

# RTRS Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning system

## Version 2.0 - Draft

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The RTRS official languages are English, Spanish and Portuguese, however in case of any inconsistency between different versions of the same document, please refer to the English version as the official one.

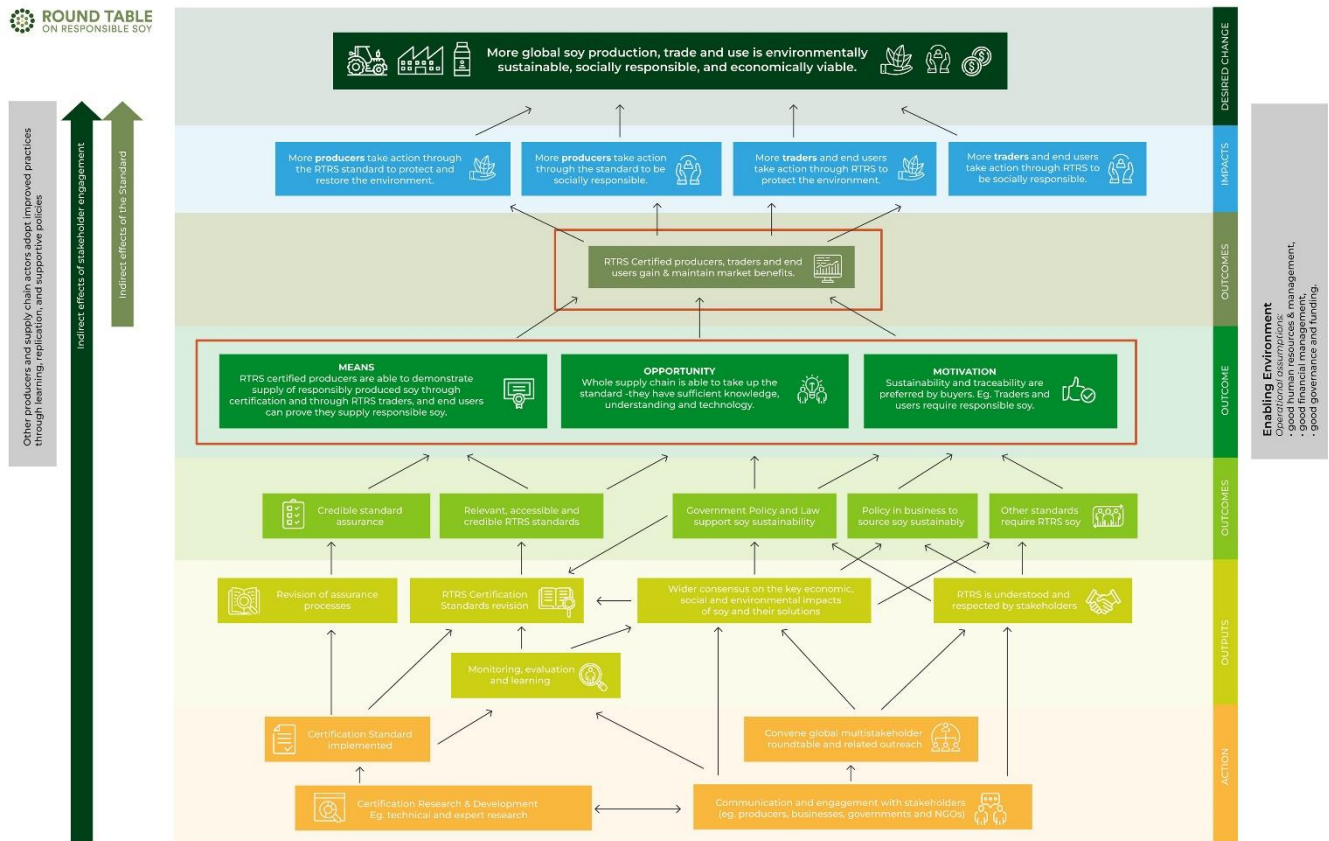
## 1. Components

The RTRS Monitoring Evaluation and Learning (MEL) System consists of several components, which include:

- The RTRS **Theory of Change** (ToC), which describes the links between RTRS activities and the intended mid- and long-term outcomes and impacts of the organization.
- The RTRS **Indicators**, which are used to measure the actual impacts of the implementation of the RTRS Standard System and the impacts of the multi-stakeholder activities.
- The **MEL plan**, which is used to track and evaluate and learn from the indicators.
- The **impact evaluation and reporting process**, whereby the RTRS will regularly inform its stakeholders about its actual (vs expected) outcomes and impacts.

## 2. The Intended Impacts and Outcomes of the RTRS

The Theory of Change shows the intended impacts and outcomes of the sustainability system, as well as the strategic activities and causal links.



## 3. Theory of Change Narrative

The Round Table on Responsible Soy (RTRS) – is a non-profit multistakeholder global organisation promoting the growth of production, trade, and use of responsible soy, RTRS’ mission is to promote the growth on production, trade, and use of responsible soy through cooperation with actors in and relevant to the soy value chain from production to consumption in an open dialogue with stakeholders including producers, suppliers, manufacturers, retailers, financial institutions, civil society organizations and other relevant actors.

RTRS also sets the standards for responsible soy production and chain of custody. Particularly, the RTRS Standard for Responsible Soy Production scheme ensures that RTRS soy not only meets the highest environmental criteria (including a guarantee of third party-verified zero deforestation and zero conversion) but also a wide-reaching set of social and labor requirements. It is based on five principles: Legal Compliance and Good Business Practices; Responsible Labor Conditions; Responsible Community Relations; Environmental Responsibility and Good Agricultural Practices.

