

The Rice Funder Collaborative

The Rice Funder Collaborative (RFC) is a first-of-its-kind philanthropic collaborative focused on transforming rice farming systems. Rice is one of the world's most important yet most overlooked climate opportunities. Rice cultivation is responsible for roughly 2% of global greenhouse gas emissions, around 11% of global methane emissions, and nearly half of all emissions associated with crops. Across Southeast Asia, rice emissions total approximately 460 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (MtCO₂e) a year, making rice one of the region's most significant contributors to climate change. Rice is also indispensable to global food security and rural livelihoods. It is the primary dietary staple for 3.5 billion people and provides income for an estimated 150 million smallholder farmers across Asia, the majority of whom live in poverty. Drought, flooding, salinity, and soil degradation already threaten productivity and deepen these farming communities' vulnerability. Investing in climate-smart rice systems therefore offers a rare chance to reduce food-system emissions, strengthen resilience, and improve livelihoods at the same time and at scale.

A diverse set of global and regional foundations and philanthropic actors are united by a shared recognition of the need to collectively catalyse this transition. The RFC is a new funders' collaborative which took shape through a year-long design process.

The RFC sees philanthropy's role in this space as catalytic, not comprehensive. It seeks to de-risk and accelerate rice transformation by unlocking the government investment, MDB financing, and private-sector activity that philanthropy alone cannot provide. It does not seek to duplicate what already exists, but to fill the “missing middle” between research and scaled implementation, the space where the field is most underdeveloped and where collective action has the greatest additive value.

The ambition

By 2030, the RFC aims to mobilise around US\$30 million in philanthropic capital and catalyse a further ~US\$100 million in aligned public and development finance.

This is intended to help realise up to 64 MtCO₂e of annual abatement potential while improving the lives of millions of smallholder farmers.

The Secretariat and Governance

The RFC Secretariat is led by the Asia Philanthropy Circle (APC) and hosted by the Asia Community Foundation (ACF):

- **Asia Philanthropy Circle (APC)** is the leading collaborative philanthropy platform in the region, and provides strategic leadership, regional collaboration, and convening power as the Secretariat host.
- **Asia Community Foundation (ACF)**, Singapore's first Asia-focused community foundation, provides the backbone infrastructure for the Secretariat and the pooled fund.

RFC Secretariat and its staff will be accountable to the Steering Committee of core funders and strategic advisors who will guide and set the vision, priorities, and major investment decisions, with a Grants/Investment Committee approving grants under the pooled fund.

The Role

Position	Strategy & Programmes Lead, RFC Secretariat
Reports to	Climate Director, Asia Philanthropy Circle (Interim Secretariat Director) Candidate will hold close relationship with and will be accountable to the RFC Steering Committee and its sub-committees
Direct reports	Up to two Programme Officers (country assessments, sourcing, diligence, local expertise) and Programme Associate(s); oversees the Communications & Knowledge function on the programmatic and evidence side; commissions and manages consultants and technical experts as needed.
Peer	Partnerships & Community Lead, who leads funder relations, the Community of Practice, convenings, and donor cultivation
Employer	Asia Community Foundation (ACF)
Location	Asia-based, across Southeast Asia (e.g., Singapore, Vietnam, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand); remote-friendly within regional time zones. Preference for candidates living in and/or able to work in Singapore.
Term	Full-time, 2-year contract, with the opportunity for renewal based on performance and regulatory approvals
Compensation	Competitive and commensurate with experience and location

The Collaborative's Approach

The Rice Funder Collaborative works through three complementary mechanisms that allow funders to engage at different levels while creating pathways towards deeper collaboration over time.

- **Community of Practice (CoP).** A knowledge and learning exchange that brings funders and experts together to share evidence, best practices, and emerging opportunities through convenings, technical working groups, learning journeys, and research.
- **Aligned Grantmaking.** A means for funders to coordinate their individual grantmaking around a shared strategy — mapping investments, reducing duplication, and encouraging complementary funding — while retaining full control of their own decisions.
- **Pooled Fund.** A single investment vehicle for funders wishing to combine resources, guided by the Collaborative's shared strategy and supported by dedicated grantmaking staff.

Four impact priorities

The Collaborative advances rice transformation through four interrelated priorities, each reflecting the complementary motivations of its funders. Focusing on only one or two risks undermining the wider systemic change needed for durable impact.

- **Smallholder Farmer Livelihoods.** No climate intervention takes root unless it works for the farmers who must adopt it. The RFC prioritises interventions that demonstrably improve income, reduce input costs, and are designed with genuine farmer buy-in.
- **Climate Mitigation.** Rice paddies are a major, under-addressed source of agricultural methane and air pollution. The RFC supports identifying, developing, and scaling proven interventions that measurably reduce on-farm emissions.
- **Climate Resilience and Adaptation.** The RFC supports work that strengthens the long-term resilience of communities and ecosystems through improved seed varieties, better input management, diversified farming systems, and stronger adaptive capacity to climate shocks.
- **Nature, Water, and Health.** A healthy rice system must coexist with a thriving natural environment. The RFC supports interventions that restore ecosystems, improve soil health, safeguard forests and watersheds, and manage water sustainably.

Four pathways for change

Across these priorities, the strategy focuses on four intervention points that must be designed and coordinated to complement one another. Pursuing a single pathway is insufficient to generate systemic change.

- **Farmer Partnership.** Farmer-centric support and organising through technical advisory and extension, strengthened cooperatives and associations, and digital decision-support tools to scale adoption while improving profitability, yields, and resilience.

- **Finance.** Financial products and structures that de-risk practice change and unlock investment across the supply chain, including blended and catalytic finance with multilateral development banks, working-capital and insurance instruments, and standards and verification to enable climate finance.
- **Policy.** Coherent policy environments across ASEAN, national, and provincial scales via mitigation targets in NDCs, carbon-market and MRV frameworks, public procurement of low-emissions rice, and regional policy and technical-assistance capacity.
- **Research and Development.** Continued innovation upstream, including breakthrough plant genetics, next-generation soil and microbial solutions, cost-effective MRV, and suitability analysis, paired with a strong emphasis on scaling the adoption of solutions that already work.

Geographic focus

The primary focus is Southeast Asia, which accounts for roughly 40% of global rice emissions, with Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam as initial countries of engagement. The Collaborative is structured so regional lessons can bi-directionally travel through learning and cross-border exchange with Sub-Saharan Africa, where rice production is growing rapidly, India as the world's largest rice exporter, and other major producing nations.