

## **GCP RegenCoffee FAQ – Draft Updated June 09<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

### **1. Why is the Global Coffee Platform (GCP) creating a guidance on RegenCoffee, and what is its role in advancing this approach within the coffee sector?**

**A:** Regenerative agriculture in the coffee sector is not new; several GCP Members, partners and other sector stakeholders have already been incorporating regenerative agriculture into their work. There is a multitude of definitions, approaches and frameworks within the coffee sector and beyond. However, an important challenge to scaling up these efforts is that there is currently no common or legal definition of regenerative agriculture or agreement on what it concretely means in the coffee sector. While there's an increasing interest in the coffee sector of regenerative agriculture as a climate adaptation strategy. There is also the concern of greenwashing without clear definitions. GCP has played a key role in the past to align the understanding of what constitutes producing coffee “sustainably” based on developing the Coffee Sustainability Reference Code (Coffee SR Code). GCP, therefore, seeks to similarly align understanding by consolidating the principles of regenerative agriculture to develop a clear guidance document for RegenCoffee to incorporate these practices into coffee farming, creating a resilient supply base with positive outcomes for people and the planet.

### **2. Is there a difference between Regenerative Agriculture and RegenCoffee?**

**A:** Essentially, “RegenCoffee” is the name GCP has created for the workstream of Regenerative Agriculture for Coffee. Both of them are the same topic, but GCP’s RegenCoffee Guidance is only focused on coffee production and on-farm processing (although RegenCoffee was developed through literature and desk research including a comprehensive scanning of existing regenerative agriculture frameworks and tools, and not all of them were necessarily specific for coffee). The goal of this guidance (phase 1 of the overall workstream) is to provide the global coffee sector with a foundational guide containing the definition, objectives, principles and expected outcomes of regenerative agriculture for coffee.

### **3. How does GCP address the risk of fragmentation in RegenCoffee definitions across different initiatives?**

**A:** GCP acknowledges the risk that various initiatives may continue to define regenerative agriculture (for coffee) differently, leading to fragmentation. This is precisely why the RegenCoffee Guidance focuses on alignment and collaboration. Rather than creating a standalone or proprietary definition, GCP is working with stakeholders across the sector (including certification schemes, technical experts, national bodies, and global initiatives) to establish a common language and shared understanding, which has been built from reviewing existing initiatives.

### **4. How does the RegenCoffee Guidance relate to national standards and other existing initiatives in coffee systems?**

**A:** The RegenCoffee Guidance recognizes and values the efforts of national institutions and initiatives in regenerative agriculture practices in coffee systems. This Guidance is not meant to compete or replace these, but to create alignment and a common language across regions and initiatives. Some of these frameworks were

reviewed and used to build this work and are referenced in *Annex 2* of the RegenCoffee Guidance. These are not exhaustive but illustrate the diversity approaches already in use. As outlined in the *Challenges and Ways Forward* section, GCP will continue engaging with national and international partners to encourage collaboration, learning, and continuous improvement within and beyond the coffee sector.

## 5. Where can I find examples of regenerative agriculture projects or initiatives, including their challenges and outcomes?

**A:** The RegenCoffee Guidance is based on existing research that includes examples of projects, case studies, and inventories of practices. This can be found in *Annex 2*. These resources provide valuable information for further reading and references for stakeholders and partners interested in similar initiatives.

## 6. How does regenerative agriculture differ from sustainable agriculture?

**A:** Regenerative agriculture and sustainable agriculture are closely related and complementary. Sustainable coffee production focuses on maintaining (sustaining) productive systems, while regenerative agriculture emphasizes actively **improving** the health of natural resources such as soil, water, and biodiversity and building resilience in ecosystems and farmer livelihoods to ensure productive farming systems. GCP views **regenerative outcomes** as the result of implementing **sustainable practices**. The RegenCoffee Guidance therefore avoids labeling any practice as inherently “regenerative,” because its impact depends on context and implementation. Ultimately, RegenCoffee builds on the foundation of sustainable agriculture by aiming for continuous improvement and long-term viability of coffee farming. For more details, see the RegenCoffee Guidance’s section on *Scope*.

## 7. Have certification schemes and second party sustainability programs been involved in the development of the RegenCoffee Guidance?

**A:** Yes, sustainability schemes are represented on the standing Technical Committee, as well as the Advisory Task Force that helped steer this work (all members of both can be found in *Annex 1*). Furthermore, the public consultation was open to all actors in the coffee sector, and several certification schemes provided input. While the RegenCoffee Guidance is not intended to be a certification scheme, it was developed to align with existing standards and programs. Certification schemes and other sustainability initiatives can use the guidance to strengthen or enhance their approaches, draw from aligned practices and indicators, and contribute to greater coherence across the sector.

