



CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT GOAL & OBJECTIVE SETTING

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Establishing mutually agreed upon continuous improvement goal(s) and objective(s) with sponsors and partners is crucial to your project's success. These critical elements will form the foundation of your project's **Continuous Improvement Plan**.

Goals are the outcome you are looking to achieve. Objectives outline the strategies and activities that will help you achieve this outcome.

Defining Your Project's Continuous Improvement Goal

Each project, regardless of pathway, is asked to describe the continuous improvement goal that forms the basis of the project's Continuous Improvement Plan. This goal serves as the north star for the project by defining clear targets for documenting and demonstrating how the project supports participating farmers in accelerating continuous improvement in a specific sustainability and/or regenerative outcome. Collectively working to define the intended outcome up front is time well spent. By engaging fellow leads and partners in this critical design step, you are able to also identify potential challenges to achieving your goals such as capacity, economic barriers, competition, market, or resource challenges.

As you craft your continuous improvement goal, reflect on what capabilities and resources your project can

uniquely offer to help participating farmers advance on their journey of continuous improvement. To inform your goal statement, it may be helpful to reflect on the underlying intent of the Project Pathway you selected; the natural resource concerns where your project is located; and the collective sustainability and/or regenerative priorities of the leads and partners engaged in the project. To aid you in drafting your project's goal statement, work through the questions on the following page.





1

**Which phase of a farmer's continuous improvement journey does this project seek to support?
How will your project meet that aim?**



Awareness

Do you want to help farmers form a better understanding of how their management practices intersect with sustainability and/or regenerative outcomes?

Do you have unique capabilities to help more farmers get started on a journey of continuous improvement?

Are you interested in creating the enabling conditions needed to help farmers get more engaged in sustainable and/or regenerative agriculture?



Knowledge

Do you want to help farmers unlock improved profitability and productivity through sustainable and/or regenerative principles?

Do you have unique competencies in helping farmers analyze how their sustainability and/or regenerative performance can help them pursue greater operational efficiencies while improving environmental outcomes?

Are you interested in helping farmers and the supply chain understand a baseline of sustainability and/or regenerative performance and potential strategies to improve upon that over time?



Action

Do you want to help farmers overcome the barriers to adopting practices that would lead to improved sustainability and/or regenerative outcomes?

Do you have resources to help share in the agronomic and financial risk that farmers face when pursuing management changes?

Are you interested in helping farmers pursue improvements in environmental outcomes and quantifying the related sustainability and/or regenerative impact?

2

How can your project respond to the region's natural resource concerns?

Are there specific ways that you could support farmers in addressing the identified natural resource concern where your project is located?

What specific management practices in the region would lead to improved outcomes to address the natural resource concern?

3

How can you deliver against sustainability and/or regenerative priorities of project leads and partners?

Beyond addressing the region's natural resource concerns, are there targeted outcomes that are a priority for one or more project leads or partners?

What specific management practices in the region would lead to improvements in these targeted sustainability and/or regenerative outcomes?

Once you have answers to these questions, you can begin crafting both your continuous improvement goal, objectives, and public summary that will be listed for your Fieldprint Project in the Field to Market [Project Directory](#).



Developing Measurable Objectives to Evaluate Progress

After your project has defined its Continuous Improvement Goal, you can move on to the next step of designing your Continuous Improvement Plan: developing objectives that will help you communicate both the continuous improvement strategy your project will employ and how your project will evaluate progress. Field to Market's Fieldprint Project Standard for accelerating continuous improvement requires all projects enrolled in the Project Directory to develop **at least one specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timebound (SMART) objective** and **establish a corresponding baseline** against which the project will evaluate progress in achieving its intended outcome.

While a Continuous Improvement Goal provides the overarching direction for your project, your objectives set SMART targets for key strategies you will use to evaluate progress in reaching your goal—helping align Project Leads and Partners on the how. By setting multiple objectives, projects can also engage interested stakeholders on progress achieved against interim milestones for ambitious Continuous Improvement Goals that may require multiple years to accomplish.

There is freedom within the frame of Field to Market's Fieldprint Project Standard for each project to meet the core requirement, while setting objectives tailored to meet your project's unique intent, needs, and circumstances. As you develop the continuous improvement objectives, consider the following types of continuous improvement objectives to guide your strategy:



Engagement

This type of continuous improvement objective focuses on the number of farmers or acres your project will seek to engage.



