

Minutes Steering Committee

02/02/2024, 10am-1pm

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	
Alexia Herwig	Government	X	
Secretariat			
Charles Snoeck	IDH	X	
Marloes Humbeeck		X	
External speaker (first 30 minutes)			
Nicolas Deckers	I love Belgian chocolate / Puratos	X	

1. External presentation: I love Belgian chocolate

Topic

After welcome words by Chairman Philippe de Selliers, the word was given to Nicolas Deckers to present the 'I love Belgian chocolate' platform and potential areas for collaboration with Beyond Chocolate. 'I love Belgian chocolate' consists of an online platform and app that promotes the quality, innovation, and sustainability of Belgian chocolate. The primary audience of the platform are consumers (B2C), the secondary Belgian chocolate companies (B2B). The platform is already supported by the three couverture makers and the Walloon region. Conversations with Brussels and Flanders, as well as other potential investors are ongoing. Nicolas proposes to have Beyond Chocolate provide input for the sustainability section of the platform.

Documents

- Annex B. Powerpoint presentation 'I love Belgian chocolate'

Discussion points & outcomes

The Steering Committee was positive about reinforcing the link between Belgian chocolate and Beyond Chocolate. It was concluded that the collaboration would be beneficial for Beyond Chocolate on different levels:

- **B2C comms:** If Beyond Chocolate provides input for the sustainability section of the platform, the power of the platform could be used to reach out to consumers without the time investment it would take doing this directly.

- **Naming & faming:** It would be interesting to explore how organizations that are part of Beyond Chocolate and/or organizations that book results towards the partnership goals can be valued (naming and faming).
- **Prospection:** Clearly communicating about Beyond Chocolate on this platform used by SMEs could attract new partners.

The SteerCo also stressed to be cautious on the following points:

- **Communication & terminology:** The SteerCo stressed to be careful with the term 'sustainability' and avoid presenting all Beyond Chocolate partners as 'sustainable'.
- **Capacity secretariat:** The SteerCo stressed that only limited capacity of the secretariat should go to this collaboration to leave time for the other priorities of the year.

Next steps

- **The SteerCo gave the secretariat the mandate to continue exploring collaboration with I love Belgian Chocolate, keeping in mind the above points for caution.** The secretariat will reach out to the I love Belgian chocolate team and will give the SteerCo an update during the next meeting.

2. SteerCo mandate & evaluation 2023

Topic

The secretariat started by sharing the SteerCo mandate and opening the floor for members who would like to leave and open their position.

The SteerCo was then asked to evaluate the performance of the Beyond Chocolate partnership vis-à-vis the deliverables set at the start of 2023.

Documents

- Annex A. Presentation SteerCo 02/02/2024
- Annex E. SteerCo mandate
- Annex F. List of prospects

Discussion points & outcomes

The SteerCo mandate states members are appointed for three years, after which the mandate can be opened to others or prolonged for another three years. It was discussed whether it would be beneficial if each SteerCo member reaches out to their constituency on a yearly basis to check if anyone else wants to apply to be a SteerCo member. In the end, the SteerCo decided to be pragmatic and only check in with the constituency when a mandate is over. Next, Alexia Herwig was appointed as SteerCo member for government, taking the place of Filip Vandenbroeke.

The SteerCo discussed which deliverables were met and which still needed further work in 2024.

1. **Qualitative annual report:** The SteerCo reviewed this deliverable as being met, urging the secretariat to explore how to increase individual accountability in 2024.
2. **Renewed theory of change:** The SteerCo was positive about the process and results of the theory of change review which was seen as consultative and informative. The next step in 2024 is to finalize the roles and responsibilities per stakeholder group and to keep the document alive.

3. **Impactful field interventions:** As no projects were approved for co-financing in the end, this deliverable was not met. The SteerCo stressed the need to analyze why the concept notes Beyond Chocolate received were not ambitious enough before launching a new call for proposals. The risk was shared that partners who have spent time on developing project proposals become demotivated. Furthermore, it was stressed that communications on approval or declining concept notes should be clear so we avoid confusion and frustration. It was concluded the process for the next call for proposals will be discussed in a dedicated meeting with interested SteerCo members. For the content, the criteria set previously by the SteerCo and included in the call for proposals will remain active.
4. **Sustainable purchasing:** This deliverable was not seen as met, but it was initiated with the LI expert workshop of December. The SteerCo asked the secretariat to ensure the content of this workshop is actively used and also asked to share the purchasing practices paper DISCO is developing with the partnership once ready. The SteerCo agreed guidance on sustainable purchasing remains a priority for 2024.
5. **Insightful learning occasions:** The SteerCo was positive about the learning occasions created by Beyond Chocolate on the topic of living income and considered this deliverable as met.
6. **Bigger market share covered:** The SteerCo stressed the need to identify the target when it comes to prospection. The question was raised whether we want to attract all companies or only focus on those with larger volumes. The secretariat has made a list of the major companies missing so far in terms of volumes (see annex F). It was also stated that the added value and return on investment of being a Beyond Chocolate signatory needs to be clear to companies.
7. **Empowered SteerCo:** The SteerCo was positive about the level of trust and ownership that was built the past year. It was indicated that for some stakeholder groups, there is little communication between the SteerCo member and the constituency (low attendance in events, no response to SteerCo agenda,...). The Beyond Chocolate secretariat is support the SteerCo members in question to address this challenge.

