Sustainable Coconut Charter – Scheme Rules

Sustainable Coconut Charter

X SCHEME RULES

THE SUPPLY CHAIN STANDARD

ORIGIN STANDARD

CHAIN OF CUSTODY MODULE

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Contents

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Preamble

- Sustainable Coconut Partnership (SCP): the organization that develops the Sustainable Coconut Charter and runs the Sustainable Coconut Assurance System.
- Sustainable Coconut Charter (SCC): the name of the normative requirements. It is divided into 4 main normative documents, see below.
- Sustainable Coconut Assurance System: the general name of this verification scheme.

In the Sustainable Coconut Charter, the term **"shall"** indicates an action or condition that must be met to **score** against the corresponding criteria.

1.2 Background

The Sustainable Coconut Partnership (SCP) has developed and owns the Sustainable Coconut Assurance System aiming to provide a mechanism to substantiate sustainability claims and champion companies as agents of change and sustainable trade partners.

Its framework is designed to verify and ensure compliance with the Sustainable Coconut Charter across the supply chain, fostering transparency, accountability, and sustainable practices. It is pragmatic, progressive, and aligned with the needs of the sector and meant to be.

Designed to foster alignment and common ground among buyers, processors, cooperatives, and farmers alike, the Sustainable Coconut Charter aims to unite stakeholders across the coconut supply chain to improve farmers' livelihoods, protect the natural environment, and build climate resilience — ensuring a responsible and resilient sector for all.

The Assurance System development involved leading experts in coconut production and standard-setting. A voluntary taskforce comprising companies within the SCP—some of the industry's top processors and buyers—brought practical, on-the-ground experience. It benefited from extensive consultations outside the partnership, looking for alignment with international standards such as Accountability Framework and ISEAL standards to ensure robustness and completeness and best practices to overcome gaps in verification while tackling the unique challenges of the coconut sector. Expert consultants from Peterson Solutions also supported the system's development.

Inception: Members of SCP publicly voted to create and adopt the Sustainable Coconut Assurance System on November 23, 2023, during the Sustainable Coconut Partnership (SCP) Roundtable annual conference in Jakarta, in the presence of senior representatives from production-country governments after underscoring a critical need for market

interventions that can genuinely drive positive change as current assurance schemes used in the sector are perceived to have major complexities and niche-focus for a sector still not mature in sustainability and therefore not always suitable for implementation in the wider coconut sector especially in the markets where coconut is sold as an ingredient of other food& beverages, fuel, oleochemical and wood, shell and fiber products.

The framework also addressed complexity, cost effectiveness and specific challenges unique to coconut production, such as the industry's heavy dependance on smallholder farmers, the complexity of its supply chain, among others. The documentation and record requirement has often proven complex for these smallholder farmers to implement. This assurance system therefore took these challenges into account to ensure the development of a suitable framework, tailored to the coconut industry.

By implementing the Sustainable Coconut Assurance System, the Sustainable Coconut Partnership seeks to stimulate market transformation by leveraging trade dynamics to support scalable, sustainable solutions for both the industry and coconut growers.

A comprehensive review of industry practices was undertaken to ensure this approach offers a gradual pathway towards greater sustainability within the coconut industry and developed for a stepwise progress versus thriving for perfection in a long, complex supply chain at a time where traceability and transparency is still a challenge globally.

SCP addressed the current limitations of the coconut supply chain in meeting the demands of existing certification programs, by developing a practical alternative while continuing to promote the achievements on other sustainability standards. This approach offers a gradual pathway towards greater sustainability within the coconut industry.

The system was officially launched on September 27, 2024, at the 2024 Sustainable Coconut Roundtable in Manila, where it was celebrated as a major milestone for the industry in the presence of senior representatives from production-country governments.
Stakeholder feedback is welcomed and can be submitted to the SCP Secretariat at info@coconutpartnership.org for future consideration.

This document is part of the Sustainable Coconut Assurance System of the Sustainable Coconut Partnership. This Sustainable Coconut Charter consists of 4 key documents:

1. **The Scheme Rules, outlining the management of the assurance scheme.**
2. The Supply Chain Standard, outlining requirements for supply chain members.
3. The Origin Standard, outlining requirement upstream supply chain actors.
4. The Chain of Custody Module, outlining requirements to ensure credible claims.

The requirements detailed in the 4 key documents of the Sustainable Coconut Charter, implementation and development processes (standard development, public consultation, Verification Body (VB) approval etc.) and the supporting tools (IT tools, databases, etc) constitute to the Sustainable Coconut Assurance System (i.e. the verification scheme).

1.3 Unique features of the Sustainable Coconut Charter

This standard offers several unique features that distinguish it from other assurance schemes and make it specifically suited to the needs of the coconut sector. Key features include:

A Progressive Approach

The Sustainable Coconut Assurance System adopts a grading approach with three claim levels. By design, this system promotes a culture of continuous improvement rather than enforcing rigid step-by-step progress or striving for perfection in coconuts' long and complex supply chain.

This progressive framework empowers businesses to drive market transformation and gradually provide essential support across the supply chain, addressing the ongoing global challenges of traceability and transparency.

Integrated Verification

Responsibility for applying the Sustainable Coconut Assurance System is distributed across the supply chain. The application of the system is designed to encourage upstream stakeholders—farmers, cooperatives/traders, first points of processing, and other actors—to work collaboratively, rather than placing a disproportionate burden on farm groups to meet requirements.

By addressing this often-overlooked aspect of supply chain management in smallholder systems, we aim to create better pathways for investments to reach farmers, who are the backbone of the supply chain.

Our system focuses on a tailored set of practices for each actor in the chain. It ensures that assurance reports provide clear insights into the performance of each stakeholder within the system.

Coconut-Specific Strategy

In order to establish transparent, reliable metrics that are industry aligned, and focus on coconut specific issues, we conducted extensive research and consultations with experienced operators. This pointed to the need to go beyond a sole focus on agricultural practices and farm boundaries to solve systemic issues in the coconut sector.

Our system includes focusing on: replanting programmes, youth engagement, market prices transparency and key aspects of supply chain management and transparency in smallholder supply chains.

Designed with operational profitability and economic sustainability in mind

To make the system more cost-effective and efficient, we considered how better-designed interventions, operational efficiency, and improved break-even projections could help operators maintain their verification status.

Our system incorporates features such as a grading approach, a lean and fit-for-purpose standard, and allowances for additional scopes like supply chain management and

jurisdictional approaches. These elements aim to share responsibility for sustainability more equitably across the chain.

Active management of the standard by the Sustainable Coconut Partnership ensures that it remains adaptive and calibrated for operational profitability and economic sustainability. At the same time, it delivers credible, data-driven, and verified insights.

Volume and Performance Claims
Our system will verify both volume claims and assess companies' sustainability performance, recognizing verified companies as sustainable trade partners and agents of change. We are aligning our practices with leading sustainability standards to ensure robust performance recognition.

Openness
Any complaint or findings may be submitted to SCP Secretariat against a VB, its performance, a particular auditor (verifier) and particular certificate holder or any other issue that may bring SCPs reputation into dispute. Please submit your notification to the SCP Secretariat at info@coconutpartnership.org for future consideration. It may be done in an anyomous way, by not disclosing the submitting entity or person.

Together, we are building a sustainable future for the coconut industry—one that values integrity, inclusivity, and steady progress.

1.4 Scope and documents

Figure 1. provides a schematic overview of the relevant documents that make up the Sustainable Coconut Assurance System. Four normative documents constitute the assurance scheme which are the Origin Standard, Supply Chain Standard, Chain of Custody Module and the Scheme Rules. Each of these standards is designed for specific actors across the supply chain.

The **Origin Standard** is focused on upstream supply chain actors aiming to facilitate collaboration to achieve sustainability.

The **Supply Chain Standard** is focused on supply chain actors throughout the supply chain so they can differentiate themselves based on their dedication towards the implementation of sustainable practices.

The **Chain of Custody Module** is for traders of processed goods. The focus is on traceability, segregation and mass-balance. It is needed to protect claims made as a result of the Origin standard across the supply chain. In order to make sustainability claims related to the origin standard, a Chain-of-Custody Module is mandatory.

