

# ANNUAL REPORT 2015

# GSSI'S YEAR IN NUMBERS

I Global Benchmark Tool launched at 20th Anniversary of FAO Code of Conduct. >17 GSSI partners committed to include Tool outcomes in buying decisions. >186 GSSI Essential Components and 137 GSSI Supplementary Components in the Tool. > 8 seafood certification schemes from across 7 countries were involved in the Tool's pilot. **350 comments** were received during the Tool's public consultation. >10 GSSI Steering Board meetings and 4 GSSI Expert Working Group meetings were held. >10 Independent Experts and Benchmark Committee Members were trained on the Tool. 3 regional workshops with the FAO reached 100+ participants from **25 countries**. GSSI travelled to **16 countries** for workshops and events. SGSI participation at events worldwide reached 1200+ seafood sector stakeholders. >1000+ GSSI brochures were handed out at international events in 2015. >30+ media articles appeared on GSSI in 2015. >15 GSSI e-updates and press releases were sent out to 900+ subscribers. >1000+ views of GSSI on YouTube and following GSSI on Twitter. > 28 companies committed to join the GSSI Foundation as Funding Partners in 2016.

# A WORD FROM THE CO-CHAIRS OF THE GSSI STEERING BOARD



Bill DiMento, High Liner Foods



Tania Taranovski, New England Aquarium

**2015 was a flagship year** in the GSSI journey with the October launch of the Global Benchmark Tool following the hard work and commitment of all involved over the last three years.

Warm thanks goes to GSSI's stakeholders: the Steering Board and Committee Members for strategic guidance in delivering GSSI's objectives; Expert Working Group Members who worked collaboratively to finalize the Tool; certification schemes who partnered with GSSI for the pilot; the public for their comments in the consultation; Independent Experts and Benchmark Committee Members who ensured a credible process; the FAO for their expertise and close engagement.

Special thanks go to Metro Group for facilitating the work of GSSI through the Consortium since 2013 up until GSSI's incorporation as a Foundation in September 2015. Warm appreciation also goes to: the Funding Partners who enabled the success of the initiative; German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and implementing partner, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH for their support; IDH (The Sustainable Trade Initiative) who co-funded the Tool pilot. GSSI's Secretariat deserves special recognition for delivering the demanding 2015 workplan.

In 2015, GSSI achieved what it was set up to do in developing a robust, credible Tool that aims to provide clarity on seafood certification and make information available across the supply chain, helping buyers to make informed and efficient decisions. In 2016, we are expecting the first schemes to be recognized by GSSI. Industry, NGOs and governments will be able to use the Tool outcomes and schemes will be able to adopt the Tool, supporting continuous improvement. Going forward GSSI has a unique opportunity to build on its ability to deliver results by looking at potential new workstreams, which will be addressed in GSSI's Vision 2020 later on in 2016.

We look forward to working closely together for another productive year ahead for GSSI!

#### **GSSI JOURNEY TO 2015**

#### APRIL 2009

OECD Round Table on Eco-Labelling and Certification in the Fisheries

**Sector,** The Hague. Participants from the seafood sector, NGOs, seafood certification schemes, FAO and governments agreed on the need for an assessment framework and benchmarking exercise to evaluate the various eco-labelling schemes on offer.

#### 2010-2012

Ahold, Metro Group, National Fisheries Institute and New England

Aquarium explore the feasibility of developing a global organization for benchmarking of seafood certification schemes. Joined by GIZ, they present to the global seafood industry and FAO at the Boston Seafood Show, Brussels Seafood Show, and Seafood Summit, Hong Kong.

#### FEBRUARY 2013

GIZ, 17 global seafood companies and retailers and 3 NGOs sign a strategic alliance for a 3-year Public-Private Partnership to develop a global benchmark tool for seafood certification schemes - the Global Sustainable Seafood Initiative (GSSI).

#### JUNE 2013

GSSI Steering Board sets up multistakeholder Expert Working Groups for Aquaculture, Fisheries and Process to develop the GSSI Global Benchmark Tool. FAO provides technical assistance in using FAO Certification and Ecolabelling Guidelines.

OCTOBER 2013 GSSI Expert Working Groups meet for the first time in London and Boston

MARCH 2014 First draft of the Benchmark Tool is presented to GSSI Steering Board.

