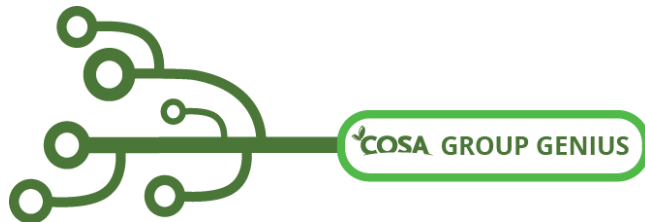




Dear Colleague,

Can a single entity really make a difference in agricultural sustainability where the challenges are both complex and far-reaching? Too many firms and agencies move from project to project without either sharing lessons or even successfully integrating the key information that leads to smarter choices and better outcomes. The result is an endless cycle of missed opportunities.

The partnerships that comprise COSA are a timely example of a shifting trend. Our culture of collaboration bridges diverse points of view to ignite dialogue and cooperation to address such complex challenges. Balancing state-of-the-art scientific methods with business-like pragmatism in the measurement and interpretation of sustainability makes COSA a valued partner for other leading learning organizations such as the FAO, the InterAmerican Development Bank Multilateral Investment Fund, the World Cocoa Foundation, the Sustainable Food Lab, and ISEAL. Sharing clarity and scientific rigor across partners fosters a more dynamic collaborative approach – to achieve what we call ‘group genius’ – that delivers greater levels of insight and innovation than any one entity can achieve alone.



From the “future of sustainability standards” to “the science of smallholder supply chains” and “the economics of Fair Trade”, the examples below demonstrate how our diverse collective efforts permit our partners to invest and operate more wisely.

Let’s work in smarter collective ways toward sustainability.



With warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daniele". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Daniele Giovannucci
President, COSA



The Future of Sustainability Standards

Sustainability standards have seen rapid growth in tropical agricultural commodities such as cocoa, coffee, palm oil, soybeans, and tea. One recent scientific paper notes, perhaps not surprisingly, that the most popular sustainability standards are those that can relax their requirements and reduce their costs. But what is the effect of such popularity?

To explore what we can do to increase the environmental results of these sustainability standards, COSA's president Daniele Giovannucci joined Jeffrey Milder and an esteemed group of researchers and scientists in compiling the ["Agenda for assessing and improving conservation impacts of sustainability standards in tropical agriculture"](#), recently published in the Conservation Biology journal.



The Economics of Fair Trade

Many consumers value goods produced in a socially and environmentally responsible manner. As a result, welfare gains are possible from credible third-party certifications, like Fair Trade, that provide consumers with information about the production process.

Raluca Dragusanu and Nathan Nunn (Harvard University) and COSA President Daniele Giovannucci provide [a critical overview of the economic theory behind Fair Trade](#). The paper, published in the prestigious Journal of Economic Perspectives and by the US National Bureau of Economic Research describes the potential benefits and pitfalls and offers an assessment of the current empirical evidence of the impacts of Fair Trade.



Smallholder Supply Chains

As part of COSA's ongoing multi-lateral collaboration representatives from the Sustainable Food Lab, COSA, and the ISEAL Alliance came together to co-author [Partnering for Increased Learning in Smallholder Supply Chains](#).

Aiming to improve the learning and effectiveness made possible with measurement frameworks that monitor the sustainability of smallholder farming systems, the paper explains the commonalities and distinctions among each organizations' approach to sustainability indicators and assessment. are building capacity in local institutions to conduct multi-dimensional impact assessments.



Sustainable Commodity Sourcing

As part of an ongoing global effort to document and understand optimal sustainability approaches, COSA collaborated with a Wageningen University-led initiative to create policy briefs for the Dutch Government.

We also contributed our experience and meta-analysis of the effects of voluntary standards toward achieving sustainability to inform a recent review of their global Sustainable Trade Initiative (STI) by the Government of the Netherlands, [Review of the Sustainable Trade Initiative STI 2008-2013](#).



Coffee Made Happy

Multiple news sources including CNN recently reported on COSA's collaboration with Mondelez, the world's second largest coffee company in its \$200 million dollar investment to empower one million coffee entrepreneurs by 2020. As a major contribution to building the world's largest database of coffee farm sustainability metrics, the work, developed in concert with the Rainforest Alliance and the Common Code for the Coffee Community, will measure how the Mondelez Coffee Made Happy program, with projects already running in Honduras, Indonesia, Peru, Ethiopia, and Vietnam, is achieving its objectives.

38 Partners and counting...

New to the family of [COSA Partners](#) are:

Triodos Sustainable Trade Fund

COSA is collaborating with Triodos to develop a set of sustainability assessment tools to understand the impact of investments made through the Sustainable Trade Fund. Triodos Bank is a pioneer in the field of impact investment and ethical banking and provides financing globally to companies and organizations that benefit people, culture, and the environment.



COSA is working with the World Cocoa Foundation to review and compare indicators and methods for data collection and analysis in order to share best practices for understanding the sustainability of cocoa farming systems worldwide. WCF, with more than 100 member companies, promotes a sustainable cocoa economy through economic & social development and environmental stewardship in cocoa-growing communities.

The COSA Team

As projects and partnerships multiply; we welcome great new staff...

Carlos De Los Ríos, Regional Research Coordinator for Latin America

Carlos is an economist with a passion for rural development. He has over a decade of experience working in one of the oldest and most respected research centers in Peru. His work has focused on agricultural and development economics with an emphasis on rural finance. His most recent efforts have centered on public and private impact evaluations of development initiatives, a topic that was a part of his

Ph.D. studies at the University of California at Davis. Carlos also has an appointment as Senior Researcher in the Instituto de Estudios Peruanos.

Friedrich von Kirchbach, Senior Advisor

Friedrich's widely-respected career in the field of Trade and Development has spanned more than three decades and he brings a wealth of experience and practical wisdom to the COSA work. He joins us from his most recent role as Director at the WTO-UNCTAD International Trade Centre (ITC). He led all of ITC's Country Programmes and has also served as Chief of the Market Analysis Section, leading the development of ITC's market analysis tools and the Trade for Sustainable Development agenda. He also previously served as a Research Fellow at INSEAD in France and has a Ph.D. in International Economics (University of Regensburg).

[View the latest career opportunities at COSA.](#)

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