Bonsucro

Monitoring Evaluation and Learning (MEL)

Framework

Latest update: November 2022

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Overview and Context

Monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) is an essential part of Bonsucro's activities.

In the Bonsucro Strategic Plan 2021-2026, Bonsucro committed to develop an improved monitoring and evaluation and learning (MEL) system for Bonsucro to measure impact and progress against our global targets. The 'Bonsucro MEL Public System Report 2022' gives an overview of our system including roles and responsibilities within the team.

The overall MEL system serves three main purposes:

- To monitor and evaluate the multiple roles of Bonsucro in contributing to change, as well as to learn how delivery of the strategy can be continuously improved;
- To generate evidence of our impact and enable us, as a community of change, to learn and improve (informing service delivery, programme design and tools, globally and locally);
- To report and celebrate success and give visibility to positive impacts, creating trust in Bonsucro and inspiring our stakeholders to take action on sustainability.

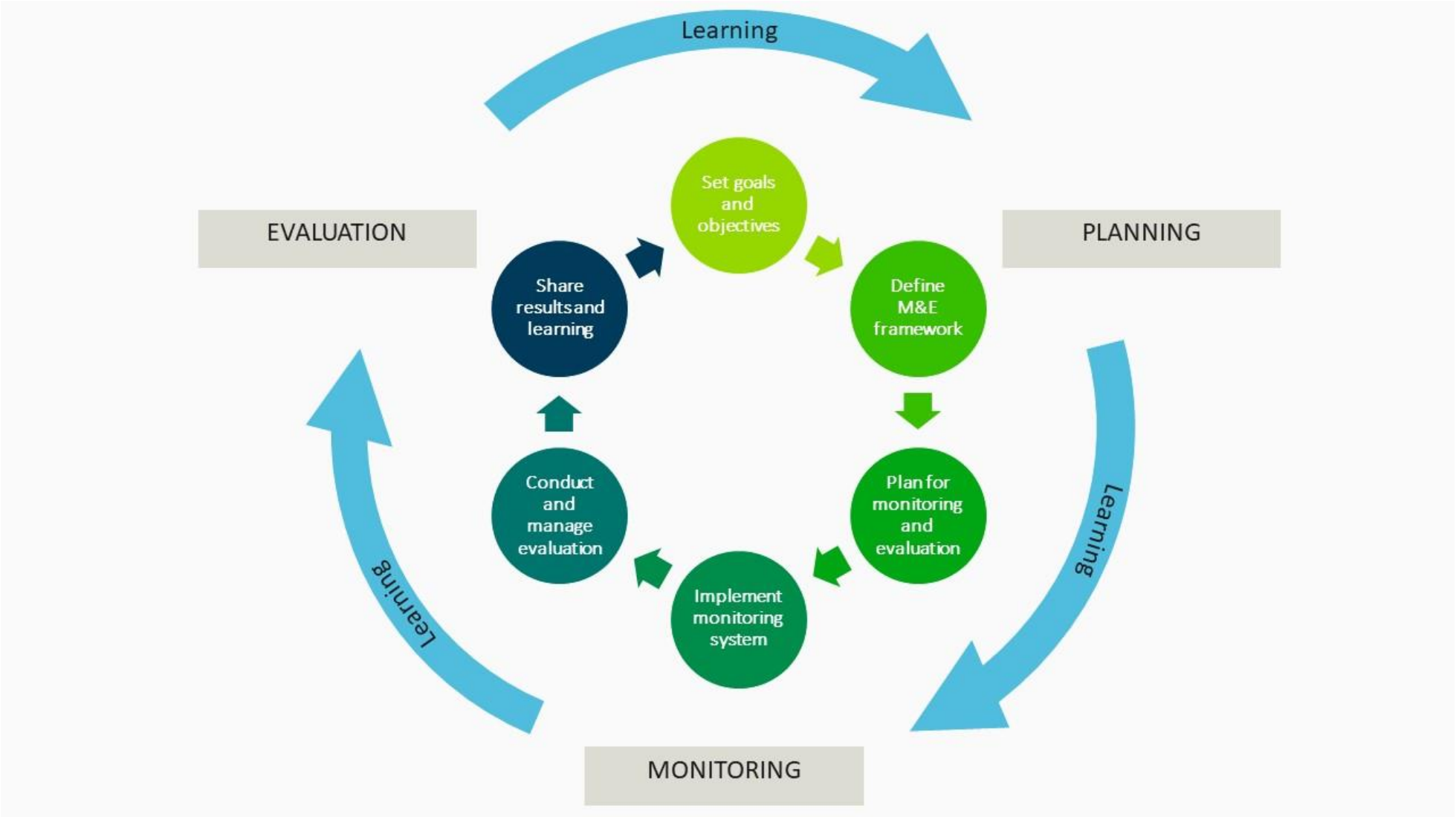
The MEL System draws on many sources of information, including the following sources:

- Certification calculators for the Production Standard (see 'Input' tab for list of 300+ producer monitoring data fields for farm and mill)
- Code of Conduct Annual Reports
- Bonsucro Production Standard and Chain of Custody Standard audits
- Member consultation and feedback
- Credit Trading Platform
- Financial reports
- Project reports
- Web platform analytics

This MEL Framework provides practical information to guide the implementation of M&E at Bonsucro. It is an operational document that will continue to evolve as Bonsucro expands its MEL capabilities. The primary audience of this framework are the Bonsucro staff team and Governance stakeholders.