JUNE-AUGUST 2014 Global Public Consultation on first draft of GSSI Global Benchmark Tool. 30+ organizations submit 2000+ comments.

SEPTEMBER 2014 GSSI Steering Board assesses comments from first Public Consultation.

# WHAT GSSI DELIVERED IN 2015

#### OCTOBER 2014 - FEBRUARY 2015

SSI Expert Working Groups update the Global Benchmark Tool based on First Public Consultation

#### MARCH

GSSI Steering Board approves
second draft of Global Benchmark
Tool. 8 seafood certification schemes
sign up to be part of the GSSI Pilot Test

#### APRIL

An important step forward for GSSI came in April 2015 with the adoption of the first GSSI Charter by GSSI partners. The Charter, which was developed by the GSSI Steering Board, sets out the guiding principles and goals for the partnership and platform's activities. The Charter also outlines critical success factors for the



initiative, which include having a: "committed business; strong GSSI; market share for certified seafood; delivering improvement; strong relationship within GSSI, and solid economic business case for GSSI."

#### APRIL – JUNE

 Global Public Consultation on second draft of GSSI Global Benchmark
Tool. 15+ organizations submit 350+ comments

#### JULY

SSSI Expert Working Groups on Fisheries, Aquaculture and Process meet to discuss results from the Pilot Test and finalize the Global Benchmark Tool

AUGUST ►End of GSSI Pilot Test

#### AUGUST - SEPTEMBER

GSSI and FAO regional workshops in Bangkok, Cape Town and Santiago de Chile. The workshops focused on certification and benchmarking with governments, industry and NGOs in 25 countries.

#### **GSSI VISION:** MORE SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD FOR EVERYONE

#### SEPTEMBER

#### GSSI FOUNDATION SETS IT UP FOR THE FUTURE

Building on the adoption of the Charter, **GSSI was incorporated as a Foundation** under Dutch law in September 2015. This sets GSSI up as a self-sustaining organization to host the Global Benchmark Tool and offer benchmark services to certification



At the same time, the Foundation allows GSSI to develop a longer-

schemes.

term vision towards 2020 and look at workstreams that are of added value to partners and the sector more widely by engaging in public-private partnerships. GSSI's success story in 2015 can be shown through the 28 partners who have committed to join the GSSI Foundation as Funding Partners in 2016.



SEPTEMBER GSSI Steering Board officially approves Global Benchmark Tool

#### OCTOBER

SGSSI and Global Benchmark Tool presented to over 60 FAO member states at the 8th session on the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture, Brasilia



#### LAUNCH OF GSSI GLOBAL BENCHMARK TOOL

GSSI Global Benchmark Tool was launched with FAO at the 20 year Anniversary of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries in Vigo, Spain



#### **GSSI MISSION:**

ENSURE CONFIDENCE IN THE SUPPLY AND PROMOTION OF CERTIFIED SEAFOOD AS WELL AS TO PROMOTE IMPROVEMENT IN SEAFOOD CERTIFICATION SCHEMES

#### GSSI PARTNER STATEMENT FROM 17 GSSI PARTNERS

Commitment to support all GSSI recognized seafood certification schemes: "As strong supporters of GSSI we, the below retailers, brand manufacturers, traders and food service companies, commit to include the outcomes of the GSSI Benchmark Tool in our daily operations by recognizing all GSSI recognized certification schemes as acceptable when sourcing certified seafood. We encourage companies across the seafood sector worldwide to join our commitment."

#### GSSI GOALS IN 2016 AND BEYOND

#### 2016+

Schemes sign up to be benchmarked.

First GSSI recognized schemes.

Seafood sector (industry, NGOs, governments) uses Tool outcomes in operations and certification schemes adopt the Tool, supporting continuous improvement.

#### 2018

Formal review of the Global Benchmark Tool to keep it updated and relevant.

#### By 2020

Target to achieve: 30% of seafood to be certified to a GSSI recognized scheme.

#### DELIVERY AGAINST OBJECTIVES OF GSSI CHARTER IN 2015

#### ✓ DELIVERED

**To provide an international multi-stakeholder platform** for collaboration and knowledge exchange in seafood sustainability.

#### ✓ DELIVERED

To develop an internationally agreed set of requirements and indicators to measure and compare the performance of seafood certification schemes, in order to facilitate their implementation and use.

