

## GLOBAL COFFEE PLATFORM

### Summary of Proposed Changes

#### Coffee Sustainability Reference Code and Equivalence Mechanism Review

##### 1. Introduction

This document summarizes the proposed changes to the Coffee Sustainability Reference Code (Coffee SR Code) Requirements and the Equivalence Mechanism (EM) Operational Criteria, as part of the 2026 review process. It is designed to support stakeholders in understanding the **main** proposed changes, identifying areas of interest for feedback and navigating the full consultation draft. Stakeholders can use the **Excel file** to see **ALL** requirements with changes side by side.

Overall, the Coffee SR Code and Equivalence Mechanism requirements remain fit for purpose, and no major structural changes are proposed. This conclusion is based on an extensive assessment process, including analysis of the implementation across the current GCP 33 recognized schemes, as well as the monitoring logs, surveys (from recognized schemes, members, the Technical Committee and the Advisory Task Force), interviews with TC/ATF members, and workshops with partners such as ITC and the TC/ATF. The proposed updates primarily aim to improve clarity and usability and provide additional guidance for consistency, drawing on practical learnings from the implementation of the Equivalence Mechanism and stakeholder input. Changes include editorial and non-substantive changes that improve the clarity and intent of requirements.

While **Guidance is not normative and not subject to public consultation**, learnings and stakeholder inputs have been reflected in the development and strengthening of Guidance across the document. Guidance has been added where it did not previously exist and expanded to improve clarity and usability. The Guidance aims to support consistent interpretation and provide clearer expectations for implementation, including addressing common challenges and questions identified during implementation. It also includes specific considerations for Scheme Owners (SOs) where relevant.

**NOTE:** If a requirement is not included in this summary, it means that **no change** is proposed to the requirement. Guidance is included to help stakeholders understand the expectations of the requirement but is not normative and is **NOT** part of public consultation.

##### 2. Overview of Changes

###### Key Themes of the Revision

Across both the Coffee SR Code and the EM, the proposed changes focus on simplifying and restructuring requirements to improve clarity, usability, and coherence. This includes streamlining wording, removing redundancies, and consolidating or reorganizing requirements to reduce overlap and improve the overall structure of the framework.

Several of the changes are minor edits including moving examples and explanatory elements (e.g. “for example” or illustrative practices) from requirements into Guidance to keep requirements concise and non-prescriptive. In several other cases, requirements have been re-worded to improve clarity; for instance, shifting from descriptive or outcome-based phrasing to clearer, action-oriented expectations, or aligning terminology across sections. Efforts have also been made to reduce duplication, improve alignment across related requirements, and strengthen the internal consistency of the framework.

### Coffee SR Code

The total number of requirements remains unchanged (93), with adjustments within each dimension, across all three pillars. The economic dimension one new requirement on risk, bringing together current risk elements across all dimensions under one management requirement. The social dimension is reduced to 29 requirements following the merging of one requirement. The environmental dimension remains at 39 requirements, with two new requirements introduced and two removed as they were merged into others. In total, **41 adjustments are proposed across the Code, distributed as 9 in economic, 12 in social, and 20 in environmental.** No new critical requirements are introduced, and the overall set of critical requirements remains basically unchanged, with only minor adjustments to improve clarity and usability (e.g. Adjustment in 1.5.1 for better alignment with new 1.5. requirement; and moving part of the text to guidance in some requirements of the Social Dimension).

Coffee SR Code Requirements		
Dimension	Current Requirements	Proposed Requirements
Economic	24	25
Social	30	29
Environmental	39	39
<b>Total</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>93</b>

In addition to requirement-level updates, a limited number of targeted structural adjustments have been made at the level of Outcomes and Expected Results to improve clarity, coherence, and consistency across the Coffee SR Code. These changes focus on

refining terminology, better reflecting the scope of practices (e.g. moving from pesticides and other inputs to "agrochemicals"), and reorganizing content to improve logical flow and usability. In some cases, Outcomes have been split to better distinguish thematic areas (e.g. soil and water), and Expected Results have been refined to clarify intent and strengthen alignment with updated requirements.

On pesticide-related requirements: The Pesticides Lists (Prohibited and Phase-out) are being reviewed and updated through a dedicated process running in parallel to the Coffee SR Code revision. As a result, updated lists (including substances and any associated timelines, such as 2026 and 2023 phase-out deadlines) may be published separately and not necessarily at the same time as the updated Code. Stakeholders should refer to the most recent version of the lists once available.