The **Scheme Rules** (this documents) includes the general requirements of the Sustainable Coconut Assurance System and aims to clarify:

- Responsibilities related to the Sustainable Coconut Assurance System,
- Requirements for the involved stakeholders implementing the Sustainable Coconut Charter,
- Procedures that need to be followed to attain successful verification

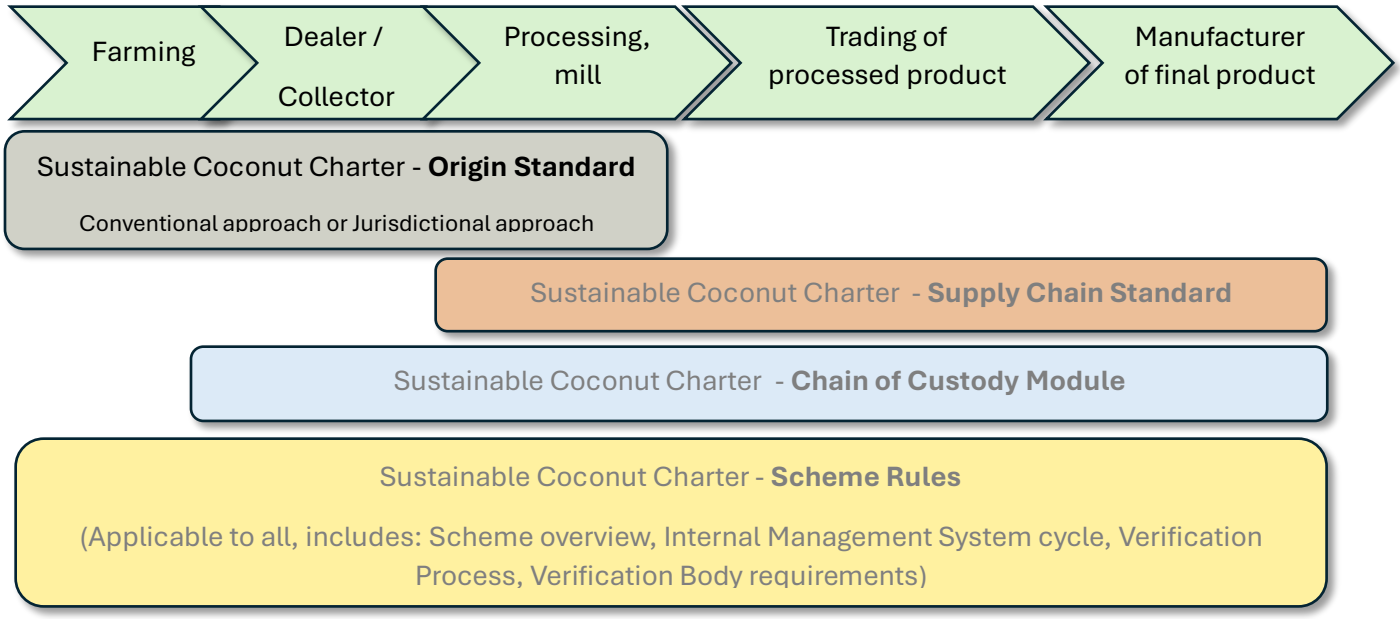

Figure 1. Overview of the Sustainable Coconut Assurance System and related documents and implementation approaches.

The Sustainable Coconut Charter applies to all participants of the coconut supply chain from production to processing, to the users of the processed product for manufacturing the final consumer products and all traders in between.

The Sustainable Coconut Charter may be used in any country, without any territorial limitation. The certificate awarded to the processor/mill (that includes the Origin and the Supply Chain standard) may cover activities (from production, harvest to processing) in one country only. Activities in different countries shall be separately verified.

Figure 2. is a schematic overview of the coconut supply chain related and the applicability of the different standards / requirements developed.

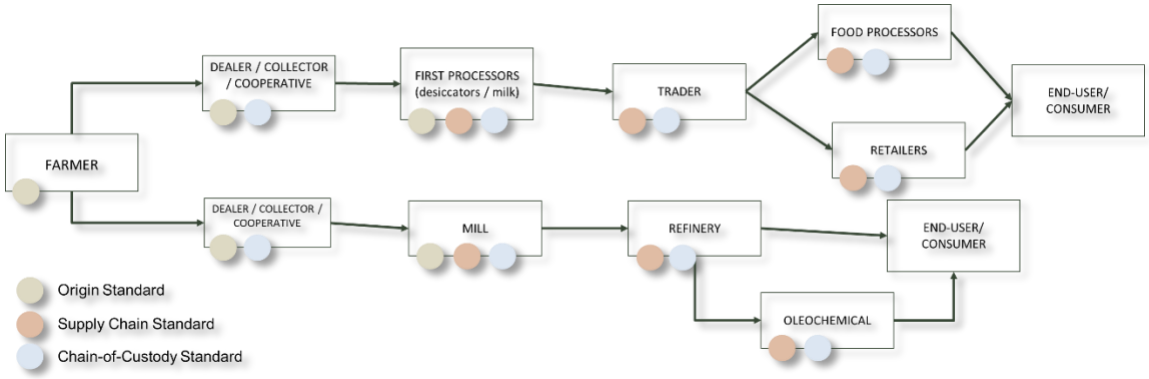

Figure 2. A schematic presentation of the supply chain. The colors indicate the standard documents that are relevant for each stakeholder.

1.5 Membership

For any claim to be made based on either the Origin Standard, Supply Chain Standard or Chain of Custody Module , the organization applying for verification must be a legal entity, a member of the SCP, have gone through the verification process and be verified (i.e. audited) by an SCP approved Verification Body. The membership is a precondition for the Origin Standard, for Supply Chain Standard and for the Chain of Custody Module verification. Only SCP members can trade with verified volumes.

SCP membership is not a precondition for all the producers, farmer groups (cooperatives), intermediate trader(s) before the first industrial processor verified under the Origin Standard. The certificate holder organization (company or cooperative) however shall be an SCP member and a formal legal entity. For membership an exception is made for traders who are only involved in transportation, dealers, collectors, cooperatives and farmers. These stakeholders only need to register with SCP to be included in the verification scope and does not have to be formal legal entity.

For the Supply Chain standard, an organization applying for verification must be a legal entity as well and a SCP member. For further information regarding the registration and membership process and fees, please contact the sustainable coconut partnership's team at info@coconutpartnership.org.

1.6 Data Access Rules

All data collected during the verification process are accessible to SCP and to the relevant Verification Body. No data about a particular farmer, trader or processor is disclosed to any third party. The verification reports and/or details are not public. The list of certified companies are made available to the public through a website operated by SCP.

Data of the certificate (i.e. compliance statement) holder	Visible to the VB?	Visible to SCP?	Visible to the public
Company name and address	yes	yes	yes
Sites', units' name and address included in the verification scope	yes	yes	yes
The scope of the certificate	yes	yes	yes
Certificate information: exact version of the standard, the date of issue, the valid from date, the valid to date, the issuing Verification Body, the Verification Body, the Sustainable Coconut Charter logo.	yes	yes	yes
Audit checklist including audit result , non-conformities and corrective actions	yes	yes	no

Table 1. data release levels

1.7 Sustainable Coconut Charter Logo

SCP is the sole owner of the Sustainable Coconut Charter logo and the related trademarks. The trademark includes the word mark, and the logo as listed below.
The word mark is: Sustainable Coconut Charter™ . The Sustainable Coconut Charter logo is:

Verification Bodies may use the logo on certificates (i.e. compliance statement) and in business-to-business communication in relation with the scope of the certificate. The logo may not appear on products. The logo may not be used as a generic statement of compliance referring those locations, sites, activities and products covered by the certificate. The Sustainable Coconut Charter alone (as above) logo may not be use by SCP members or certified companies.

2 SUPPLY CHAIN STANDARD

The Supply Chain Standard is developed with the intention of enabling members to demonstrate progress and showcase their commitment towards transparency, sustainability and their mobilization towards responsible rejuvenation , despite there not yet being verified Origin materials available. This way, a supply chain actor is allowed to differentiate itself from its peers.

Purpose	Verification	Scope
A company level verification for organizations sourcing and processing coconut products enabling overarching company-level verification on the organization's transparency, sustainability and mobilization towards responsible rejuvenation. It promotes market transformation and collaboration among sectoral change-makers, signalling to the market that the organization is a responsible trade partner committed to creating a responsible and resilient coconut sector.	This standard recognizes and controls the level of performance and continuous improvement of an organization of the supply chain principles of the Charter. The verification is done by third party verification bodies on or off-site	This standard applies to all organizations involved in the production, processing, and trade of coconut and coconut-derived products that seek to demonstrate transparency in their sustainability practices and their commitment to responsible rejuvenation, and building a resilient and responsible coconut sector.

This section is focused on the verification cycle of the Supply Chain Standard. Under SCC Supply Chain Standard certificate is issued to the buyer of processed products, which must be a legal entity.

Companies certified to the SCC Supply Chain Standard shall have a plan to purchase origin standard verified material within the next 24 months.

When a company operating multiple first industrial processing sites (e.g., mills) applies for SCC Supply Chain Standard verification, all sites shall be included within the verification scope. The certificate must explicitly list each activity, site, and its corresponding address, rather than only the general legal entity address.

2.1 Verification cycle

Figure 3. provides an overview of the verification cycle for the Supply Chain standard.

Verifications are conducted via a digital platform that streamlines the audit process by digitizing data verification and enabling remote meetings.

Organizations have two options:

1. Information can be shared on a declarative basis (no external verification).
2. Information can be verified by an accredited Verification Body (VB).

