ISEAL MEMBERS BUILD PUBLIC DATABASE OF PESTICIDES AND INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT

**Project duration:** December 2016 to December 2017

A coalition of ISEAL members have received a grant from the ISEAL Innovations Fund to help them take a major step towards their ambitious long-term aim of eliminating highly hazardous pesticides. Juan Carlos Isaza, Program Manager at the Global Coffee Platform, explains more about this project.

**Can you tell us who is involved in this, and why?**

The ISEAL Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Coalition is a partnership between UTZ, Better Cotton Initiative (BCI), Bonsucro, Fairtrade International, Roundtable on Sustainable Materials (RSB), Golf Environment Organization (GEO), Sustainable Agriculture Network (SAN), and the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). In 2016, these ISEAL members signed a Memorandum of Understanding to work towards reducing pesticide use, and the long-term aim of eliminating highly hazardous pesticides. We agreed that the first common project of the ISEAL IPM Coalition would be to create a pesticide database to allow users to search for information on pesticide active ingredients and alternatives to these.

**What’s innovative about this project?**

Highly hazardous pesticides are still widely used in agriculture and forestry. Phasing them out is a complex issue because they are readily available, alternative pest control methods are scarce, and access to information is limited. While the chemical industry has a common open standard for chemicals, many websites use a different spelling and omit mentioning agreed classifications. This causes problems when sharing content between providers, and hinders information about pesticides and IPM.

This project seeks to produce a comprehensive online platform, with two databases: The first will be a searchable open data database of pesticides, detailing the hazards associated with each one. The second will
detail alternative IPM methods per crop and forestry species. The databases can be searched by active ingredient and report on the corresponding WHO and IARC classifications, CAS registry number, and whether a particular active ingredient is restricted or banned by one or more sustainability standard.

What made you decide to apply to the Innovations Fund for support?

The fund was set up to help ISEAL members develop innovations that can help make them be more effective. In our case, it gave us the opportunity to fund an innovative idea that was collective but towards which we could not all contribute the same financial resources. The grant came as an enabler to work together on an idea we had been discussing for at least a couple of years.

What lessons have you learned so far?

Collaboration requires clarity on common goals. Be very concrete about the expected results, describing them in a very tangible way. It is important to dedicate enough time to this.

What advice do you have for other ISEAL members thinking of applying to the Innovations Fund?

The fund has allowed us to be much more proactive and collaborative in building on our initial idea. Certification schemes come with already well-established policies, processes and tools, and often our time needs to be dedicated to maintaining these to ensure the system keeps working well for our stakeholders. The fund provided us with resources to take a step back, view our current rules with a critical eye, and ask ourselves: ‘what changes are needed to make our assurance system more trustworthy, cost-effective and conducive to generating evidence?’

“Resources are wasted when there is different understanding or even competition in unnecessary fields. If two or more ISEAL member organizations can collaborate on harmonizing concepts and approaches, even tools, this can help not only those organizations that are multi-certified, but the entire sustainability community. The Innovations Fund can be a catalyst for this.”

Juan Carlos Isaza, Program Manager, Global Coffee Platform

If you are an ISEAL member, find out how you can apply to the ISEAL Innovations Fund.

The ISEAL Innovations Fund is supported by the following partners:

[Logos and partner names]