / SRI methods, water minimization methods, and risks management; and (3) exploring adoption of digital technologies to enhance resource use efficiency in farming practices, improve transparency and accountability in rice sourcing practices, improve knowledge management and learning and expand impact.

#### **Change pathway 2: Working with and strengthening the private sector in developing and adopting inclusive business practices that support women's economic empowerment and climate resilience.**

The private sector here includes the national rice companies in Cambodia, Vietnam and Pakistan and their international buyers. We will focus on leveraging country experiences and private actor champions to engage and influence national, regional and global bodies and policy spaces to develop and implement policies that support inclusive and responsible business practices resulting in WEE and climate resilience in rice sector (including Sustainable Rice Platform, Climate and Clean Air Coalition, Sustainable Development Goals).

#### **Change pathway 3: Engaging and influencing governments and regional bodies to develop and implement policies for the development of inclusive and responsible business practices that support women's economic empowerment and climate resilience.**

For rice work, the contribution will be their on-ground learning, alternative business models that could be used to influence the development of ASEAN policy proposals related to business and human rights and inclusive investment, including the agenda for developing Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises.

As part of the program's change pathway and result area 2, it is planned to address knowledge gaps on producer group management and assurance through complementary research. It aims to build a comprehensive understanding of the small-scale women and men producer group management and assurance schemes for sustainable rice and value chains nested in it. This research will especially focus on what can be learned from relevant initiatives and experiences.

Oxfam intends to use this review report to 1) support the implementation of the sustainable rice models in the three core countries and 2) further refine its engagement and influencing strategy on rice, especially towards the selected national companies and the multi-stakeholder Sustainable Rice Platform.

## **2. Objectives of the Research**

Sustainability schemes in agriculture are on the rise in response to the growing demand in the Western and emerging markets. On one hand, this demand helps improving public awareness on sustainability issues in the agriculture sector and motivating actions. On the other hand, it also sets the challenge to meet this demand with a steady and adequate supply of fair and sustainably-produced goods.

Commodity standard's certification is widely used as the way to assure product's quality. In the sectors dominated by small-scale producers the most common way for them to join certification schemes is through producer groups. Consequently, such groups have a key role to play in any strategy aimed at enhancing the access of individual farmers to certification. However, these groups tend to account for a tiny proportion of the vast number of producers. As standard systems seek to expand the supply of certified products and their collective impact, they face the increasing challenge of reaching out to less organized producers or to producers that are organized according to other group models.

This situation is especially true and challenging for the rice sector where majority of producers are small-scale and poorly organized. It is vital to understand local options, local practices and locally appropriate models for organizing small-scale producers and generating collective impact. It is Oxfam's belief that by better understanding and strengthening producer groups it would help to reach more small-scale producers and enable them to adopt good and sustainable cultivation practices thanks to lower costs of adoption and higher benefit sharing. Consequently, it would help to reduce the social and environmental costs and footprints in the rice sector as a whole.

The main objectives of this study are to ascertain 1) what types of producer groups exist; 2) what their role could be in particularly the currently marginalized producers in on-going conventional certification schemes and/or alternative assurance schemes in relation to empowerment of small-scale women and men producers and steps actors can take to mitigate adverse and strengthen positive impacts towards small-scale producers. On these bases, the study shall provide recommendations for best practices and principles to be applied and advocated in the GRAISEA rice programme.

The specific objectives of the study are proposed as follows:

- Take stock of the main, on-going certification and alternative sustainability schemes applied for sustainable rice.
- Identify key trends and where possible drivers of change for sustainable rice at the Asia regional level, including an explorative analysis of the political and institutional context for such sustainable rice assurance/certification schemes.

- Analyse the efficiency and effectiveness of the selected sustainable rice assurance/certification schemes and initiatives in relation to empowerment of the small-scale women and men rice producers.
- Characterise what is wrong or missing in these schemes with regards to small-scale producer's power for decision making and influence in distribution of the benefits; and suggest appropriate responses to these wrongs and gaps.

### 3. Research Questions

The specific questions to be answered include:

- Describe what definition of each standard certification scheme and assurance initiative is used for producer groups and summarize how this definition is translated in principles and tools in supporting group's management and functioning.
- Describe producer group management in each of the sustainable rice standard certification scheme and/or sustainability assurance and guarantee initiatives, its history, stakeholders, functions and key activities.
- Analyse the following aspects of the selected producer group models:
  - Governance structure, ownership, and decision making
  - Management and technical capacity
  - Financial capacity and structure of the financial support
  - Level and organization of service delivery
  - Business orientation
  - Certification and/or quality assurance and guarantee.
- Describe the successes achieved, best practices, but also challenges and remaining issues with specific attention to reach and empower small-scale rice farmers and specifically women.
- Analysis and synthesize financing options for producer groups to viably adopt certification and assurance schemes.
- Identify key trends and where possible drivers of change to include more small-scale women and men rice producers in the sustainability certification, guarantee schemes in Asia regional level.
- Formulate key lessons to be learned for Oxfam from the analysis, especially with focus on how to assure the GRAISEA program can be gender transformative and smallholder led, and with specific recommendations towards improvements of respective SRP Standard.