The monitoring, evaluation and learning cycle

The cycle is relevant at any level of organisational activity. Learning occurs or can be applied at every step.



Ethical Considerations in Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning

Monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) is an essential part of Bonsucro's activities.
Ethical considerations are important in the conduct of MEL activities.

Bonsucro's MEL and research activities operate under the following principles:

- Deliver work of integrity and merit
- Act with honesty, competence and accountability
- Respect people's rights and dignity
- Maximise benefit and minimise harm

All monitoring, evaluation, learning and research decisions must be aligned with these principles.
They are consistent with Bonsucro's underpinning principles of **Credibility, Inclusivity, Collaboration and Adaptability**.

To help us achieve this, MEL activities and research conducted by on or behalf of Bonsucro commit to:

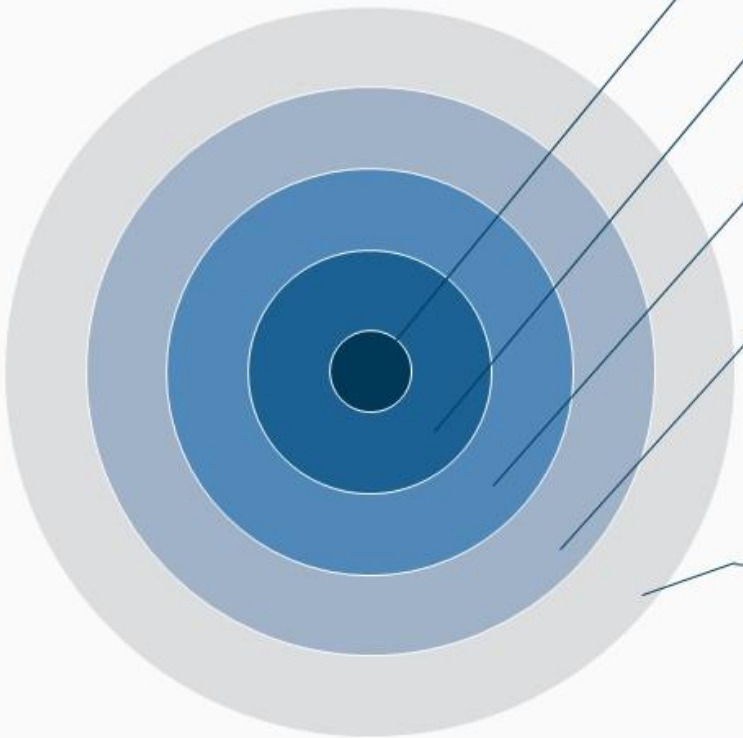
- Avoid conflicts of interest
- Maintain privacy, confidentiality and data protection
- Uphold voluntary participation and informed consent

Bonsucro's Stakeholders in Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning

Layers closer to the centre represent higher levels of engagement with Bonsucro activities.

CONNECTION TO BONSUCRO MEL

- **Bonsucro Team and Governance:** deliver M&E activities, generate insights, use data in decision-making and service provision, evidence impact.
- **Member network:** shape the strategy underpinning Bonsucro M&E, providers of data and intelligence, delivery partners, consumers of Bonsucro data.
- **Certification ecosystem:** data gatherers, data stewards, data consumers, examples of M&E best practice, comms audience.
- **Sugarcane sector & Partners:** source of comparison data, audience for impact comms and engagement.
- **Wider Stakeholders:** provide benchmarks, audience for Bonsucro information, potential to elevate impact.



BONSUCRO TEAM AND GOVERNANCE
- Staff
- Board of Directors
- Technical Advice Board
- Members Council

MEMBER NETWORK
- Producers
- Farmer/Mill Associations
- Intermediaries/traders
- End-users
- NGOs
- Project partners

CERTIFICATION ECOSYSTEM
- Smallholders
- Farms & Mills
- Chain of Custody certified companies
- **Certification Bodies***
- ISEAL Community
- Other Standards
- Capacity building organizations
- Trade unions