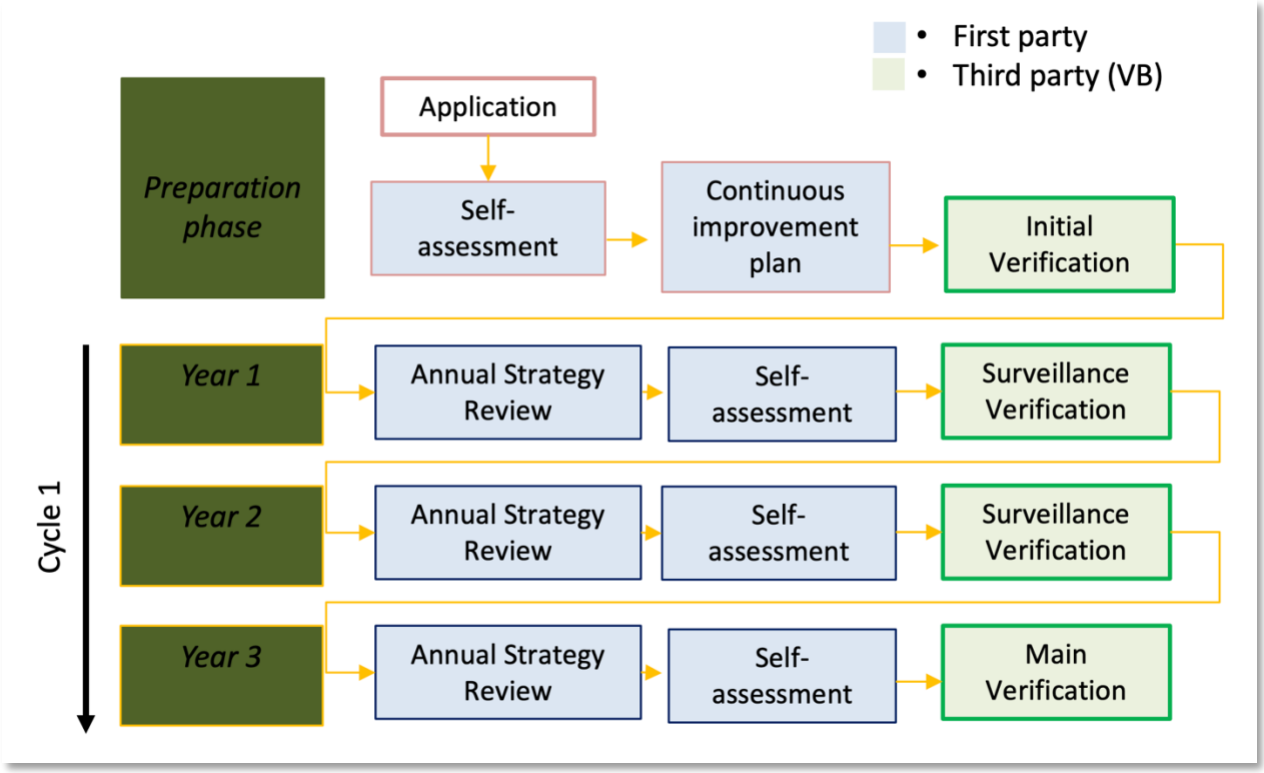

Figure 3. a schematic overview of the verification process for the supply chain standard. CoC requirements are included in the Origin standard document.

This cycle starts with an **application** and membership in order to proceed with the Supply Chain verification. Organizations applying for verification shall conduct an **internal self-assessment** to understand their current compliance level with the Supply Chain Standard. **A continuous improvement plan** should be developed explaining how the organization intends to drive sustainability in their supply chain based on the Supply Chain Standard.

The company shall choose an SCP approved Verification Body for the verification. The continuous improvement plan, along with any additional evidence will be verified by the Verification Body and an overall score assigned based on the scores of each practices. This is an annual process and the continuous improvement plan should be reviewed every year in

the **Annual Strategy Review**. This strategy review is then again followed by an self-assessment to track compliance.

2.2 Continuous improvement plan and strategy review

The supply chain standard is organized around 5 key topics that can help shape the implementation strategy. This is the same strategy that should be outlined in the 'continuous improvement plan' and which is reviewed in the 'annual strategy review' from the verification process. The SCC aims not to be too prescriptive on how the requirements ought to be implemented or what should be mentioned in the continuous improvement plan, but would like to offer some guidance in this chapter. The Supply Chain Standard is formed around 5 key topics:

1) *Commitments:*

This first step starts with the establishment of a commitment or a target. It outlines the need for policy commitment levels to the "ORIGIN standard" principles, requiring an intention to progress towards at least 50%, 75%, or full adoption of its ambitions. It also mandates the development of appropriate business ethics. Based on these commitments, a plan can be developed to achieve them. This can be the continuous improvement plan.

2) *Mapping:*

Creating an overview of stakeholders involved in the supply chain can be helpful to identify next steps and potential partners to collaborate with. It also form the foundation for the traceability and due diligence assessments to understand where the coconut product originates from and assess its potential risks.

3) *Supplier risk and due diligence:*

Ensuring sustainable sourcing a thorough supplier due diligence should be conducted focusing on the risks associated with that suppliers. Those risks can be based on various aspects like the size of the supplier or their location for example.

4) *Action plan formulation:*

Results from the due diligence should eventually be incorporated into an action plan outlining how the organization aims to collaborate with their suppliers to achieve a supply of more sustainably produced products.

5) *Updating commitments*:

Once the action plan has been rolled out and successfully implemented, new targets ought to be set to maintain progress and further improvements towards a more sustainable supply chain. Based on that revision the project steps can be revised and updated, resulting in an updated continuous improvement plan.

How these steps are implemented is dependent on the organization implementing them and their current position in the sustainability journey. As mentioned this is only intended as guidance.

2.3 Verification process of the Supply Chain Standard

The intention of this process is to explain in more depth what steps are taken to complete an actual verification. It thus serves as a more detailed description of the '*SCP or Third party verification*' step in the verification cycle. Verifications are conducted via a digital platform that streamlines the audit process by digitizing data verification and enabling remote meetings.

Organizations have two options:

1. Information can be shared on a declarative basis (no external verification). The SCP logo or SCP supported claim cannot be carried based on a self-declaration.
2. Information can be verified by an approved Verification Body (VB). This would enable the use of the SCP logo and SCP endorsed claims to be made.

Figure 4. shows the verification process. The process begins with sharing an application form, in the online platform or to the VB depending. After this step, the member completes the online questions posed and includes the evidence needed to confirm their compliance to the requirements outlined in the standard. Following the review of the documents a more in-depth session can be planned to confirm compliance. In case of any NCs, time is provided to close them before the compliance statement is issued.

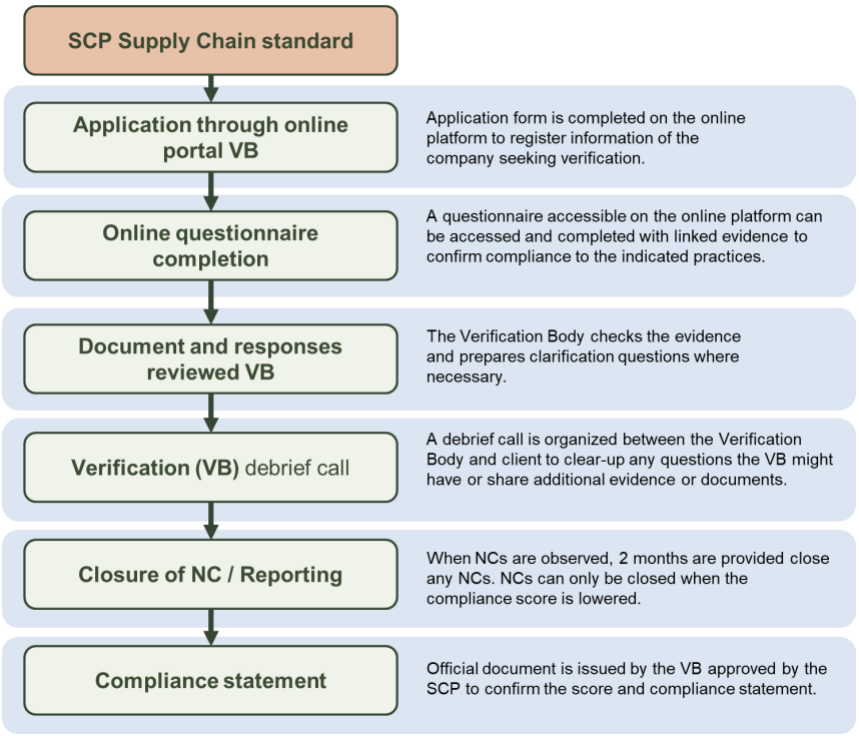

Figure 3, the verification process for the Supply Chain Standard. The verification in the process is conducted by the SCP secretariate.

The following principles need to be observed during the Supply Chain verification:

I. Annual Supply Chain verification (the debriefing call) must be conducted within a 4 month window of the anniversary date of the first Supply Chain verification (2-months before the anniversary date and 2-months after the anniversary date).
II. The Supply Chain standard score will be based on the findings during the verification.
III. Verification call needs to be organized within a month after sharing the questionnaire results and evidence with the Verification Body.
IV. The verification report will be shared within 2 weeks after the verification.
V. The verification report will include an overview of all requirements, with a clear decision regarding compliance and the evidence that was reviewed to justify that outcome.
VI. If any NCs are established during the verification, the member has an option to close those NCs during a 2 month period after the verification. Evidence of NC closures should be shared with the verifier and approved by the verifier within the 2-month deadline.
VII. If the claim level has not changed or sufficient evidence has been submitted to close the NC and maintain the claim level, a certificate (i.e. an attestation) can be issued. This should be done within 15-days of sharing of the verification report to the member or after the VB acceptance of the NC closures (and evidence).
VIII. The VB shall operate a complaint or grievance procedure whereby the clients has the opportunity to appeal against any decision derived from the verification result.

