

# How business can make smallholder supply chains resilient

Practical ways to use the Sustainable Development Goals

13th-14th March 2018 | London

[www.innovation-forum.co.uk/smallholders-and-the-sdgs](http://www.innovation-forum.co.uk/smallholders-and-the-sdgs)

This two-day conference will assess how business can connect the all-encompassing SDGs to their smallholder supply chains – and the business case for doing so.

The agenda is focussed around specific goals, to avoid the overwhelming nature of the SDGs. By drilling down to the targets, discussion will move towards clear, tangible outcomes and ensure business delegates receive as much practical insight as possible.

Agenda sessions will focus on topics relevant to specific goal targets. Below are a few examples of sessions that relate directly to one of the SDG targets.

SDG	Session
2.A	<b>Farmer access to finance and funding</b> Why is it so hard for smallholders to gain access to finance and funding, and how can business can make it easier for them?
2.4	<b>The consequences of climate change</b> Building farmer resilience to unpredictable weather patterns and droughts to ensure food security
5.1	<b>Gender equality within smallholder farming</b> How can business correct the severe inequalities between male and female farmers?
8.8	<b>Working conditions and human rights on smallholder farms</b> What can business do to ensure the farmers in their supply chains have a decent working conditions?
12.3	<b>Reducing food waste at farm level</b> Best farm management practices, technology and other solutions to reduce and eliminate food waste at the farm level

## Participating organisations include:



HOSTED AND SUPPORTED BY:



# Confirmed speakers include:

David Croft  
Director, global sustainable development  
**Diageo**



Vera Santos  
New approaches project manager  
**FSC**



Sarah Schaefer  
Global policy director  
**Unilever**



Stephan Brunner  
Global key relation manager  
**Bayer**



Michael Gidney  
CEO  
**Fairtrade Foundation**



Chris Brown  
Head of environment  
**Olam**



Mark Wong  
Senior vice president  
**Sime Darby**



Carla Romeu Dalmau  
Senior manager learning and  
impact research  
**IDH**



Nicolas Mounard  
Chief executive  
**Farm Africa**



Michaël de Groot  
Senior investment manager  
**Rabobank**



Sophi Tranchell  
CEO  
**Divine Chocolate**



Jenny Edwards  
Programme lead, sustainable agriculture  
initiative  
**SAI Platform**



Sarah Wakefield  
Food sustainability manager  
**The Co-operative Group**



Amanda Berlan  
Reader of business and sustainability  
**De Montfort University**



Hazel Culley  
Sustainability manager  
**Marks and Spencer**



Jeroen Kroezen  
International programme coordinator,  
fruit and vegetables  
**Solidaridad**



Alan Johnson  
Lead, smallholder supply chains  
**IFC Agribusiness Advisory Services**



Tina Lawton  
Regional director, APAC  
**Syngenta**



Susan Tissiman  
SDU investment associate  
**AgDevCo**



Caroline Ashley  
Head of economic justice  
**Oxfam**



Rachel Kent  
Regional manager – Europe  
**TFT**



Francesca New  
Global sustainability manager  
**Mars**



- **Focused debate**
- **Senior participants**
- **Candid dialogue**

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## **Opening remarks by the conference chairman**

Tobias Webb, founder, **Innovation Forum**

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## **Should business even care about the SDGs when developing smallholder policy?**

The sustainable development goals (SDGs) are a universal set of goals, targets and indicators that UN member states will be expected to use to frame their development over the next 15 years. Many of the goals laid out in the SDGs apply directly to the work companies are already doing in smallholder supply chains. So, if company policy is already in place, why bother with the SDGs?

This session will consider the business case for engaging with the SDGs when developing, implementing and communicating on smallholder development in agricultural supply chains.

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## **How do you connect the all-encompassing SDGs to your smallholder supply chains?**

The SDGs are ambitious, all-encompassing global targets. Sustainability departments are often tasked with turning high-level policy into action on-the-ground. But with the scale of the SDGs this task can seem all the more daunting.