#### DELIVERED AND ONGOING

To build, operate and maintain a common, consistent and Global Benchmark Tool for seafood certification schemes.

#### 

To reduce cost by eliminating redundancy and improving operational efficiency of seafood certification schemes thereby increasing affordability and flexibility within the supply chain.



# GSSI GLOBAL BENCHMARK TOOL UP AND RUNNING

**GSSI's Global Benchmark Tool** for seafood certification schemes went live in 2015, developed through the first collective and non-competitive approach to provide more clarity on seafood certification. This milestone was achieved thanks to the strong support and commitment of partner companies, NGOs, experts, governmental organizations and the FAO.

The Tool was launched at the FAO's 20th Anniversary of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries in Vigo, Spain on 8 October. The event was attended by industry, NGOs, governments, certification schemes and the media. The press release of the launch included the commitment by 17 GSSI partners to use the Tool outcomes in daily operations and a call for schemes to go through the benchmark process. Since the launch, non-partner companies have joined this commitment, with others encouraged to do so. Schemes have also signed up to be benchmarked and updated their programmes in response to the Tool.

The Tool received a positive reception worldwide including from certification schemes and industry. Articles on the launch ran on more than 15 media sites including: The Aquaculturist, FIS-news, Fish News EU, The Fish Site, Fishing soc, Globefish, Infoyu, Intrafish, SeafoodNews, SeafoodSource and Undercurrent news. GSSI partner support was captured in a GSSI film on the launch on *www.ourgssi.org.* 

Throughout 2015, GSSI stakeholders contributed their expertise and resources to developing a robust and rigorous Tool made up of 186 GSSI Essential Components and 137 GSSI Supplementary Components. Following the second draft of the Tool updated by the Expert Working Groups in February, a 60-day public consultation was held from April to June, resulting in 350 comments from across the seafood sector.

From March to July the Tool was piloted with eight certification schemes across seven countries worldwide to road-test its use and to familiarize schemes with the benchmark process. The schemes collaborating with GSSI for the pilot were: Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute's Responsible Fisheries Management Scheme; Aquaculture Stewardship Council; Global Aquaculture Alliance Best Aquaculture Practices; Iceland Responsible Fisheries Foundation; Indonesia Good Aquaculture Practices; Marine Stewardship Council; Thai Agricultural Standard (TAS) on Good Aquaculture Practices for Marine Shrimp Farming, TAS-7401-2009; Vietnam Good Aquaculture Practices. Ten Independent Experts and Benchmark Committee Members were also trained in the pilot.

The lessons learned from the pilot test and the comments from the public consultation were taken on board by the Expert Working Groups on Fisheries, Aquaculture and Process who met in July to finalize the Tool, with FAO experts closely involved. The Tool was then officially approved by the GSSI Steering Board in September. Moving ahead, GSSI will be able to publicly recognize schemes that meet GSSI Components grounded in the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and FAO Guidelines for seafood certification and ecolabelling.

In 2015 GSSI delivered on its mission "to ensure confidence in the supply and promotion of certified seafood as well as to promote improvement in seafood certification schemes." Looking ahead to 2016 GSSI is focused on consolidating the results of the Tool. That means encouraging schemes to sign up to be benchmarked and building momentum across the sector (industry, NGOs, governments) to make use of the Tool outcomes in daily operations.

# THE GLOBAL BENCHMARK TOOL IN 2015

"This year we are celebrating the 20 year anniversary of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, which is a very important milestone for FAO. In the same year we are also seeing now for the first time the Benchmarking Tool coming out of GSSI as a robust Tool, an instrument for clarity on certification in the marketplace."

Audun Lem, Deputy Director, Fisheries and Aquaculture Department, FAO

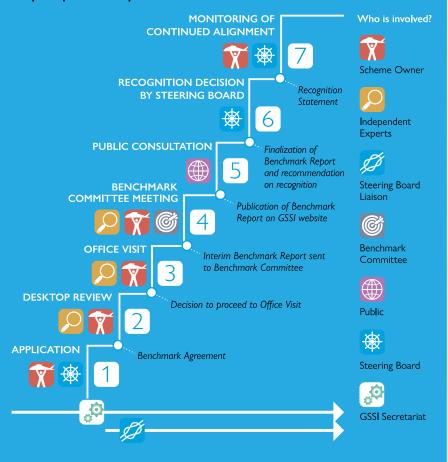


"As one of the founding partners of GSSI I am very pleased to see the GSSI Global Benchmark Tool being launched, this is an important step towards simplifying buying decisions and providing clarity to the seafood certification landscape. Metro Group is committed to source certified seafood from GSSI recognized certification schemes in the future, and encourages all certification schemes to apply for benchmarking."