2.4 Sustainable Coconut Partnership Member Claims and logo's

Table 2. gives an overview of the 3 level logo's and claims that can be made based on the Supply Chain Standard. Each level signals to the market that the organization is a sustainable trade partner committed to creating a responsible and resilient coconut sector that positively impacts farmers' livelihoods, the climate, and the environment and is at a certain level of maturity in their journey.

Table 2. overview of the Sustainable Coconut Partnership Member logo and claims that can be made based on the Supply Chain Standard.

Logo:	Description:
SUSTAINABLE COCONUT PARTNERSHIP GOLD MEMBERSHIP **YEAR-YEAR**	**Gold Level** Score: >80% *Only B-to-B claim possible, no on product or volume claim possible. Claims can be displayed on company websites and commercial documents but do not certify specific products or traded volumes.* *My organization is a Gold Member of the Sustainable Coconut Partnership and has implemented and externally verified the Sustainable Coconut Assurance scheme.*
SUSTAINABLE COCONUT PARTNERSHIP SILVER MEMBERSHIP **YEAR-YEAR**	**Silver Level** Score: >60% to ≤80% *Only B-to-B claim possible, no on product or volume claim possible. Claims can be displayed on company websites and commercial documents but do not certify specific products or traded volumes.* *My organization is a Silver Member of the Sustainable Coconut Partnership and has implemented and externally verified the Sustainable Coconut Assurance scheme.*
SUSTAINABLE COCONUT PARTNERSHIP BRONZE MEMBERSHIP **YEAR-YEAR**	**Bronze Level** Score: ≥30% to ≤60% *Only B-to-B claim possible, no on product or volume claim possible. Claims can be displayed on company websites and commercial documents but do not certify specific products or traded volumes.* *My organization is a Bronze Member of the Sustainable Coconut Partnership and has implemented and externally verified the Sustainable Coconut Assurance scheme.*

The Sustainable Coconut Partnership Member logo and any accompanying text shall follow the SCP specifications. Only those organizations may use the claim and the logo that are authorized to do so by the SCP approved VB, taking into consideration the outcome of the continuous verification result.

The Sustainable Coconut Partnership Member logo is granted for two consecutive years (e.g. 2025-2026). The years shall be incorporated into the logo that is granted by the VB as result of a successful verification process. The VB is responsible for the control of the correct use of the logo.
When the company verification result changes during the annual VB verification (increase or decrease), the VB shall issue a new logo with the corresponding membership level.

The Sustainable Coconut Partnership Member logo may only be used in business-to-business communication and shall not appear on the product, product packaging or on any accompanying material visible to the final consumer.

The Sustainable Coconut Partnership Member logo may not be used as a product or volume claim or directly related to certain ingredients derived from verified process. It refers to the organization's achievement regarding the implementation of sustainable practices in the coconut supply chain.

3 ORIGIN STANDARD

This section focuses on the Origin Standard and its verification cycle, process and practical implementation.

Purpose	Verification	Scope
A production and processing level verification for "sustainable coconut production" verifying volumes of product compliant with the Sustainable Coconut Charter (SCC).	This standard recognizes and controls levels of performance and continuous improvement of Core Principles and Ambitions of the SCC for sustainable production of coconut products.	It includes the production, harvest, transportation and processing of the coconuts. Therefore, it includes individual farmers, farmer groups, collectors, traders and first industrial processing companies. It may only include traders of processed materials, processors beyond the first processing site, brand manufacturers of the final consumer products in a supporting facility as part of the Group Management Entity. The standard may be applied at the local/jurisdictional/landscape/island levels.

The first industrial processing company is referring to those processing plants -beyond initial processing that sometimes takes place on-farm- where the coconut is processed to large scale traded industrial commodities (e.g. coconut oil, coconut flour, coconut sugar).

Under the SCC Origin Standard certificates are normally issued to the first industrial processor, which must be a formal legal entity. The certificate and the verification audit scope shall include all the supply chain participants from the producing farms up till the processing plant. The producers, traders and cooperatives covered by an SCC Origin Standard certificate does not have to be formal (official) legal entities. The term first industrial processor refers to those processing plants -beyond initial processing that sometimes takes place on-farm- where the coconut is processed to large scale traded industrial commodities (e.g. coconut oil, coconut flour, coconut sugar).

The Farmer Group/cooperative may also apply for Origin Standard certification, may be certified alone and therefore will be allowed to sell SCC certified product to multiple mills. In this case however the CoC Module is also required. The Farmer Group/cooperative will be the certificate holder, therefore it must be an official legal entity, and needs to be an SCP member.

When a mill applies for SCC verification without including the supply chain members (i.e. farms, farmer group and traders), the CoC Module and the Supply Chain standard applies. The mill will be the certificate holder, therefore it must be an official legal entity and need to be an SCP member.

Where a cooperative or producer group applies for verification, that group may consist of sub-groups. The whole group may receive one certificate, and the total number of the producers will be sampled during verification visit. The members and subgroup shall be located within one country. Alternatively, the sub-group may apply for verification individually. In this case they will be considered as independently verified groups.

3.1 Verification cycle

Figure 5. shows the verification cycle of the Origin Standard. There are two types of approach to implementation (Conventional and Jurisdictional) for the origin standard; The conventional approach focusses on assessing sustainability of the upstream actors of a supply chain. Upstream actors of the supply chain are verified using the Origin standard on a sampling basis through a third-party verification process. The upstream actors eligible for the verification are farmers, dealers/cooperatives/traders, first processors and millers. The certificate holder is the organization that pays for the verification. The certificate holder is the only entity that can trade SCC claimed materials, on behalf of the stakeholder group.
The audit cycle is based on a 3-year validity of the onsite initial/main verification, with annual remote surveillance verifications in between to ensure compliance is maintained.

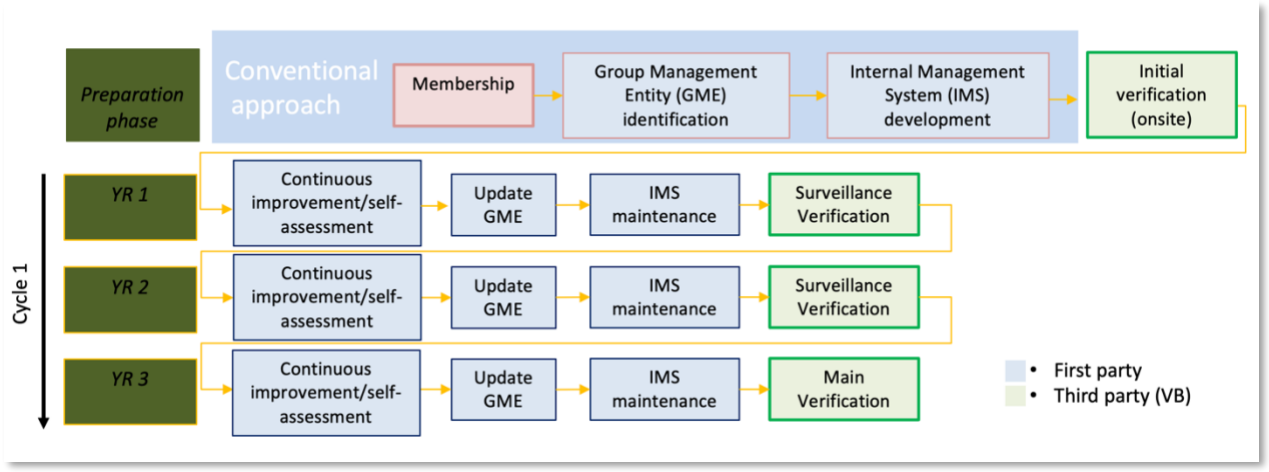

Figure 5. the verification cycle highlighting the different steps necessary to successful achieve verification.

3.2 Group Management Entity (GME)

Member organizations apply through an identifying the **Group Management Entity (GME)** together with its supply chain partners.

A Group Management Entity (GME) is the legal or functional organization or group of organizations responsible for managing, coordinating, and ensuring compliance with the SCC Origin Standard through an established Internal Management System (IMS) and is responsible for ensuring that all members comply with the requirements of the standard. Where a group is composed of several legal entities (e.g. cooperatives, associations, or companies), the group members may collectively designate one organization to hold the certificate or verification on behalf of the group.

Regardless of which entity legally holds the certificate, the GME remains responsible for the overall compliance, integrity, and governance of the Internal Management System, ensuring that all participating entities and individual producers comply with the standard's requirements.

The GME is a group of farmers, dealers (traders)/cooperatives/collectors, first processors and millers and depends on the structure of the upstream supply chain. Identification of this group is essential since the Origin standard includes practices relevant for all upstream actors to foster collaboration.
The Actor Database (member list of the group) needs to be updated every year to account for potential stakeholders entering or leaving the supply chain.

3.3 Internal Management System (IMS)

The next step is the development of the **Internal Management System (IMS)**. The IMS is a structured framework within the GME or the organization applying for verification that is designed to manage, monitor and ensure compliance with the Origin Standard. It includes policies, procedures and tools to guide activities, track performance and address issues related to sustainability. In terms of verification, an IMS helps to systematically oversee and document compliance to the Origin standard enabling more efficient and cost-effective auditing. Further information is provided in chapter 3.2.
In the SCC Origin Standard each practices are classified under ''Actors'' to two categories: ''GME'' or ''Participation''. This indicates that the respective practice shall be implemented and verified on GME or on farmer ('Participation'') level:

- **Participation:** requirements related to producers (i.e. farmers, cooperative members and traders).
- **GME:** requirements related to the Group Management Entity. These requirements shall be implemented by all members of the GME, including collectors, traders, processors and also producers.