## 8. This RegenCoffee Guidance is referred to as Phase 1 of a four-phased approach. What are the other anticipated phases?

**A:** The four phases include:

- **Phase 1: Aligning the principles and practices of regenerative agriculture in coffee cultivation: RegenCoffee, December 2024 – June 2025. Global level.**
- Phase 2: Informing the next revision of the [Coffee SR Code](#), aiming to integrate and strengthen relevant sustainability principles and practices at the global level in the 2026 update.

- Phase 3: Define common coffee farm archetypes with contextualized implementation plans and metrics at the national level.
- Phase 4: Field testing, and scaling through selected GCP Collective Action Plans.

## 9. How does the RegenCoffee Guidance relate to the Coffee Sustainability Reference Code (Coffee SR Code)?

**A:** The RegenCoffee Guidance builds on and complements the [Coffee SR Code](#). The practices in the current version of the Coffee SR Code specifically related to soil, water and biodiversity have evidence-based links to regenerative outcomes essential for sustainable coffee production. These connections are highlighted in the *RegenCoffee Framework* section of the Guidance. The focus for this RegenCoffee Guidance is on linking evidence-based practices to measurable outcomes, reinforcing the value of what is already being implemented through the Coffee SR Code and other sustainability schemes. This alignment will be further strengthened in the next revision of the Coffee SR Code, planned for 2026 (e.g. Phase 2 from question 8).

## 10. How does the RegenCoffee Guidance relate to GCP Collective Action Plans for Farmer Prosperity?

**A:** As discussed in question 8, a step wise four phased approach will bring all stakeholders along from global alignment on definitions and concepts of RegenCoffee to field testing, e.g. via integration into GCP Collective Action Plans in specific countries and contexts. This is anticipated via:

**Phase 3**, which will focus on national level convening of the coffee sector to align on what constitutes RegenCoffee for their context across local differences and farm archetypes (coffee variety, farm size, etc.). It will assess what evidence already exists and determine what further research may be needed to assess which practices are cost effective, bring the most impact and understand potential trade-offs. The anticipated outputs are contextualized transition/implementation plans and metrics for these various coffee farm archetypes.

**Phase 4**, which will begin joint field testing of the practices determined in phase 3, and monitoring their progress. This will include testing the feasibility and relevance of the selected indicators in different contexts, before scaling through selected GCP Collective Action Plans.

## 11. Does the RegenCoffee Guidance offer a comprehensive list of outcomes and practices that are considered “Regenerative”?

**A:** The Guidance proposes harmonized definitions of what outcomes, practices and associated indicators for each Core Impact Area. These are not meant to be prescriptive nor exhaustive but intended to establish a **common language** across the sector. This standardization facilitates consistency, sharing and learning. They should always be considered within a holistic approach that looks at the legal frameworks, socio-economic and environmental outcomes and practices. Outcomes should also be relevant to the context. For more information see the section *What Counts* in the RegenCoffee Guidance.

## 12. How does the RegenCoffee Guidance approach the implementation and measurement of practices across different contexts?

**A:** The approach recognizes that RegenCoffee must be context-specific, reflecting local realities, farmer priorities, and environmental conditions. Rather than prescribing a fixed checklist of practices, the RegenCoffee Guidance proposes a flexible approach that starts with a set of common global regenerative outcomes, aligned with other frameworks and reporting standards. These are linked to a diverse set of potential practices based on scientific research. Starting with a baseline assessment, farmers and stakeholders should develop transition pathways and select practices based on their unique needs, costs/benefits and risk levels. This non-prescriptive model supports localized decision-making and allows for meaningful stakeholder engagement and ownership to collectively define what's appropriate for their context (anticipated in Phase 3 of GCP's RegenCoffee workstream – see questions 8 and 10 for more information).

### **13. How does GCP ensure that the RegenCoffee Guidance drives real improvement and avoids greenwashing or undermining existing sustainability schemes?**

**A:** GCP is committed to ensuring that RegenCoffee can lead to credible and measurable improvements. Rather than labeling individual actions as “regenerative practices,” the RegenCoffee Guidance focuses on practices that aim to achieve regenerative **outcomes**, recognizing that the effectiveness of these practices depends on context and conditions. The approach emphasizes evidence-based decision-making and outcome verification, not unchecked claims. By aligning with credible systems and encouraging transparent, context-specific implementation, GCP helps safeguard the integrity of the sustainability agenda and avoid undermining existing credible sustainability schemes.

