Bonsucro Smallholder Steering Committee

Meetings Notes, September 21st

**Agenda**

* Terms of reference review
* Scope of the revision
* Share summary of the consultation
  + Webinar with interested stakeholders
  + Technical Advisory Board feedback
* Key feedback on size of smallholder farmers
* Sharing of format of calculator for revision
* Work plan

**Summary on Consultation Review, Points to Add**

* Inability to collect data: potential to learn from the TMP project in Sub-Saharan Africa and see what data will be collected at the smallholder level.
* Comment to consider the data aggregation format designed by mills in India.
* Inability to collect data: need to identify a clear benefit for the farmer to collect data (it will probably be a big change to how they manage their farm)
* Governance indicators: there needs to be a way to ask questions and receive training, but otherwise there needs to be a clear need for additional indicators. They need to be adaptable for the various systems of smallholders, including those that are not already organised. Need to have a clear case for why governance indicators need to be added.
* General agreement with removal of data points use for footprint indicators and the lack of priorities on these getting back to the farmer.
* Lean data: Adding yield and what is a major cost to the farmer you can get a sense of profitability, this can be useful to the farmer. Focusing on something relevant that can be relevant to the smallholder farmer.

**Core Indicator Consultation**

* 4.1.3 Environmental impact and management plan, this would be difficult for a smallholder farmer. The smallholder farmer needs to follow it.
* 2.4.1 Smallholder farmers hire day labourers with a verbal contract. When it comes to documentation, it is too challenging for the smallholder farmer.
* General: The core requirements if they’re pointed at the individual farmer, they are unrealistic. Need to consider farmers in a group, aggregated by the mill or an association. For example considering those in a geographical region.
* General: Need to reconsider what is mandatory and what are the specifics of what is the expectation. The indicators shouldn’t be for a tick-off value or lead to exclusion of smallholders in some cases.
* 1.1.1 National laws complied with is very broad. It would make sense for a smallholder farmer if it was specific ones, but generally the laws can be not clear and very contradictory. The laws are not written in a way that the laws are accessible or can be clearly complied with.
* 1.2.1 Having land and water in the same line is problematic. Need to separate them out. Should all farmers without land rights be excluded? There are instances of smallholder farmers giving rights to land to others. Need to review what the target outcome of this indicator is: is it to ensure there is no encroachment on land rights from others instead of specifically demonstrating land rights. Need modifications on this indicator and the purpose or review of other indicators. However, in other contexts, they should need to follow (but it might be controversial).
* 2.1.4 This depends on the size of the smallholder farmers. There is no question of right to form unions when there are one or two workers. This type of indicator is not relevant for the individual smallholder, not the group. Haulage companies and cane cutting, unions are relevant there. Impractical for the smallholder individually.
* 2.2.5 Drinking water, written for employees. Does it apply to the smallholder farmer individually (e.g. the water comes from the household). Nothing systemically which would prevent this. Question on the drinking water availability in the household, it is a challenging perspective if the mill/producer organisation is taking on the role of the municipality/government.
* General agreement with the topics covered by the core indicators.
* However, it depends on the lens of auditing (group/jurisdiction/farm).

**Definition: Smallholder Farmer**

* Proposed amendment: consider situations of groups of individuals smallholders to achieve economies of scale. Per head, they have below 25 hectares, but they have formed a co-operative to farm together. An allowance for a per farm owner ratio would work.
* Segmentation of smallholder farmers, knowing this supports understanding the theory of change. Size is not necessarily an indicator of this.
* Learning from Fair Trade: it has led to restructuring so need to consider this.
* Average size in India is less than 1 hectare. 25 hectares is a large farmer in India. Agreed that it makes sense that fields <25 hectares should be applicable to the smallholder requirements, however, there are challenges of alignment between the local view of what a smallholder farmer is and a global definition that makes sense.
* Need clarity on what it means for a group to be “homogenous”. Best practice in group certification.
* Who would this exclude? Need to map this out specifically for each country/region how it would likely apply.
* Coffee example, 25 is reasonable, might be 10 in some cases.

**Other Notes**

* Diesel is measured, but the government has a subsidy on the electricity used for irrigation and it is not counted or monitored. Specifically, in India.
* Governance to be brought to future agendas, but noting as it still remains very important and will be addressed more deeply in the draft revisions.
* Farming as a business: it is important to frame the indicators as a business assessment tool since this is an improvement on traditional smallholder practices.
* A driving focus of the design should be on the best way to tackle the improvements that are needed and are interest to the smallholder farmer.