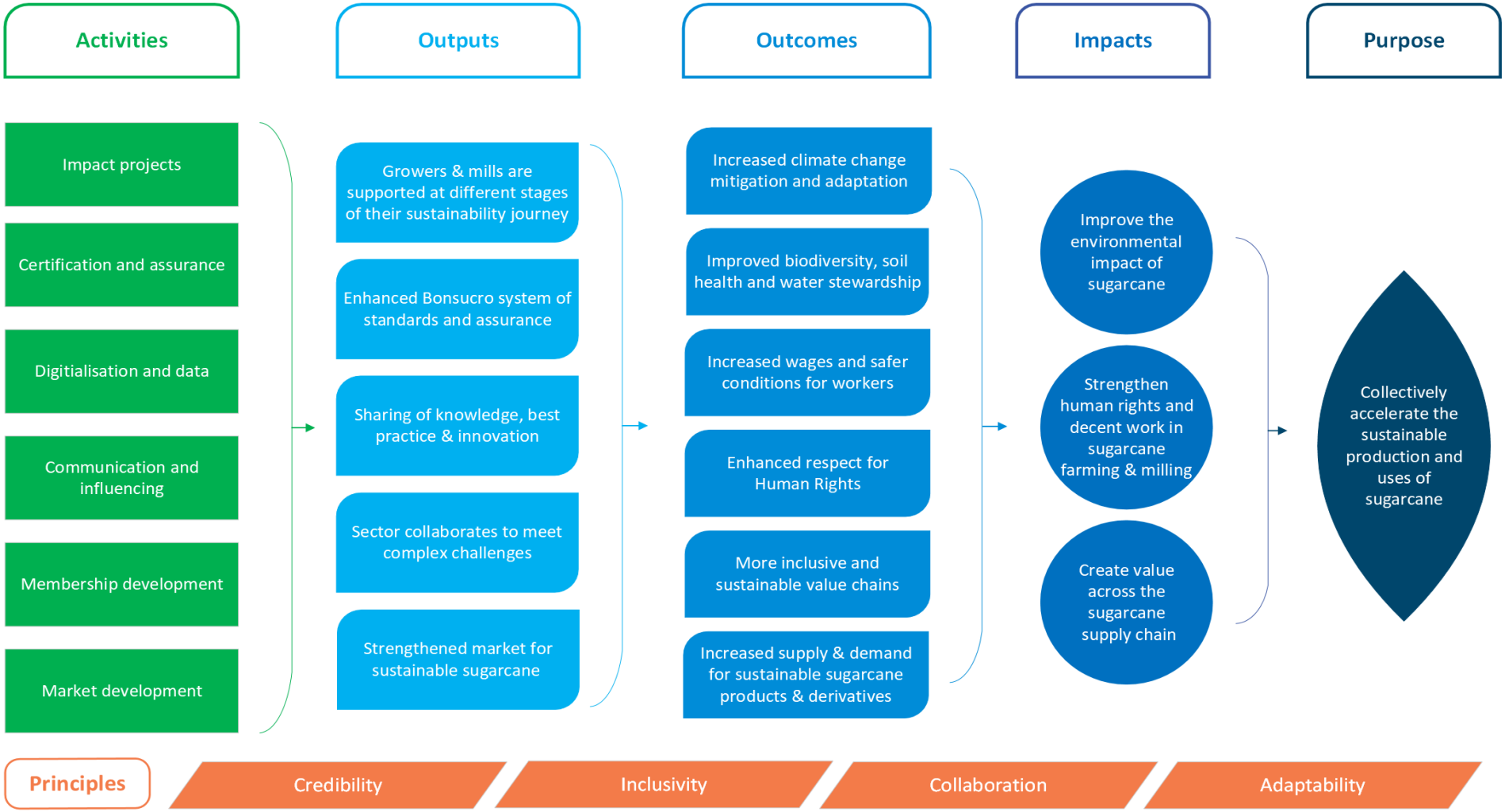
SUGARCANE SECTOR & PARTNERS
- Potential Members
- Businesses considering certification
- Franchise bottlers
- Food & Beverages market
- Ethanol & Energy market
- Beauty market
- Bioplastics market
- Domestic buyers
- Multinational buyers
- Environmental and Human Rights NGOs

WIDER STAKEHOLDERS
- National / State governments
- European Union
- Research bodies
- Media
- Finance institutions
- Communities in sugarcane regions
- The Public / consumers

*Certification Bodies are a particularly important stakeholder in our M&E, because they verify and steward all certification data, which is vital to understanding our impact.

Bonsucro's Stakeholders in Monitoring and Evaluation

Bonsucro Theory of Change



Logframes for managing monitoring and evaluation (M&E)

These logical frameworks (logframes) clarify what information is needed to evidence our outcomes, how and when it will be collected, and how often it will be reported. **Reporting typically involves analysis, evaluation, review, learning and response to findings.**

Outcomes M&E – Strategy KPIs

Line #	Outcome	Indicator / Measure (STRATEGY KPIs)	Means of verification (data collection method)	When will we collect it?	When will we report it?
A1	**Increase supply & demand of certified sustainable sugar, ethanol & derivatives**	Hectares of certified sugarcane annually	Audit reports processed into the database	When audits submitted throughout the year, ongoing.	Internal Power BI Dashboard updated monthly. Include in Annual KPI and Outcome Reports.
A2		Number of certified mills	Certification Body confirmation recorded on Salesforce	Upon submission throughout the year, ongoing.	Website dashboard updated daily. Include in Annual KPI and Outcome Reports.
A3		Tonnes certified sugar & m^3 certified ethanol produced (or equivalent)	Audit reports processed into the database	When audits submitted throughout the year, ongoing.	Internal Power BI Dashboard updated monthly. Include in Annual KPI and Outcome Reports.

Line #	Outcome	Indicator / Measure (STRATEGY KPIs)	Means of verification (data collection method)	When will we collect it?	When will we report it?
A4	**Increase supply & demand of certified sustainable sugar, ethanol & derivatives**	Number of Bonsucro raw sugar credits (or equivalent) sold annually	Credit Trading Platform records	Each time a trade is completed.	Data available any time. Include in Annual KPI and Outcome Reports.
A5		Tonnes of certified physical products sold ex-mill	Audit reports processed into the database	When audits submitted throughout the year, ongoing.	Include in Annual KPI and Outcome Reports.
A6	**More inclusive & sustainable value chains**	Number of independent farmers & smallholders reached by Bonsucro certification and/or impact projects over 5 years	Audit reports processed into the database. Impact Project reports and project participation records	When audits submitted throughout the year, ongoing. During project delivery (timing depends on project) and upon project completion.	Include in Annual KPI and Outcome Reports.
A7	**Convene impact projects**	Total money invested in Bonsucro impact projects over 5 years	Finance records, with input from Credit Trading Platform data.	Annually in Q1	Include in Annual KPI Report.
A8	**Deliver value to members**	Annual membership retention rate	Finance records	Annually in Q1	Include in Annual KPI Report.

