

## GLOBAL COFFEE PLATFORM

### Coffee SR Code & Equivalence Mechanism Review – Project Description

#### 1. Objective and Justification (Why)

The coffee sector faces increasing sustainability challenges, including economic viability of coffee farming, climate change, human rights due diligence requirements, price volatility, social inequities, regulatory changes, and evolving consumer expectations. One of the keys for the coffee sector to address these challenges and to drive sustainability and farmer prosperity is a common framework for collective action and shared responsibility. In this context, the Coffee Sustainability Reference Code (Coffee SR Code) and the Equivalence Mechanism (EM) are essential tools to guide and align the sector on baseline sustainability practices in coffee production.

In line with the ISEAL Code of Good Practice, continuous improvement and GCP's 2030 Goal, GCP is undertaking a planned review in 2026 to ensure they remain credible, future-proof, and aligned with emerging sector priorities, including regenerative agriculture, new regulation frameworks (as EUDR), and strengthened due diligence expectations.

This review aims to ensure that the Coffee SR Code and EM remain fit for purpose, technically robust, and aligned with regulatory and market trends. It includes:

- Ensuring the Code reflects updated baseline social, environmental, and economic sustainability practices for coffee production and primary processing.
- Strengthening linkages to measurable sector outcomes and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- Ensuring alignment with new global frameworks and regulatory expectations (e.g., EU Deforestation Regulation, CSDDD).
- Ensuring the Equivalence Mechanism remains a clear, credible, and user-friendly process for recognizing sustainability schemes, integrating findings from the Monitoring Log and due diligence checking on current recognized schemes.

By updating these tools, GCP aims to reinforce its leadership role in sector alignment and support producers, companies, and sustainability schemes in delivering measurable, credible progress to advance farmers' economic prosperity, social well-being, and the conservation of nature.

#### 2. Scope (What)

The review covers the following components:

- a. Coffee Sustainability Reference Code (Coffee SR Code):
  - Full review of principles, criteria, and guidance for green coffee production and primary processing.
  - Review of current Critical Practices to ensure relevance, clarity, and alignment with regulatory and market expectations.
  - Integration of emerging topics from the changing landscape (e.g., regenerative agriculture, EUDR).
- b. Equivalence Mechanism (EM):
  - Review of operational requirements to determine their relevance and effectiveness.
  - Revision of recognition criteria, processes, and alignment requirements for sustainability schemes.
  - Analytical foundation for EM implementation options and future roadmap.
- c. Integration with broader sector tools
  - Alignment with the GCP Coffee Sustainability Purchases Report and sector outcome indicators.
  - Ensuring both the Coffee SR Code and EM remain practical and usable for smallholder farmers, producers, producer organizations, traders, roasters and retailers, financing/insurance sectors.
  - Informing implementation pathways for recognized schemes and other users.