In this plenary discussion, we will address the practical steps that business can take to align company strategy with the SDGs. In particular, we'll ask which SDGs are most relevant to smallholder supply chains, and why. We'll also assess how these can be incorporated into procurement decision making and sustainability policy so that business can focus efforts in the areas that they can deliver most value.

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## **Can the SDGs really drive internal alignment between buyers and sustainability?**

The age-old battle of uniting procurement and sustainability teams has been discussed at length. But part of the draw of engaging in the SDGs is the potential to engage buyers in a common set of objectives, based around one common language. Is this enough to incentivise buyers and to align priorities? Or does it simply present an additional check box barrier to buyers getting the best price?

In this session we will discuss:

- How can the SDG framework be incorporated into procurement decisions?
  - Is this enough to really engage buyers in the sustainability of smallholder supply chains?
  - What are the common challenges and pitfalls when implementing new policy and guidelines into different departments?
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## **Powered by women: how to bridge the gender equality gap within smallholder farming**

Within agricultural supply chains, there is a massive gender gap in low-income countries. There is a distinct difference between the resources and rights available to men who work the land and those available to women who do the same.

Women make up 43% of the agricultural labour force and produce 60-80% of the food crops in poorer parts of the world. They cultivate field and tree crops, tend livestock, and grow home gardens, just as men do. Yet women have less access to land, rights and credit to education and technology than men. Inequality of assets, inputs, and support means women produce less on the same amount of land.

Closing this gender gap presents a significant opportunity for business. They can improve the lives of women, their families and communities, and also tackle poverty, hunger and climate change. All the while, improving productivity in their supply chain.

This session will address what business can do to bridge this gap and provide equal treatment of the men and women - at scale - across smallholder supply chains.

## Breakout sessions

### Breakout one

#### How can business help provide smallholders with the necessary finance and funding that they need?

While agriculture remains a key economic activity in Africa employing about 55% of the population, a meagre 1% of bank lending goes to the agricultural sector. Only 4.7% of adults in rural areas in developing countries globally have a loan from a formal financial institution and only 5.9% a bank account, according to Findex data.

Smallholders need access to finance to buy necessary equipment, invest in improved seeds and to ease cash flow in between harvest times.

This session will question why it is so hard for smallholders to gain access to finance and funding currently, and how business can make it easier for them from now on.

### Breakout two

#### Water scarcity and responsible water usage: How to educate and incentivise smallholders

Agricultural production is the most water intensive activity, consuming roughly 70% of the world's freshwater. One-third of the world's food is produced in areas of high or extremely high "water stress" or competition.

Businesses have a responsibility to educate and incentivise farmers to use water efficiently on their farms – and it pays to do so. This session will look into the latest best practice in water use efficiency, and how this can be communicated down to a farm level.

### Breakout three

#### How to collect, store, share and use relevant data

Access to the right data can lead to significant improvements in supply chains when it comes to resource efficiency, productivity, transparency, and a host of other areas.

How best to use supply chain data in a manner that delivers efficiencies is a key issue for business. But collecting the right data in the first place is often as big a challenge.

This session will study the best tools, data models and sharing platforms available, that enable us to collect and use data in the most effective way.



## What's different about Innovation Forum?

### IF is NOT:

- ✗ **A PR platform:** enthusiastic speakers are NOT given free rein to fill a session presenting their companies, allowing no time to actually get to the crux of the issues.
- ✗ **A talking shop:** this is NOT an opportunity for a group of people in a room to simply agree with everything said, regardless of outcomes.
- ✗ **All promise, no delivery:** we will NOT promise what we can't deliver. The issues covered are complex. They won't be solved at a two-day conference. But we will help deliver progress through in-depth, constructive and practical advice around specific issues.

### IF is:

- ✓ **Candid:** Entirely off-the-record (Chatham House rules) discussion that enables open and honest disclosure from speakers and genuine participation from the audience.
- ✓ **Practical:** A clear focus on the practical and actionable guidance that can drive change throughout industries and supply chains.
- ✓ **Focused:** We provide enough time, resources and expertise to the issues that really matter. We don't skate the surface, but get to the crux of the issues to provide in-depth, constructive discussion.