### **14. What might be considered an achievement against the regenerative outcomes in the RegenCoffee Guidance?**

**A:** Any achievement against the regenerative outcomes in the RegenCoffee Guidance will be context-specific and must be assessed relative to baseline conditions, such as the existing state of soil, water resources, and ecosystem health, as well as country and farm-level realities. The *What Counts* section of the RegenCoffee Guidance highlights this context-based approach, emphasizing that regeneration should be evaluated through meaningful, evidence-based improvements over time rather than by applying universal targets. This ensures that progress remains credible and locally relevant. Additionally, Phase 3 will further explore areas where collective action is needed to increase efficiency and share the costs of monitoring, supporting the scalability and feasibility of regenerative efforts (see questions 8 and 10).

### **15. How are the specific agronomic aspects of each country reflected in the RegenCoffee Guidance?**

**A:** The RegenCoffee Guidance emphasizes the need to contextualize the outcomes and practices based on the reality of each producing country. This should be done in consultation with the producers/farmers and other key stakeholders, including national coffee boards. Technical issues and practices (e.g. rehabilitation, replanting, Agroforestry, varieties and other context specific topics) should be considered in the discussions in each country. It is important to keep in mind that this guidance does not attempt to define specific thresholds for regenerative outcomes. These will depend on the baseline of the condition of the soil, water, country context, local context and

the farmer's starting point, and will then require subsequent regular measurement for positive change. Practices selected should have clear targets and monitoring/reporting on activities.

**16. Is GCP creating, as a derivable, a technical reference on how to measure Outcomes, KPIs and Metrics?**

**A:** No, instead GCP leverages existing tools including technical references. The RegenCoffee Guidance is based on existing regenerative agriculture frameworks and tools—particularly those applicable to coffee (see Annex 2). Many of these frameworks already include specific methodologies for measuring outcomes, KPIs, and practice-based indicators. These methodologies cover technical references such as indicator selection, data collection techniques including sampling, protocols, etc. Thus, it is always recommended to use the existing technical references developed by the experts. GCP recognizes that not all of these references are easily accessible, particularly for farmers and local implementors, who may not be aware of these resources. Thus, in the short term the focus for GCP will be to help make the existing references more findable and accessible.

**17. Why does RegenCoffee focus primarily on the farm level, and how are broader issues, like landscape and ecosystems, social issues including human rights, gender, youth and communities considered?**

**A:** The RegenCoffee Guidance's focus has been designed to be farmer-centric, with the primary scope set at the farm level. This decision was made to establish a clear and practical common language around regenerative agriculture in coffee. However, GCP fully recognizes that many farm-level practices can contribute to broader landscape and ecosystem outcomes. On social issues, working conditions, and human rights, the RegenCoffee Guidance builds on existing sustainability frameworks, including the Coffee SR Code, which already integrates these aspects.

**18. Why is “Resilient Farmer livelihoods” listed as a separate impact area rather than integrated across all RegenCoffee activities?**

**A:** While farmer livelihoods are deeply interconnected with all regenerative activities, the RegenCoffee Guidance intentionally highlights them as a separate impact area to emphasize their critical importance. This approach allows for a clear definition of what resilient livelihoods mean, an exploration of the specific challenges farmers face, and a demonstration of how regenerative outcomes—like healthier soils, better water management, and biodiversity—contribute directly to economic resilience. By doing so, the framework maintains its farmer-centric approach by acknowledging that the long-term success of regenerative agriculture depends on farmers' economic viability and wellbeing, as foundational for achieving lasting impact.

**19. How are climate and carbon footprint reflected in the RegenCoffee Guidance?**

**A:** Climate adaptation, mitigation and resilience and carbon footprint are integrated as cross-cutting elements of the RegenCoffee Guidance rather than being treated as a separate impact area. The framework is designed to keep

a farmer-centric approach, and while many farm-level practices can contribute to carbon storage and carbon footprint reduction goals (same as landscape, ecosystems and social issues), these are generally more of interest to other actors in the supply chain for reporting and compliance purposes. Many of the practices identified (such as improving soil health, enhancing organic matter, reducing synthetic inputs, and increasing tree cover) can contribute to climate goals such as reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and increasing carbon sequestration. These climate-related impacts are reflected in the Guidance's indicators and narrative, ensuring that the climate mitigation potential of regenerative approaches is embedded across multiple outcomes, including soil, water, biodiversity, and livelihoods.

