Everything you need to know about the

BELCO IMPACT SCORE®

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2. Advantages
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1. Purpose of the tool

It was developed by Belco to **assess and promote the sustainability of coffee farms and upstream players in the supply chain.**
Rather than approaching sustainability from a binary perspective (sustainable or not), the Impact Score® offers a more precise sustainability scale that reflects the complexity of this concept.

The tool focuses on the three dimensions of sustainability:

- **agro-environmental**
- **socio-territorial**
- **economic**

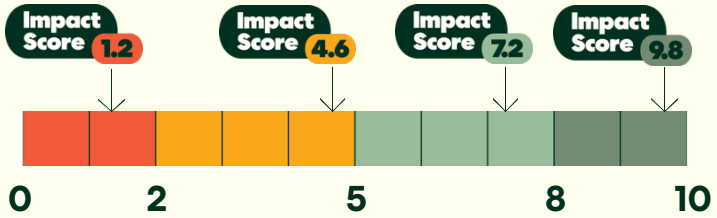
and is based on a demanding theoretical framework:

- **strong sustainability**
- **agroecology**
- **multifunctionality of agriculture**

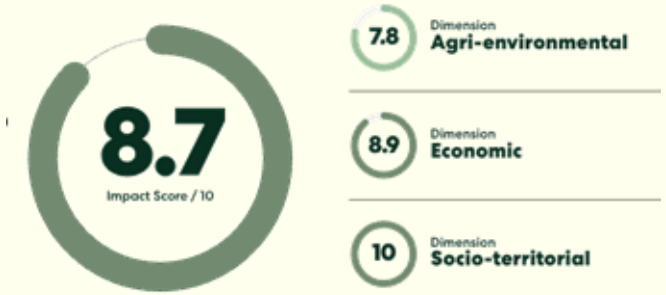
How to read the Impact Score®?

A score out of 10 to assess the sustainability of a coffee at a glance.

A colour scale to facilitate comparison.



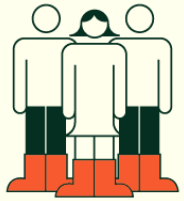
A score per dimension (*their average giving the final score)*



2. Advantages of the Impact Score®

For producers

> Self-assessment of their farm
> Awareness of certain important issues



For teams in the field

> A framework for supporting producers
> A tool for measuring progress in sustainability and identifying projects.

For coffee roasters

> Provides robust data
> Informs about producers' practices
> Enables informed choices when purchasing coffee
> Identifies potential projects to engage with at source

For consumers

> Combats greenwashing
> Raises awareness of industry issues
> Enables informed/sustainable consumption

3. Origin

The **Impact Score®** is mainly inspired by the IDEA4® methodology, recognised for its quantitative and multidimensional approach to sustainability.

Developed over nearly two years, it is the result of a collective effort combining field expertise, agricultural engineering, marketing impact assessment and academic collaboration.

The IDEA4® methodology, initially designed for European farms, has been thoroughly **adapted to the coffee industry and tropical contexts** by the Belco team, assisted by a group of 10 agricultural engineering students in five producing countries (El Salvador, Guatemala, Colombia, Ethiopia, Kenya) over a period of 10 months.

The result is a tool that is **robust, contextualised and operational.**

4. Field assessment methodology

1. TOOL = QUESTIONNAIRE

Coffee is assessed using a questionnaire during a field visit. This assessment is repeated once every 2 to 3 years.

2. CHOICE OF CONTACTS

This questionnaire is completed jointly by the Belco field agent and the producer, as well as the manager of the washing station or cooperative. In the case of a producer group, a representative sample is surveyed.

3. DEFINITION OF THE SCOPE

The analysis focuses on a specific coffee reference in order to accurately assess the value chain associated with that coffee. It represents the level of sustainability of a farm and post-harvest practices in a given year.

4. COLLECTION = FIELD VISIT / INTERVIEW

Data collection is collaborative and contextualised in the form of an open-ended interview. Each response must be justified/explained in order to ensure a detailed understanding of the context and the reliability of the results.

5. SCORE CALCULATION

The responses collected are translated into scores ranging from 0 to 5. They are then weighted and added together to give an overall score for each sub-dimension and dimension. The final score is the average of the three dimensions.