RTRS engages with stakeholders (including producers, traders, users, governments, sectorial organizations other standards, among others) mainly through a strong multistakeholder membership community which is RTRS' highest decision-making level. Additionally, and to foster stakeholder engagement and to encourage collaboration large international conferences are organized, as well as task forces in different countries, field trips, etc., around common goals. On top of this, RTRS presents and promotes the Association mission in various different local and regional platforms around sustainable soy (and corn) supply chains.

Through the certification scheme, with a credible, accessible standard, and trustworthy assurance, RTRS producers, traders and users are able to credibly demonstrate support and /or supply of responsible soy.

Stakeholders, through understanding the standard and the benefits it brings, decide to support (governments); choose (businesses) and recognize (other standards) RTRS soy.

This mutual support of supply and demand leads to long-term benefits for the territory and the entire supply chain, which means that responsible soy is recognized and included in organization's sustainability policies and is part of their sustainable sourcing.

In the longer term it is possible to see the local environment being protected, conserved, and restored, and being socially responsible (respecting labour conditions and the inclusion and respect of the community).

Ultimately, more soy globally is produced in a responsible way.

#### **4. Scope and boundaries of the Monitoring Evaluation and Learning System.**

The RTRS MEL System seeks to understand if the RTRS is achieving its expected mid-term and long-term impacts and outcomes, and how it can improve its impact. The MEL system also covers assumptions in the ToC, and major unintended consequences. The RTRS MEL System, including the Theory of Change, is designed to comply with ISEAL Impact Code.

The MEL system caters to the following main objectives:

- Understand, measure and monitor the actual outcomes and impacts (both positive and negative) of RTRS as both a voluntary scheme and a multistakeholder roundtable;
- Adapt and steer the RTRS strategy, standards and procedures in light of the results of the MEL System;
- Communicate on the outcomes and impacts of the organization to RTRS stakeholders and the public;

The MEL system will be reviewed at least once in 3 years, or earlier upon decision by the General Assembly or as required by ISEAL membership requirements.

The RTRS MEL system aims to measure environmental and socio-economic impacts of

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RTRS certification in relation to the sustainability criteria included in the RTRS Standard, as well as the impact it has on the entire soy supply chain. The MEL system also seeks to understand and improve the effect that the Roundtable activities have on the understanding of the standard and the legislation, choice and stipulation on RTRS certified soy by governments, businesses and other voluntary standards respectively.

The RTRS MEL system does not seek to monitor non-certified entities, the work of other Soy standards or products other than soy and corn.

## 5. The Unintended effects, both positive and negative

Strategy/Activities	Unintended Effects
Development, implementation and continuous improvement of a comprehensive set of environmental and socio-economic requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The standard may be too broad and/or too stringent, thus reducing the number of certified operators and ultimately its impact on soy supply chains.</li> <li>- Those soy farmers who have missed the deforestation deadline, but still want to protect the environment cannot gain market benefits for doing so.</li> <li>- Those soy farmers who have missed the deforestation deadline cannot gain market benefits through the standard, and therefore decide to deforest what they are legally allowed to deforest, as well as not implementing sustainability practices.</li> <li>- Smallholders may not be able to access the scheme, either through financial or logistical barriers and thus cannot attain market benefits.</li> </ul>
Development, implementation and continuous improvement of traceability requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Additional traceability costs for certified operators might decrease their competitiveness in certain markets.</li> </ul>
Development, implementation and continuous improvement of a robust assurance system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Additional assurance costs for certified operators might decrease their competitiveness in certain markets.</li> </ul>
Roundtable for Responsible Soy creates opportunities for stakeholders to understand more about responsible soy production.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Non-certified producers use the standard as a guide for continuous improvement and without getting certified and entering into the RTRS market. However, they may make improvements to their practice which then benefits workers and/or the environment or saves them money.</li> </ul>

## 6. Roles and responsibilities

The MEL System is developed and maintained by both staff in RTRS Secretariat and external consultants. The MEL Manager and main contact for the general public in regards to the overall MEL system is Ana Laura Andreani ([ana.andreani@responsiblesoy.org](mailto:ana.andreani@responsiblesoy.org))

The percentage of the budget of the Technical Unit assigned for the development and maintenance of the MEL System will be decided on annual basis, which will first be approved by the RTRS Executive Board and afterwards endorsed by the RTRS General Assembly.

## 7. Outcome and Impact Evaluation

Performance monitoring resulting in an annual internal report will cover:

- Facts and figures about RTRS certification and certified organizations (e.g. volumes of RTRS certified soy, hectares of land in cultivation, etc.)
- An evaluation of the outcomes/impacts of the implementation of the RTRS standard against the expected outcomes/impacts. If significant deviations from the expected outcomes/impacts are observed, the MEL report shall propose improvements in the RTRS strategy and/or a revision of the mid/long term expected outcomes and impacts.
- An evaluation of strengths and weaknesses of the MEL system, along with suggestions for improvement.

An externally available outcome and impact evaluation will be commissioned on an annual basis.

The results of the evaluation shall be approved by the Executive Board. Upon approval, the report shall be distributed to all RTRS members, certified organizations, certification bodies, accreditation bodies, and made publicly available on the RTRS website.



**ROUND TABLE**  
ON RESPONSIBLE SOY

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