Delta Project
Wednesday 22 June: 14:05 – 15:00 (55 min)

With Speakers:

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Facilitator:
3-year project (03/2019-06/2022) funded by SECO through the ISEAL Innovation Fund

Aim: Develop a common framework to measure and report sustainability performance in the agricultural commodity sector, in line with the SDGs and shared priorities in cotton & coffee.

Consortium: Better Cotton, GCP, ICAC-SEEP Panel, and ICO

Key partner: Cotton 2040 Working group on Impact Metrics Alignment (Better Cotton, CMiA, Cotton Connect, Fairtrade, MyBMP, OCA, TE, Forum for the Future, Laudes Foundation)
Rationale

- Lack of common narrative about what sustainable cotton (or other agriculture commodities) is and its benefits
- Confusion around standards’ sustainability messages
- No clear demonstration that sourcing of sustainable cotton actually links to environmental and socioeconomic progress at farm level.
- No clear benefits for the farmers who are providing the data
Objectives

• Build multi-stakeholder and cross-commodity consensus for sustainability measurement on key common goals

• Harmonize approaches to assess continuous improvement and progress towards SDG commitments made by private & public sector actors

• Add value to farmers from their own sustainability performance data
Delta Sustainability Framework
Delta Framework expected benefits

The Delta Framework was developed with the aim to:

- Be integrated in the Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning (MEL) Systems of Voluntary Sustainability Standards (VSS) working in agriculture;
- Support national reporting on the commitments set by the SDGs and the ratification of international conventions on chemicals, climate change, biodiversity, and labour rights;
- Inform farm management plans to ensure an environmentally and financially sustainable agricultural operation;
- Facilitate transparent communication with consumers on the actual benefits of sustainably produced goods.
## Delta Framework components

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Delta Framework Indicators</th>
<th>Integrating new indicators into sustainability systems</th>
<th>Basic guidance for obtaining informed consent</th>
<th>A common data model</th>
<th>Guiding principles for sustainability information in Agriculture</th>
<th>Guidance tool to report progress on commodity sustainability</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* Indicators description</td>
<td>* Strategic framing for the indicator integration process</td>
<td>* Data protection and the categorization of personal and sensitive data</td>
<td>* Overview of the information and data ecosystem</td>
<td>* Monitoring versus impact indicators</td>
<td>* Examples of potential existing primary and secondary data sources for each data tab.</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Definitions</td>
<td>* Data Value Chain</td>
<td>* Recommendations for how to obtain informed consent</td>
<td>* Applying a common data model</td>
<td>* Framework application principles</td>
<td>* Simple self-assessment of the quality of the data source being used</td>
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<td>* Methodologies</td>
<td>* Generation: data capture, acquisition, and obtaining informed consent</td>
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<td>* Mandatory data</td>
<td>* Indicators-specific principles</td>
<td>* Prioritising data collection based on resources available</td>
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<tr>
<td>* References</td>
<td>* Data transmission and validation</td>
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<td>* Application of existing data standards</td>
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<td>* Analytics: data processing and analysis</td>
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<td>* Ethical and data protection considerations</td>
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<td>* Exchange: packaging and communicating insights, publishing, and sharing data</td>
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<td>* Recommendations for how to apply the common reference data tables</td>
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Delta Framework Consultations

Consultations to agree first on shared sustainability priorities, and then on the most suitable indicators to measure progress in each area:

- 17 events / 120 people / 54 organisations
- Private & public actors in agriculture
- Sustainability Standards and Cotton 2040 Impact Metrics Alignment working group
- Expert groups and specialized organisations: Global Soil Partnership, Australian Cotton Research and Development Cooperation (CRDC), CARE International, etc.
Delta Framework Indicators

A common set of 15 cross-commodity indicators selected based on the following criteria:

- **Farm-level**
- **Impact / Outcome**
- **Limited number**
- **Alignment** with exiting sector frameworks, GCP and SEEP
- **Global Relevance** to measure progress towards SDGs
- **Usefulness** for global commitments, for comparability & aggregation
- **Feasibility** to integrate in regular MEL systems: easy of data collection and costs - Pilots to validate feasibility in several countries
Alignment with SDGs

Data directly feeding into SDGs sub-indicators:
Environmental Indicators

Agrochemicals
Highly hazardous pesticides and pesticide risk to biodiversity
Fertilizer use and NUE

Water use
Withdrawal, efficiency and productivity

Soil Health
Soil Organic Content

Deforestation
Forest, wetland and grassland conversion

GHG Emissions
Economic Indicators

Yield
Average yield

Price
Price at farmgate

Gross Margin
Gross margin from cotton and coffee production (in future: Living Income)
Social Indicators

Wages
Proportion of workers earning a legal minimum wage

Labour
Incidence of child labour and forced labour

Gender
Women’s empowerment

Safety
Number of fatalities and non-fatalities on the farm
Indicators reporting

**Target**

0 for some indicators
Users to set specific values or report on ±%

**Progress towards set targets**

SDGs examples

**Changes over time**

**WATER**

DRAFT 5-YEAR TARGET:
Improve irrigated cotton water use efficiency by 12.5 per cent.