Continuous improvement serves as a step to strengthen and potentially expand the implementation of the Origin Standard, aiming to achieve a higher compliance score. The objective is to foster ongoing progress toward a more sustainable supply chain.

An **internal self-assessment** should be done in preparation for each onsite verification, with the aim of assessing the level of compliance and detect any potential non-compliances. This will allow time to resolve any non-compliances prior to the third-party verification. The sampling strategy is detailed in Chapter 3.5.

Figure 5. shows the cyclical nature of the IMS. The IMS cycle consists of 5-steps:

- ***Step 1***. *Identify / action plan*.
  This step focusses on the mapping of the participants of the supply chain and the identification of what activities need to be conducted with the relevant actors to implement the SCC or maintain compliance. The activities should be outlined in an action plan which includes objectives formulated inline with SMART principle.
- ***Step 2***. *Implementation planning*.
  An implementation plan should be developed outlining when the activities defined in the first step should be implemented and completed. This also includes a clear identification of who will conduct the activities and which stakeholders will be involved in the verification process itself.
- ***Step 3***. *Internal assessments*.
  An internal assessment is intended as a first party assessment where the organization assesses compliance to the SCC amongst the GME. This is an important tool to understand the current levels of compliance. Such assessments can be done using the entire standard, or focus on specific topics or levels of compliance. The scope of the assessment should be the SCC Origin standard practices.
- ***Step 4***. *Analyze results*.
  After the internal assessments have been conducted, results should be reviewed, analyzed and summarized to inform the next step. Results could indicate the need for capacity building on a particular topic, training or any another intervention that could support the GME.
- ***Step 5***. *Continuous improvement*.
  Any activity conducted to help the GME close the observed compliance gaps observed during step 3 and 4. This is step is also intended to further develop and implement additional SCC requirements to increase the score and keep improving the sustainability score of the group.

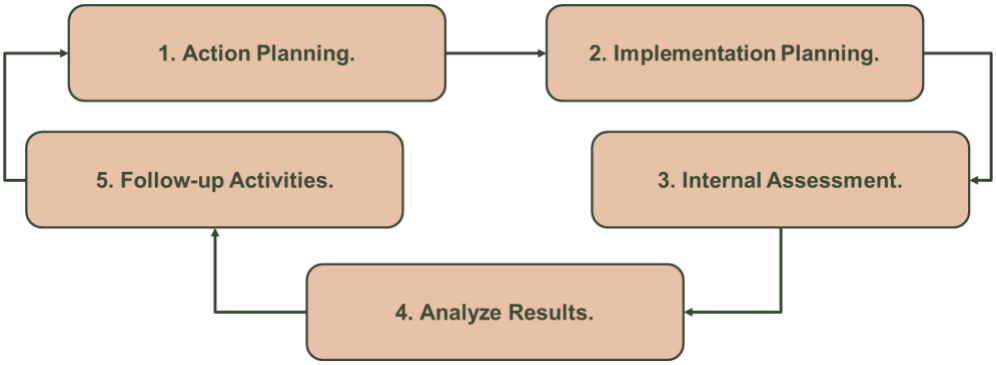

Figure 6., the cyclical Internal Management System (IMS) system in place to support the implementation of the SCC Origin standard across the upstream stakeholders.

To ensure proper organization of the IMS, the following practices must be implemented and documented through clear SOPs and records:

I. *Organizational Structure*: The IMS must establish a clear structure with defined roles and responsibilities for all individuals and entities involved. These roles must at least include:
   a. An IMS manager responsible for the day-to-day operations of the IMS.
   b. The support staff needed properly implement the IMS across the GME (example, internal assessments, follow-up activities, trainings, etc..).

II. *Legal Entity*: The IMS should operate within an existing legal entity or be established as a legal entity itself.

III. *Actor Database*: A comprehensive database must be maintained, covering all actors and entities within the IMS:
   a. For farmers, this includes names, contact details, ID numbers, land status, location (address/GPS), land size, production volume, and date of inclusion.
   b. For organizations, this includes the organization name, representative, contact information, location (address/GPS), activity, date of inclusion, and output volume.

IV. *Training*: All IMS personnel must receive training on the IMS functions and at least the Origin standard.

V. *Sanctions and Appeals*: Sanctions must be in place for un-cooperative stakeholders, with an appeals process for reviewing cases when necessary. This appeals procedure may be integrated with existing grievance procedures under the Supply Chain and Origin standards.

VI. *Continuous Improvement*: The action plan should prioritize continuous improvement, with annual goals targeting higher compliance scores and progressively more ambitious targets.

VII. *Actor engagement*: During the 3 year verification cycle, all actors in the verification scope must be visited at least once. For example, 33% of farmers visited each year. Internal assessment should be done by competent personnel trained in the Sustainable Coconut Charter Assurance System.

VIII. *GME changes*: New farmers or organizations can be added to the verification scope. Any new farmer/organization added to the farm group has to receive a:
   a. training on the Sustainable Coconut Charter Assurance System,
   b. an internal assessment (first party) needs to be conducted and
   c. a follow-up activity needs to be done to support the farmer to close compliance gaps.

IX. *Maintaining group integrity*: When third party verified claims are being made over the coconut materials, the number of new farmers that can be added to a group cannot exceed 50% of the total number of existing group members the year before.
In case the number of farmer members increased with more than 50 %, the square root of the newly added producers must be verified during the surveillance verification.

X. *Evidence*: Developed and completed checklists and reports, SOPs, records and other documents need to be kept as evidence. These documents will be checked during the actual verification and surveillance verifications to establish compliance with the IMS system.

3.4 Producer Loyalty and Progression

SCC want to recognize commercial flexibility (i.e., not all farmer's output must be sold into the verified supply chain), but still require demonstrated progress over time, with the auditor able to verify loyalty and increasing share of volumes entering the verified supply chain. This approach ensures farmer autonomy and market flexibility while promoting measurable, increasing inclusion of producers' volumes into the verified, traceable supply chain over time.

i. Non-Exclusive Supply
Producer members of a GME certified against the SCC Origin standard are not required to sell 100% of their production volumes exclusively to into the verified supply chain. Membership shall not restrict producers' freedom to sell to other buyers or markets.

ii. Tolerance Mechanism
Recognizing the social and economic realities of local markets, the SCC Origin standard allows farms for partial selling of producer volumes into other supply chains. This shall not exceed more than 50% of volumes of a given farm.

iii. Progressive Integration Requirement
Participating producer members of a GME must demonstrate increasing loyalty over time:
   - A baseline percentage of verified volumes shall be recorded at the time of onboarding.
   - Each subsequent year, the producer members shall plan and demonstrate efforts to increase the proportion of volumes delivered into the verified supply chain.

iv. Auditor Verification. Auditors shall verify:
   - Documented volume flows (purchases, sales, transfers);
   - Producer-level supply records (where applicable and feasible);
   - Evidence of continuous improvement in the proportion of volumes entering the verified supply chain; and
   - That no contractual or informal pressure limits producers' ability to make independent market decisions.

v. Performance Expectation
   Lack of exclusive sourcing is not non-compliance. However, failure to demonstrate progress toward increased integration over three (3) consecutive years shall trigger a Corrective Action Plan, with timelines and responsibilities defined.

3.5 Verification process

The verification process is intended to provide a systematic procedure used to assess compliance with the Origin Standard. The goal of verification is to provide an objective assurance that compliance is achieved and to determine the claim that can be made. In the Origin standard the verification cycle is based on a 3-year cycle with annual verifications. During the verification process, the IMS, as well as a sample of the individual entities and actors within the GME will be subject to verification, which may include on-site visits, document reviews and interviews.

There are two types of verification; an on-site **Initial/main verification** and a remote **surveillance verification**. The first verification (known as year 0, or the initial verification) must be conducted on-site. The next two verifications (known as year 1 and 2, or surveillance verifications) will be conducted remotely and focus on the groups' IMS and evidence collected as part of the IMS implementation. In year 3, another on-site verification is required to renew the attestation and the three year cycle begins again. Figure 7. shows the process for both type of verification and includes detailed descriptions per step.