Jürgen Matern, Vice President Corporate Sustainability and Regulatory Affairs, Metro Group "The participation in the GSSI Pilot Test Program has been an interesting journey for us. It has given us the opportunity to look at our own certification program in a critical way, as well as we are certain that our participation has been a valuable input in the development of a useful tool, that honors internationally adopted principles and guidelines. We hope that the result will be a fair and objective tool that will level the playing field and promote order in the market for seafood."

**Dr. Hrefna Karlsdóttir,** Project Manager, Iceland Responsible Fisheries Foundation (IRFF)

#### From Application to Recognition: Key steps and responsibilities in the GSSI Benchmark Process



"I would like to applaud the efforts of the GSSI and the Fisheries Expert Working Group (F-EWG). This was a truly multi-stakeholder driven process where all opinions were voiced and heard. The spirit with which the F-EWG was conducted was collaborative and open in order to reach consensus among often opposing view-points. I really appreciate the professionalism with the process and I was happy to be part of getting the benchmark tool finalized."

Wendy Norden, Monterey Bay Aquarium

## GSSI EXPANDS WORLDWIDE REACH WITH FAO

#### In 2015, GSSI significantly expanded its global

**engagement,** working with the FAO to reach out to member states. Greater outreach has supported GSSI to become a truly global organization, bringing together public and private partners and deepening dialogue with governments.

Strong engagement at regional level supports GSSI's principles as set out in the Charter: "the partnership shall aspire to engaging with small and less developed schemes to provide them with a pathway towards recognition by GSSI." GSSI's pilot test on the Tool from March to July involved certification schemes from Southeast Asia, namely IndoGAP, Thai Agricultural Standard and VietGAP. Collaboration between national schemes and GSSI is being warmly welcomed, as voiced by the Vietnam representative at the Tool's Launch event in Vigo.

"Many members strongly supported the GSSI Global Benchmark Tool as a timely and practical tool to help implement the Technical Guidelines and the Evaluation Framework, to simplify certification schemes and choices by consumers, to help identify gaps in national certification schemes, to assist in capacity building and partnerships across global fish value chains, and as a means of further promoting the [FAO] Technical Guidelines [on Aquaculture Certification]."

#### Official Report: 8th Session of the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture, FAO

Three regional workshops in Bangkok, Cape Town and Santiago de Chile were held jointly with the FAO between August and September on "Awareness Building on Fisheries Ecolabelling, Aquaculture certification, Conformity Assessment and Benchmarking." The workshops brought together over 100 participants from governments, industry and NGOs in 25 countries. The events helped to map out the certification landscape and raise awareness on the value of benchmarking and GSSI. As the South African representative at the Tool's Launch event made clear, the FAO member countries are keen to get further involved with GSSI.

GSSI and the Global Benchmark Tool were also presented to over 60 FAO member states at the 8th session of the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture in Brasilia in October. Many member states voiced their support for the Tool and for the FAO's close cooperation with GSSI, in particular from countries that had attended the joint FAO-GSSI regional workshops. More information was requested from governments, alongside calls for greater capacity building.



#### FAO MEMBER STATE ENGAGEMENT 2015 AUGUST-SEPTEMBER

**3 Regional Workshops together with FAO** (in total over 100 participants) in Bangkok, Cape Town and Santiago de Chile

#### Participating countries in the 3 regional workshops:

Angola Argentina Bangladesh Brazil Brunei Darussalam Cambodia Chile Colombia Ecuador India Indonesia Lao PDR Madagascar

Mexico Mozambique Myanmar Namibia m Peru Philippines South Africa Sri Lanka Thailand Vietnam Zambia Zimbabwe

#### OCTOBER

Presentation at Sub-Committee on Aquaculture (COFI-AQ), Brasilia

Launch of the Benchmark Tool at 20th anniversary of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF), Vigo