Line #	Outcome	Indicator / Measure (STRATEGY KPIs)	Means of verification (data collection method)	When will we collect it?	When will we report it?
A9	**Drive climate action in the sugarcane sector**	% Reduction in Scope 1 and 2 emissions of certified mills and farms after 5 years' certification (kg CO2equivalent/kg sugar)	Verified calculator data submitted with audit reports and processed to the database	Annually in Q1	Include in Annual KPI and Outcome Reports.
A10		Number of collective commitments & actions on climate change mitigation and adaptation	Collective action dashboard and annual review of achievements.	Upon achievement, update dashboard.	Include in Annual KPI Report.
A11	**Improve water security & stewardship**	% Increase in water-use efficiency by certified producers after 5 years certification *(kg per mm per hectare)*	Verified calculator data submitted with audit reports and processed to the database	Annually in Q1	Include in Annual KPI and Outcome Reports.
A12		Number of collective commitments & actions on sustainable water management	Collective action dashboard and annual review of achievements.	Upon achievement, update dashboard.	Include in Annual KPI Report.

Line #	Outcome	Indicator / Measure (STRATEGY KPIs)	Means of verification (data collection method)	When will we collect it?	When will we report it?
A13	**Improve biodiversity and soil health**	# hectares High Conservation Value Areas (HCVA) protected & maintained	Verified calculator data submitted with audit reports and processed to the database	Annually in Q1	Include in Annual KPI Report.
A14	**Increase wages in sugarcane farming and milling**	increase in average % differential between wages paid above legal minimum wage after 5 years of certification	Verified calculator data submitted with audit reports and processed to the database	Annually in Q1	Include in Annual KPI and Outcome Reports.
A15		Number of collective commitments & actions on Living Wage [†]	Collective action dashboard and annual review of achievements.	Upon achievement, update dashboard.	Include in Annual KPI Report.
A16	**Improve occupational health & safety in farming and milling**	% reduction in accidents in certified farms & mills after 5 years' certification	Verified calculator data submitted with audit reports and processed to the database	Annually in Q1	Include in Annual KPI and Outcome Reports.
A17	**Enhance respect for human rights**	Number of collective commitments and actions to promote UN Guiding Principles on Business & Human Rights, & OECD-FAO Guidance for Responsible Agricultural Supply	Collective action dashboard and annual review of achievements.	Upon achievement, update dashboard.	Include in Annual KPI Report.

Performance Management – Operational KPIs

Line #	Objective	Indicator / Measure (OPERATIONAL KPIs)	Means of verification	When will we collect it?	When will we report it?
B1	**Engage effectively with members**	# Members	Salesforce records of accounts with full 'member' status	Ongoing, 'member' status allocated upon payment of membership fees (and withdrawn upon resignation).	Salesforce dashboard available to staff any time. Public dashboard on website updated weekly. Membership figures reported quarterly to the Board. Annually in Outcome Report.
B2		% Members submitting their annual report	Supplyshift analytics compared to Salesforce records	Calculated annually following report submission deadline.	Annually to the Board and staff, and in the Continuous Improvement Report.
B3		% Members participating in webinars and events (in person or online, across all regions)	Zoom analytics compared to Salesforce records	Calculated annually in Q1.	Annually to the Board and staff teams.
B4		% Members satisfied or very satisfied on a 5-point scale	Supplyshift analytics	Calculated annually following survey submission deadline.	Annually to the Board and staff, and in the Member Satisfaction Survey.

Line #	Objective	Indicator / Measure (OPERATIONAL KPIs)	Means of verification	When will we collect it?	When will we report it?
B5	**Effective Resource Management**	Annual income £	Finance records	Ongoing record keeping. Calculated annually in Q1 (for the previous year).	Progress reported monthly to Finance and Risk Committee. Annually to the Board and staff, and publicly in our Annual Report.
B6		Healthy reserves = 3 month operating costs (£)	Xero finance records	Ongoing record keeping. Calculated annually in Q1 (for the previous year).	Progress reported monthly to Finance and Risk Committee. Annually to the Board and staff, and publicly in our Annual Report.
B7		# average debtor days (membership)	Xero finance records	Ongoing record keeping. Calculated annually in Q1 (for the previous year).	Progress reported monthly to Finance and Risk Committee. Annually to the Board and staff.
B8		# average debtor days (credits)	Xero finance records	Ongoing record keeping. Calculated annually in Q1 (for the previous year).	Progress reported monthly to Finance and Risk Committee. Annually to the Board and staff.

