

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Strategic Benchmark of the Sustainable Coconut Charter Assurance System (V1.1)

Date: 18/03/2026

Issued by: Sustainable Coconut Partnership (SCP)

Deadline for submission: April 17th 2026

Expected duration: 3–4 weeks

1. Background

The Sustainable Coconut Charter, developed by the Sustainable Coconut Partnership (SCP), serves as the sector-aligned sustainability framework tailored specifically to coconut supply chains.

The Charter was developed through multi-stakeholder consultation with more than 180 organizations globally and is designed to:

- Harmonize buyer expectations, improve transparency across fragmented supply chains, provide a stepwise, scalable assurance pathway, enable pre-competitive collaboration, support long-term responsible rejuvenation of the coconut sector

The SCC Assurance System differs in design philosophy from many existing agricultural certification schemes. It emphasizes:

- Coconut-specific material risk prioritization, progressive, stepwise improvement, accessibility for smallholder-dominated origins, market-adapted deployability

In 2025, SCP commissioned a standards comparison primarily aimed at supporting internal refinement of the Charter in its version 1.0. Since then, a version 1.1 has been developed and as SCP moves from framework development toward scaling and market deployment, a new benchmark on the version 1.1 is required, one that supports strategic positioning within the sustainability ecosystem.

2. Objective of the Assignment

The objective of this consultancy is to conduct a **strategic and analytical benchmark** of the Sustainable Coconut Charter Assurance System (V1.1) against selected major sustainability standards relevant to coconut markets.

The purpose is not to rank standards by theoretical comprehensiveness.

The purpose is to assess:

- Coconut risk relevance (vs areas of the existing materiality analysis of the sector)
- Assurance model design and scalability
- Design choice and divergence areas

This benchmark must support stakeholders in clearly articulating its positioning sustainability standards within the broader offering landscape and also be used in discussion related to benchmark and equivalences instances like ISEAL or Accountability Framework.

3. Standards for Comparison

The benchmark will compare the SCC Assurance System against:

1. Organic standard (IFOAM-aligned or EU Organic)
2. Rainforest Alliance Certification Standard
3. Fairtrade International Standard
4. Regenerative Organic Certified

The analysis should recognize differences in intent, area of focus, scope, philosophy, governance models, piloting and deployment objectives for the coconut sector based on publicly available information.

The comparison should reflect how effectively each system addresses material risks specific to coconut supply chains. The benchmark should analyse the growth of each certification models over the year and offer an objective look at each system's growth perspectives in current market context.

4. Scope of Work

The selected consultant/team will:

4.1 Analyse the SCC Assurance System

- Review scope, criteria, material risk coverage
- Understand design logic (stepwise, voluntary, progressive elements)
- Assess verification mechanisms and scalability logic

4.2 Analyse other Standards

- Review scope and criteria
- Assess assurance model design
- Identify structural design philosophy

4.3 Conduct Comparative Assessment

The analysis must include:

- Thematic comparison tables (spider web charts)
- Coconut material risk mapping and how standards respond to them
- Assurance structure comparison (progressive, pass/fail, NC's and mandatory criteria)
- Expectation levels for each smallholder farmers, cooperatives/traders

5. Analytical Framework Requirements

(Mandatory)

The benchmark must apply a multidimensional assessment framework structured around four core dimensions:

A. Coconut Risk Relevance (Weight: 30%)

Assessment of how effectively each system addresses material risks specific to coconut supply chains...

B. Assurance Model Design & Scalability (Weight: 30%)

Assessment of accessibility barriers, stepwise compliance, cost realism, deployability in early-stage traceability environments, improvement pathways...

C. Depth & Safeguards (Weight: 20%)

Assessment of safeguards on critical issues such as Child labor, Forced labor, Deforestation
Depth must be evaluated proportionally to sector relevance.

C. Focus on Responsible Rejuvenation/Regenerative practices (Weight: 20%)

Qualitative assessment of how each standard responds to the sector's priority of responsible rejuvenation and their capacity to mobilize investments towards fixing systemic issues...

6. Safeguards Against Reductive Ranking and Expert Oversight

The consultant must adhere to the following:

1. No single aggregate score may be produced without narrative explanation.
2. No "strongest to weakest" ranking tables may be used as proxies for robustness.
3. No traffic-light simplifications without narrative explanation.

The final report must include a boxed interpretative statement clarifying how standards respond to coconut sector issues of today.

This benchmark does not rank standards by theoretical comprehensiveness. It assesses design logic, coconut risk relevance, scalability, and market fitness. Differences identified reflect distinct governance models and deployment strategies rather than absolute strength or weakness.

Responsible Use of AI and Expert Oversight

The consultant may use digital research tools, including AI-assisted tools, as supportive instruments for information processing. However:

- All analytical judgments, interpretations, scoring decisions, and positioning conclusions must be based on expert review and professional expertise.
- The consultant remains fully responsible for the accuracy, originality, and analytical integrity of all deliverables.
- Deliverables must reflect expert reasoning, contextual understanding, and sector-specific insight that cannot be derived solely from automated content generation.

SCP reserves the right to:

- Request clarification on methodology and analytical reasoning,
- Seek evidence of validation of findings
- Reject deliverables that rely excessively on AI, generic, template-based, or non-contextual analysis.

The consultant shall confirm in writing that:

1. The work is original and expert-reviewed,
2. Any AI-assisted tools were used only as supportive instruments
3. No confidential SCP materials were uploaded into public AI systems without prior authorization

7. Deliverables

1. Inception Note

- Methodology, Analytical framework, Work plan, Weighting justification

2. Draft Benchmark Report

3. Final Benchmark Report

- Executive summary (strategic and readable), Detailed annexes, Interpretation safeguards section, Clear articulation of complementarity

4. One-Page Public Positioning Narrative

A publication-ready document written in accessible language, structured as follows:

- Why this benchmark matters, what makes coconut supply chains distinct, what the benchmark shows, How sustainability standards contribute to responsible rejuvenation

5. Virtual Presentation to SCP Stakeholders & presentation at RT 2026 Annual Conference

8. Consultant/Team Requirements

Proposals must demonstrate a team combining:

- Recognized expertise in coconut supply chains (years of experience in the sector, roles occupied...)
- Recognized expertise in agricultural sustainability standards
- Experience in certification benchmarking or assurance system analysis (audits, benchmarks, design...)
- Knowledge of perennial smallholder crop systems

Multidisciplinary teams are an option.

9. Timeline

Expected duration: 3–4 weeks from contract signature. Indicative milestones:

- Week 1: Inception & methodology validation
- Week 2–3: Draft report
- Week 3–4: Final report & presentation

10. Budget

Available consultancy budget: USD 8,000.

Proposals must include:

- Detailed budget breakdown, Timeline

11. Submission Requirements

Interested consultants/teams must submit:

1. Technical proposal
2. Description of methodology
3. CVs of consultant/key experts
4. Budget proposal
5. Sample of similar previous work



Call For Proposal
Strategic Benchmark
18/03/2026

Submissions to: info@coconutpartnership.org

Subject line: **Proposal – Sustainable Coconut Standards Strategic Benchmark**

Deadline: **April 3rd 2026**