### Operational Requirements EM

There are more substantive proposed changes to the operational requirements. This is based on learnings from 3 years of implementation across more than 30 schemes along with alignment with emerging legislation and market expectations of minimum requirements. This includes more emphasis on governance, transparency and data. All requirements were aligned with international frameworks including ISO standards and ISEAL Code. The current version of the EM includes 27 requirements:

EM Operational Requirements		
Section	Current Requirements	Proposed Requirements
Governance	3	5
Standard-Setting	4	4
Assurance	10	10
Data	6	7
Claims	4	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>30</b>

The proposal includes 30 requirements and introduces some structural changes for coherence and consistency across topics. The Governance section includes three new additions and one removal. The standard-setting section remains unchanged with 4 requirements. The assurance section remains at 10 requirements but includes two new requirements, one removal (merged), and one requirement repositioned to the claims section. The data section includes one new requirement. The claims section maintains 4 requirements, with one new requirement, one repositioned from assurance, and two removals.

### 3. Summary Detail of Changes Tables

#### Legend

The following tables use three categories to describe the type of change:

- NEW (**Green**): A requirement that has been newly introduced in the proposed version.
- UPDATED (**Yellow**): An existing requirement that has been modified in content, scope, or wording. The majority of these changes are non-substantive editorial improvements to enhance clarity and consistency.
- REMOVED (**Blue**): A requirement that has been removed. In most cases, content has been either merged into another requirement or repositioned elsewhere in the framework to improve coherence and reduce duplication.

Changes at Outcome or Expected Result Level				
Area	Where	Previous	Updated	Rationale
Social	Expected Result 5.4	5.4 Workers have the right of collective bargaining	5.4 Workers have the right of <b>consultation and negotiation</b> (collective bargaining)	Broadens the concept to reflect different forms of worker representation across contexts
Environmental	Outcome 9	Sound pest and weed management practices that minimise pesticide use and prevent health and environmental harm.	Sound <b>agrochemicals</b> management practices that <b>optimise</b> use and prevent health and environmental harm	Expands scope from pesticides to all agrochemicals and shifts focus from minimization to optimized use
Environmental	Expected Result 9.1	9.1 Integrated pest, weed and disease management strategies are adopted and use of pesticides is minimized and recorded.	<b>9.1. Integrated Pest Management (IPM)</b> strategies are adopted, and pesticide <b>use is</b> minimised, <b>monitored</b> , and recorded <b>to support IPM implementation.</b>	Focus on IPM overarching Strengthens link between monitoring and decision-making

Changes at Outcome or Expected Result Level				
Area	Where	Previous	Updated	Rationale
Environmental	Expected Result	9.2. Pesticides and other hazardous chemicals are stored, applied and disposed of, in the least hazardous manner for human health and the environment.	9.2. Agrochemicals are stored, applied and disposed in a manner that minimises risks for human health and the environment.	Aligns terminology and broadens scope
Environmental	Outcome 10	10. Soil quality and water sources are maintained or improved	Split into: 10 Increased Soil health and fertility, 1X Sustainable water management	Improves clarity by separating soil and water as distinct thematic areas with cross references to interdependencies
Environmental	Expected Result 10.1	10.1 Soil is protected from erosion by adequate soil conservation measures	10.1. Soil health is promoted through minimizing soil disturbance and maintain living roots in the ground.	Broadens on soil health practices aligned with regenerative approaches
Environmental	Expected Result 11.2.	Waste should be prevented or reduced where feasible (wastewater, farm and processing by-products, fossil fuels).	Waste should be prevented or reduced where feasible. Where wastes cannot be prevented, reuse and recycling is maximized.	Maintained but better clarification added for prevention of waste generation

Coffee SR Code Economic Requirements			
Type	Ref	What changed	Rationale
UPDATED	1.1.1	Minor wording simplification (removal of “national”)	Improves flexibility and applicability across contexts
UPDATED	1.1.4	Minor simplification. “Corporate governance” changed to “governance”	Broadens applicability beyond formal corporate structures
UPDATED	1.3.1	GESI analysis simplified to focus on barriers and opportunities	Improves usability and reduces complexity while maintaining intent
UPDATED	1.3.2	Stronger link between analysis and action	Reinforces results-based approach
UPDATED	1.4.3	Scope expanded to include communities	Strengthens inclusiveness of grievance mechanisms
UPDATED	1.4.4	Removal of “for example” Clarification of minimum member data requirements	Aligns with original intent and improves consistency and traceability of coffee production and supply at group level
NEW	1.5.X	Introduction of risk assessment requirement	New management requirement brings together multiple current requirements in other dimensions into one cohesive requirement. This enables farmers to more easily understand diverse risks for prioritization of planning and implementation
UPDATED	1.5.1	Action plans must address identified risks	Aligns planning with risk assessment for stronger impact
UPDATED	2.2.1	Simplified wording on inputs and services	Improves clarity and reduces redundancy