Line #	Objective	Indicator / Measure (OPERATIONAL KPIs)	Means of verification	When will we collect it?	When will we report it?
B9	**Effective Resource Management**	# international secretariat staff	Breathe records for contracted staff in post	Ongoing record keeping with each incoming and outgoing member of staff.	Quarterly updates to the Board.
B10		# regional staff	Breathe records for contracted staff in post	Ongoing record keeping with each incoming and outgoing member of staff.	Quarterly updates to the Board.
B11		Average score (1 to 7) of staff satisfaction	Staff satisfaction survey responses (e.g. on Alchemer)	Annually following the submission deadline (ideally Q4)	Report summary findings to staff within 1 month of the submission deadline. Annually to the Board.
B12	**Demonstrate impact**	Outcome Report	Documents publicly available on the website.	Upon public launch of the report.	Annually to the Board, staff, and members.
B13		MEL system established	Key documents publicly available on the website. Internal resources shared on Chatter.	Upon publication. Ongoing Project Management tracking.	Annual progress update to the Board.
B14		# External Impact evaluations completed	Impact Assessment Report complete and signed off	Upon completion	Annually to the Board, and published on website.

Line #	Objective	Indicator / Measure (OPERATIONAL KPIs)	Means of verification	When will we collect it?	When will we report it?
B15	**Strengthen capabilities & systems**	Data maturity score	Data Orchard assessment results score	Annually in Q2	Annually to the Board and staff.
B16		Spend on the People Function, and Learning & Development	Xero finance records	Ongoing record keeping of relevant expenses. Calculate total annually in Q1.	Annually to the Board and staff.
B17	**Strengthen communications**	# website pageviews	Google analytics	Monthly	Quarterly to E&M team. Annually to Board and wider staff.
B18		Average % opens for monthly bulletin mailing list	Mailchimp analytics	Monthly	Quarterly to E&M team. Annually to Board and wider staff.
B19		# of social media engagements[1] (total for LinkedIn, Twitter)	LinkedIn and Twitter analytics	Monthly	Quarterly to E&M team. Annually to Board and wider staff.
B20		# stories of change published	Stories of change running record	Upon publication	Quarterly to E&M team. Annually to Board and wider staff.
B21		Bonsucro contributions to content hosted by other organisations/platforms	'Reach from Events' spreadsheet	Ongoing upon attendance	Quarterly to staff. Annually to Board.

[1] Social media "engagements" is the total of reactions, comments, shares and clicks on Bonsucro posts

Impact Assessment

Line #	Impact Goals	Indicator / Measure	How will we collect it?	When will we collect it?
C1	**Improve environmental impact of sugarcane**	Collective assessment of environment outcomes, with robust impact assessment on mid to long-term change in representative contexts. Explore specific questions and aim to understand level of attribution e.g. What would likely have happened without Bonsucro involvement? How have local/regional landscapes changed?	Independent Impact Assessment	At least every 10 years*
C2	**Strengthen Human Rights and Decent Work in sugarcane farms and mills**	Collective assessment of human rights and decent work outcomes, accompanied by robust impact assessment on mid to long-term change in representative contexts. Explore specific questions and aim to understand level of attribution e.g. What would likely have happened without Bonsucro involvement? How have local/regional communities changed?	Independent Impact Assessment	At least every 10 years*
C3	**Create value in the supply chain**	Collective assessment of 'value in the supply chain' outcomes, accompanied by robust impact assessment on mid to long-term change in representative contexts. Explore specific questions and aim to understand level of attribution e.g. What would likely have happened without Bonsucro involvement? How have local/regional markets changed?	Independent Impact Assessment	At least every 10 years*

***** *Independent impact assessments are planned to occur on a regular rotation, supported by other outcome evaluations. "At least every 10 years" recognises that each impact study requires time, focus and resources to be meaningful, and all topics might not be covered simultaneously. We will ensure that in a staggered programme of assessments, each impact goal receives in-depth attention at least every 10 years.*

Tracking unintended consequences

See Unintended Consequences Review 2022 for more information. Stakeholders wishing to discuss unintended consequences of Bonsucro activities please contact lferreira@bonsucro.com.

Unintended consequence/impact	Indicator/Activity
Lose members	Number of resignations per year (by membership category) Capture reasons for resigning
Gain members (via influence outside our main sphere and stakeholders)	Number of new members per year (by membership category) Capture reasons for joining
Organisations drop the Bonsucro Standard(s)	% certifications renewed per year Capture reasons for not renewing certification
Lower uptake of Bonsucro certification	Number of new certifications per year (by Standard type)
Cost of implementing the Standard(s) becomes prohibitive	Average cost of implementation, calculated from a representative sample every 3 years
Cost of administering the Standard(s) becomes prohibitive	Average cost of administration, calculated from a representative sample every 3 years
Lower demand for manual labourers (influencing local un/employment trends)	Survey a representative sample of members every 3 years Identify sector-wide benchmark information
Higher demand for sustainability skills among employees (influencing the local job market)	Survey a representative sample of members every 3 years Identify sector-wide benchmark information

Unintended consequence/impact	Indicator/Activity
Strength of market for certified sugarcane products negatively affected (e.g. higher production costs making certified products uncompetitive or unprofitable)	% market uptake of certified products
Low use of the grievance mechanism	Number of complaints submitted
Poor perception of Bonsucro	Satisfaction Survey results and sector/stakeholder engagement
Wider sphere of influence reached	Capture examples and case studies of positive influence
Unintended consequences foreseen, planned and managed to minimize negative impact	Number of projects that include mention of unintended consequences in their planning documents Number of new unintended consequences added to the log per year