6. VERIFICATION AND TRANSMISSION

Each questionnaire conducted by our field technicians is verified by a transition expert who identifies areas for improvement. This score then becomes your tool on belco.fr.

6. The 3 dimensions

AGRO-ENVIRONMENTAL

Represents agriculture rooted in its local environment: It provides information on the integration of agroecological practices (agroforestry, soil and resource management, etc.) and their performance (resources used, yield, efficiency).

SOCIO-TERRITORIAL

It assesses product management and revaluation, expertise, knowledge sharing, health and quality of life at work, etc. In short, it represents the roots of agriculture in its territory and social fabric.

ECONOMIC

Analyses the economic performance of agriculture, its robustness, its independence and its long-term prospects. It represents the economic viability of agricultural activity.

7. The list of 24 indicators assessed

AGRO-ENVIRONMENTAL

Impact of cultivation on the ecosystem

- Agroforestry
- Organic certification
- Soil cover

Responsible use of inputs and resources

- Irrigation
- Soil fertility
- Water management
- Treatment of process water

Yield efficiency compared to national average

SOCIO-TERRITORIAL

Management and reuse of products

- Limiting waste
- Local market sales
- Valuing local and traditional know-how
- Innovating in farming practices
- Participating in agricultural knowledge networks

Health and quality of life at work

- Signatory of the ethical sourcing charter

ECONOMIC

Efficiency

- Fair trade certification
- Economic development and profitability of the company

Independence

- The share of coffee in turnover
- Vertical integration in the supply chain
- Customers diversity

Durability

- Forecasting
- Generational transmission

8. Understand them one by one

Theme

Question asked + Possible answers

Points awarded per answer

Level of agroforestry	What is the level of agroforestry? a) Zero b) Level 1 simple c) Level 2 complex d) Niveau 3 forêt	0	1,5	3	5

+ explanations on the importance of the criterion.

Agro-environmental dimension

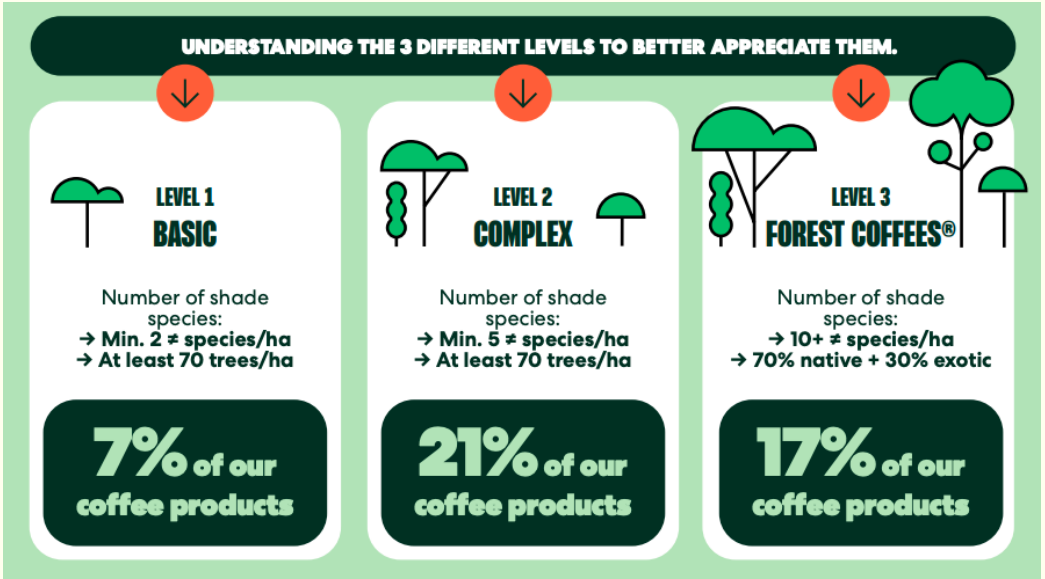
		A	B	C	D
Level of agroforestry	What is the level of agroforestry? a) Zero b) Level 1 Simple c) Level 2 Complex d) Level 3 Forest	0	1,5	3	5

1. Level of agroforestry

Why is this important?

Agroforestry = Agricultural production method combining tree plantations with other crops on the same plot, with a view to reciprocal beneficial effects (JORF, 2015).