2020/21 Water use efficiency improved.
On track for draft target.

**Gross production water use efficiency ML/bale**

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<tr>
<td>Value</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>0.70</td>
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**FERTILIZER USE KG/ha**

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<td>2017</td>
<td>201.50</td>
<td>205.50</td>
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<td>2018</td>
<td>202.00</td>
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<td>2019</td>
<td>202.50</td>
<td>206.50</td>
<td>204.50</td>
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Recommended frequency:
3 years for Environmental
1 year for Economic
5 years for Social
Methodological development

- Water irrigation indicators – adaptation of metrics developed by the Australia Cotton Research Institute
- Topsoil carbon – guidance on the selection of one metric for soil health sought from the Global Soil Partnership
- Deforestation – use of the Global Forest Watch for coffee, possible adaptation to cotton in future
- GHG emissions – collaboration with the Cool Farm Tool team on data requirements and relevance to cotton
- Gender – new ad hoc Women Empowerment Index developed by CARE International

Gaps

- No water metrics included for rainfed agriculture
- No open-access GPS-based tool for land use changes in cotton available as of now
Delta Framework & the sustainability community
Innovation and Evolution in Sustainability Systems: the Delta Framework in Context

ISEAL is the global membership organisation for ambitious, collaborative and transparent sustainability systems. We’re driving collective efforts to tackle the most pressing sustainability issues and create a world where markets are a force for good.

**ISEAL Credibility Principles**
A foundation for impact

- **Sustainability Impacts**
- **Measurable Progress**
- **Continual Improvement**
- **Impartiality**
- **Reliability**
- **Truthfulness**
- **Transparency**
- **Stakeholder Engagement**
- **Collaboration**
- **Value Creation**

**Innovation and improvement priorities include....**

1. Meaningful measurement of progress
2. Transparency about results
3. Continual improvement
4. Adding value for users (supporting sector action, sustainability reporting, farmer improvement)
ISEAL and the Delta Framework

- ISEAL Innovations Fund
- ISEAL Innovations Accelerator: Learning partner
  - Facilitating cross-pilot learning on indicators and on integration of indicators into systems (Indicator integration guidance)
  - Bringing lessons to and from wider sustainability systems community
  - Exploring the future of the Delta Framework
- Experience and frameworks for measurement and data sharing
  - Living income, GHG, landscape scale measurement, etc
  - ISEAL Core metadata

With support from State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) and Laudes Foundation
Key takeaways and considerations for next steps

1. An indicator framework is a living thing. It is never ‘done’; it needs constant nurturing and evolution.

2. The direction of evolution for the Delta Framework will depend on its key constituencies and objectives.

3. Indicators are only the first part of the challenge – next come measurement at scale, interpretation of results, reporting to support action....

4. There are important tensions between the needs of global actors and of farmers and producers. Watch out for inequities in the allocation of costs and benefits.
Future of Delta Framework in the sustainable cotton sector
Is the survey and methodology practical and usable?
Can it be applied to other fibers/materials?
How do the indicators line up to reporting of Climate+?
Is our current process sufficient to collect this data?
Can this be the framework used for Sustainable Cotton Challenge 2025 reporting?

Pilot Coverage
10 indicators piloted + 3 N/A
204 farms (India) + 55 farms (Brazil) + 10 farms (Peru)
Key Areas of Development

- Development/improvement of survey and methodology
- Alignment of methodologies with wider stakeholder groups
- Regionalization and localisation resources
- Learning, value and incentive to farmers
- Increasing adoption and scaling with programs/initiatives
- M&E line up to global reporting of outcome/impact
Alignment Opportunities with Textile Exchange

Framework for measuring and reporting outcome/impact:

• Consolidated reporting for Sustainable Cotton Challenge 2025
• Climate+ progress measure
  • Outcome/impact: GHG + soil health, water and biodiversity
  • Considerations: Animal welfare, social
• Global reporting vs program reporting
• Textile Exchange unified standard development – Fiber Crops Module
• Preferred Fiber and Material Matrix
Textile Exchange is interested in supporting the next steps for the Delta Framework, further developing methodology and alignment with the international community on impacts measurement, in collaboration with ISEAL and like-minded Standards Owners.

Call to Action

Resourcing • Awareness • Participation
Thank you