Next steps

- **The SteerCo composition will remain the same as last year, with Alexia Herwig replacing Filip Vandenbroeke for the DGD.**
- The deliverables that weren't met in 2023 will be addressed in 2024. **A follow-up meeting** will be organized with interested SteerCo members to review the process of the **new call for proposals**.

3. 2024 annual plan

Topic

The SteerCo was presented with a draft annual plan including 4 priorities for the year in order of importance: increase partner accountability, increase market demand and uptake of living income cocoa, implement impactful living income projects and foster collaboration. They were asked to further develop the annual plan, adding definitions of success and deliverables, and defining the role for the secretariat and SteerCo.

Documents

- Annex A. Presentation SteerCo 02/02/2024

Discussion points & outcomes

1. Increase partner accountability.

- Key deliverables:
 - *Final theory of change in place*
 - *More detailed and precise commitments are taken by stakeholders and stakeholder groups*
 - *All partners report by April and annual report published in September.*
 - *Secretariat & steerco hold individual partners accountable when there's lack of progress.*
- The SteerCo agreed increasing accountability is one of the most important roles of the Beyond Chocolate initiative and should therefore be central to the annual plan. It was agreed upon that individual accountability should be further developed. In the past months the secretariat has updated the monitoring framework to increase individual accountability and has checked and refined these changes with monitoring experts. This review of the framework should allow us to better identify which partners are performing well or are underperforming. Once the reporting data is in, the SteerCo will discuss possible tools to improve individual accountability. As such the publication of a color code evaluation per stakeholder and the idea of adopting individual action plans/roadmaps were raised as options.
- The SteerCo is in agreement of the current annual monitoring process but suggests to put more effort into communicating reporting results back to the different stakeholder groups. The SteerCo identified the role of the secretariat as coordinating the annual monitoring, chasing partners to report, and informing the partnership about the results and next steps.

➤ **The proposed deliverables were then validated by the Steering Committee.**

2. Increase market demand and uptake of living income cocoa.

- **Deliverables**
 - *Inspiration guide for SMEs published by WCC5.*
 - *Learning event organized for SMEs*
 - *Retail commitment on LIRP payment*
 - *CEOs traders convened by June 2024, to discuss progress towards 100% certification, and a future LI offer.*
 - *Increase # of signatories reporting on LI cocoa*
 - *At least 5 new partners join Beyond Chocolate*
- It was proposed that next to the individual trajectories for SMEs, traders and retailers, a trajectory for government should be included. Beyond Chocolate could create leverage for a more coherent approach of Belgium towards more sustainable cocoa from a policy perspective. As such, we could look at fiscal instruments to make it more attractive for companies to source cocoa at a living income tariff (e.g. tax reduction). Civil Society could play a big role in lobbying for this.
- The point was raised that there is a general need to work on sustainable purchasing. As such, to reach a LIRP commitment from retailers, there's also a need to guide the retailers more on sustainable purchasing and the business model this could bring.

➤ **The proposed deliverables were then validated by the Steering Committee.**

3. Implement impactful living income projects.

- *By October 2024, at least two scalable living income projects led by coalitions of partners have started implementation.*

- *At least 5 learning opportunities on projects (events, blogs, publications,...)*
- The SteerCo stressed the need to analyze why the call for proposals wasn't a success last year and make corrections before launching the new call. As such, it should be ensured that the return on investment of participating in these projects is clear to partners. Furthermore, bottlenecks (payment of the LIRP, focus on innovation) should be identified and addressed.

➤ **The proposed deliverables were then validated by the Steering Committee.**

4. Foster collaboration

- *Deliverables:*
 - *Deliverable (a) - Beyond Chocolate and key partners are featured in the program.*
 - *Deliverable (b) - A joint vision document (2026-2030) is developed by the secretariats.*
 - *Deliverable (c) - A successful board meeting is organized to evaluate and review the ISCO collaboration (and MoU).*
 - *Deliverable (d) - Ensure next pilots are set in CFI region.*
 - *Deliverable (e) - Set up system for sharing of data & monitoring burden.*
- The point was raised that the CSOs within Beyond Chocolate can link up with local CSOs to ensure their voice is also heard in the partnership.

➤ **The proposed deliverables were then validated by the Steering Committee.**

Next steps

- After final validation by the SteerCo, the **annual plan will be shared with all partners.**
- **The SteerCo members are asked to share with the secretariat their individual commitments for the year.**
- A **follow-up call specifically on the co-financed projects** will be organized in the following weeks for those interested.

4. Varia

The SteerCo received the report of the living income expert workshop of December and the agenda of the world cocoa conference of April. For the latter, Beyond Chocolate will have a speaking slot in the panel "Sustainable cocoa: why are we stuck and how can we fix it?".

5. Annexes

- Annex A. Presentation SteerCo 02/02/2024
- Annex B. Powerpoint presentation 'I love Belgian chocolate'
- Annex C. Report living income expert working group
- Annex D. Draft agenda WCC (confidential)
- Annex E. SteerCo mandate
- Annex F. Prospection strategy

6. Upcoming SteerCo meetings & preliminary agendas

- **29/04/2024, 10am-1pm**
 - Update on monitoring process: reply rates
 - Update on collaboration I love Belgian chocolate
 - Feedback world cocoa conference
 - Update on launch call for proposals
 - Update on trajectories retail & SMEs
- **09/09/2024, 10am-1pm**
 - Monitoring results & annual report
 - General Assembly
 - Update on approved projects
- **02/12/2024, 2pm-5pm**
 - Update on trajectory traders
 - Evaluation 2024 & draft annual plan