Agroforestry makes it possible to produce ecosystem services: temperature regulation, soil protection, pest management, fertilization, improved ripening. The more complex the system, the closer the plot is to a syntropic environment that is more robust in the face of increasing pressures linked to climate change.



These 3 different levels of agroforestry have been developed by Belco to categorize the diversity of coffee agroforestry systems. These specifications were drawn up jointly with the French Agroforestry Association.

Agro-environmental dimension

Organic certification(bonus)	Is the coffee certified organic? a) No b) Yes	0	2,5	5

This is a **BONUS** question!
The producer does not lose points if he is not certified, but he does if he is.

🌿 2. Organic certification

Why is this important?

It indicates the producer's effort to practice environmentally friendly agriculture and to commit to compliance with an international standard.

Agro-environmental dimension

Soil management	Identifying Soil Management of Coffee Plots a) Bare soil b) Soil cover	0	5

3. Soil management: bare soil vs. covered ground

Why is this important?

A permanent cover protects the soil from the risks of drought and erosion, promotes an aerated structure beneficial to permanent humidity and a rich biological life.

Avoids erosion (a major problem in tropical areas).
Reduces evapotranspiration→ less water stress, better flowering.
Nourishes soils → better productivity and quality.
Optimizes resources (fertilizer, weeding).
Builds climate resilience.

Examples of Floor Covers + Their Benefits

🌿 Ground cover legumes

Examples : *Forage peanut, clover, alfalfa, peas, creeping bean.*

Interest:

Fix nitrogen in the soil → less fertilizer to buy.
Cover quickly → limit weeds.
Improve soil structure and retain moisture.
Rich in biomass → nourish the soil when they are mowed.

→ Coffee loves living soils rich in nitrogen.

🌱 Controlled grasses and grasses

Examples : *local grasses, vetiver*

Interest:

Stabilize sloping soils very well.
Deep roots → limit erosion.
Low maintenance if well managed.
Sources of mulching.

→ Ideal in mountainous areas where rain washes away the soil quickly.

🦶 Intercropping

Examples : *Plantain, cassava, sweet potato, beans...*

Interest:

Provide additional income.
Light shade beneficial to the coffee tree (depending on the species).
Protect the soil and limit evaporation.

→ Diversifies producers' sources of income → more resilience.

🌾 Temporary cover crops (green manures)

Examples : *sorghum, oats, rye*

Interest:

Quick to install.
Produce a lot of biomass to restore soils.
Smother weeds.
Protect the soil during the inter-seasons.

→ Ideal in planting or transition periods.

🍂 Natural mulch (mulch)

Examples : *coffee leaves, pruning residues, composted pulp.*

Interest:

Reduces erosion.
Retains moisture.
Nourishes the soil as it decomposes.
Reduces irrigation requirements.

→Low-cost solution, widely used in traditional coffee farming.

🌳 Cover via shade trees (light agroforestry)

Examples: banana trees, Inga, Erythrina, Albizia...

Interest:

Their leaves create a "natural mulch".
Limit rain runoff.
Improve soil organic matter.

→ Combines climate regulation + ground cover.

Agro-environmental dimension

Irrigation / Pressure on water resources	What is the type of irrigation? a) Uncontrolled irrigation b) Controlled irrigation (micro-irrigation, precision irrigation, etc.) c) No irrigation	0	2,5	5

4. Type of irrigation

Why is this important?

Irrigation uses an increasingly precious resource: water. It must be controlled via innovative irrigation systems such as micro-irrigation.
On the other hand, the absence of an irrigation system has no impact on this resource.

Agro-environmental dimension

Fertility monitoring	Soil fertility analysis performed at least every 3 years a) No b) Yes	0	5

🧪 5. Fertility analysis every 3 years

Why is this important?

Without analyses, we can "guess" the needs of the soil. Fertility analyses provide detailed information on soil nutrient deficiencies and surpluses. This allows you to adjust your fertilization exactly, at the right time: less expense and better yields.
Finally, the fertility analysis testifies to the producer's interest in his soil, one of the pillars of agroecology.

Agro-environmental dimension

Fertilization	Specify the type of fertilization of the plots a) Use of synthetic fertilizers (b) Abandonment of synthetic fertilizers or use of synthetic and organic fertilizers c) Use of organic fertilizers	0	2,5	5

6. Type of fertilization

Why is this important?