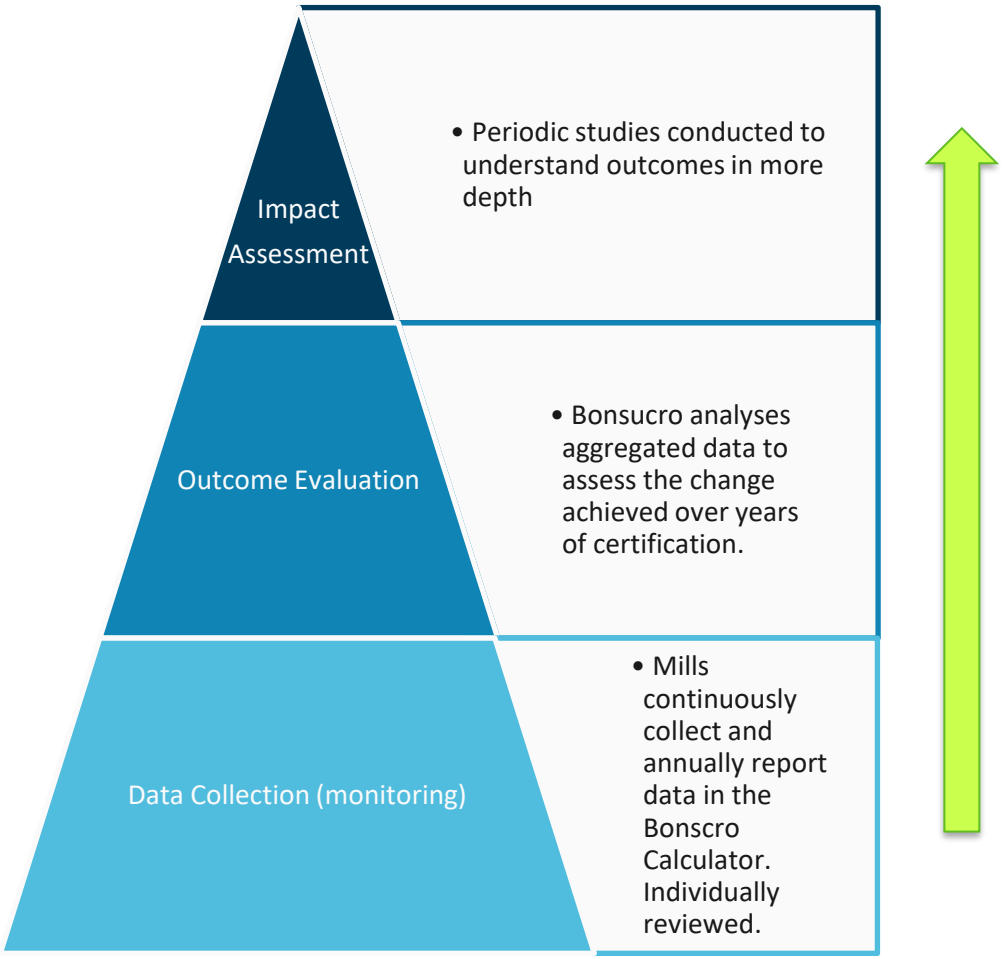
Supporting information

Evaluation activities

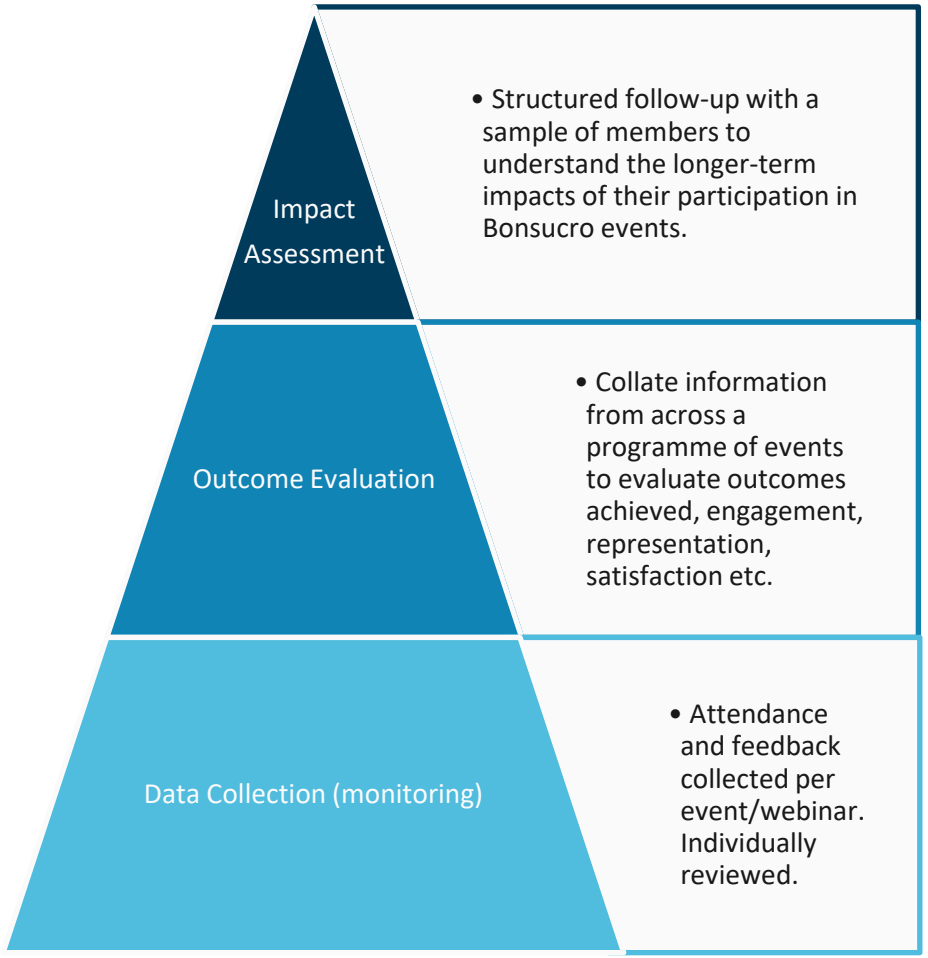
Tracking and reporting KPIs is primarily a form of monitoring. For evaluation, staff are encouraged to **reflect** upon what the monitoring information can tell us about what is working well or not, **explore** the 'why' of trends emerging in the data, and structure a **response** to act on conclusions, insights and lessons learned. Documenting this evaluation and learning, and sharing the results with stakeholders, is an important step in the process.

