



Sustainable Trade Initiative (IDH): Putting people, planet and progress at the heart of trade

Mainstreaming sustainable production and trade in agriculture and manufacturing value chains contributes to the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

As global challenges do not exist in isolation but as part of a dynamic, interconnected complex system, it is not possible for companies, governments, civil society organisations or any other actor to conquer the enormous task by working alone. A wide range of actors with different perspectives, different areas of expertise and different fields of influence need to join together to transform markets and bring about systemic change. Within this environment, the Sustainable Trade Initiative IDH builds broad alliances to catalyse positive change.

Rationale

The production and trade of global commodities are key drivers of prosperity and the basis of sustainable development, yet their value chains are marred by persistent sustainability issues. These challenges are not easily solved, and they call for a sustained and coordinated systemic approach to transform value chains, markets, and landscapes.

Building on 15 years of experience, IDH drives systemic market transformation towards better jobs, better income and better environment for all people, regardless of gender or origin. In fact, IDH drives public private partnerships, which change business practices and contribute generating inclusive growth in key commodity sectors as well as broad sourcing areas. As core donor and strategic partner, SECO, together with other agencies, engages to strengthen IDH's foundation and monitoring framework to ensure that the impact of IDH action can be shown.

Objectives and activities

IDH aims to contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals at large but sets a specific focus on creating positive impact on better jobs (living wage), better income (living income) and better environment with gender as important cross-cutting theme. Particular impact can be shown on SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), SDG 15 (Life on Land) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

SECO country/region
Global

Main funding partners
Switzerland, The
Netherlands (core
donors)

Implementing partners
1000+ public and
private partners

Implementing agency
The Sustainable Trade
Initiative IDH

Duration
2021-2025

Total budget
EURO 270,000,000

SECO contribution
CHF 12,000,000



Main activities are:

IDH convenes coalitions of companies, civil society organisations, trade unions and governments towards joint visions and program agendas for sustainable trade. This includes for example the Cocoa and Forests Initiative in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire or the landscape approaches, where IDH facilitates agreements for whole sourcing areas between public, private and civil society stakeholders to enhance the sustainability and productivity of land and thus secure community livelihoods alongside conservation and restoration of forests and other natural ecosystems. In the present phase of cooperation with IDH, a closer cooperation with the Swiss private sector is envisaged, in particular in the context of cocoa and coffee.

IDH innovates, convenes, and invests in inclusive and sustainable solutions that enable businesses to create value for people and planet, while improving their own performance, to catalyse change at scale. In coffee this means for instance that IDH uses blended finance to de-risk investment in smallholder farmers in ten African countries for fertilizers, seedlings, cash advances, coaching and access to markets.

IDH produces and distributes learnings from important innovations, challenges and experiences in the programs. This means that IDH for example generates data, develops sector analysis, field evidence and business cases and shares those insights with its stakeholders. IDH sets a learning focus on small holder Service Delivery Models, Innovative Finance, Renovation & Rehabilitation, Deforestation, Living Wages/Income, Gender and Working Conditions.

With a partner base of more than 500 companies, 200 public sector actors and over 300 civil society organizations, financial institutions and producer organizations, IDH works in 11 commodity sectors (apparel, aquaculture, cassava, cocoa, coffee, cotton, fresh fruits and ingredients, palm oil, pulp and paper, soy, and tea) in almost 40 countries across the globe and in 17 landscapes in Brazil, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Kenya, Liberia and Vietnam.

Governance structure of IDH

IDH is set up as a foundation, which is led by an Executive Board. The Supervisory Board appoints the Executive Board and also guards the overall policy and functioning of IDH. Furthermore, there is the Impact Committee, which governs the impact of the work IDH is delivering.

SECO engages with IDH since 2013. Together with the other institutional donors, we have the opportunity to provide strategic input during the IDH Multi-Donor Meeting.

How to get involved

IDH fosters collaboration and exchange opportunities around the world for companies, governments, civil society organisations as well as research institutions. For more information, do not hesitate to contact IDH directly.

Further information and contact details

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