Synthetic fertilizers give quick results but deplete soil life and chemically pollute groundwater or watersheds.
Organic fertilizers nourish the soil in the long term and promote its structure, they are made from raw natural materials.

Agro-environmental dimension

Process water management	How is process water managed? a) Flow to the outside of the site without treatment b) Treatment by storage or sedimentation c) Treatment by more complex actions (filtration, etc.) / Only unwashed (natural) coffee	0	2,5	5

7. Process water management

Why is this important?

Pulping water (or effluents) is often acidic, rich in sugars, pectins and fermentation residues. They can be very polluting if they reach rivers or aquifers. The more complex their treatment, the less likely these effluents are to reach and pollute these water resources. A site that treats them protects the water resources in its area and drastically reduces the negative impacts of production on its direct environment.

Agro-environmental dimension

Source of the water	Use of rainwater for irrigation and/or processes a) No b) Yes	0	5

8. Use of rainwater

Why is this important?

Rainfall is an important source of water for irrigation or post-harvest processes. Recovering them drastically reduces dependence on water from boreholes, wells or rivers, and at the same time sensitivity to droughts or restrictions.

Agro-environmental dimension

Drying infrastructure	Drying Type a) Mechanical drying b) Solar drying	0	5

🌞 9. Drying Type

Why is this important?

Solar drying does not consume energy and has a positive influence on the flavour profiles.
Mechanical drying is faster but more expensive and requires the use of fuels: gas, wood, electricity, etc.

Agro-environmental dimension

Yield	What is the yield of cherries on the plots? a) Less than -20% of the national average b) Close to the national average (+/- 20% of the average) c) +20% higher than the national average	0	2,5	5

🍒 10. Cherry yield

Why is this important?

The main objective of an agricultural farm is to produce a raw material. A yield above the national average proves that the producer applies efficient agricultural practices, while a low yield can be a sign of various agronomic problems (soil health, lack of maintenance, diseases, age of the trees).

Waste	Implementation of actions to limit the loss and waste of production and/or resources a) No actions b) Actions implemented	0	5

11. Actions against loss and waste

Why is this important?

A resilient system makes the most of everything it can in order to get the most out of its raw materials and resources. This shows a high efficiency of the value chain.

By-products / Co-products	Commercial recovery of by-products and/or co-products a) No b) Yes	0	5

☒ 12. Recycling by-products

Why is this important?

Some by-products of the value chain may be of commercial interest (cascara, coffee leaves or flowers, etc.). To value them commercially, the producer allows the producer to diversify his income and at the same time create a new economic circuit.

Socio-territorial dimension

Short circuit sales on site	Sale of coffee in short circuit on site for the local market (excluding intermediaries for export) a) No b) Yes	0	5

🤝 13. Local sales in short circuits

Why is this important?

Selling on the local market allows you to create an economic activity on your territory and to circulate currency. It also allows local actors to consume the products they grow, it is a vector of food autonomy for the territory.

Socio-territorial dimension

Promoting innovative, local and traditional know-how	Use of innovative agricultural practice(s) and/or promoting local and traditional know-how a) No b) Yes	0	5

👩‍🌾 14. Innovative agricultural practices based on local know-how

Why is this important?

Agriculture plays a major socio-cultural role in a territory because it bears witness to a history, know-how and traditions. It is also a vector of innovation by proposing new ways of inhabiting the environment and living respectfully in an ecosystem. By showing new practices or updating old ones, agriculture influences the way we inhabit the world. Innovation makes it possible to anticipate climate shocks and secure productivity. This is a sign of modern management of the farm.

Participation in agricultural knowledge networks	Participation in agricultural knowledge networks a) No b) Yes	0	5

📚 15. Participation in agricultural networks

Why is this important?

A producer who shares his knowledge contributes to improving practices in a territory and at the same time creates a network of information and exchange. From a systemic point of view, information sharing is an essential lever for the resilience of the system.

Socio-territorial dimension

Sourcing ethical charter	Signatory of the Belco Sourcing ethical charter? a) No b) Yes	0	5

🤝 16. Signing of the Belco Ethical Charter

Why is this important?