Adoption

This type of continuous improvement objective centers on the influence your project seeks to have in increasing adoption of practices proven to drive improved outcomes.



Impact

This type of continuous improvement objective focuses on quantifying sustained improvements in sustainability and/or regenerative outcome(s).

To demonstrate the collective impact of Field to Market's membership with projects enrolled in the Project Directory, all projects are asked to set an engagement objective, which sets targets for the number of growers or acreage the project seeks to engage over its lifetime. This also meets the core requirement of the Fieldprint Project Standard for a SMART continuous improvement objective.

Additional continuous improvement objectives could be added to demonstrate the specific strategy your project will utilize to accelerate continuous improvement; communicate interim milestones to evaluate progress against the project's overarching goal; and support the underlying intent of a specific project pathway. For instance, all Innovation Projects should plan to communicate either an Adoption or Impact objective in addition to the required Engagement objective to clarify how you will accelerate adoption to improve the targeted sustainability and/or regenerative outcome(s) your project has identified.





Putting It All Together: Your Project's Continuous Improvement Plan Summary

Your Continuous Improvement Goal will form the basis of your project's public-facing summary, outlining your project's approach to accelerating continuous improvement in the targeted sustainability and/or regenerative outcome(s). **In this summary statement, we encourage projects to utilize their Continuous Improvement Goal and clearly communicate where the project will operate, what crops it will target, and how the project's continuous improvement strategy seeks to address local natural resource concerns where the project is located.**

Review the following examples for ideas and guidance in crafting a Project Summary, Goal, and Objectives for your Fieldprint Project based on the pathway you selected.

SAMPLE PROJECT SUMMARY, GOAL & OBJECTIVE(S)



INCUBATION

SUMMARY: Together University Extension and local Soil and Water Conservation Districts will provide educational opportunities for cotton producers in the Texas Panhandle to influence continuous improvement in irrigation water use efficiency outcomes. By conducting educational events and field days, our project will first introduce advanced irrigation water management techniques and then offer follow-up consultations to interested growers. Our project seeks to engage 75 farmers in sustained outreach and technical assistance to improve irrigation water use efficiency by December 2030.

GOAL: Influence continuous improvement in irrigation water use efficiency outcomes.

ENGAGEMENT OBJECTIVE: Engage 75 farmers in sustained outreach and technical assistance to improve irrigation water use efficiency by December 2030.

ADOPTION OBJECTIVE: Support at least 50 farmers in installing subsurface drip irrigation systems by December 2030.



INSIGHT

SUMMARY: Improving water quality in the Mississippi River Basin is a critical need for the state of Indiana. Over three years, our project will engage 100 corn farmers throughout the state to analyze year-over-year continuous improvement in water quality outcomes utilizing the Fieldprint Platform. We aim to improve water quality outcomes by helping participating farmers benchmark their performance against their peers and gain deeper insights into the suite of management practices that can reduce sediment and nutrient loads in Indiana's waterways.

GOAL: Improve water quality outcomes for Indiana corn production.

ENGAGEMENT OBJECTIVE: Engage 100 corn farmers to analyze year-over-year continuous improvement in water quality outcomes and benchmarking their performance against their peers from the 2028 crop year through the 2030 crop year.

ADOPTION OBJECTIVE: Support at least 50 participating corn farmers in adopting advanced nutrient management strategies to reduce nutrient loads in Indiana's waterways by December 2030.



INNOVATION

SUMMARY: Partnering together to deliver improved sustainability outcomes for the Mississippi River Basin, Acme Rice has convened supply chain partners and trusted advisers to engage 75 farmers in optimizing irrigation water use efficiency, improving water quality outcomes, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions for Arkansas rice production.

GOAL: Improve irrigation water use efficiency and water quality outcomes while reducing rice methane emissions.

ENGAGEMENT OBJECTIVE: By 2028, engage 75 rice farmers to analyze continuous improvement in sustainability outcomes and benchmark their performance against their peers.

ADOPTION OBJECTIVE: By 2030, drive a 30% increase in the number of participating farmers in our projects that implement alternate wetting and drying, nutrient management, and irrigation water management.

IMPACT OBJECTIVE: By 2030, support participating farmers in reducing total project rice methane emissions by 10%.