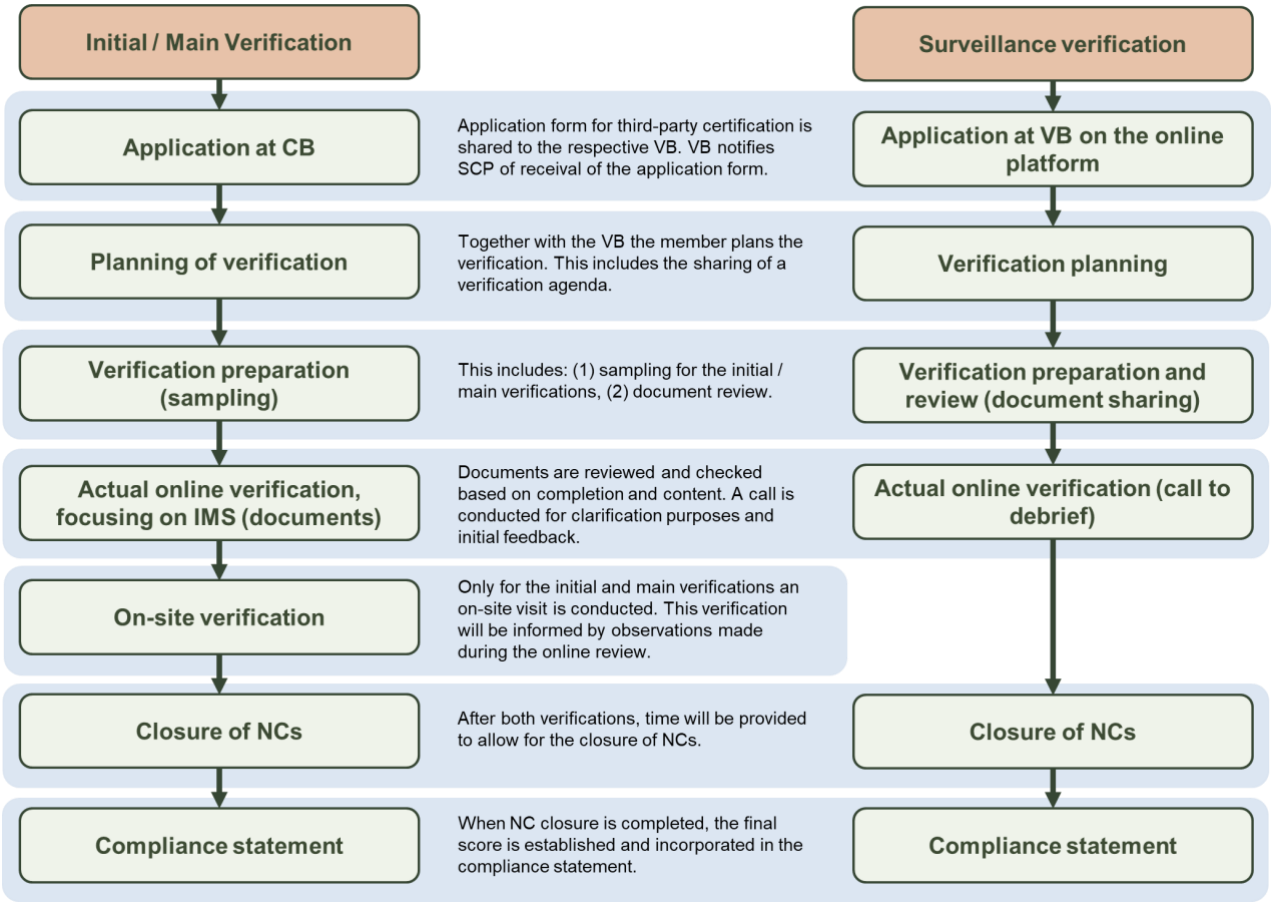

Figure 7. overview of the verification process of the Origin Standard. Both the process for the Initial/Main verification and for the surveillance verification are outlined. Both need to be conducted by third party VBs as verifiers.

During the verification the following principles are to be followed:

I. Surveillance verifications and main verifications must be conducted within 4 months of the anniversary date of the initial verification (2-months before the anniversary date or 2-months after the anniversary date).
II. Scores can only be updated during on-site verifications. If members want to publicly claim a score increase during year 1 or 2, an onsite element can be added to the surveillance verification. This must be indicated in the application form shared with the VB.
III. The score will be based on the findings during the verification.
IV. The application form should be shared at least 6 weeks before the first day of the verification.
V. The verification agenda should be shared at least 4 weeks before the first verification day.
VI. In case of an onsite verification, the sample will be communicated no sooner than 2 weeks in advance of the first verification day.

VII. The initial/main and surveillance verifications must be conducted by an independent VB.

VIII. The verification report must be shared within 2 weeks from the last day of the verification.

IX. The verification report includes an overview of all requirements with a clear decision regarding compliance and the evidence that was reviewed to justify that outcome.

X. If the newly determined score results in a negative claim change, the member has 2-months to close its NCs in order to maintain its claim level (where a newly determined score results in a positive claim status, any open non compliances do not need to be resolved) from the moment the verification report has been received.

- The member will need to prioritize which NCs to close to maintain their compliance levels. This should be outlined in their action plan and shared with the verifier within two weeks from receiving the verification report.
- Evidence of NC closures should be shared with the verifier and approved by the verifier within the 2-month deadline.

XI. If the claim level has not changed or sufficient evidence has been submitted to close the NC and maintain the claim level, a certificate (i.e. a compliance statement) can be issued.

XII. Some requirements (practices) are marked with ‘’CR’’ i.e. critical requirements. In case these requirements are not complied with, the certificates cannot be issues regardless of the achieved overall score.

XIII. The VB shall operate a complaint or grievance procedure whereby the clients has the opportunity to appeal against any decision derived from the verification result.

XIV. The Verification Body may decide based on its risk assessment that during the surveillance verification (years 1 & 2) the remote verification is partially replaced by on-site verification. The risk factors that shall be considered by the Verification Body include but are not limited to: previous verification result, complaint related to the particular client, reported issues related to the region that may negatively affect the compliance level, suspicion of fraud, natural disaster.

3.6 Duration of the verification

Pre-Audit Preparation & Internal Assessment review	CoC audit	Mill/ First Industrial Processing Facility	Farms & Coops/Traders assessed	Audit Report, closing of NC, verification award
Standard 1 day	0.5 days per CoC system audited	0.75 days per Mill/ First Industrial Processing Facility	Standard 2hrs per farm	Standard

Example:	Pre-Audit Preparation & Internal Assessment review	CoC audit	Mill/ First Industrial Processing Facility	Farms & Coops/Traders assessed	Audit Report, closing of NC, verification award
Number of units	1	1	1	800	1
Sampling				28	
Number of days	1	0.5	0.75	7.1	1
TOTAL Audit Days	**9.1**				
Audit Team	2				

Additional complexity factors that may influence the duration of the verification:

Complexity Factors	
Wide Supply Base	Yes/No
Large scale operation (important distances and logistics)	Yes/No
If one of the above is Yes or if the on site audit exceeds 5 days, then VB is to allocate at least two verifiers (auditors) or increase the man-days.	

Complexity on the farm/coop/trader sampling	
Size	Large farm ; Medium Farm ; Small Farm
Topography (terrain)	steep terrain
Infrastructure	worker housing, storage facilities, or processing equipment
Environmental, social & labor issues reported on farms	Eventual need for confidential interviews with workers and stakeholders
If above issues are noted, VB may increase the number of hour per sites or for specific sites only sensibly and must justify their choice in audit mandate.	

3.7 Sampling

This approach was selected to minimise verification costs, making the Origin standard more accessible to the various members, whilst still providing reasonable assurance. The goal of the verifications is to verify the management system that is in place to implement the Sustainable Coconut Charter Assurance System.

The following general requirements need to be observed:

I. An internal self-assessment should be completed by the project proponent for all the farmers in the group during a 3-year cycle. Using the self-assessment result, and other selection criteria, the verification sample should be drawn. The external verification sample shall be based on the square root of the number of farm members (rounded up to the next whole number). In this approach the sample is reviewed against the internal self-assessment reports to check that there is consistency in scoring, as an indication of an effective IMS system being in place.

II. All non-farmer entities in the verification group must be included in the scope of the verification and visited on-site during the verification. The square root of traders/dealers (rounded up to the next whole number) shall be audited by the VB (external verification) during a 3-year cycle. The square root of traders/dealers shall be separately calculated from the square root of farmers.

III. The following strategies can be followed to ensure a representative sample is selected for both the internal pre-assessment and verification:
    a. Sampling should be stratified ensuring different farm sizes, locations and types are included in the sample.
    b. Sampling should be random to prevent the same farmers from being assessed or verified each verification.

Example: a farmer group with 110 members shall conduct 110 self-assessment and the Verification Body shall audit 11 farmer group members ($\sqrt{110}=10.48 \rightarrow 11$).

3.8 Scoring

The VB shall calculate the score of each audit (initial, surveillance or main verification). The overall score shall be based on the audit result of the sampled GME members and therefore represent the performance of the entire GME. The calculation is based on the average score of each requirement per each sampled entity.

During the audit, the scores of all the sampled entities will be recorded in one single report/spreadsheet (i.e. no separate report or checklist per audited farms). The score for each requirement is the average score of all actors (i.e. GME or participants) for that given requirement. Some requirements are applicable only to farms (producers), some to traders and cooperatives and some for the mills. For example, if there are 10 farmers, the score of a specific requirement applicable to farmers (e.g. protective equipment) will be the average score of the 10 different results of the 10 farmers. The final score of the whole verification is the sum of all scores in that checklist, representing the outcome of the verification.

Formula:

S_1 = score of the requirement #1

S_1= (Score of entity 1 + Score of entity 2+ Score of entity 2) ÷ number of entities

Final Score Origin std.: $S_1 + S_2 + S_n$

Example:
An example of the calculation for 3 requirements (practices) in a case where 2 farms are sampled.

Practice	Farm #1 score	Farm #2 score	GME (Group Management Entity)	Average score
1.1.1 (Farmer receive GAP training…)	2	1	N/A	1.5
1.1.2 (Productivity is tracked…)	N/A	N/A	1	1
1.1.3 Demonstration farms or plots shall be established…)	N/A	N/A	1	1
Total score				**3.5**

3.9 Claims and logo

Table 2. indicates the logos and claims that can be made based on the verification conducted. In case of group compliance the owner of the verification statement is the organization that has paid for the verification to take place and has applied for verification with the VB.