#### GLOBAL STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH THROUGH CONFERENCES AND EVENTS 2015

#### JANUARY

Regional certification workshop FAO, Bangkok

#### MARCH

Seafood Expo North America (SENA), Boston

APRIL TILAPIA 2015 conference, Kuala Lumpur Seafood Expo Global, Brussels

JUNE FAO-EUROFISH workshop, Yerevan

#### OCTOBER

Conxemar Conference, Vigo Seafood Directions, Perth

European Aquaculture Society (EAS), Rotterdam

GAA-GOAL Conference, Vancouver

41st Forum on Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture, Hamburg

NOVEMBER Global Sustainability Forum, Dublin

GLOBAL STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH 2012-2014

#### PARTICIPATION OF CERTIFICATION SCHEMES IN PILOT TEST 2015

ASC, The Netherlands ASMI, United States GAA-BAP (global) GAP TAS-7401, Thailand IndoGAP, Indonesia IRFF, Iceland MSC, United Kingdom VietGAP, Vietnam



## GSSI BUILDS GLOBAL PROFILE AND PRESENCE

#### GSSI moved centre stage in 2015,

strengthening its communication activities and building a greater profile and presence through developing user-friendly materials. This has been in line with the Charter's Partnership policy: "communication shall actively seek to establish the purpose and progress of GSSI to ensure the ongoing visibility and credibility of our activities."

Newly designed GSSI resources have included the GSSI brochure, Charter, Global Benchmark Tool, Tool flyer and newsletter, presentations, e-updates, press releases and FAQs. In 2015, 15 GSSI e-updates, announcements and press releases went out to a 900+ strong mailing list.

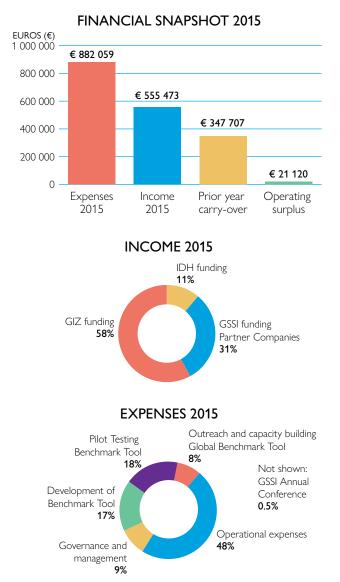
GSSI material was also translated into Spanish and French. GSSI travelled to 16 countries for workshops, events and the pilot test in 2015, reaching over 1200 sector stakeholders at events worldwide and handing out over 1000 GSSI brochures. Alongside coverage of the Global Benchmark Tool launch, articles on GSSI have appeared in both *Infofish* and *Rural21*. *Seafood Digital International* cited GSSI as one of the top ten trends shaping the way seafood buyers will operate in the future.

**Two GSSI short films**, Global Seafood Solutions and the Global Benchmark Tool Launch, and a nine-part Speaker Series

featuring GSSI's partners, were produced and made available on *www.ourgssi.org*.

GSSI's social media presence grew with GSSI on Twitter. There have been over 1000 views of GSSI's multi-media on YouTube or following GSSI on Twitter.

#### GSSI 2015 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

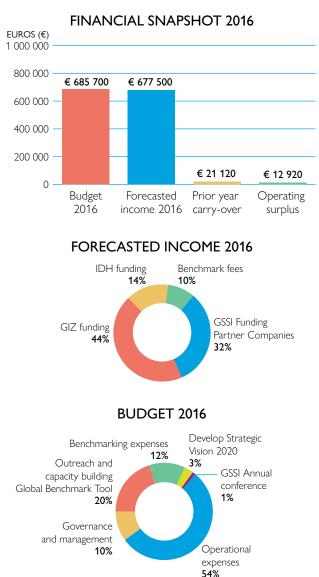


**Expenses:** Expenses were 8% lower than budgeted mainly due to efficient collaboration with FAO on the regional workshops and postponing of the expenses for benchmarking.

**Income:** 12% lower than budgeted due to the decision to postpone the collection of the Benchmark Fees and the contribution of one Partner Company to 2016.

**Result:** Operating surplus of 2015 will be carried over to 2016 to support the operating activities of 2016.

### **GSSI 2016 FINANCIAL OUTLOOK**



**Budgeted expenses:** Decrease in expenses is mainly caused by the fact there will be no expenses associated with development and pilot testing of the Global Benchmark Tool. Expenses that are anticipated to increase include the expenses for benchmarking, the expenses for outreach and capacity building, and development of a strategic vision towards 2020.