## Breakout sessions

### Breakout one

#### **The importance of market access and long-term stability for smallholders**

Growing global demand for food offers opportunities for smallholders to gain more returns from participating in markets. However, smallholder farmers are typically unable to take full advantage of new market developments, since they often lack secure access to land and water, inputs, working capital and asset finance, efficient market connectivity, and real time, impartial market information. They seldom have the means to engage equitably in marketplace bargaining or the capacity to influence the national, regional and global policies affecting them.

Improved access to markets can help smallholders build their assets and incomes, in doing so ensuring stable supply. So how can business help?

We will touch on the following points:

- How feasible are long term contracts that offer security to smallholders?
- What are the latest developments that can provide access to accurate, up to date price information for farmers?
- Is there a role for business in simplifying the institutional operating environment to lessen the administrative burden placed on farmers?

### Breakout two

#### **How can companies ensure that smallholders stick to sustainable soil management practices to prevent degradation and loss of biodiversity?**

Converting land with high conservation value, including grasslands, forests and marshes to food production impacts biodiversity and reduces the capacity of natural ecosystems to provide benefits critical to agriculture, including watershed and soil protection, as well as pollination and climate regulation.

Current soil management practices threaten the productivity and sustainability of food systems. About one-third of soil worldwide is moderately to highly degraded due to erosion, nutrient depletion, acidification, salinization, compaction and chemical pollution. These factors deplete and pollute water resources used to grow and process food, increase operating costs and disrupt overall supply chains due to lower and less dependable crop yields.

Clearly, soil is important, so what are we doing to protect it?

### Breakout three

#### **Reducing food waste at farm level, what solutions are available?**

One third of food is wasted. A large part of the loss is created early in the supply chain, between harvesting food from fields and getting it to market. Improper harvesting techniques, poor storage facilities, inefficient infrastructure and many other reasons account for huge losses at the beginning of the supply chain.

The benefits of reducing food waste are obvious. More and better-quality food is delivered to market and the livelihoods of smallholder farmers are improved at the same time.

This session will look at the best farm management practices, technology and other solutions to reduce and eliminate food waste at the farm level.

## **Building farmer resilience against changing weather patterns and droughts**

Climate change has led to unpredictable and undesirable weather patterns, such as droughts, which severely impact smallholders. Miscalculated planting times and failed crops lead to poverty and hunger amongst farmers, as well as destabilising supply chains and jeopardising global food security.

Business needs to play a role in helping farmers become more resilient to climate change, and in doing so safeguarding their own future supply.

This session looks at the ways in which businesses have successfully delivered improved climate resilience to farmers and local communities.

In particular we will address:

- The latest innovations in farming techniques and inputs that reduce exposure to changing climates
- How best to educate farmers around the most efficient use of resources and crop diversification
- The role for business in building capacity in local communities via the installation of renewable energy sources, for example

## Improving farmer co-operatives for increased transparency, integrity, scale and the SDGs

How can farmer cooperatives which are supplying big brands be improved, in terms of function, governance and scale? How can we achieve better verification and expansion of the co-operative idea, reformed in light of modern challenges, corporate needs and the SDGs?

The role of business in supporting farmers' development into independent, profitable enterprises

The future of agriculture does not look bright based on how business and smallholders are currently functioning. Younger generations are opting out of farming to seek more lucrative employment elsewhere. Smallholders need to develop into profitable businesses to ensure the security of next generation farmers.

Business should be looking to develop these smallholders into farming entrepreneurs who own more land, employ staff and run their farms as profitable businesses. Only then will future food security be achievable. We should be aiming to lift ordinary smallholder farmers out of their subsistence lifestyle and into the cash economy.

So how do we do this?

## How are networks, coalitions and NGOs evolving to tackle the challenges of certification and its discontents

This session is a continuation of the infamous certification debate - no doubt there will be strong opinions on both sides of the table.

The vast number of smallholders around the world means that certification alone inevitably has its limits. These limits have been discussed at length, but suitable, scalable solutions to these challenges aren't as forthcoming.