### 4. Research Methodology

The research is a combined desk review and field investigation. The desk review will draw from public data. Field investigation will concentrate on Cambodia and Vietnam to produce at least one case study for each country.

The research will take the form of a mapping and visualization exercise to identify dimensions of the rice producer group models, gather existing data that measures indicators of these dimensions, and use descriptive statistics to characterize changes over time as well as relevant relationships. It will involve literature review of documents and initiatives related to various rice standard certifications and assurance initiatives at the national and regional levels.

Gender analysis: Oxfam recommends that the research will explore and analyse if the sustainability certification and guarantee schemes have included gender equality as one of key dimensions; if there are barriers for women and men's access to and adoption of sustainable rice standards; levels of participation and gains are shaped at the household scale by gendered divisions of labour, time budgets, decision making to adopt or not, decision making to join or not join the producer group. In undertaking this analysis, it is desirable to look at the other factors such as social norms and practices that impact women's participation in producer groups.

## 5. Deliverables and Timeline

The deliverables of the research will include:

- A maximum 20-page discussion paper (excluding annexes, bibliography, and executive summary). Data will be presented graphically in the paper; bulleted list of key criteria / questions.
- The report should be written in plain English and avoid jargon.
- 2 case studies will be annexed.
- A Powerpoint presentation, visually presenting the core findings and data.

The estimated timeline for the deliverables will be:

	Output	Date
1.	Research outline, highlight data sources and suggestions around what revisions to make on questions and assumptions	Within first 2 weeks of contract start
2	Field investigation and rough analysis of 2 case studies	Tentatively Sept-Oct 2019
3.	First draft, essentially graphs presented against stated questions	4 weeks after field investigation
4	Second draft, full with a story line - to be reviewed by internal and external audience	2 weeks after receiving comments on the 1 <sup>st</sup> draft
5.	Final draft addressing comments	2-4 weeks

## Documentation of Research

In order to use the findings in Oxfam publications and campaigns, Oxfam (GB) must be provided with full information and documentation to substantiate those findings.

- The final report(s) must provide footnote or endnote references for all specific facts and statistics used. The report(s) must also include a bibliography of all references mentioned.
- Primary sources must be used wherever possible over secondary sources (for example, the Consultant should provide documentary evidence of a fact or statistic as written in its original report, not as cited by a newspaper)
- If internet sources have been used, a printed-out page from the website showing the cited facts and statistics must be submitted. The consultant must ensure that the date on which it was printed out is written on the page.
- If Oxfam discovers any discrepancies with the figures or facts, the consultant will work with Oxfam to resolve the discrepancies.

It is expected that:

- Consultant will write the report into the Oxfam Research Backgrounder template if provided, or Consultant will write according to the Oxfam Style Guide if stipulated.
- Consultant will work with Oxfam to determine the appropriate research methods.

- Consultant must make assumptions in research design explicit.
- Work must undergo a review process that includes internal Oxfam review and independent external peer review.
- Consultant is expected to make deadlines outlined above, unless the consultant negotiates alternative deadlines with Oxfam, in which case Oxfam will revise the scope of work to express the new deadlines.

### **Payment**

Payment will be made in 3 instalments upon the receipt of key deliverables. Final payment will be payable when the consultant's final report has been submitted and when the Research project manager and client have confirmed of the satisfactory completion of the research.

- First payment: 30% of total contracted amount after signing the contract;
- Second payment: 50% of total contract amount upon approval that the second draft report has been satisfactorily completed;
- Final payment: the rest 20% of total contracted amount upon confirmation that full research documentation has been provided.

### **Requirements of Consultant(s)**

The consultant(s) must possess the following essential qualifications:

- Master's degree in Business Administration/Marketing/Economics or related fields;
- Experience and knowledge on sustainable production standards and certification and initiatives applied in rice value chains;
- Knowledge and experience in women's economic empowerment and gender equality;
- Experience in project documentation, evaluation and impact assessment;
- At least 5 years of experience working in rural market and value chain development;
- Excellent analytical, communication and writing skills.

### **Submission of proposal**

The consultant(s) are expected to submit the Expression of Interest (EOI) in English, including:

- A proposal that sets out detailed methodology, budget and timeline to undertake this research;
- Up-to-date CV(s) of the consultant(s). In case the applicant is an organization, add an up-to-date portfolio of the organization; and
- Examples of previous research undertaken that might relate to this project.

### **Selection Procedure**

A recruitment committee, composed of the GRAISEA Programme Manager, technical advisors and programme coordinator, will review the EOI and the CV(s) and assess these as per compliance with the criteria and requirements.

If necessary, interviews with one or more potential candidates will be held before final decision is taken. Purpose of the interview is to seek further clarification on the EOI and learn more about the background and previous experiences of the candidate.

### **Application Deadlines**



Interested consultant(s) are requested to submit their EOI demonstrating their ability to deliver this assignment based on their qualifications and experience. GRAISEA's PMU will be the primary point of contact.

The EOI should be sent to [rcharles1@oxfam.org.uk](mailto:rcharles1@oxfam.org.uk) with the title "Consultancy for Study of Producer Group Management Model and Assurance: Implications for Small-scale Women and Men Rice Producers" by 5pm on 9 August 2019.