Coffee SR Code Social Requirements			
Type	Ref	What changed	Rationale
UPDATED	4.1.2	Removal of explicit ILO reference	Simplifies wording. ILO reference and details reflected in Guidance
UPDATED	5.1.1	Requirement strengthened to explicitly include non-discrimination.	Clarifies expectations on equal treatment
UPDATED	5.2.3	Removed example to Guidance	Keeps the requirement concise and clearly auditable, while providing detailed explanation and context in guidance.
UPDATED	5.3.1	Examples moved to Guidance	Overall simplification
UPDATED	5.3.3	Clarified requirement to explicitly ensure protection of representatives in their role	Introduces a clearer, action-oriented obligation to protect representatives, and distinguishes this provision from broader non-discrimination requirements (5.3.1).
UPDATED	5.4.2	Clarifies right to collective bargaining	Aligns with international labour principles
UPDATED	6.2.2	Shift from equal benefits to fair and non-discriminatory access to benefits	Introduces proportionality in the provision of benefits while maintaining protection against discrimination and unfair treatment of seasonal and piece-rate workers.
UPDATED	6.5.1	Conditional wording on housing provision	Improve clarity and applicability
UPDATED	6.6.1	Aligned with risk assessment approach and clarified outcome on safe working conditions	Aligns the requirement with the overall risk assessment framework by explicitly referencing assessment and clarifies the intended outcome of ensuring healthy and safe working conditions.
UPDATED	6.6.2	Added reference to controlling identified risks; examples moved to guidance	Clarifies that procedures should address identified risks, while keeping the requirement concise and supported by guidance.

Coffee SR Code Social Requirements			
Type	Ref	What changed	Rationale
REMOVED	6.6.4	Concepts merged into 6.6.1 Guidance integrated to ensure concepts are covered	Reduces duplication and improves coherence
UPDATED	7.1.1	Expanded scope to include changes in land and water access/use and explicit inclusion of local communities	Extends the application of FPIC beyond acquisition to ongoing impacts on land and resource use, and clarifies inclusion of all affected stakeholders, including local communities.

Coffee SR Code Environmental Requirements			
Type	Ref	What changed	Rationale
UPDATED	8.2.3	Added language to explicitly link intent of requirements with biodiversity objective	Explicit link to the biodiversity Outcome and Expected Result.
UPDATED	9.1.1	Clarified and structured implementation of IPM approach	Emphasizes practical application of IPM by defining key components, while maintaining flexibility for different farm sizes and contexts.
UPDATED	9.1.2	Clarifies training on IPM approach	Aligns with updated IPM requirement
UPDATED	9.1.3	Expanded and restructured agrochemical use records to support IPM decision-making	Broadens the scope from Highly Hazardous Pesticides to overall agrochemical use and repositions record-keeping as a tool to support IPM decision-making, with flexibility based on farm size and context.
UPDATED	9.2.1	Terminology aligned to "agrochemicals" (from pesticides and other inputs). Expanded plan to include minimum storage and safety requirements	Ensures consistency across agrochemical management requirements and clarifies minimum expectations for safe handling, storage, and disposal.

Coffee SR Code Environmental Requirements			
Type	Ref	What changed	Rationale
UPDATED	9.2.2	Terminology aligned to “agrochemicals”	Ensure consistent terminology across agrochemical-related requirements.
UPDATED	9.2.3	Terminology alignment to “agrochemicals”	Ensure consistent terminology across agrochemical-related requirements.
UPDATED	9.2.4	Terminology alignment to “agrochemicals”	Ensure consistent terminology across agrochemical-related requirements.
UPDATED	10.1.1	“Control” replaced with “manage” soil quality	Reflects broader soil management approach
UPDATED	10.1.2	Added context-specific adaptation	Improves applicability
NEW	10.1.3	Introduction of requirement on minimizing soil disturbance	Reflects regenerative agriculture principles on soil health, emphasizing knowledge and context-based implementation without prescribing specific practices.
NEW	10.1.4	Introduction of requirement for maintaining permanent soil cover	Introduces regenerative agriculture principles on soil health, particularly maintaining soil cover, with a focus on knowledge and context-based implementation rather than prescriptive practices.
UPDATED	10.2.2	Shift to integrated nutrient management approach, including recycling of organic by-products	Aligns with regenerative agriculture principles and integrates nutrient recycling into a more holistic management approach, including elements from former 11.3.1.
UPDATED	10.2.3	Stronger requirement to reduce synthetic fertilizers	Requirement edited to emphasize reduction over time.

