BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS PLATFORM

Impact spotlight

Scaling carbon markets access for sustainable rice producers in Vietnam

Partners: International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), The Gold Standard Foundation and the Australian Government

CGIAR | IRRI | Gold Standard | Australian Government

Timeframe

November 2022 – September 2024

CARBON MARKETS

FUNDING

DFAT	Partners	TOTAL
$413,344	$491,835	$905,179

This BPP partnership between the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), The Gold Standard Foundation and the Australian Government aimed to make carbon markets more accessible to farmers by developing clear methodologies, practical tools and a platform to support low-emission rice production at scale.

The partnership developed and launched a new Gold Standard methodology - *Methane Emission Reduction by Adjusted Water Management Practice in Rice Cultivation* - which is now publicly available and already in use by project developers. It also established a Rice Sustainability Hub for Vietnam, offering training resources, how-to guides, ready-to-use templates and a simple calculator to estimate emission reductions.

By promoting Programme of Activities (PoA) models, the partnership lowered costs and simplified carbon market participation for smallholders. Targeted training for farmers, verifiers and government officials built skills to apply low-emission practices, while early pilots helped refine tools for ease of use and scalability.

By 2024, the partnership had delivered a cost-effective pathway for farmers to reduce methane, access carbon finance and open new income streams. While designed for Vietnam, the approach offers a blueprint for rice-producing countries worldwide to transform production and contribute to global methane reduction goals.

Highlights

New global standard
Launched a methane emission reduction methodology for rice cultivation, now publicly available and already in use.

Launching the Rice Sustainability Hub
Created the Rice Sustainability Hub for Vietnam, attracting 1,100+ users in its first year, and offering resources, templates and training in English and Vietnamese.

Capacity building
Trained farmers, developers and auditors, with widespread uptake of new resources, templates and tutorials.

Adoption at scale
Three projects were in the pipeline within the first year of the methodology covering 40,000+ hectares, with potential to cut 150,000 tonnes of CO_2 annually.

Globally, there are now more than 40 projects currently listed on Gold Standard's Impact Registry that are utilising the new methodology. Two of the listed projects are already fully certified.

Digital innovation
The partners analysed how AI and remote sensing can reduce implementation costs, feeding into Gold Standard's digital MRV pilots.

Climate Impact

This partnership supported practical pathways for Vietnam's rice sector to reduce methane emissions at scale helping meet national and global climate goals while opening access to carbon markets.

- New rice methodology applied to **3** projects during the BPP project, covering 40,000+ ha and cutting up to **150,000+ tCO_2e** annually. Growing registrations are set to add hundreds of thousands more tonnes each year.
- Methodology informed the World Bank's Transformative Carbon Asset Facility (TCAF) as a technical foundation for the **1 Million Hectares** program.

Socio-Economic Impact

Accessing carbon markets can boost farmer incomes, but high costs often exclude smallholders. This partnership created a cost-effective shared platform, allowing farmers to join grouped projects by contributing "units." The model makes certification simpler, cheaper and scalable.

- The Rice Hub attracted **1,100+** users, **1,400+** sessions and **280+** demonstration video views in its first year.
- Training videos viewed **1,500+** times during the partnership period, building farmer and auditor skills.
- Linked to IRRI training programs with reach to **120,000** farmers.

Gender Impact

The partnership made training and tools accessible to women and other disadvantaged groups, helping ensure carbon market benefits are more inclusive.

- The Programme of Activities model has the potential to **lower barriers for women** smallholders to join.
- Women engaged in **stakeholder workshops** on finance and carbon markets.
- The application of the methodology includes **mandatory gender-sensitive procedures** and strategies that all projects must follow.

Catalytic Impact

Establishing foundational tools and frameworks for scaling sustainable rice farming and carbon markets in Vietnam and globally.

- Rice projects in the pipeline continue to grow with **46** currently listed on the Gold Standard registry under the new rice methodology.
- AI/remote sensing pilots tested with **210+** stakeholders across 32 countries.
- Co-authored policy brief with the Institute of Strategy and Policy on Agriculture and Environment (ISPAE), **shaping Vietnam's carbon market policy**.

AI for sustainable rice: harvesting carbon credits through smarter technology

A groundbreaking 2024 report by Mantle Labs, produced through our BPP Carbon Markets partnership with Gold Standard, IRRI and the Australian Government, explores how artificial intelligence can lower barriers to carbon market access for rice farmers in Vietnam.

Demonstrated through a case study in Dong Thap Province, the report shows how AI can automate monitoring and verification, cut costs, and increase accuracy. By streamlining these processes, AI is unlocking a new opportunity for farmers: harvesting carbon credits alongside their crops.

What's next?

The partners aim to:

- Expand the Rice Sustainability Hub with new resources, templates and training to help more smallholder farmers use the methodology.
- Scale adoption of the rice cultivation emissions reduction methodology across India, Pakistan and Southeast Asia.
- Support more Validation and Verification Bodies (VVBs) to certify rice carbon projects at scale.
- Deepen collaboration with government, developers and financiers to strengthen enabling policies and unlock international climate finance.
- Support Vietnam's 2030 pledge to cut methane emissions by 30% under the Global Methane Pledge.