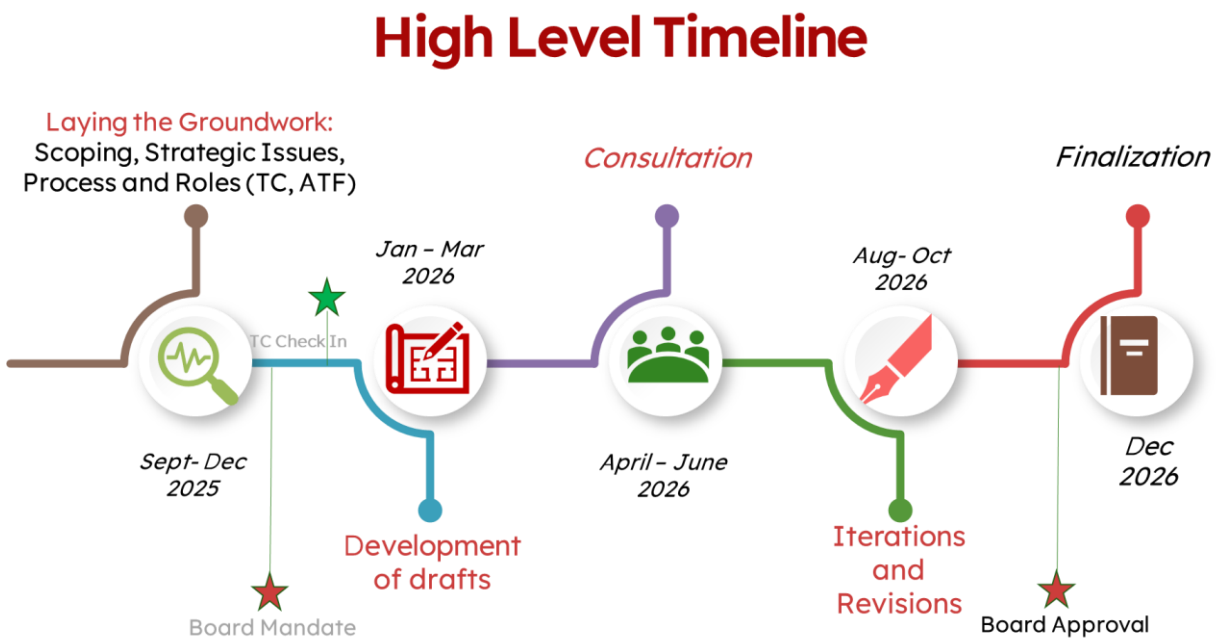
### **3. The Process (How)**

The review will follow a structured, consultative approach, incorporating multiple perspectives and ensuring broad ownership:

- a. Baseline assessment and data gathering (QIV 2025)
  - Landscape analysis of regulatory trends, sector expectations, and reference frameworks.
  - Survey and interviews with recognized schemes and sector actors to capture strengths, challenges, and opportunities.
  - Compilation of lessons learned from implementation of the Coffee SR Code and EM, including Monitoring Log findings.
- b. White Paper synthesis (QI 2026)
  - Summarizes survey and interview findings, analytical insights, and key questions for revision.
  - Serves as a foundation for discussions with the Technical Committee (TC) and Advisory Task Force (ATF).

- c. Drafting and consultation (QI- QIII 2026)
- TC develops draft revisions based on analysis, technical input, and alignment needs.
  - ATF provides expanded perspectives from downstream actors and diverse geographies.
  - Member consultation, complemented by targeted virtual and/or in-country workshops.
  - Public consultation open to the wider coffee community
- d. Finalization and approval (QIV 2026)
- TC submits the final revised Coffee SR Code and EM operational requirements to the GCP Board.
  - Position paper on EM implementation and roadmap. Options, including business models and recommendations, with transition scenarios.

## Timeline



## 4. Opportunities for Stakeholders Engagement

Stakeholder engagement remains inclusive and multi-layered, ensuring diverse insights and legitimacy:

- Producers and cooperatives across all key producing countries.
- Downstream companies, including traders, roasters, and retailers.
- Sustainability schemes recognized under the Coffee SR Code.
- Civil Society, technical experts, and reference framework specialists.

- Country Platforms to ensure local relevance.

Engagement opportunities will include surveys, interviews, webinars, TC/ATF workshops and member consultation, to ensure regional relevance and accessibility.

## 5. Governance and roles (Who)

- GCP Board: Mandate and final approval of the revised Coffee SR Code, EM operational requirements, and the EM implementation roadmap.
- Technical Committee (TC): Leads technical review, drafts revisions, and prepares recommendations for the Board.
- Advisory Task Force (ATF): Ensures diverse perspectives and high-level sector expertise in support of TC decision-making.
- GCP Secretariat: Manages overall coordination, ensures process integrity, supports stakeholder engagement, and leads communication.

The [composition of TC and ATF](#) ensures global, multi-stakeholder representation, credibility, and strong technical foundations.

## 7. Risks and Mitigation

Risk	Mitigation
Complexity and potential delayed consensus	TC supported by ATF; phased decision-making; clear guidance and timelines
Limited participation or consultation fatigue	Virtual tools, targeted in-country workshops (TBC), alignment with existing platforms
Pressure to expand scope beyond baseline sustainability	Clear communication of project scope.
Regulatory or market changes mid-process	Integrate legal monitoring and agile adjustments into analytical foundations

## 8. Contact

For questions or comments regarding the review:

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