



INTERNATIONAL COTTON ADVISORY COMMITTEE
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**Report of the 37th Meeting of the Expert Panel on Social, Environmental
and Economic Performance (SEEP) of Cotton Production**
April 8-9, 2013
Meeting at FAO Headquarters, Rome

Members Present: Allan William (Chair), Francesca Mancini (Vice Chair), Michel Fok, Bill Norman, and Jens Soth.

Members Absent: Kater Hake, Elke Hortmeyer, Fatih Dogan, B.K. Mishra, Wilfried Yameogo, Denilson Galbero Guedes, and Yu Ta Dolphin were not able to participate.

Observers: Sarah Goetz (GIZ), Uwe Grewer (FAO Consultant), Marie Mahieu (FAO Consultant), Anne-Sophie Poisot (FAO-AGP), Harry van der Wulp (FAO-AGP), Louis Bockel (FAO-ESA).

Alejandro Plastina served as Secretariat.

Next Meeting:

A face-to-face meeting will be conducted in Cartagena during the 71st Plenary Meeting of the ICAC. If needed, a teleconference could be scheduled before the Plenary Meeting.

Report of the Meeting

The 2-day meeting started with an open door session where FAO experts presented some of the work of the organization on voluntary standards and sustainability frameworks. Nineteen people were in attendance. The agenda of the open session follows:

- 10.30: Opening remarks, Clayton Campanhola, Director, Plant Production and Protection Division (AGP)
- 10.40 : Welcome address, David Hallam, Director, Trade and Markets Division (EST)
- 10.50: World Banana Forum, Pascal Liu, Senior Economist, Trade and Markets Division (EST)
- 11.20: Sustainability Assessment of Food and Agriculture systems (SAFA), Nadia El-Hage Scialabba, Senior Officer, Natural Resources Management and Environment Department (NRDD)
- 11.50 The Ex Ante Carbon-balance Tool EX-ACT, Louis Bockel, Policy Officer, Agricultural Development Economics Division (ESA)

The 37th Meeting of the SEEP started on the afternoon of April 8. Before adopting the agenda, the Panel seconded the motion to allow observers to actively participate in the discussions. The main goals of the meeting were to:

1. Review the report “Measuring Sustainability in Cotton Production”, identify areas that need improvement and assign responsibilities to address them
2. Review the scoring methodology and select a core set of indicators to measure sustainability in cotton production
3. Discuss on the next steps: finalization of report, distribution, way forward, etc.
4. Review the graphic lay out of the report (for publishing) by the graphic designer.

1. Review the report “Measuring Sustainability in Cotton Production version 21”, identify areas that need improvement and assign responsibilities to address them

Section 1. Introduction. Allan will write this section.

Section 1.3. Way forward. It was agreed that the language of this section will be changed to reflect the goal of providing a framework for sustainability measurement that SEEP recommends be adopted by the international community, along the lines of option A). Option B) was discarded. Option C) might become the second phase of the project. There was agreement that this report should not become a standard but a reference framework for cotton stakeholders including governments of cotton producing countries, private sector, implementing agencies, civil society, farmers, and any initiative working with cotton farmers.

Section 4.1. Pest and Pesticide Management. Three short paragraphs on the International Code of Conduct and the International Conventions on pesticide management (Rotterdam and Stockholm), on efficiency of pesticide application methods (pesticide drift & related issues) and on waste disposal and container management will be added by Harry van der Wulp.

Section 4.2. Water management – Water Depletion. Allan and Kater will explain the factors behind the recent finding that different irrigation methods (surface versus drip) are not significantly different in a couple of paragraphs, and will bring some references regarding the soil management practices which impacts the irrigation efficiency.

Section 4.3. Land Use. Land conversion is not always an issue, thus it should be taken into account only with specific reference to the geographical areas where conversion is a problem. Ask Denilson Galbero Guedes to write a short section on “Land conversion from non-cultivated land into cotton: The case of Brazil.” Change title of paragraph “yield improvement” into “land productivity”. Ask Kater to write a few paragraphs on “Land productivity”: yield indicator, improvements over the last 10 years, note the exceptions.

