



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What is the Sustainable Coffee Challenge?

The Sustainable Coffee Challenge is a pre-competitive coalition of coffee companies, governments, NGOs, donor agencies, and others, collectively working to make coffee the world's first sustainable agricultural product. Convened by Conservation International (CI), the Challenge focuses on increasing transparency of sustainability initiatives, aligning these to a common sustainability framework and advancing collaboration to address the critical issues facing coffee. Following a clear [roadmap](#), we catalog, track and share sustainability efforts to inspire more individual and collective investments and amplify action across the sector. Since the launch of the Challenge in December 2015 at the Paris Climate Conference (COP21), the coalition has grown to include more than 80 partners.

Why is the Challenge necessary?

While there are many initiatives working to advance sustainability in coffee, there is a need to accelerate the rate of change across the sector to achieve our goal. This will require a pre-collaborative approach that includes work to strengthen market demand for sustainability while continuing to drive investments back into the value chain. The Challenge fills this need by showcasing the many pathways to sustainability, and understanding how they work together. It is dedicated to mapping commitments, actions and impacts to help develop shared learnings and stimulate more ambitious commitments and investments.

Who can join and why should I join?

Each actor in the sector - industry players, governments, nonprofit organizations and others - has a responsibility and role to play in tackling the complex issues facing the sector to ensure the long-term sustainability of coffee. The Challenge is an open movement and all industry players, governments and nonprofit organizations are welcome to join us. Participating in the Challenge offers the opportunity to *showcase* your contributions, demonstrate *leadership*, and develop partnerships to *scale the impact* and cost-efficiency of your sustainability efforts. There are no fees to become a partner in the Challenge and we rely on voluntary contributions from the partner community to help us deliver on our objectives.

Participation in the Challenge and being part of our movement is easy – it is free of charge and partners are required to take these steps:

- 1) **Align with our Vision** – To show alignment with our vision, we ask new partners to share a statement of support and a copy of their logo to be used in our communication.
- 2) **Showcase and Track Your Commitment(s)** – We ask that partners publicly state their commitment(s) to sustainable coffee on the Commitments Hub and annually report on progress.
- 3) **Leverage Framework as Guidance** – We encourage Challenge partners to align with the Framework and use it to guide interventions and investments.



- 4) **Join an Action Network** – While participation is optional, we encourage partners to join one of the Collective Action Network.

What is the purpose of the Commitments Hub?

By launching the Commitments Hub, the Sustainable Coffee Challenge is providing a common space for understanding the numerous sustainability commitments and initiatives underway across the coffee sector. Partners in the Challenge are asked to publicly state and report on their sustainability commitments through this online and open-source Hub. The Hub enables us as a community, to better understand what stakeholders are individually and collectively doing to promote sustainability and will help facilitate sharing of experiences and lessons-learned.

What does it mean to be part of an Action Network?

In April 2017, we established four pre-competitive Collective Action Networks that aim to tackle some of the most pressing challenges by working collaboratively toward collective goals. The initial four networks focus on the following topics: labor, farm renovation, sourcing and coffee and forest mapping coffee. Participants in the action networks meet by conference call for an hour every 3 weeks to implement agreed action plans and work towards common deliverables. Challenge partners (as well as non-partners) are encouraged to contribute to one or multiple networks that address themes that are of strategic importance to them or to which they can contribute their individual or organization's expertise. Three additional action networks on economic viability, gender & youth, and climate-smart-agriculture are led by the GCP, and Challenge partners are welcome to participate in these as well

What is the Sustainability Progress Framework?

A key component of the Challenge roadmap has been the development of a common Sustainability Framework for the coffee sector. The Framework provides a collective definition of success for the sector, helps us develop a better understanding on how current investments contribute to this vision and provides guidance in developing new interventions. A first draft of the Framework was launched in October 2016, followed by a 5-month stakeholder consultation process. In March 2017, a joint-working group between the GCP and the Challenge was formed to develop a Version 2.0 of the Framework that incorporated the feedback coming out of the consultation period and kick-started the work to define common indicators for collective reporting on sector progress. The Framework is hosted as an open-source tool for the sector on the Challenge website and the work on developing a small number of common indicators for collective reporting is continued by a working group under the GCP.

How will the Challenge contribute to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?

The Challenge helps the sector to align our sustainability efforts with the [SDGs](#) to ensure the commitments and investments being implemented also make progress toward the global goals. This enables countries to understand how sustainability commitments in the coffee sector contribute to meeting the SDGs. For example, a commitment to support improved productivity and increased producer incomes could also contribute to the no poverty, zero hunger, good health and wellbeing, quality education and gender equality SDGs.



How does the Challenge collaborate with other multi-stakeholder initiatives in the sector, such as the Global Coffee Platform?

To avoid duplication of efforts and to enhance efficiency of investments, we actively collaborate with other multi-stakeholder initiatives that share our vision and objectives. For instance, in February 2017, the Sustainable Coffee Challenge and the Global Coffee Platform (GCP) [signed a Memorandum of Understanding](#) (MoU) outlining our organizations' collaboration in setting a collective vision, sharing best practices, driving action and tracking & measuring progress. As part of our collaboration, we have agreed to reciprocity in the Collective Action Networks – members of the GCP may participate in the Challenge networks and Challenge partners are free to participate in those facilitated by the GCP without having to officially join the other initiative. In addition, the Challenge and GCP combined efforts to establish the Sustainability Framework for the coffee sector that takes the work we have done over the past year and continues to advance it to enable collective reporting on our progress, in a working group entitled *Sustainability Progress Framework Joint Working Group*.

How is the Challenge funded and governed?

The agenda and priorities of the Challenge are set by the partners via working groups. An [Advisory Council](#) of experts from across the sector provides strategic advice and guidance on the direction of the Challenge. Launched with initial funding and support from Starbucks, the Challenge has received additional support from Conservation International and S&D Coffee and Tea as well as some anonymous donors. A team within Conservation International, led by Bambi Semroc, convenes, facilitates and manages the day-to-day work of the Challenge.