

## Revision of ProTerra M&E

### Background

As per ISEAL definition, Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system is *“an ongoing process through which an organisation concludes its contribution to intended outcomes and impacts. A monitoring and evaluation system consists of a set of interconnected functions, processes, and activities, including a systematic collection of monitoring data on specified indicators and the implementation of outcome and impact evaluations”*.

The Theory of Change forms the basis for the ProTerra Monitoring and Evaluation framework, which tracks progress and ensures continuous learning and improvement. ProTerra’s Theory of Change is embedded in the concept of continuous improvement in the social, economic, and environmental performance of farmers, traders, transporters, and processors as well as in the improvement of ProTerra’s operations over time.

ProTerra has defined a set of indicators to monitor and evaluate performance in relation to the changes ProTerra aims to make in society through its impact on stakeholders. These indicators are critically analysed and help ProTerra to review its strategy for the coming year, adjusting its budget and labour effort to drive increased positive impact on stakeholders. The system has been in place since 2018 noting that ProTerra has been an ISEAL member since 2022, and a more structured approach has been adopted since then. ProTerra’s accumulated data on the indicators can be found on our webpage under [resources](#). ProTerra’s indicators are reported on a yearly basis each April with reference to the previous year’s results.

As part of the ProTerra Foundation's commitment to improve its Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system, ProTerra Foundation has committed to conduct an evaluation of the existing system in 2023.

The commitment involved:

- (a) ensure that one in-depth evaluation of the M&E system is an independent impact evaluation, designed to determine whether it is possible to attribute observed changes to the standards system (ISEAL Impacts Code 8.5).
- (b) ProTerra shall ensure that the results of performance monitoring, outcome and impact evaluations and the learning from these activities are used in a review and refinement of the intended change and of the M&E strategy, as applicable (ISEAL Impacts Code 9.2).
- (c) ProTerra shall publish conclusions and share our learning from the above actions with stakeholders (ISEAL Impacts Code 10.2).

### Revision Strategy

Based on the guidance provided by ISEAL under Impacts Code 8.5<sup>1</sup>, ProTerra Foundation has defined conducting this review with its stakeholders, using the Stakeholder Council for this function. This decision was based on the independence of the Council, the nature and size of

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<sup>1</sup> *The number, regularity and extent of impact evaluations should be commensurate with the maturity, scale, and intensity of the activities of the standards system. Impact evaluations generally take several years to complete as a goal is to see change over time. Thus, standards systems are unlikely to have any fully completed independent impact evaluations until they have been operational for three to five years.”*

ProTerra Foundation’s operational structure and the recent structure of the M&E system under ISEAL.

The M&E results were presented and discussed with the Stakeholder Council during the SHC Meeting in May 2023.

Questions that have been discussed are:

- What is needed to increase ProTerra outreach further?
- Are indicators unnecessary, or needed or are the defined ones the right ones?
- What conclusions can we make based on the indicators?
- Do these indicators represent the development of the Standard/Foundation?

## Results

The main outcome was a review and update of the indicators. The table below shows the previous set of indicators and the updated set (in green), which, based on the Stakeholder Council, more pragmatically represent the key outcomes of ProTerra Foundation’s activities. Three new topics have been added: Engagement, Governance: Stakeholder Council, Certification and Standard Committee and Board and Environmental impact (emissions, water), while one was removed (CO<sub>2</sub> reduction initiatives, now covered by a broader topic related to environmental impact).

The inclusion of indicators around ProTerra’s contribution to the water issue highlights the importance this topic has between the stakeholder represented in the M&E evaluation process and, as an update to ProTerra’s M&E system, will lead to improved actions and outreach around this topic what has not occurred so emphatically before.

*Table 1 – Indicators Update*

Topic related to ProTerra Initiative	Previous Indicators	Updated Indicators	Comments
<i>A Global Standard</i>	Tons of products certified/verified	Unchanged	
	Number of products certified/verified	Unchanged	
	Number/type of raw materials	Unchanged	
	Number of countries/regions we operate in	Unchanged	
<i>Certification and verification</i>	Number of certified and/or verified organisations	Unchanged	
	Tons of products certified/verified	Unchanged	
	Number of products certified/verified	Unchanged	

Topic related to ProTerra Initiative	Previous Indicators	Updated Indicators	Comments
<i>Labelling and claims guidelines</i>	Number of companies using claims of B2C products	Unchanged	
	Type of labelled products	Type of labelled products (number of certified raw materials used in these products)	
<i>Training and publications</i>	Number of trainings organised	Unchanged	
	Number of people trained	Unchanged	
	Number of the webinars in which ProTerra presented and or organised	Unchanged	
	Number of newsletters published	Unchanged	
	Number of trainings organised	Unchanged	
<i>Community Network</i>	Number of members	Unchanged	
<i>Member recruitment and retention</i>	Number of new members	Unchanged	
<i>Benchmark and partnership</i>	Number of benchmarks completed	Unchanged	
	Number of new standard recognition agreements and ongoing partnerships	Unchanged	
<i>Engagement</i>		Number of organisations ProTerra is participating in (committees, board)	
<i>Smallholder interpretation and regional interpretations</i>	Number of interpretations	Unchanged	
	Effectiveness (smallholders participating)	Effectiveness (number of smallholders participating)	
<i>Coordination/Participation in response to sustainability challenges</i>	Number of physical events organised and attended by ProTerra	Unchanged	
<i>National / regional situation assessment</i>	Number of initiatives managed by ProTerra	Unchanged	

Topic related to ProTerra Initiative	Previous Indicators	Updated Indicators	Comments
<i>Governance: Stakeholder Council, Certification and Standard Committee and Board</i>		Number of meetings	
<i>CO2 reduction initiatives</i>	Number of ProTerra-specific initiatives developed	Removed	
<i>Environmental impact (emissions, water)</i>		Number of countries/regions included in ProTerra-specific CO <sub>2</sub> initiatives/calculations	
		Number of crops included in ProTerra-specific CO <sub>2</sub> initiatives	
		Percentage of primary data included in ProTerra-specific CO <sub>2</sub> initiatives	
		Number of countries/regions included in ProTerra-specific water initiatives	
		Number of crops included in ProTerra-specific water initiatives	
		Percentage of primary data included in ProTerra-specific water initiatives	

### Next steps

Based on the outcome of the M&E revision, ProTerra Foundation will update its Theory of Change and M&E documents to reflect the updated indicators.

Additionally, the topic related to water conservation, due to its importance, will be further included as a requirement in version 5 of the ProTerra Standard Social Responsibility and Environmental Sustainability. This requirement will require certified organisations to:

- ensure that management plans account for future water resource conditions (climate change, demographic shifts, projected use increases, etc.), and
- implement integrated catchment management mechanisms where applicable.

The next review of the M&E system will take place in at least 5 years.