



Retreat: Metrics in Action

November 10-12, near Boston

The retreat will start with dinner the evening of Wednesday November 10 and conclude mid afternoon November 12. (Please indicate interest in being invited.)

Draft, to be iterated

Sponsored by the Sustainable Food Lab, with the partnership of SAI Platform. Key research partners include the International Institute for Sustainable Development, the MIT Sloane School of Management and the Harvard Business School. The Applied Sustainability Center at the University of Arkansas is also becoming an important partner.

Objectives of retreat:

1. Agreement to seek alignment of sustainability indicators and share what is learned in pilots and data collection;
2. Design of a collaborative support system for pilots, case study write-ups, and incentives for better practices through supply chains.

Beginning assumptions: Leaders in food and agriculture are developing outcome metrics to supplement practice standards and guidelines. These metrics systems are crucial but to be effective need to be tested and owned by players along the chain. Indicators need available data, and better practices need incentives. If all of the metrics systems tend toward alignment with consistent data, the whole industry will be more capable of tracking progress. If metrics are piloted in supply chains and standards, serving the goals of multiple stakeholders, the systems will be practical and scalable.

Overall Goals:

- Support for piloting performance metrics in supply chains, linked in a learning cluster;
- Improve opportunities for producers to participate in ecosystem service markets;
- As much alignment as possible among the metrics systems;
- Industry buy-in to shared metrics;
- Synergy among private sector and public sector metrics; and
- Published research and case studies of the use of outcome metrics.

Agenda Elements:

- A map of indicator systems (drafted pre-retreat) to identify who is doing what—intended users, scope and scale, stage of development, range of metrics;
- Use case stories to illustrate how indicators are used for management, impact assessment, scorecards and standards;
- Provide opportunities for each multi-stakeholder metrics system to receive feedback and support for piloting in supply chains (e.g. Keystone Field to Market, Stewardship Index for Specialty Crops, ISEAL Code of Good Practice for Assessing Impacts of Standards);
- Analyze role of consumer facing metrics (e.g. Good Guide and retail scorecards);
- Design next steps toward alignment and testing of indicator systems.

Preliminary confirmations from:

Sarah Stokes Alexander, Keystone Center
Molly Anderson
Rebecca Butterfield, Rainforest Alliance
Jason Clay and Dave McLaughlin, WWF
Jeff Dlott, Sure Harvest
Erin Fitzgerald, Dairy Management Incorporated
Rebecca Henderson, Harvard Business School
Jon Johnson and Marty Matlock, University of Arkansas Applied Sustainability Center
Jonathan Kaplan, Stewardship Index for Specialty Crops
Gord Kurbis, Pulse Canada
Patrick Mallet, ISEAL Alliance
Laszlo Pinter, International Institute for Sustainable Development
Aimee Rusillo, lead researcher for ISEAL, IISD, etc.
Peter Senge and Jason Jay, MIT Sloane School of Management
Jeff Senne and maybe Arlin Wasserman, Sodexo
Jan Kees Vis and Christof Walters, Unilever
Craig Watson, Sysco
Andy Whitman, Manomet Conservation Center
Peter Erik Ywema, SAI Platform

Facilitation team: Hal Hamilton, Joseph McIntyre, Peter Senge, Don Seville

Research already underway:

1. Review of Harvard Business School agribusiness cases that include discussion of sustainability metrics.
2. A short paper mapping key metrics initiatives. This paper will describe each initiative's goals, timelines, background and intended users. As an overview of the field, the paper will review which high level indicators are generally agreed to be most important and which would require more dialogue before they would become industry consensus.
3. A paper that describes tools and models for measuring environmental impact linking farm, landscape, and regional levels (in progress, by Aimee Russillo for IISD and WWF).
4. Two-three snapshot cases describing the information infrastructure that could be used to measure impacts in cocoa, pulse and potato production (selection of commodities tentative, to be done by Jane Black for IISD).

As specific input to the retreat, organizers will prepare brief case write-ups for retreat participants to review and discuss, including strategic choices for some participants' own initiatives (e.g. ISEAL Code of Good Practice for Measuring the Impact of Standards, Stewardship Index for Specialty Crops, etc.).

Please send indication of interest to Hal Hamilton hhamilton@sustainablefood.org