

What's New

December 2011



I was pleasantly surprised by a recent report that an overwhelming 93 percent of corporate CEOs surveyed for the largest ever CEO research on corporate sustainability (UNGC/Accenture) recognize that sustainability issues are “critical to the future success of their companies”.

As the concept of a triple bottom line reaches boardrooms in meaningful ways, the report finds that the available methods for measuring it are limited. As COSA gathers experience and a standardized knowledge base for sustainability in the world of food and agriculture, we are cognizant that we must partner widely to develop standardized measurements – not unlike what was done decades ago to build the common standards for reporting of financial balance sheets.

Going beyond firms - producers and policymakers also need clear and practical measurement tools to make sound decisions and to determine how they want to pursue sustainability. Scroll down to see some of the ways that COSA and its partners are providing these around the world.

We look forward to working with you in 2012 to further evolve the field of sustainability assessment together.

With warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daniele". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "D".

Daniele Giovannucci
Co-founder and Executive Director

OVERVIEW

1. End of COSA Silence...
2. Really simple new COSA indicators for companies...
3. Shared Impact Measurement Toolbox...
4. COSA Country Updates and New Partners...
5. COSA in Stockholm: Technical & Scientific Sessions...

News

1. End of COSA Silence ...

We are coming to the end of our **self-imposed public silence** and are now preparing several 2012 publications for scientific journals as well as general media. Partner scientists from the US, Central America, Germany, Italy, Colombia, Kenya, Thailand, Peru and Canada will collaborate to introduce the work on thousands of datasets to a broader public.

Our partnership with the **International Trade Centre** (UN-WTO) is also producing the beta version of a public platform for basic COSA indicators.

2. Really simple new COSA sustainability indicators for companies

COSA is now exploring **VERY SIMPLIFIED indicators** that can be applied by firms and traders to better understand and manage their supply chains for sustainability. These “map” to the more scientifically-grounded COSA indicators to permit low-cost benchmarking for firms and can be easily customized for anyone interested in the production within their supply chains.

See the [full set of COSA farm-level indicators](#).

3. Shared Impact Measurement Toolbox

COSA partnered with the **Finance Alliance for Sustainable Trade (FAST)** in their Shared Impact Measurement Toolbox that will help its more than 100 member institutions to better understand the sustainability impacts of their financial efforts. This work is also being forwarded within the Global Impact Investing Network’s (GIIN) own Impact Reporting & Investment Standards (IRIS).

About COSA

The Committee on Sustainability Assessment (COSA) is a global consortium of institutions measuring and analyzing the distinct social, environmental and economic impacts of any agricultural practices.

Globally comparable and consistent metrics allow projects, businesses and researchers to have a common understanding regardless of crops, conditions, standards, or countries.

COSA is a non-profit and transparent system operating at the global level.

www.theCOSA.org

COSA interesting fact ... Do sustainability certifications affect education?

There is a great advantage to knowing *how to collect the right information in the right way*. When the typical education question asks if children are attending school the results range from 71-95%.

However, when determined whether children are *attending ‘the grade level that is appropriate for their age’*, the results are very different.

After the Harvest: Fight Hunger in the Coffeelands

After the Harvest: Fighting Hunger in the Coffeelands is a film that brings the day-to-day challenges of the “thin months” to life in the voices of coffee farmers, and shares the creative projects that have been established to eliminate this annual period of food insecurity.

[Click here](#) to see the film.

4. COSA Country Updates and New Partners

In 2012, we are preparing for new work in **Côte d'Ivoire, Colombia, Ghana, Guatemala, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Peru, and Tanzania** with support from new partners such as the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

In **Colombia**, after extraordinary results analyzing the first 2 years of data, we are beginning our third year of work with CRECE and the Colombian National Federation of Coffee Growers. This will be the first 3-year longitudinal study to look at the effects of many different sustainability approaches comparing with a consistent set of indicators.

In southern **Mexico**, CATIE, one of our regional partners, has reported internally on the satisfactory outcomes of COSA-based research, while in Central America they finished COSA fieldwork in three countries and are conducting advanced analysis to publish the results.

With partners, we have delivered new analytical papers on **Colombia, Tanzania, and Vietnam** and are now preparing more in-depth analysis. We are also finalizing work in other countries such as **Côte d'Ivoire**.

5. COSA in Stockholm: Technical & Scientific Sessions

The Committee on Sustainability Assessment (COSA) held its annual **Technical and Scientific Sessions** in Stockholm the third week of October and because it was oversubscribed, we again offer our sincere apologies to our many collaborators that we could not accommodate. A broad group of COSA partners and world-renowned scientists from Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, England, Switzerland, Ghana, Italy, Kenya, Nicaragua, Peru, Thailand, and the US gathered to share global learning and advance COSA approaches. The workshop agenda and photos can be viewed here.

We are grateful to ENTWINED for their generous financial support of the event.

Support for COSA in 2011 came from:

Colombia National Federation of Coffee Growers

ENTWINED (Mistra Foundation)

Ford Foundation

International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)

International Trade Centre (ITC)

Rainforest Alliance (B. and M. Gates Foundation and Global Environment Facility (GEF)

Solidaridad

State Secretariat for Economic Affairs of Switzerland (SECO)

United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

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