

# What's New

June 2012



Every year, consumers spend billions of dollars on products with environmental and social certifications. What is their role in a sustainable future?

COSA was invited to share its first findings on this at the global Rio+20 UN Conference on Sustainable Development. The response was remarkable and we were accompanied by an illustrious group of leaders (more below).

Of course, our working partners have seen the COSA work first hand and are both using and discussing it in several countries. We will release more of the data this autumn and then begin making it available on a regular basis.

Thanks to key supporters (below), we have great news about recent and coming expansions in both cocoa and coffee partnerships, and our growing leadership team.

With warm regards,

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

Daniele Giovannucci  
Co-founder and Executive Director



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## 1. COSA unwraps at Rio

After 6 years of work, a long-awaited independent review of the impacts of various Sustainability Initiatives was officially launched at Rio. The Committee on Sustainability Assessment (COSA), using state-of-the-art methods in a number of countries, shared an overview of the sometimes surprising results being collected in a number of countries.



The panel discussions with respected leaders and luminaries provided insights into what the innovative policy makers, foundations, and private companies are doing. The path toward a green economy is not yet clear but there are many bets on the increasing use of certification and other approaches that are market-oriented. The key will be to ensure that the poor and our environment actually benefit from the growing markets for sustainability.

The guest speakers were a unique collection of innovative leaders.

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## 2. New COSA Director of Research



From IFPRI Nicola Francesconi joins the Committee on Sustainability Assessment. COSA President Daniele Giovannucci announced, "We are pleased to have Nic's advanced expertise on methods for impact

assessment, and we value his work experience with the difficult situations of developing country rural areas."

Dr. Francesconi previously led field research efforts in several African countries for the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and is the co-founder of the IFPRI-Dakar Stakeholder group. His experience includes professional residencies in Ethiopia and in Senegal. He is noted for his action-oriented research skills that serve to evaluate and guide better agricultural development practices in developing countries.



Advancing transparent and global measurement tools to understand, manage, and accelerate sustainability.

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### New partnerships

COSA is expanding its work in **Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire** and **Columbia**, and has signed new agreements with leading institutions to conduct new research in **Guatemala, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Peru, and Tanzania.**

See COSA Partners

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### New publication

Food and Agriculture: The Future of Sustainability

This report, led by COSA CEO Daniele Giovannucci, was just released by the U.N. Division for Sustainable Development and was launched at the Rio+20 Summit.

With contributions from more than 70 global agri-food leaders in the business, policy, green, and social arenas, the report exposes unforeseen areas of consensus.

The report also exposes areas of disagreement, and lays out a key set of specific "high impact" areas where smart decisions will make the most difference for sustainable and resilient food and agriculture systems.

[Read the report online](#)

“We want to play a pivotal role in the acceleration of sustainable practices,” says Giovannucci. “The selection committee did not select Nicola just for his formidable skills or because he is a respected scholar among his peers. There are, after all, a lot of smart people out there. We especially liked his commitment to our ethos of innovation and having good science used in practical ways that serve the goal of sustainability and not just create more research.”

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### 3. Expanding partnership with IFC

Our **expanding partnership with IFC** is now testing new business-friendly approaches to improve the sustainability of supply chains. Working with a global trading company at the field level enables faster development of the COSA tools for practical use. The idea is to achieve two objectives:

- IFC will have sophisticated yet easy-to-use tools for enhancing sustainability in its multi-billion dollar agribusiness portfolio;
  - The trading firm will have a set of practical supply chain management tools that will enable it to not only deliver greater sustainability but also more credible reporting to its stakeholders.
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### 4. Diving into Peru

**The Instituto de Estudios Peruanos (IEP)** is one of the most respected and long-lived institutions in Latin America. As our Partner in Peru, they hosted the launch of our new work there with a full-scale training and field work. The IEP will lead the classic COSA work under the supervision of Carlos de los Rios, and will also lead the development of **COSA-Simple** with various users (including the members of the SCAN Platform and Sustainable Harvest) across Peru. This will provide access to better sustainability management and choices for producers and supply chains. As the number of assessments grows, we can provide a much better understanding of what is and what is not working for the producers of Peru.

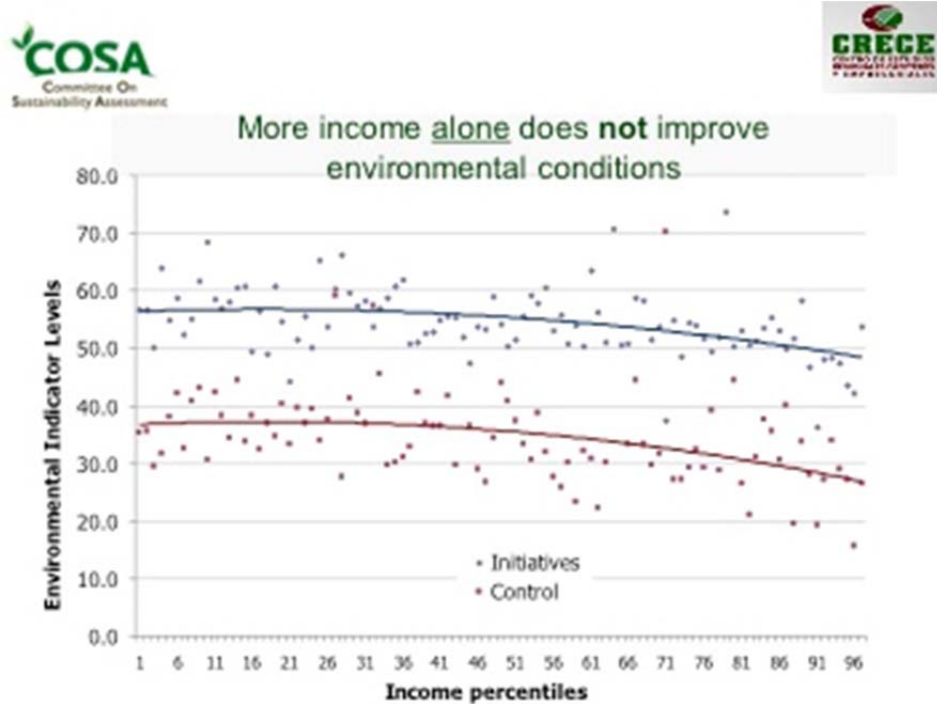


Initial training classes were held in Lima and supplemented with a 3-day in-field session in San Ignacio, Cajamarca. The training prepared local surveyors to conduct accurate assessments of hundreds of farms. COSA also hosted training participants from the Junta Nacional del Café de Perú, Cooperativa La Frontera, IEP staff, Sustainable Harvest staff, and members of the Sustainable Commodity Assistance Network. Jaclyn Daitchman (COSA Research Officer) and Gabriela Soto (COSA's Central America Coordinator) co-led the event with Carlos de los Rios (Peru Country Coordinator) and the team received technical advice and support from Nick Reddell who is improving COSA's new data gathering technology. Adelante!

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## 5. COSA interesting findings:

One of the more interesting findings emerging from our Colombian partner (CRECE) carrying out COSA surveys is that there seems to be an inverse correlation between more income and improved environmental and social outcomes. Thousands of controlled surveys suggest that, at least for the income levels of developing country small farmers, making more money is not an assurance of more sustainability in terms of social and environmental outcomes. See graph below.



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