Between Sections 4.4 and 4.5: Ask Kater to write a stand-alone section on “Seeds and the Seed Sector” and to propose some indicators for inclusion in appendix 3 and consideration for table 8.

Section 4.5. Biodiversity. Add a paragraph on the 3 levels of biodiversity. Add notes on the lack of evidence of fewer predators, less biodiversity. Add one sentence explaining that although biodiversity is an important issue, the science of measuring it is still under development. Uwe will coordinate this section. Rephrase the following sentence to avoid using “no quantitative evidence”: “While there are several pathways that cotton production can impact biodiversity negatively, there appears to be no quantitative evidence of the actual impact of cotton production on biodiversity per se.” FAO will revise this section.

Section 4.6. Climate change. Bill will provide either the original full-resolution file for figure 7 or the numbers underlying the graph (so that the graphic designer could redraw exactly the same graph in high resolution). Uwe will delete figure 8 and enhance the narrative on country comparison of GHG emissions.

Section 4.7. Change the title to “Economic viability, poverty reduction, and food security”.

Section 4.8. Food security. Michel will write this section on cotton as a cash crop and its relevance for countries with subsistence agriculture. Describe the competition between cash and food crops, the influence of income levels, and the reduced availability of public goods that puts pressure on family budgets (more cash needed to buy services formerly provided as public goods). Uwe will provide reference documents of FAO to Michel.

Section 4.9. Change the title to “Economic risk management and organization”. Alejandro in consultation with Michel and with inputs from Anne-Sophie Poisot on West-Africa will write this section focusing on the different organizations in developed and developing countries, the use of market tools for risk management, administrated prices at farm level in developing countries, the importance of knowledge on price formation, timely payment, purchase of inputs, loan repayment rates, interest rates (usurer), contract farming (national, regional compulsory, voluntary), a description of the types of economic risks faced by producers, noticing that in some areas such as west Africa price risk has been addressed through lissage systems.

Section 4.10. Labor rights and standards. FAO will add a subsection on minimum wages, labor rights, hours worked, terms of payment, freedom of association (a summary from Alastair report). FAO will also add a section on Workers health and safety, including issues of working conditions, hours worked, etc.

Section 4.11. Farmers Organizations (and rural institutions?). Allan will write a short section on farmers organizations, including issues of training provision to farmers on various issues (agricultural practices,

pesticide mgmt, etc.) and general issues of collective action, bargaining power, association, etc. Since it was now intended as a stand alone section, this will also involve the proposition of indicators for inclusion in appendix 3 and consideration for table 8.

Section 4.12. Equity and Gender. Alejandro in consultation with Michel will write this section. Relevant documents were identified as the ICRW report (10 page summary, ask Sarah for a copy), the ITC report, the ICAC production practices report, a study carried out as part of the FAO cotton IPM Programme (available from Francesca), possibly the NORC report (CmiA) and also Michel Fok mentioned to have a paper under review on the issue (to be shared?). If ready early enough before end of May, Ilaria Sisto from the FAO Gender team is willing to review and provide further inputs (contact through Francesca & Uwe). Overall this will also involve the proposition of indicators for inclusion in appendix 3 and consideration for table 8.

Section 4.13. Summary. Allan will write this section.

Section 6. Identification and Ranking of Sustainability Indicators for Cotton. FAO will include a note on purposefully including both monitoring and evaluation indicators, and leaving further discussions on guidelines for implementation to a later stage. The three step process of deriving table 8 will also be explained once explicitly (1. Screening VSI's and theoretical literature; 2. Scoring all retrieved indicators; 3. SEEP expert panel selection of relevant indicators). (FAO)

Section 7. Results. Substantial changes were introduced to table 8. Francesca will incorporate the changes into the electronic version. Marie will present table 8 in two formats: as a list of indicators within each sustainability theme (some indicators will appear under more than one theme), and as a matrix with unique indicators (not repeated) in the rows of the first column, and twelve other columns, one for each theme, with rows indicating with a cross the themes a particular indicator applies to. Once both tables are ready it will be decided whether to present them both in Section 7 or shift one into the annex.

