

CALL FOR PROPOSAL: STANDARDS COMPARISON FOR SUSTAINABLE COCONUT

The Sustainable Coconut Partnership (SCP) is seeking proposals for a research project focused on advancing sustainable coconut farming through sustainability standards. SCP seeks a comparative assessment of various assurance standards used in coconut against the Sustainable Coconut Charter.

The goal is to assess how these standards align with the Sustainable Coconut Charter enabling mutual recognition in the market and providing stakeholders with a clear view of available tools and how they compare enabling data driven mutual recognition in the market and providing stakeholders. By fostering mutual recognition, SCP aims to streamline compliance efforts, reduce duplication, and increase the accessibility of sustainable practices across the coconut supply chain.

Context:

The Sustainable Coconut Charter is the sector aligned common language for coconut sustainability developed by the sustainable coconut partnership through sector wide consultations. It is a key market instrument to drive the coconut sector towards a responsible and resilient coconut sector aiming to support the sector to tackle a generational challenge of sustainability for millions of coconut farmers and promote a responsible regeneration of the sector.

It was developed with over 180 organizations worldwide to shape a fit for purpose sustainability framework for coconut supply chains responding to an industry wish to harmonize sustainability requirements in a long, complex supply chain at a time where traceability and sustainability is still a challenge in most origins globally. The Sustainable Coconut Partnership is the custodian of the Sustainable Coconut Charter and is responsible for defining, maintaining and revising it periodically through a global multi stakeholder alignment process.

The Charter outlines key areas of focus, principles and outcomes that should be expected of sustainability programs and key facets of supply chain management in coconut supply chains. It is meant to:

- Harmonize buyers' requirements for supply chain partners and increase industry transparency.
- Help companies define, benchmark and gain confidence in impactful sustainability practices for coconut.
- Include an inclusive, step wise assurance system to provide assurance of sustainability for buyers and processors and confidently invest in verified sustainability in origins
- Streamline action towards meaningful pre-competitive collaboration and mutually recognized, robust sustainability programs at both supply chain, jurisdictional and landscape/island level
- Respond to the lack of uptake and market transformation of current schemes in global markets

Objective:

The objective of this consultancy is to conduct a detailed comparison of the Sustainable Coconut Charter Assurance system (base standard) with the following standards:

1. Rainforest Alliance Standard
2. Organic Standard
3. Fair Trade Standard
4. Farm Sustainability Assessment (FSA) by SAI Platform
5. Regenerative Organic

The goal is to assess alignment in terms of **scope, criteria, and verification mechanisms**, quantifying compliance levels between 0% and 200%. The ultimate aim is to identify opportunities for mutual recognition and provide stakeholders with a clear understanding of how these standards complement or differ from each other.

The consultant/organization will:

1. **Analyse the Sustainable Coconut Charter assurance system**
 - Review the Charter's scope, criteria, and verification mechanisms.
2. **Examine the Selected Standards up for comparison**
 - Assess the scope, criteria, and verification mechanisms
3. **Perform an alignment analysis**
 - Compare each standard with the Sustainable Coconut Charter.
 - Describe alignment or divergence in scope, criteria, and verification mechanisms.
 - Express alignment or divergence for each as follows:
 - **<100%**: Standards below the requirements of the Charter
 - **100%**: Full alignment.
 - **>100%**: Standards exceed the requirements of the Charter.
4. **Provide Insights and Recommendations in a final report**
 - Identify opportunities for mutual recognition and integration across standards.
 - Highlight overlaps, gaps, and areas of opportunity for SCP to enhance compatibility and accessibility of the Charter in the broader market context.
 - Suggest practical actions for SCP to position the Charter as a complementary tool within existing sustainability frameworks.

Deliverables

1. **Inception Report**
 - Detailed methodology and work plan, including any data collection tools.
2. **Draft Report**
 - Preliminary findings, including compliance percentages for each standard.
 - Comparative tables, charts, and a narrative explanation of results.
3. **Final Report**
 - Consolidated findings and actionable recommendations for achieving mutual recognition.
 - Annexes with detailed analysis and supporting documentation.
4. **Presentation**
 - Summary presentation for SCP stakeholders, delivered virtually.

Timeline

The assignment is expected to take **4 weeks** from the signing of the contract, with key milestones as follows:

- Week 1: Start of the work ; Week 3: Draft report ; Week 4: Final report & Presentation to stakeholders.

Budget:

- The available budget for this endeavour is 12,000 USD

Required Qualifications

- Proven expertise in sustainability standards and certification systems in agriculture.
- Demonstrated experience in comparative analysis or gap assessments of sustainability standards.
- Strong analytical, writing, and communication skills.
- Familiarity with coconut or similar perennial crop industries is an asset.

Application Process

Please provide your proposal by **January 31th 2024** in electronic format:

1. Proposal including methodology, work plan, timeline, and budget.
2. Organization profile and CV of key personnel leading the work along with their qualifications and relevant experience.
3. Sample of relevant previous work.

Submission Guidelines

Submissions should be sent to **info@coconutpartnership.org** with the subject line: *Consultancy – Comparison of Sustainability Standards*.

Sincerely,

The Sustainable Coconut Partnership