Examples of monitoring and evaluation at different levels

1. Certification information (Strategy KPIs)



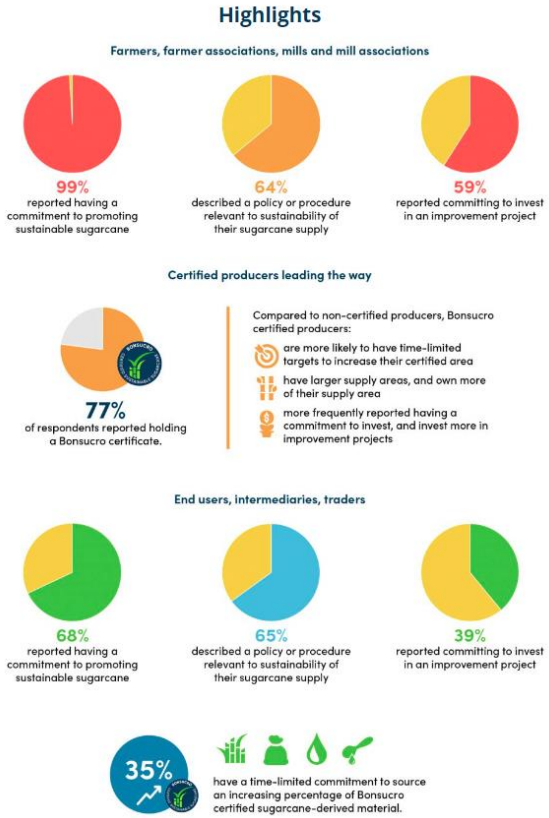
2. Member engagement (events and webinars)



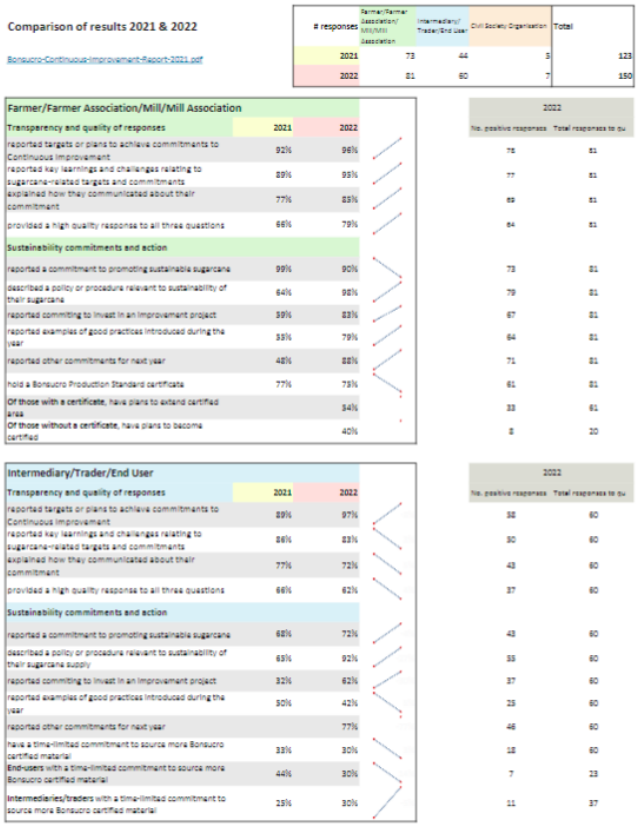
Example M&E to track Members' Continuous Improvement

Since 2021 Members have been invited to complete a survey about their own continuous improvement on sustainability. The behaviour of our Members on sustainability issues offers insight on wider changes in the sector, indicates how they contribute to Bonsucro's own impact goals, highlights areas where Bonsucro can add value, and offers a way to reflect the influence of Bonsucro engagement on key issues. Information is collected annually via a dedicated section of the Members' Annual Report, available as an online survey.