Section 8. The Importance of Country and Stakeholder Perspectives in Applying the Framework. FAO will eliminate the matrix and put guidelines in comment form.

Section 9. Conclusions are currently weak. Allan and Harry will finalize the conclusions of the report. This includes the propositions of specific options on how to engage in a second step, actually using the results of the report. These ideas will be linked to the ideas developed for discussion and presentation at the ICAC Standing Committee Meeting in June as well as at the ICAC Plenary Meeting.

Appendix 1. A template to present the main facts of each cotton initiative was agreed upon. The specific indicator list will only be included for cotton identity programs (meaning BCI, CmiA, Organic, Fair Trade), but not for the other initiatives that will instead have a short text description of their indicator sets. The length of the text allocated to each initiative must be similar across initiatives. It was agreed that the final descriptions of the initiatives must be reviewed by the initiatives themselves. Bill will provide the text and the set of indicators for Field to Market (FM). Allan will provide the text for MyBMP. The descriptions of FM and MyBMP will be considered as reviewed by the initiatives themselves.

Appendix 3. FAO will check on the consistency of the list (whether all relevant indicators were included, whether they were included under the appropriate initiative name, whether the indicators were listed under the proper themes, etc.). FAO will incorporate the indicators that Bill will provide from FM into appendix 3, and the methodology will decide whether more indicators need to be included in table 8.

It will be mentioned that in some cases the specific formulation of an indicator originating from a VSI was changed by the SEEP panel if deemed necessary for adequate reasons.

It was agreed that although many indicators are closely related to governance, a section on that topic is beyond the scope of this report.

2. Review the scoring methodology and select a core set of indicators to measure sustainability in cotton production

A detailed analysis was conducted and substantial changes were introduced to table 8.

3. Discuss on the next steps: finalization of report, distribution, way forward, etc.

Since Francesca will be on leave for some time, it was agreed that Uwe (Uwe.Grewer@fao.org) should be put in copy of all SEEP communications.

After incorporating Field to Market indicators in appendix 3 (and maybe some additional indicators into table 8), Francesca will distribute among SEEP members who attended the meeting in Rome a clean and updated version of table 8 for comments. Target date: April 30.

Bill will present an update on the status of the report to the Standing Committee of the ICAC on June 6. Allan will provide the text for a 15 minute presentation, including a menu of possible extensions of this project. Bill will ask the Standing Committee to allocate an entire session during the Plenary Meeting to discuss the report with multiple stakeholders and obtain guidance from the Advisory Committee on the next steps.

It was agreed that all above specified contributions should be send to Francesca & Uwe for consolidation by 31st of May. Due to the tight time frame until September, it would be important to see this as a hard deadline.

Allan will conduct the technical edition of the report (checking on appropriateness of terms used, logic of the sections, etc.) by the end of June.

SEEP members will receive the final version of the report in the first half of July for their last light revision.

English editing will be conducted by FAO editors in early August.

In the last two weeks of August FAO graphic designers will put the report in printable pdf format, both in black and white and color versions.

ICAC will have the executive summary translated into Spanish, French, Russian, and Arabic.

The final report will be distributed at the 2013 Plenary Meeting of the ICAC.

The title was agreed upon as: "Measuring sustainability in cotton farming systems. Towards a guidance framework". Authors will be identified as SEEP and AGP (for FAO).

4. Review the graphic lay out of the report (for publishing) by the graphic designer.

Three potential covers were presented. There was support for a cover with a multi-ethnic faced farmer (made with slices of pictures of farmers' faces), but SEEP requested to have one more demo with a female farmer's face in the cover and potentially the male farmer's face in the back. Both faces composed of slices of pictures of faces of ethnically diverse farmers.

The graphical design presented by FAO staff was approved. Only two sections need new photos: the indicators section (section 6) and the stakeholders section (section 8). SEEP members will provide pictures for technical consideration by the designer. In particular, Bill will provide pictures of farm visits with a variety of stakeholders.

It was agreed that the report will be published as a one-piece publication, with no stand-alone section or insert.

End of notes