

Minutes Beyond Chocolate Steering Committee

23/01/2023

0. Attendance

Name	Constituency	Attendance	Replacement
Steering Committee			
Philippe de Selliers	Small manufacturers (& Chair)	X	
Ricardo Romero	Large manufacturers	X	
Anne Widart	Traders	X	
Karen Janssens	Retailers	X	
Wouter Vandersypen	Social impact investors	X	
Patrick Van Damme	Knowledge institutions	X	
Koen van Troos	Civil society	X	
Filip Vandenbroeke	Government	→	Alexia Herwig
Secretariat			
Charles Snoeck		X	
Marloes Humbeek		X	

1. Opening remarks & introductions

Beyond Chocolate Chairman Philippe de Selliers opened the meeting by welcoming all members. He gave a special welcome to the two new SteerCo members Ricardo Romero and Anne Widart. Ricardo and Anne were selected as representatives of respectively large manufacturers and traders, a decision taken during the last SteerCo meeting of September 2022 and communicated during the General Assembly of October 2022.

Each SteerCo member then briefly introduced himself/herself and explained what they see as their role in the Steering Committee:

- **Philippe de Selliers:** Being Chairman of both Beyond Chocolate and the Belgian chocolate federation Choprabisco, Philippe wants to make a link between the two and put sustainability high on the agenda within the federation. As chairman, Philippe aims to bring together all SteerCo perspectives and expertise to ensure Beyond Chocolate reaches its end goals.
- **Ricardo Romero:** As MEL Manager, Ricardo is happy to bring his expertise in the field of monitoring to the Beyond Chocolate partnership. He aims to build bridges between different stakeholders and support them to find common ground. Furthermore, his involvement in the Beyond Chocolate SteerCo will help him connect the sustainability agenda on Mars level.
- **Anne Widart:** Being responsible for the gourmet market within Barry Callebaut, Anne has a deep understanding of the demand side of cocoa trading and customer requirements.

Furthermore, Anne is also a Choprabisco board member and wants to leverage this connection to make impact.

- **Karen Janssens:** Karen defines herself as a ‘constructive challenger’. She has a special interest in sustainable purchasing practices, urging everyone in the supply chain to take up their part of the responsibility. She aims to further build out her relationship with other Belgian retailers in order to better involve and represent the entire retail sector.
- **Wouter Vandersypen:** Wouter is the head of Kampani, a social impact investor providing growth capital to cooperatives in the developing countries. Wouter is convinced that to address the poverty challenge, we need to fully embrace commercial logic.
- **Koen van Troos:** As CSO representative, Koen wants to play a constructive intermediate role to ensure civil society is closely involved in the Steering Committee discussions. Koen has a special interest in reviewing the Beyond Chocolate Theory of Change and defining the attribution of Beyond Chocolate.
- **Alexia Herwig:** Working as desk officer for the DGD, Alexia wants to ensure a smart use of the investments made by Belgian Development Cooperation. She sees high value in the multi-stakeholder element of Beyond Chocolate.

It was then stated that one of this year’s objectives is to further empower the SteerCo to play its role. It was stressed that SteerCo members are encouraged to contact the secretariat in case they have ideas and suggestions on how the secretariat can further empower the SteerCo members.

After the round of introductions, the SteerCo validated the agenda for the day.

2. Governance: SteerCo Mandate & exclusion procedure

Topic:

- As part of empowering the SteerCo, a clear mandate is needed. The secretariat has proposed a revised mandate including how long SteerCo members can stay on, how new members are selected, what is required from SteerCo members, how decisions are made etc.
- During the General Assembly of October 2022 an exclusion procedure for non-complying Beyond Chocolate partners was announced. However, the validation process wasn’t clear to all SteerCo members. Therefore, the exclusion procedure was put forward again during this SteerCo.

Documents:

- [Steering Committee Mandate](#)

Objective:

- Validation

Discussion Points:

- **On the decision-making process:** The SteerCo raised the point that a majority voting system would not be in line with the spirit of cooperation of the partnership. All members agree that the SteerCo should strive for consensus. In the rare case where consensus cannot be reached, the chairman can make the final decision.
- **On decision-making power:** More clarity on the decision-making power of the SteerCo was requested. The secretariat explained that the SteerCo is asked to advise on the direction of

Beyond Chocolate within the framework (program description and budget) that was agreed upon between IDH and the Belgian government. It should be noted that the SteerCo has played an essential role in the designing and writing of the program description and has therefore influenced the existing framework. The secretariat will make this more explicit in the mandate. It was also stated that the role of the General Assembly should be better defined during the review of the theory of change of the Beyond Chocolate program.