Coffee SR Code Environmental Requirements			
Type	Ref	What changed	Rationale
UPDATED	10.3.5	Shift to integrated water conservation and quality approach	Introduces a more holistic, outcome-based approach to water management, linking soil and water functions and aligning with regenerative agriculture principles.
REMOVED	11.3.1	Merged into 10.2.2	Content integrated into 10.2.2 to align organic by-product use with the broader nutrient management approach and improve coherence within soil fertility requirements.
UPDATED	12.1.1	Shift from climate risk assessment plan (covered in NEW Economic requirement) to climate risk identification	Aligns with the overall risk assessment framework and introduces a more flexible, proportionate approach, avoiding duplication and improving applicability across contexts.
UPDATED	12.1.2	Minor wording simplification	Improves clarity and consistency, with strengthened guidance linking adaptation practices to soil management.
REMOVED	12.1.3	Carbon sequestration requirement removed	Integrated into soil health requirements (10.1.1), where related practices are addressed more holistically, positioning carbon sequestration as an outcome and avoiding duplication.
UPDATED	12.1.4	Simplified GHG requirement (no fixed timeline)	Improves feasibility and flexibility

Governance EM Operational Criteria			
Type	Ref	What changed	Rationale
REMOVED	G2	Requirement on ensuring producer awareness removed	This requirement was removed as it is standard practice and does not differentiate between schemes. Its removal supports streamlining without reducing credibility.
UPDATED	G3	Complaints mechanism refocused on internal policy	Clarifies scope by distinguishing internal complaints policy from broader dispute resolution mechanisms
NEW	G4	Introduction of dispute resolution mechanisms covering multiple system elements	Establishes clear and impartial mechanisms to address complaints and appeals across standard-setting, assurance, and claims. Aligns with international frameworks.
NEW	G5	Introduction of governance transparency requirements	Increases transparency by requiring public access to key information on governance structure and operations
NEW	G6	Introduction of risk management plan for scheme systems	Strengthens credibility and integrity through a structured approach to identifying, assessing, and mitigating risks to the SO systems. aligned with due diligence principles

Standard-Setting EM Operational Criteria			
Type	Ref	What changed	Rationale
UPDATED	SS1	Edit addition that criteria available "in schemes official language"	Improve expectations and level playing field for national and international schemes
UPDATED	SS3	Requirement simplified to focus on opportunity for stakeholder input. Detailed elements moved to guidance.	Improves usability while maintaining intent to ensure stakeholder participation

Assurance EM Operational Criteria			
Type	Ref	What changed	Rationale
UPDATED	A2	Requirement updated to clarify minimum expectations. Removed bullet points on Risk Management and Continuous improvement as covered elsewhere	Risk Management bullet point moved to own NEW criteria due to scope and critical nature in due diligence process. Continuous improvement is already covered in A3 - so removed as duplicative
NEW	A.x1	New requirement defining minimum requirements for different types of assessments	Increases consistency across assurance approaches by clarifying minimum expectations for assessment design and implementation
NEW	A.x2	Split from A.2 Risk-based approach to assurance now as a NEW standalone requirement	Due to its critical importance now standalone requirement; ensures consistent application of risk-based assurance and avoids dilution within broader methodology requirements
UPDATED	A5	Moved examples of internal systems to guidance	Simplification and not favouring one specific type of system
REMOVED	A7	Standalone requirement on exceptions merged into A2	Consolidates related content to avoid fragmentation and uneven weighting across requirements
UPDATED	A9	Additional language to clarify that the Chain of Custody (CoC) model must match the claims allowed with rationale	Explicitly link Chain of Custody model to claims allowed and improves transparency

Data EM Operational Criteria			
Type	Ref	What changed	Rationale
UPDATED	D1	Expanded data management requirement adding data analysis covering compliance and performance	Expands focus from data procedure to data and information systems with minimum expectations for data use and analysis
UPDATED	D2	Rephrasing of intent for providing insights and minimum expectations added	Clarifies intent and strengthen focus on actionable performance insights for producers
UPDATED	D5	Expanded to include minimum standardized KPI reporting requirements to GCP	Supports interoperability and strengthens transparency
UPDATED	D6	Simplified wording on monitoring and evaluation system	Improves clarity without changing intent
NEW	D7	Introduction of interoperability and coordination requirements	Addresses duplication and inefficiencies in data requests across the value chain, aligned with OECD “fitness criteria” for credible schemes

Claims EM Operational Criteria			
Type	Ref	What changed	Rationale
NEW	C.x1	Introduction of overarching claims policy and management system	Establishes a comprehensive framework for credible claims, integrating and strengthening previous requirements. Aligns with ISEAL, ISO, and regulatory expectations
REMOVED	C1	Requirement regarding logos and claims removed	Content integrated into broader NEW C.x1 claims policy framework to improve coherence

Claims EM Operational Criteria			
Type	Ref	What changed	Rationale
UPDATED	C2	Strengthened controls on claims use including minimum expectations	Enhances credibility through clearer rules, monitoring, and enforcement mechanisms
UPDATED	C3	Strengthened evidence requirements for claims	Ensuring claims are supported by reliable, verifiable, and accessible data
REMOVED	C4	Content integrated into broader claims management systems C.x1 and removed	Content integrated into claims management system to avoid duplication and improve coherence