**Forecasted income:** An increase of approximately € 120 000 is expected in 2016. This increase in income is expected to come from:

- 1. growth of the GSSI Partnership resulting in an increase of € 50 000 in membership fees,
- 2. benchmark fees paid by certification schemes that have applied to be benchmarked,
- increase in financial support from IDH and GIZ to cover the increased expenses for outreach and capacity building for the Global Benchmark Tool globally.

**Expected result:** The operating surplus is anticipated to be around zero.

## GSSI FINANCIAL OVERVIEW 2013 - 2016

	2013	2014	2015	BUDGET 2016	TOTAL 2013-2016
EXPENSES					
Operational expenses	€ 234 117	€ 267 942	€ 425 117	€ 369 500	€ 1 296 676
Governance and management	58 930	17 908	76 410	70 200	223 448
Mid-term evaluation	0	26 354	0	0	26 354
GSSI Annual Conference	12 426	6 005	4 285	8 000	30 716
Development of the Benchmark Tool	40 556	163 321	148 938	0	352 815
Pilot Testing Benchmark Tool	0	0	158 401	0	158 401
Outreach and capacity building Global Benchmark Tool	3 548	4 652	68 909	138 000	215 109
Benchmarking cexpenses	0	0	0	82 500	82 500
Development Strategic Visison 2020	0	13 731	0	17 500	31 231
Subtotal expenses	€ 349 577	€ 499 913	€ 882 060	€ 685 700	€ 2 417 250
INCOME					
GSSI funding Partner Companies	€ 334 848	€ 219 017	€ 174 807	€ 220 000	€ 948 671
GIZ funding	321 666	321 666	321 666	300 000	1 264 998
IDH funding	0	0	59 000	95 000	154 000
Benchmark fees	0	0	0	62 500	62 500
Subtotal revenues	€ 656 514	€ 540 683	€ 555 473	€ 677 500	€ 2 430 169
RESULT					
Subtotal result	€ 306 937	€ 40 770	€ -326 587	€ -8 200	€ 12 919
Prior year carry-over	0	€ 306 937	€ 347 707	€ 21 120	
Operating surplus	€ 306 937	€ 347 707	€ 21 120	€ 12 920	€ 12 919

#### Whereas:

- Operational expenses: Includes expenses for Secretariat and Communications, this includes the expenses for GIZ staff working for the GSSI Secretariat.
- **Governance and management:** Includes expenses for meeting rooms, legal advice for the GSSI Foundation, expenses for financial management of the GSSI Foundation and the expenses for professional facilitation of the Steering Board and Partner Council meetings.
- Mid-term evaluation: Includes expenses for obligatory project evaluation under GIZ, conducted Jul-Sep 2014 by CAL Limited.
- **GSSI Annual Conference:** Includes expenses for logistics of the annual GSSI Partner Council meeting.
- Development of Global Benchmark Tool: Includes expenses to support development of the GSSI Global Benchmark Tool by Expert Working Groups (EWGs), including: technical consultant support to the EWGs, travel expenses support for non-industry EWG members and expenses for logistics of EWG meetings.
- Pilot Testing Global Benchmark Tool: Includes expenses for a Pilot Testing Program of the GSSI Global Benchmark Tool with 8 seafood certification schemes globally, as well as the expenses for the training of Independent Experts and development of training materials for Benchmark Committee members.
- Outreach and capacity building Global Benchmark Tool: Includes the expenses of the development of targeted communication materials, participation at international conferences and events, and outreach and capacity development, including engagement with National Certification Schemes, in Asia, Africa and Latin America together with FAO. The outreach and capacity building activities in Asia, Africa and Latin America are financially supported by GIZ and IDH.
- **Benchmarking expenses:** Includes expenses for benchmarking certification schemes, benchmarking expenses are estimated to be cost neutral and covered by the Benchmark fees paid by applicant schemes.
- Outreach Global Benchmark Tool: includes expenses for 3 regional workshops in Asia, Africa and Latin America together with FAO to build awareness and support for GSSI and its Global Benchmark Tool.
- Developing Strategic Vision 2020: Includes expenses for the development of a strategic vision for GSSI towards 2020, including a Social Scoping study which was added to the project concept in 2013 as part of increased funding in the Strategic Alliance with GIZ in 2014 and 2015.





Find out more:

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