



Media release of 28 June 2017

Voluntary Sustainability Standards: Growth continues

The latest market data on key Voluntary Sustainability Standards (VSS) is presented in "[The State of Sustainable Markets 2017](#)" report. The 2017 edition was presented yesterday at the Global Sustainability Standards Conference at the World Trade Center in Zurich, Switzerland, where the key results were showcased.

(Frick/Geneva/Zurich, 28 June 2017) The new report "[State of Sustainable Markets 2017: Statistics and Emerging Trends](#)", covering 14 Voluntary Sustainability Standards (VSS), shows continued growth across all products and all standards.

The report presents data that helps small firms take advantage of trends to supply consumers with products that are environmentally sustainable and socially responsible.

Coffee: the largest certified area

The share of standard compliant area reached double digits in 2015 for the following products: more than 25% of land used for coffee production, 16% of land used for cocoa production, 15% of land used for oil palm production, and 14% of land used for tea production are now VSS compliant.

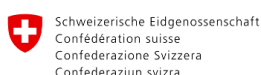
Cotton: largest growth in standard compliant area among certified commodities

The cotton standard compliant area nearly quadrupled between 2011 and 2015, while the banana compliant area almost tripled, and the tea compliant area more than doubled in the same timeframe. The soy and cotton compliant area both grew by close to 50% between 2014 and 2015.

Organic is the standard with the largest certified area

Organic is the largest sustainability standard in terms of area; it is the standard with the largest variety of commodities and is the only VSS operating across all nine sectors covered in this report. In 2015, more than 50.9 million hectares were certified organic, representing 1.1% of the global agricultural land. The single-commodity Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) certified almost 3.5 million hectares, making it the standard

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with the second-largest area, representing 0.07% of the global agricultural area. GLOBALG.A.P. had more than 3.1 million hectares.

Strongest area growth by standard noted for the Better Cotton Initiative

Most of the VSS experienced significant growth between 2011 and 2015.

- Better Cotton Initiative (BCI) standard compliant area expanded almost ninefold between 2011 and 2015, to 2.2 million hectares.
- The area used to cultivate Round Table for Responsible Soy (RTRS) soy increased fivefold and is now at 0.7 million hectares.
- The certified area of Cotton Made in Africa (CmiA) (almost 1 million hectares) and of the Roundtable for Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) tripled between 2011 and 2015.
- The 4C (1.6 million hectares) and UTZ (2.1 million hectares) also experienced a significant growth of their certified area in the same timeframe.

Report "State of Sustainable Markets 2017: Statistics and Emerging Trends"

The "State of Sustainable Markets 2017: Statistics and Emerging Trends" is the second joint report between the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL), the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), and the International Trade Centre (ITC). It offers a comprehensive snapshot of the market performance of global sustainability standards operating in eight products: bananas, cocoa, coffee, cotton, palm oil, soybeans, cane sugar, and tea. The report also covers forestry. This report and the global market survey on Voluntary Sustainability Standards (VSS) is funded by the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO).

This report covers the following standards: 4C, Better Cotton Initiative, Bonsucro, Cotton Made in Africa, Fairtrade International, Forest Stewardship Council, GLOBALG.A.P., IFOAM – Organics International, the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification Schemes, ProTerra Foundation, Rainforest Alliance/Sustainable Agriculture Network, the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil, the Round Table on Responsible Soy, and UTZ.

An interactive database featuring these standards and products will be launched in late September 2017 in Geneva at the Trade for Sustainable Development Forum, allowing policymakers, businesses, standards bodies and researchers access to customized, updated data on these markets.





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Background

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Global Sustainability Standards Conference

The 2017 Global Sustainability Standards Conference, organized by ISEAL Alliance, is taking place at the World Trade Center, Zürich, Switzerland, June 27 to 30.

More information is available at www.isealalliance.org/about-us/annual-conference/2017-conference

Partners

➤ International Trade Centre (ITC)

ITC, founded in 1964, is the joint agency of the World Trade Organization and the United Nations. Our aim is for businesses in developing countries to become more competitive in global markets, to speed economic development, and to contribute to the achievement of the United Nations Global Goals for sustainable development.

Trade for Sustainable Development (T4SD) is ITC's partnership-based programme that helps businesses chart their path to more sustainable trade. The T4SD programme offers access to wide-ranging information for trade-related sustainability initiatives and standards. Building on well-established online tools, such as Standards Map and SustainabilityXchange, ITC will be launching a new platform, the Sustainability Map, in September 2017, which will provide new features such as the Sustainability Network. The online platform enables users, regardless of their position in the value chain, to better understand the sustainability initiatives landscape and to connect with business partners.

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➤ **Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL)**

FiBL, founded in 1973, is a centre for research and consulting on organic agriculture. FiBL's strengths include closely linked interdisciplinary research and the rapid transfer of knowledge from research to extension to agricultural practice. Alongside practical research, FiBL gives high priority to transferring knowledge into agricultural practice through advisory work, training, and conferences. FiBL has offices in Switzerland, Germany, Austria, and France, and a representative office in Brussels. Additionally, FiBL has numerous projects and initiatives in Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America.

FiBL has more than 15 years of experience in collecting and publishing data on organic agriculture. Since 2000, FiBL has been in contact with 200 experts worldwide and has built a network of experts from more than 180 countries who contribute to the data collection. Every year, FiBL and IFOAM – Organics International jointly publish *The World of Organic Agriculture*. This book documents recent developments in global organic agriculture. For more information, see www.organic-world.net.

➤ **International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)**

IISD is a public policy research institute that has a long history of conducting cutting-edge research into sustainable development. Established in 1990, its mission is to promote human development and environmental sustainability through innovative research, communication, and partnerships. The institute has offices in Canada, Switzerland, China, and the United States, and operates in over 70 countries around the world.

IISD has been working on assessing the characteristics, performance, and market trends of Voluntary Sustainability Standards (VSS) via the State of Sustainability Initiatives (SSI) since 2008.

This media release online

This media release and pictures can be accessed online at www.fibl.org/en/media.html.