Continuous Improvement Report 2021



Continuous Improvement Report – headline stats comparison 2022 with 2021



Brief evaluation guidance for projects

- Develop a clear M&E framework per project and share with stakeholders. Consider any budget implications.
- Document a baseline at the start.
- Assign person/team responsible for each area of data collection.
- Event/activity debriefs for continuous improvement: What went well? What could be improved?
- Quarterly reporting against framework.
- Mid-way evaluation exercise with project team.
- Steering group or similar to consider M&E reports.
- Independent external evaluation at the end of the project where possible.
- Reflective focus group among project staff and closest collaborators at end of projects/events.
- In addition to objective KPIs, evaluate achievements related to
    - Accessibility of the project process and information
    - Inclusion of all stakeholders
    - Achieving value for different stakeholders
    - Advantages and challenges of collaborative working
    - Wider application of learning
    - Unintended consequences
- For those who had no/low/incomplete engagement with the project, explore why.

Stakeholder engagement

Evidencing the successes and challenges of stakeholder engagement when delivering our work is an important factor in strengthening our systems and enhancing our impact.

We can expect a natural attrition of numbers of people engaged in different phases of stakeholder engagement depending on factors such as time, interest, relevance, language, accessibility of information etc.

Monitoring at three levels will help identify barriers and success factors to stakeholder engagement:

Example Project M&E Materials

[Bonsucro Impact Fund MEL Framework - Final.docx]

[Bonsucro Impact Fund_ MEL guidance_ final.pdf]

Introduction

As a BIF grantee, you will be expected to report on your project to Bonsucro every six months, and at the end. This guidance is to help you gather the right data and monitor your project to increase impact and more easily report on your project to Bonsucro. Please read this guidance in full and use it to support putting your MEL activities into practice.

What is MEL?

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) are fundamental parts of any project. All three aspects are closely linked and comprise a dynamic approach to project management; learnings generated by regularly monitoring and evaluating your project should help you adapt your project to quicken your progress towards positive impact.

This guide helps to break down this MEL approach into easy tasks that can be incorporated into your project.

How the MEL supports the aims of the BIF

The Bonsucro Impact Fund (BIF) supports social and technical innovation, and encourages grantees to try new approaches, anticipate risks and **learn from what works, and what doesn't work** so that successful projects can be replicated and adapted elsewhere

A dynamic MEL approach supports the aims of the BIF.

For MEL, context matters. Who are the people you are working with? Are they smallholders, commercial farmers, artisanal or larger mills? Are they producing under contractual arrangements? Are owners or workers female? Do people lack social or financial support to fully engage with your project?

Understanding this context is a fundamental step in shaping your project to maximise its impact, and also for **helping Bonsucro's network** to understand if their contexts are similar and if they could replicate your project.

Significant changes can happen at any time, and not just at the end of a project. Monitoring the progress your project is making as you go along can help you quickly identify what things are going well and why.

You may find that your water stewardship project has saved much more water than you anticipated. Why would that be? Are smallholders, farmers, mills and workers doing additional activities that are having a knock-on effect?

BIF MEL guidance

Approaches to MEL of the Bonsucro Impact Fund

Transparency: *For MEL to be effective, openness and being honest about what works and what doesn't work is a requisite.*

Learning: *The Bonsucro Impact Fund and our ways of working with grantees provides a safe space in which everyone can ask questions, share challenges, and seek solutions.*

Accountability: *Underpinned by our commitment to openness and knowledge sharing, we will evolve our projects to avoid negative impact on the more vulnerable participants, while boosting positive impact.*

Being pragmatic: *Most projects are complex and it is hard to predict how positive impact can be generated despite modern planning tools. We need to be flexible, learn as we do, and change plans if necessary.*

There are also very commonplace risks associated with projects similar to yours. Monitoring can help you identify what these risks are, and help you mitigate. These risks could be anything from smallholders or farmers signing up, but then dropping out of your project; or more vulnerable groups of workers, such as migrants, or women, losing work as a result of an innovation in farming or milling practices.

Knowing about these changes as they occur means that you are able to learn, reflect and adapt your projects accordingly.

Evaluation is the opportunity you have to reflect and share how the context, and implementing your project, has reshaped your initial idea or plans, and consider whether or not this has led to expected aims or impact.

In this guidance, you will find the support and help you need to operationalise this MEL approach.

In the next section, we explore the BIF's theory of change, and how this shapes what indicators should be used when monitoring and evaluating projects.

Development Plans for the Bonsucro MEL System

In addition to routine M&E activities e.g. annual Outcome Report and Continuous Improvement Report.

Short-term (0-6 months)

- Programme of engagement with staff to reinforce M&E understanding and data culture
- Increase visibility and accessibility of existing M&E information among staff team
- Develop results chains within the Theory of Change
- Develop accompanying log frames for Activity and Output KPIs

Medium-term (6-12 months)

- Develop tools and guidance for staff carrying out MEL in projects and activities e.g. dashboards and templates
- Evolve internal capture of insights and learning, feeding into operational improvements and strategic decisions
- Evolve added value activities for Members e.g. regional data profiles, benchmarking Continuous Improvement information, bespoke reports on request, sharing learning etc.
- Develop additional methods and tools to track the effectiveness of Bonsucro's stakeholder engagement
- Develop methods and tools to track Bonsucro's influence and ability to catalyse change e.g. stories of change
- Build a network of reference data sources outside of certification as a point of comparison
- Improve systems for communicating learning among our network of stakeholders

Long-term (12-24 months)

- Complete an independent impact assessment
- Improve data maturity, based on 2022 assessment and guidance
- Closer alignment of datasets with other standards and systems
- Develop data management protocols e.g. consistent fields for data collection across multiple projects and activities
- Increase visibility and accessibility of MEL information among stakeholders