## **20. Why doesn't the RegenCoffee Guidance include carbon monitoring or broader climate reporting requirements?**

**A:** The RegenCoffee Guidance focuses on four core impact areas: soil, biodiversity, water and farmer livelihoods. These areas were identified as priority entry points for regenerative practices in coffee production. While GCP recognizes the relevance of carbon storage and emissions data, especially in the context of climate change, broader carbon monitoring and supply chain-level climate reporting fall outside the current scope of this farmer-centric Guidance, as such data is primarily geared toward supply chain actors rather than on-farm implementation. Collecting technical data (whether related to carbon, water quality (e.g. COD or BOD), or biodiversity) requires time, capacity, and resources. To avoid placing additional burdens on farmers at this stage, the framework prioritizes practical, actionable practices that deliver measurable benefits aligned with the core impact areas. Climate-related benefits, including carbon sequestration, are not treated as a standalone pillar but are integrated across the framework as cross-cutting themes. Each impact area of the RegenCoffee Guidance includes elements relevant to climate adaptation, mitigation, and resilience, reflected in the KPIs and Metrics; as well as in the Outcomes, such as those presented in Table 2, which addresses the common core outcomes and KPIs, including the climate mitigation outcomes.

## **21. Why doesn't GCP standardize a specific approach to measuring carbon footprint?**

**A:** GCP aims to support alignment with credible, sector-wide initiatives rather than duplicating efforts. Two notable initiatives leading the development of consistent methodologies for carbon footprint measurement in coffee are the Cool Farm Coffee Working Group, which promotes shared guidance through the Cool Farm Tool (CFT); and the 4C Carbon Footprint Add-On, including its robust methodology and participation in the Latin America Coffee Carbon Footprint Baseline project. By recognizing and supporting such collaborative efforts, GCP contributes to a harmonized approach across the coffee sector while ensuring flexibility for diverse production contexts and avoiding additional complexity for producers.

## **22. Why does the RegenCoffee Guidance not include a pillar on Crop Resilience?**

**A:** While the RegenCoffee Guidance does not currently include a dedicated core impact area on Crop Resilience which is supported by practices around replanting, rehabilitation and varieties, crop resilience is recognized as critical for the long-term sustainability of coffee production. It is acknowledged as an important outcome in several other frameworks; for example, the Rainforest Alliance's Regenerative Coffee Scorecard explicitly highlights it, and

it is also one of the eleven key practice areas in the CIAT Coffee Guide (see Section 3.4.1 and Figure 3.5 on page 49). Although not treated as a standalone outcome area in RegenCoffee, elements related to crop resilience—such as productivity, efficient resource use, and climate adaptation—are indirectly addressed through broader outcomes like improved livelihoods and climate resilience. Importantly, this area is on GCP’s radar for future consideration. Crop resilience and the practices leading to this outcome including replanting and rehabilitation practices, will be considered as part of the 2026 revision of the Coffee Sustainability Reference Code, in alignment with other leading sustainability frameworks.

### **23. How can RegenCoffee contribute to food security and sustainable development?**

**A:** RegenCoffee can potentially contribute to food security and support sustainable development by improving soil health, increasing farm resilience, and promoting diversified income sources for farming families. These benefits are reflected in the Farmer Livelihoods impact area of the RegenCoffee Guidance, which includes indicators related to income diversification and economic stability. By restoring natural resources and supporting more resilient farming systems, regenerative outcomes contribute not only to sustainable coffee production but also to broader development goals. For more details, see the RegenCoffee Guidance’s section on *Core Impact Areas*.

### **24. What is the position for the RegenCoffee Guidance on Transition Costs from Conventional to Regenerative?**

**A:** The RegenCoffee Guidance acknowledges that one of the biggest challenges identified is the costs and support needed for the transition from conventional to sustainable to regenerative farming. How do we ensure that the long-term benefits of RegenCoffee are accessible to all farmers, particularly smallholders? Long-term sustainability of ecosystems is essential to safeguard farmer productivity and profitability. It is thus a key priority to ensure that coffee producers have the support they need to adopt practices that make their production systems more resilient. It is, therefore, essential for governments, business and financial institutions to support long-term investments in the transition for shared responsibility in developing and implementing transition pathways. By bringing companies and organizations together in pre-competitive collaboration, GCP and their stakeholders are able to concentrate efforts on the most critical issues to the coffee sector and coffee-growing communities.