



Sustainable Performance Assessment (SPA)

May 2012

Rationale

Over the last few years, many of SAI Platform member companies have encouraged their farmers and/or suppliers to adopt Principles and Practices (P&Ps) for sustainable agriculture. As a second step, they wished to identify practical indicators as well as a good tool to help farmers assess the level of implementation of these guidelines, and its impacts on the economic, social and environmental pillars of their farm sustainability.

Phases 1, 2 and 3

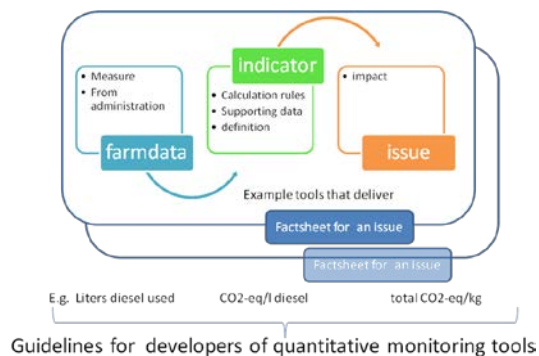
In mid 2010, the Sustainable Performance Assessment (SPA) project was launched - aiming to extract the best indicators and assessment tools from existing farm sustainability evaluation methods. It has progressed through three different phases and outcomes. Each phase was “steered” by volunteer member representatives (over 20 people) and reviewed by recognised external experts:

- Phase 1: List and benchmark of existing indicators (published end 2010)
- Phase 2: List and benchmark of existing sustainability tools (published in 2011)

At the end of phase 2, members agreed that the most promising route for their purpose was to add calculation tools on climate, biodiversity, water etc as separate modules to existing Farm Management Systems (FMS). This had to be completed in a consistent manner to make the resulting indicators of future FMS comparable and aggregable. At the end 2011, the third phase was launched to define a set of factsheets with requirements (farm data, algorithms and indicators) which would serve as guidelines for builders of dedicated software and FMS.

Glossary of SPA terms

The outcome of SPA phase three is a final report containing a set of seven factsheets on climate change and energy; water use; nutrient efficiency; soil quality; biodiversity; pesticides; and land use. Other factsheets may follow in the future on subjects such as animal welfare; farm economics; occupational health and safety.



Intellectual property and use

The final report was published in early May 2012. SAI Platform naturally has intellectual ownership of the guidelines, but not of the tool(s) which will be developed or adapted to follow these. Everyone is free to use the guidelines as they wish. Companies developing software tools for monitoring and reporting sustainable farming are encouraged to make use of these for further deployment of their tools – in a way that is endorsed by member companies.

Next steps

The SPA report published in May 2012 represents version 1.0. The guidelines will be pilot tested in 2012-2013 and, based on the test findings, improved and revised. Version 2.0 of the report will be published in 2014.

Further information

Read SPA Q&A or contact our secretariat: peywema@saipatform.org or efellus@saipatform.org.