That being said, several companies are now moving towards their own schemes in an attempt to move 'beyond-certification'. Other new approaches are also being considered. One such approach adopted by FSC, enables smallholders to design their own certification systems that work for them. Other approaches based around continuous monitoring are also providing an alternative to traditional certification models.

This session will discuss and debate some of the new approaches, and assess how different actors are evolving to tackle the challenges of certification.

## One common language: Improving communication by aligning your reporting with the SDGs

The SDGs provide a united platform from which businesses can work towards a broad range of sustainability issues, they put everyone on the same page and give us a common language. Having this shared index of targets makes communicating and reporting your smallholder work easier and more efficient.

We'll look into how can business take full advantage of this when it comes to improving and clarifying companies' smallholder reporting, whilst answering questions such as:

- Consumer engagement: Do the SDGs have the potential to engage an audience traditionally unaware of the majority of supply chain actions?
- Investor relations: Does this framework ease investor concerns for better, more relevant information on company performance
- Corporate benchmarking: Can the SDGs present a process for more accurate corporate benchmarking



## Breakout sessions

### Breakout one

#### **How can companies ensure decent working conditions for the farmers in their supply chains?**

Many smallholders are based in countries lacking basic worker protections and agriculture is one of the most dangerous industries, with a high fatal accident rate. Exposure to pesticides and other chemicals also pose health risks, and a lack of social protection schemes exacerbates the situation for agricultural workers, many women are forced to work without pay.

Programmes and policies may help ensure standard working conditions for farmers and labourers, but how can businesses force the implementation of these standards?

This session will discuss how business can monitor, understand and respond to issues around working conditions at the bottom of their supply chains.

### Breakout two

#### **How is business educating smallholder farmers about the consequences of deforestation and stopping traditional techniques such as slash and burn?**

Smallholder farmers are frequently forced to clear areas of valuable forest to make more room for agricultural production. It is bad enough to be clearing forests, but traditional land clearing methods used by smallholders are also very damaging. Often farming in remote areas and with little regulatory oversight, smallholders are far more likely to engage in “slash-and-burn” forest clearance which contributes further to climate change and soil degradation.

The importance of educating the farmers to look after their forests is paramount. What is business doing to prevent farmers from contributing to deforestation? Businesses must ensure that the farmers in their supply chains are educated and trained not to clear areas of land, but to find alternative ways of increasing crop production, such as using shade-grown crops.

This session will uncover the latest best practices for business in engaging and preventing farmers from contributing to deforestation.

### Breakout three

#### **What scientific advances have been made within GM and technology to increase farmer productivity?**

A combination of technology and science can nearly always offer solutions to even the most complex problems. So how can tech (and science) within agriculture help improve farmer productivity and crop yields? How far have genetic modification and engineering advanced and what are the potential health and ethical risks of this approach?

In addition to the technical challenges, convincing a farmer to use 'new and improved' seeds when he has been farming with 'normal' seeds for years may not be easy. To do so will take education and persuasion.

This session will explore the scientific and technical advances being made to increase farmer productivity and crop yields. We'll also assess the ways companies can most effectively engage farmers in these practices.

## Questions?

If you would like to discuss being involved as a delegate, sponsor, or media partner, please email:

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## Register here:

[www.innovation-forum.co.uk/smallholders-and-the-sdgs-register](http://www.innovation-forum.co.uk/smallholders-and-the-sdgs-register)

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## 3 ways to register

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**W** [www.innovation-forum.co.uk/smallholders-and-the-sdgs-register](http://www.innovation-forum.co.uk/smallholders-and-the-sdgs-register)

## WHY ATTEND?

- ✓ **LEARN FROM INDUSTRY LEADERS ON BEST PRACTICES** and get in-depth guidance on how to harness the SDGs to strengthen smallholder supply chains
- ✓ **MEET AND NETWORK WITH AN INFLUENTIAL AND HIGHLY RELEVANT AUDIENCE** of key stakeholders, including NGOs, business, government and supply chain actors
- ✓ **BENCHMARK COMPANY PERFORMANCE** amongst a room of your peers and discover where you should be focusing efforts