- **On attendance:** The SteerCo unanimously agreed that each member should attend at least 75% of the annual SteerCo meetings and the General Assemblies. If a member does not comply with this rule, the secretariat and Chairman will take this up in a one-to-one meeting to seek for a solution.
- **On mandate:** There was a potential confusion on whether the mandate was applicable to members or organizations. The first was agreed upon: the mandate is applicable to the person that has been selected for her/his expertise and position within an organisation that is signatory of Beyond Chocolate. A mandate as SteerCo member covers a period of three years. Each member can renew its mandate only once, but someone else from the same organization can still submit an application.
- **On transparency:** The SteerCo agreed that more efforts should be put in building transparency towards partners on what is being discussed in the SteerCo meetings. Therefore, the agenda of the SteerCo will from now on be shared in advance and the minutes will also be publicly shared with all partners. Partners can take up contact with their respective SteerCo member in case of questions or suggestions.
- The SteerCo concluded the exclusion procedure proposed by the secretariat was not yet clearly defined and needs to be more detailed on the process that needs to be followed before a partners can be excluded. The secretariat will draft a new proposal based on the input of the SteerCo. The SteerCo will validate the proposal via mail.

Outcome & Next Steps:

- The attached mandate was validated by the Steering Committee. It will be published on the Beyond Chocolate website and will from now on be active. The mandate includes the following points related to discussions had in this SteerCo:
 1. The Steering Committee is engaged to strive for consensus. In case this is not feasible, the Chair will get the final say.
 2. The Steering Committee advises the secretariat within the framework signed between IDH and the DGD, but can not make changes to this framework. It is however to be noted that the Steering Committee plays an important role in the designing and writing of the framework.
 3. The mandate is applicable to members, not organizations.
 4. The Steering Committee agenda and minutes will be shared openly with the partnership.
 5. Each Steering Committee member will attend at least 75% of SteerCo meetings and General Assemblies personally.
- When reviewing the Beyond Chocolate Theory of Change, the objective and decision power of the General Assembly will be defined.
- The Steering Committee will provide input to the exclusion procedure via mail. The exclusion procedure will be in place before the 2023 monitoring round of April.

3. Missions to Ghana & Côte d'Ivoire

Topic:

- At the end of 2022, the Beyond Chocolate secretariat undertook two missions: one ISCO mission to Ghana and one Beyond Chocolate project mission to Côte d'Ivoire.

1. ISCO Mission to Ghana

- **Attendees:** the secretariats of Beyond Chocolate, DISCO, GISCO and SWISSCO
- **Objective:** Meet with local partners and initiatives to discuss complementarity and future collaboration.
- **Highlights & main learnings:** please refer to [this article](#).
- **Conclusion:** It is a valuable to approach producing country representatives together as ISCOs.

2. Beyond Chocolate project mission to Côte d'Ivoire:

- **Attendees:** Project team of the co-financed Beyond Chocolate project “a living income for cocoa farmers in Côte d'Ivoire”, including Colruyt Group, Puratos, Rikolto, Fairtrade, Impact Institute and the Beyond Chocolate secretariat.
- **Objective:** Check advancements of the project, connect with project partners and lay the basis for further scaling.
- **Highlight & main learnings:**
 - In an open conversation with participating farmers, it became clear that the paying of a higher price is an incredibly important intervention. Furthermore, the local fermentation centre and VSLAs have brought many benefits. A challenge is the high degree of illiteracy amongst farmers (80%).
 - The smartest person in the room is the room: the mission allowed project partners to engage in open discussions and revealed the added value of each partner and the potential of multi-stakeholder collaboration. There was a desire for scaling from all participants.
 - The project offers a good case to better understand the role of sustainable purchasing practices.
 - Impact institute is working on a Living Income impact report which will be published in spring. The report will be used to optimize future interventions.
- **Conclusion:** The project is making valuable steps and partners will now look into scaling this approach. Within the living income approach, the role of sustainable purchasing practices is crucial.