The Origin Standard consists of three stages of performance (Engaged, Verified in Transition, Verified Sustainable), verified by a third-party Verification Body (VB). The claim and its performance level can be displayed on company websites, commercial documents, provided the chain of custody – mass balance or segregated – is maintained.

Table 1. the Sustainable Coconut Charter verification status logo's and claims that can be made based on the achieved scoring as a result of the verification.

Logo:*	Description:
 	Sustainable Coconut Charter - Verified Sustainable ™ Score: >80% Whether Mass Balance or Segregated is added to the logo depends on the result of the Chain-of-Custody compliance. Claim: *'Coconut [material name] issued from an origin/jurisdiction creating a responsible and resilient coconut sector' following the Sustainable Coconut Charter'*

	Sustainable Coconut Charter - Verified in transition™ Score: >60% to ≤80% Whether Mass Balance or Segregated is added to the logo depends on the result of the Chain-of-Custody compliance. Claim: *'Coconut [material name] issued from an origin/jurisdiction in transition towards sustainability following the sustainable coconut charter'*
	Sustainable Coconut Charter - Engaged ™ Score: ≥30% to ≤60% Whether Mass Balance or Segregated is added to the logo depends on the result of the Chain-of-Custody compliance. Claim: *'Coconut [material name] issued from an origin/jurisdiction that engaged in transition towards sustainability following the sustainable coconut charter.'*

The Sustainable Coconut Charter verification status logo and any accompanying text shall follow the specifications by SCP.

Only those companies (including cooperatives, first industrial processors, etc) may use the Sustainable Coconut Charter verification status claim and the logo that are authorized to do so by the SCP approved VB, taking into consideration the outcome of the continuous verification result.

The Sustainable Coconut Charter verification status logo may only be used in business-to-business communication and shall not appear on the product, product packaging or on any accompanying material visible to the final consumer. The VB is responsible for the control of the correct use of the logo.Companies interested in On-product claim may reach out to info@coconutpartnership.org and request this evolution.

The Sustainable Coconut Charter verification status logo may be used as a product or volume claim or directly related to certain ingredients derived from verified process.

4 CHAIN OF CUSTODY (CoC) MODULE

The Chain-of-Custody (CoC) Module is here presented as a separate module from both the Supply Chain standard and Origin standards. The purpose of the CoC Module is the protect the credibility of the claims enabled by the Origin standard. It does this by verifying the sequence of ownership, handling and control of a product/material as it moves through each stage of the supply chain.

Separating the CoC module from the Supply Chain or Origin standard enables the individual implementation of each standard. Therefore, enabling supply chain actors to demonstrate their commitment and progress towards more sustainable supply chains by implementing the Supply Chain Standard, despite there not being any SCC verified origin materials available yet.

Purpose	Verification	Scope
To protect the integrity of the claims made as a result of Origin Standard compliance of upstream actors.	This Module ensures the traceability of coconut materials by documenting the handling, transfers and storage to prevent tempering, loss or contamination.	This Module covers the supply chain actors other than the producers. So anyone trading handling or altering the product.

4.1 Chain of Custody models

The SCC recognizes 2 types of CoC models, the Mass balance and Segregation model.

4.1.1 Mass Balance model

This CoC model allows for verified and non-verified product/materials to be mixed in controlled proportions, while still accounting for the volumes of verified product/materials that enter and leave the supply chain. Under this model, the quantity of verified product/materials purchased by a member matches the amount of product/materials it claims to sell, despite being mixed with non-verified products during production.

The defining characteristic of mass balance CoC models is that there is no guarantee of physical presence of specified characteristics in a material (i.e. verified status of the product/material). When mass balance is applied, the physical relationship between material and specified characteristics is lost.

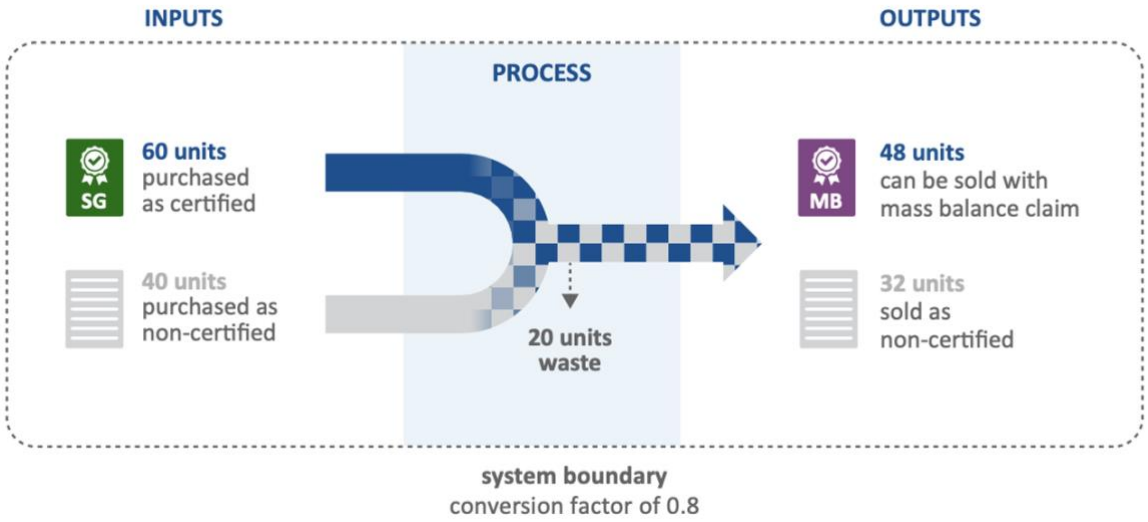

Figure 8. Mass balance model. Source: ISEAL.

Key requirements include:

- The balancing of inputs and outputs of verified materials. The volume of verified materials must be aligned with the volume the member sells.
- Controlled mixing of verified and non-verified materials. Mixing of verified and non-verified products is allowed as long as proper records are kept to track the total volumes of verified and non-verified volumes.
- If materials with varying claims levels ('Engaged,' 'Verified in Transition,' and 'Verified Sustainable') are purchased and combined, the product is sold under the lowest claim level. This is to prevent overstating the achieved level of compliance.
- In case of mixing the ratio of verified and non-verified materials must be known at each stage of supply chain when processing, mixing or (re)packaging occurs.

Mass-balance claims follow the 'verified sourced content' principle, as defined by ISEAL ALLIANCE (Chain of Custody models and definitions). This means that the quantity of product sold with a verified claim must match the amount of verified product purchased. Any non-verified volume remains unlabeled. Partial verified claims (e.g., stating a product contains X% verified content not allowed.

4.1.2 Segregation model

This CoC model refers to a situation where the verified product/material is kept separate from the non-verified product/material. This means that verified product/materials remain physically isolated from non-verified products during the various stages of the supply chain from initial input to the final output.

Key requirement include:

- The physical separation of verified and non-verified products is strictly needed to avoid any contamination.

- Verification from origin to final product due to the separation of the product throughout the supply chain.
- If materials with varying claims levels ('Engaged,' 'Verified in Transition,' and 'Verified Sustainable') are purchased and combined, the product is sold under the lowest claim level. Unless the various claim levels can be segregated and are therefore not mixed. Then products with different claim levels can be sold. In the latter case, it is allowed to mix products with the same claim level.

Claims based on the segregated supply chain are based on the 'segregation' principle as described by ISEAL ALLIANCE (Chain of Custody models and definitions). This means the verified product is kept separate from non-verified products throughout each stage of the supply chain. All verified products can be labelled with the appropriate claim as outlined in this document.

If verified raw materials are mixed with different scores achieved under the Origin standard. The volume with the lowest score is used as a basis for the claim that is made on the product. This is relevant to both mass-balance and the segregated supply chain.

4.2 Conversion ratios

During the SCC Chian of Custody Standard verification, the VB shall examine the consistent balance between input and output of the product originating from verified and non-verified origins. To facilitate the verification the following standard conversion ratios shall be used.

Typical Conversion Ratios (Raw Coconut → Products):

Copra (dried kernel): 1,000 kg raw coconuts ≈ 160–220 kg copra
(kernel-to-copra depends on drying efficiency and nut maturity).

Coconut Oil (from copra): 160–220 kg copra ≈ 100–150 liters of oil
Oil yield from copra ≈ 60–65% by weight.

Virgin Coconut Oil (from fresh kernel, not copra): 1,000 kg raw coconuts ≈ 70–90 liters
Lower yield compared to copra oil, but higher quality.
From coconut oil to virgin coconut oil the conversion is less than 5%.

Coconut Water: 1 coconut ≈ 100–160 ml water
1,000 coconuts ≈ 100–160 liters.

Coconut Sugar (from sap, not nut): 1 liter coconut sap ≈ 150–170 g sugar
A healthy coconut tree gives 1.5–2 liters sap/day, so not a direct nut-to-sugar ratio, but sap-to-sugar ratio is ~8:1.

Desiccated Coconut : 1,000 coconuts ≈ 100–140 kg desiccated Coconut
~15–25% recovery of nut weight.

5 Jurisdictional approach

The Jurisdictional is an alternative verification option the SCP members have decided upon and can be enabled.