The **Belco Ethical Sourcing Charter** includes the 8 fundamental conventions of the International Labour Organization. It asks our suppliers to commit to ensuring that their upstream value chain respects these conventions. This shows a formal commitment to responsible and transparent practices. It is an element of confidence in the sector.

- No child labour
- No forced labour
- Minimum wage compliance
- Access to drinking water
- No discrimination
- No violence in the workplace
- No violence or harassment against women
- Freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining
- Freedom of opinion and expression
- Consultation with indigenous peoples (human rights of indigenous peoples)

Economic dimension

This is a
BONUS
question!
The producer does not lose points if he is not certified, but he does if he is.

Certification Equitable (bonus)	Is the coffee certified under a fair trade standard? a) No b) Yes	0	5

18. Fair Trade Certified

Why is this important?

Fairtrade certification ensures rigorous traceability from the field to the store. Certification ensures that products are grown in accordance with strict economic, social and environmental standards, helping to improve the living and working conditions of producers. This bonus values the producer's effort to commit to an internationally recognized standard.

Economic dimension

Evolution of the last 5 years	Ask the producer/supplier to rate the average economic development of the company over the past 5 years from 1 to 5: 1: Very negative development 2: Negative evolution 3: Constant evolution 4: Positive developments 5: Very positive development	0	1,25	2,5	3,75	5

📉📈 19. Economic Developments (1 to 5)

Why is this important?

This considers the producer's testimony about the development of his farm over the past few years. This free question to the producer allows his opinion to be considered. Who better to talk about his farm than the farmer?

Economic dimension

Coffee's share of overall turnover	How much does coffee represent in the turnover of the entire company a) More than 81% b) Between 21% and 80% c) Less than 20%	0	2,5	5

☕ 20. Coffee's share of turnover

Why is this important?

A producer's independence depends on his ability to diversify his sources of income. If a producer sells only one product that is dependent on a global financial market (such as coffee), their system has a low level of resilience. Having multiple sources of income provides security if one of the product's financial markets collapses and makes its sales less profitable.

Economic dimension

Upstream value chain integration	Number of stages of the value chain in which it is integrated? >Production >Wet Processing >Drying >Sorting and export a) Only 1 step b) 2 steps c) 3 steps d) 4 steps	0	1,5	3	5

21. Number of steps mastered in the chain

Why is this important?

A producer who controls several steps downstream in his value chain thus controls the creation of added value. This control allows it to increase the economic added value of its raw materials and to be less dependent on intermediaries who each take a margin from the process.

Economic dimension

Downstream Value Chain Integration	Are the roasting and/or coffee-shop steps mastered by the actor? a) No b) Yes	0	5

22. Mastery of roasting or a coffee-shop

Why is this important?

In relation to the previous criterion, the control of these steps is a fundamental element of a robust system: by controlling most of the steps and being able to sell to the end consumer, the actor has total independence. Mastering these steps also allows you to know the quality of your product and therefore to know how to sell it better.

Economic dimension

Customer diversity	Number of customers for the café: a) Less than 3 b) Between 3 and 5 c) More than 5	0	2,5	5

👥 23. Number of customers

Why is this important?

The fewer customers he has, the more dependent a producer is.
A diversified customer portfolio stabilizes revenues and secures operations.

Economic dimension

Projection over the next 5 years	Ask the producer/supplier to rate from 1 to 5 how he or she sees the evolution of the profitability of his or her business in the next 5 years: 1: Very low confidence 2: Not very confident 3: Confident 4: Very confident	0	1,5	3	5

🔮 24. Confidence in future profitability

Why is this important?

This considers the producer's testimony on the projection of his farm in the coming years: Is he serene about the evolution of his business? This free question to the producer allows his opinion to be considered.

Economic dimension

Takeover	Existence of a person to take over the business a) No b) Yes	0	5

👣 25. Existence of a buyer

Why is this important?

Without a buyer, the farm risks abandonment or fragmentation. Transmission guarantees the sustainability of know-how and production while avoiding the negative effects of the rural exodus. The age of coffee producers is an international issue (the majority are over 40 years old, and the average age is 55). This justifies the necessary agricultural succession to ensure the continuity of coffee production.

That's it, you know everything about our coffee evaluation method via the Belco Impact Score®.

Do you have any questions? We would be happy to answer them, write to us on impact@belco.fr