Objective:

- Information

Documents

- [Article ISCO mission to Ghana](#)
- [Webpage](#) project “a living income for cocoa farmers in Côte d'Ivoire”

Discussion Points:

- The question was raised if and how the ISCOs are opening up to producing country representatives. It was stated that it is not wishful to include producing country representation in the Steering Committee, as the ISCOs are a market-based initiatives and therefore need to look at how they can create a favourable context for impact in producing countries. That being said, there is a need for improved communication between what happens in producing countries and consuming countries, for example through the joint Cote d'Ivoire Ghana Cocoa Initiative (CIGCI) and the Cocoa & Forest Initiatives in both countries. This mission allowed to establish first connections and to get to know each other, but more efforts are needed in the future.
- The Steering Committee sees the value of project missions and considers the possibility of a Steering Committee mission in 2023.

Outcome & Next Steps:

- The ISCOs will continue to approach producing country representatives jointly.
- The Steering Committee will discuss a possible 2023 SteerCo mission in the Steering Committee of April.

4. 2023 Annual Plan

Topic:

- The secretariat has prepared a draft annual plan based on inputs from previous SteerCo meetings, the Beyond Chocolate mid-term evaluation and discussions with Belgian government.
- The Steering Committee is asked to reflect on the 7 identified workstreams/priorities in this Annual Plan and to determine to which of these workstreams the most/least secretariat capacity should be invested. Since the secretariat has relatively limited human resources, this will allow for them to make decisions on what to do and what not to do. Secondly, each SteerCo member is asked to reflect on his/her specific role and responsibility within these workstreams.

Objective:

- Discussion & Validation

Documents

- [Beyond Chocolate 2023 Annual Plan](#)

Discussion Points:

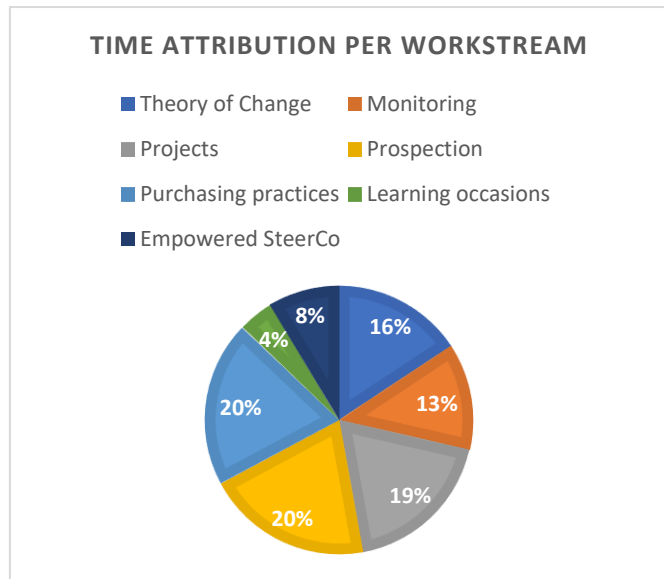
- The SteerCo ranks the proposed priorities in the following order from “1: high secretariat investment needed” to “7: low secretariat investments needed”.

1. Purchasing Practices
2. Prospection
3. Projects
4. Theory of Change
5. Monitoring
6. Empowered SteerCo
7. Learning Occasions

- A discussion started on the importance of growing the partnership. Beyond Chocolate

states that by 2025 all chocolate produced and/or sold on the Belgian market will be certified and/or covered by a corporate sustainability scheme. On the production side, Beyond Chocolate has a good market coverage (about 90%) but on the consumption side, only 57% of the market is involved at this point. There is a risk of Beyond Chocolate losing credibility if this market coverage is not increased. As the Belgian market is quite fragmented, the SteerCo advises the secretariat not to spend their time on going after all smaller brands individually but to approach Choprabisco and the three traders to define how to accelerate the move towards the intermediate 100% certified/company scheme objective.

- The importance of putting retailers, brands and traders in contact and of addressing sustainable purchasing practices was stressed.
- It was stated that the Theory of Change needs to clarify what will happen to partners who do not meet their 2025 target.