Jurisdictional approache aim to address the root causes of sustainability issues by focusing on systemic changes within an entire region or jurisdictions (e.g., provinces, states). This differs from the more common farm-level verification approach, which can be challenging to scale and may not address broader landscape-level issues. By focusing on entire landscapes, jurisdictional approaches can address socio-economic and environmental issues more holistically. They can also help to protect critical ecosystems and ensure the long-term sustainability of natural resources.

An increasing number of governments, foundations, NGOs, and companies are looking to jurisdictional scale approaches as a way to help deliver sustainable commodities while improving the health and sustainability of rural and farm communities' economies. The most important and promising element of these initiatives is the opportunity to drive dialogue and convergence of common goals across business, government, and community stakeholders with a long term thinking in mind.

Where the conventional system is often very effective to ensure compliance at a given supply chain level, A jurisdictional approach is a method of assessing sustainability that focuses on entire regions or jurisdictions, rather than the supply chains of individual companies. It brings together local governments, producers, and other stakeholders to align on sustainable practices across a defined geographic area. This approach can address socio-economic and environmental issues more holistically. by verifying that sustainability standards are met on a jurisdictional/landscape/ island level scale. By assessing entire jurisdictions, it aims to drive systemic change and scale sustainable practices more effectively.

Applications proposing a jurisdictional approach will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis by the SCP Secretariat prior to any verification. Please submit your expression of intent to the SCP Secretariat at info@coconutpartnership.org for future consideration.

6 ANNEX: ISEAL comparison

This Annex gives an overview comparing the contents of the Sustainable Coconut Charter Assurance System with the ISEAL Code of Good Practice for Sustainability Systems. This document sets out good practices for a scheme owner to ensure a holistic and well governed sustainability system.

The ISEAL code consists of 8 topics. For the purposes of Sustainable Coconut Charter Assurance System, we will focus on chapter 7 of this code, which provides detailed guidance for assurance scheme development. Other requirements are more focused on the general governance and functioning of the scheme which is important, but beyond the development and management of the assurance scheme itself.

ISEAL requirement code	Description	Compliance
7.1 assurance model	Establishing the assurance structure includes deciding on roles and responsibilities in the assurance system, e.g., decisions about the role of the scheme, its decision-making bodies, and external partners such as oversight bodies and assurance providers.	Scheme scope is mentioned in chapter 1.4, intended impacts in the chapter 1.3. Value creation is mentioned in chapter 1.2 and 1.3. Types of claims are highlighted in chapters 2.4 and 3.9.
7.2 Assurance policies and procedures	The scope of the assurance system includes the scheme's sustainability standards and any other requirements applied to clients in support of scheme integrity, e.g., chain of custody requirements, etc.	Origin Standard (includes Chain-of-Custody req.) and Supply chain standard documents. Chapter 4. focuses on the CoC and models allowed. Oversight of assurance scheme is mentioned in Chapter 4, will be expanded in VB requirements. *Details to add*: legal contract models, document control system, change protocols for system updates and stakeholder inclusion.
7.3 Assessment methodology	The scheme owner can also choose to define the minimum evidence needed to assess criteria or requirements.	Chapters 2.3 and 3.5 highlight assessment frequency and intensity. The Origin Standard and Supply

		Chain Standard set out requirements for compliance. Chapters 3.5 and 2.3 outline more details about the verification process including content of reports and timelines. *Details to add*: knowledge and skill level of assessors (VB requirements will partly cover that), consideration of exceptions to the standard and data sources to be used.
7.4 Risk-based assessments.	Assurance providers and oversight bodies can implement their own risk assessments but the scheme owner is responsible for ensuring overall consistency of approach.	This standard is not based on a risk-based approach. Only risk elements are in Supply Chain standard when due diligence is carried out by the member, during the IMS implementation plan and during the verifier sampling.
7.5 Sampling protocol.	The scheme owner develops a sampling protocol for assurance providers and oversight bodies to use during assessments that includes, at a minimum, a description of when sampling is to be employed in the assessment, what influences the depth and intensity of sampling, and the type of sampling to be employed in each instance.	Chapter 3.7 sampling. For farmers a sampling strategy is highlighted, for other upstream actors all will need to be visited.
7.6 Decision-making protocol.	The scheme owner defines a decision-making protocol that enables consistent determination of conformity or performance status, the severity of non-conformities, and repercussions for each level of non-conformity. The scheme owner requires assurance providers and oversight bodies to implement this protocol.	This should be worked out in more detail in the VB requirements. This will also be informed during the pilot tests of the standard. In the standard documents practices are prioritized based on their scoring.
7.7 Performance insights	The scheme owner requires assurance providers to provide sufficient information to clients to enable those	The need to share a report with findings and the need to

	clients to derive insights about their performance. At a minimum, this includes detailed information about any non-conformities	underpin those findings is highlighted in 1.6.
7.8 Appeals mechanism.	The scheme owner requires assurance providers to implement a publicly available appeals procedure where clients can appeal their assurance decisions. It also requires oversight bodies to implement this for assurance providers.	The grievance or appeal procedure is mentioned in Chapter 2.3 3.3, and 3.5.
7.9 addressing non-conformities	The scheme owner defines consistent procedures for addressing non-conformities.	Chapters 2.3 and 3.5 outline the policy on NC closures.
7.10 Group assessment	Where the scheme owner allows for group assessments, it specifies requirements for assurance providers to consistently evaluate the effectiveness of a group's internal management system in identifying and resolving non-conformities within the group.	Chapter 3.2&3 highlights the management of groups under the SCC.
7.11 Assurance equivalence	Where the scheme owner accepts as equivalent or partially equivalent assurance results of another scheme, it defines the steps taken or the additional assurance activities or documentation required to have confidence in the results of the other scheme.	Not yet included. This should be conducted after the pilots of the standards have been completed.
7.12 Internal audits	The scheme owner requires that assurance providers and oversight bodies: 1. conduct annual internal audits of their performance relative to the requirements of the scheme 2. share the results of these internal audits and how any findings were addressed with the scheme owner	This needs to be outlined in the VB requirement document to streamline this.
7.13 Responsibility for outsourcing	The scheme owner requires that assurance providers and oversight bodies retain: 1. authority for assessment decisions	This needs to be outlined in the VB requirement document to streamline this.

	2. responsibility for ensuring the quality and integrity of all assurance activities they outsource to other parties	
7.14 Calibration of assurance personnel	The scheme owner requires assurance providers to implement calibration activities that support consistent interpretation of the standard by auditors and assurance personnel, including sub-contracted personnel. Where the scheme owner works with multiple oversight bodies, it requires a similar program of calibration for the auditors working for these bodies.	This needs to be outlined in the VB requirement document to streamline this.
7.15 Impartiality of interpreters and technical experts.	The scheme owner requires that interpreters or technical experts contracted by assurance providers or oversight bodies are independent of the client or assurance provider being assessed and do not have conflicts of interest. The scheme owner can allow for exceptions due to logistical constraints such as absence of alternative options, and in such cases, requires that exceptions are justified and recorded.	This needs to be outlined in the VB requirement document to streamline this.
7.16 Impartiality in assessment	Where the scheme owner allows assessors or other assurance personnel to provide information to clients about improving performance, the scheme owner documents the types of information that can be provided and the steps taken to avoid conflicts of interest.	Chapter 1.6.
7.17 Impartial decision making	The scheme owner requires that assurance providers and oversight bodies assign competent personnel other than the assessor or assessment team to review assessment findings and any other relevant information and make impartial decisions about the client or assurance provider's assurance status.	More elaborate procedures should be detailed in the VB requirements document.

7.18 Oversight mechanism	The scheme owner defines an approach to oversight of assurance activities and assurance providers, ensuring this is consistent with the scheme's assurance models (7.1).	They do need to be more detailed in the VB requirement document.
7.19 independence of oversight	The scheme owner ensures that its oversight mechanism, including any oversight bodies, is independent of the assurance providers being assessed.	They do need to be more detailed in the VB requirement document.
7.20 Authority for oversight	Mechanisms to ensure that issues raised are addressed can include public reporting of the findings of the oversight body and/or direct reporting of the findings to decision making bodies within the scheme.	Chapter 1.2 Openness.
7.21 Accreditation	Where the scheme owner relies on accreditation bodies for its oversight, it ensures that accreditation bodies conform to the current version of ISO/IEC 17011 in addition to the requirements in the ISEAL Code that apply to oversight bodies.	At moment no accreditation bodies are involved yet, as the SCC is in its infancy. This could change depending on the VB requirements document.
7.22 Proxy accreditation	Where the scheme owner accepts an assurance provider's accreditation against other similar standards as a proxy for the assurance provider's competence, it requires that these assurance providers carry out regular internal audits against the scheme specific scope and share the findings and any resulting actions with the scheme owner. The scheme owner takes additional measures to ensure these assurance providers meet its personnel competence requirements (2.4).	Not relevant yet at this stage.
7.23 Public information on assurance	The list of current and past clients and information a bout their assessments can alternatively be made publicly	Chapter 1.6.

	available by the assurance provider. For information about results of assessments, it is recommended that the scheme owner discloses additional information about the nature of non-conformities detected and the corrective actions planned or taken. Non-conformities that are mitigated before a decision on certification is taken do not need to be made public.	