Outcome & Next Steps:

- The Beyond Chocolate 2023 Annual Plan was validated by the SteerCo.
- The secretariat will focus on:
 1. Better understanding existing sustainable purchasing practices and will start to define key principles. This input will then be used to build knowledge and share guidance with the partnership.
 2. Revieng the Beyond Chocolate Theory of Change (see below).
 3. Covering a bigger share of the market by collaborating with Choprabisco and couverture makers to attract new partners.
 4. Making the co-financed projects a success by sharing lessons and launching a new impactful call for proposals.

To a lesser extent, work will be invested in the annual monitoring, knowledge exchange and empowering the SteerCo;

5. Theory of Change Review

Topic:

- As was recommended in the Beyond Chocolate mid-term evaluation, there will be a review of the Beyond Chocolate theory of change in 2023, specifying amongst others the attribution of the Beyond Chocolate program. The Steering Committee is asked what the reviewed Theory of Change should look like and what process should be followed to reach that reviewed theory of change.

Objective:

- Discussion

Discussion Points:

- **On what an ideal Theory of Change should look like:**
 1. The ideal theory of change is clear and to the point;
 - The interactive Fairtrade International Theory of Change is put forward as an example.
 2. The ideal theory of change clarifies roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder group;
 3. The ideal theory of change should be based on a solid context analysis.
 - The market has changed since the signing of Beyond Chocolate (Covid, economic crisis,...).
 - Would help to better define where we can have an added value.
 - It is advised to look at studies (eg. Le Basic study in margins in the German cocoa sector) to better understand what interventions work and what responsibility each stakeholder could take.
- **On the process that should be followed:** All SteerCo members agreed that, in this case the process is as valuable as the outcome. A small, dedicated task force should give shape to a first version of the theory of change, after which a wider partner consultation should take place. The Steerco also advises the secretariat to hire a consultant to work on this theory of change. This could be one of the universities involved in Beyond Chocolate.

Outcome & Next Steps:

- The Beyond Chocolate secretariat will draft a Terms of Reference for the theory of change task force as well as a timeline. The objective is to present a review ToC at the next General Assembly of the partnership.
- The Beyond Chocolate secretariat will check if budget is available to hire a consultant and will reach out to knowledge institutions that are signatory.

6. Varia

Topic:

- It was announced that Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands signed a [joint declaration of living income and living wage](#) last summer. This could offer an opportunity for showcasing the work done through beyond chocolate.
- From May 17th -19th the academy on food and laws in Portugal will take place. SteerCo member Alexia Herwig will teach a course. More information can be found [here](#).
- The secretariat informs the SteerCo that it is currently reviewing the monitoring framework of Beyond Chocolate and the wider ISCO monitoring framework. The vision behind the reviewed framework is to
 - Decomplexify and shorten the framework;
 - Look at the entire supply chain instead of focusing on the program level;
 - Focus more on impact;
 - Put Living Income central

Beyond Chocolate and DISCO have completely aligned frameworks (18 out of 18 indicators are aligned) and the other ISCOs have to a large extent (14 out of 18 indicators are aligned). The Steering Committee will receive the full framework in March and the monitoring round will take place in April.

Objective:

- Information

Outcome & Next Steps:

- The reviewed monitoring framework will be discussed and checked with several M&E experts in one-to-one calls (including SteerCo member Ricardo Romero) and with the ISCO Monitoring Working Group. The Steering Committee will receive the monitoring framework for validation in March.

Next Steering Committees (with preliminary agenda)

Steering Committee of April 24th

Time: 11am-5pm, including lunch

Agenda

- Guest speakers: Jean-Pierre Ernotte on the World Cocoa Conference 2024
- Guest speakers: Samuel Poos on the Enabel Coaching Program
- Validation call for proposals governance and criteria
- Discussion on task force purchasing composition
- Update on the 2023 monitoring round
- Discussion draft theory of change
- Discussion on SteerCo mission

Steering Committee of August 30th**Time:** 2pm-5pm**Agenda**

- Validation 2023 Annual Report
- Discussion on agenda 2023 General Assembly
- Update on the Call for Proposals
- Discussion on purchasing practices outcomes

Steering Committee of November 30th**Time:** 2pm-5pm**Agenda**

- Discussion & Validation 2023 Annual Plan