



Spreading ginger to dry, Nepal

CHAPTER THREE

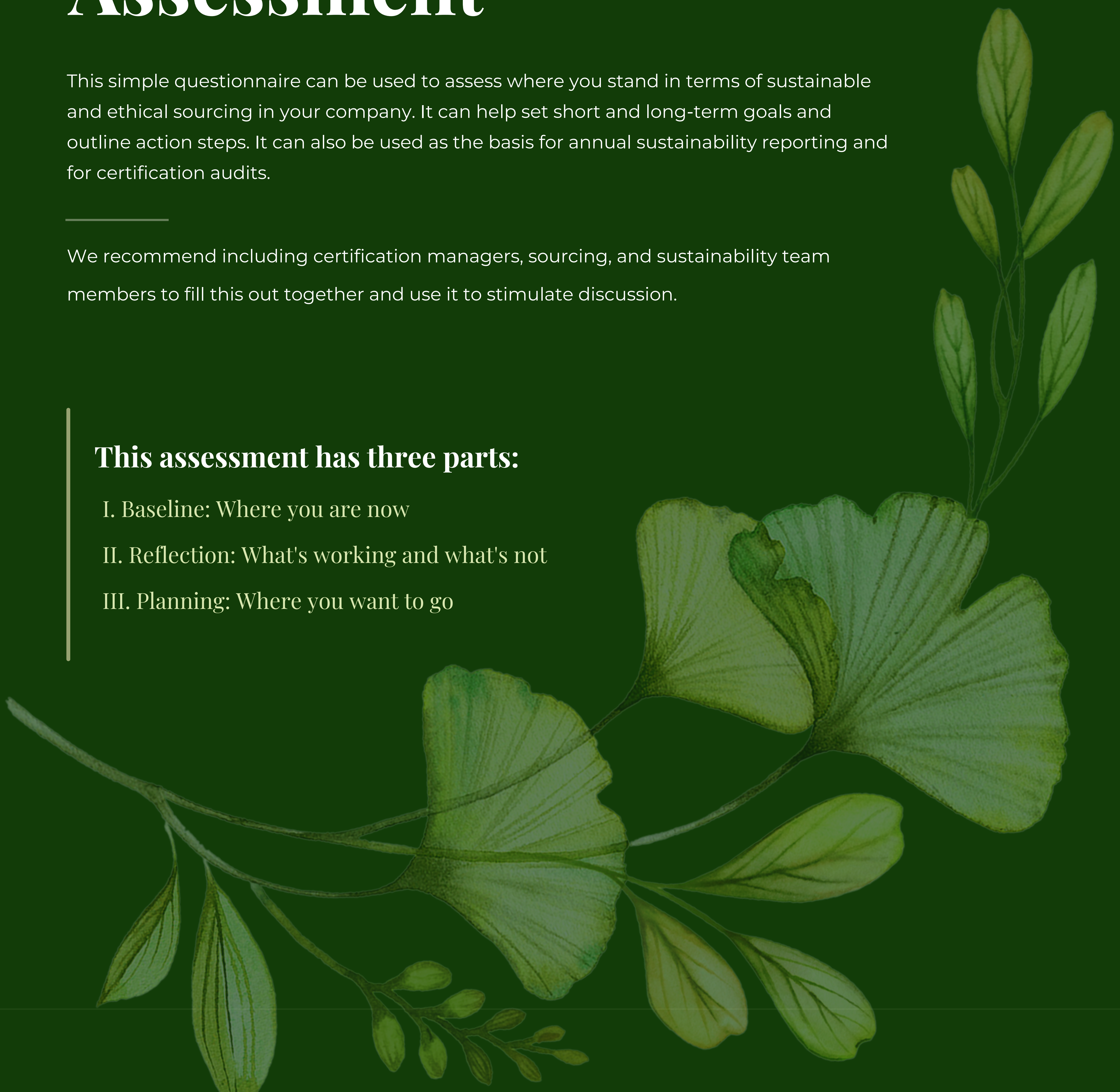
Sourcing Self-Assessment

This simple questionnaire can be used to assess where you stand in terms of sustainable and ethical sourcing in your company. It can help set short and long-term goals and outline action steps. It can also be used as the basis for annual sustainability reporting and for certification audits.

We recommend including certification managers, sourcing, and sustainability team members to fill this out together and use it to stimulate discussion.

This assessment has three parts:

- I. Baseline: Where you are now
- II. Reflection: What's working and what's not
- III. Planning: Where you want to go



PART I – BASELINE: Where are you now?

2. SUSTAINABILITY

For the purposes of this assessment, sustainably sourced may include environmental stewardship, social responsibility, economic viability, and long-term supply resilience.

2a. How do you define "sustainably sourced"? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Internal impact assessments and performance indicators
- ☐ Third-party certifications addressing environmental, social, and/or economic sustainability (e.g. Biodynamic, Regenerative Organic Certified, Fair for Life, FairWild)
- ☐ Internal traceability systems (batch records, supplier documentation, lot tracking)
- ☐ Other criteria or tools (please describe):

2b. What percentage of the herbs you source do you currently consider sustainably sourced?

- ☐ 0%
- ☐ < 25%
- ☐ 25–50%
- ☐ 50–75%
- ☐ > 75%

2c. What makes these materials sustainable?

(For example: farming practices, certifications, long-term relationships, pricing structures, investments made at source.)

2d. What percentage of your total annual botanical purchases (by weight) are covered by third-party sustainability standards?

Materials may fall under more than one standard.

SUSTAINABILITY STANDARD	% SOURCED
Demeter Biodynamic Farming and Processing	
EU Regulations on Organic Production	
USDA National Organic Program (NOP) Organic Agriculture Standards	
EcoCert Fair for Life (FFL) Social & Fairtrade Standard	
Fairtrade International (FLO) FairTrade Standard Herbs, Herbal Teas & Spices	
Fair Trade USA (FTUSA) Agricultural Production Standard (APS)	
FairWild Foundation (FWF) FairWild Standard (FWS)	
Rainforest Alliance (RA) Sustainable Agriculture Standard	
Regenerative Organic Certified (ROC) Framework	
Union for Ethical BioTrade (UEBT) Ethical BioTrade Standard	
UEBT/Rainforest Alliance Herbs & Spices Program	
Other	

(Look at your annual purchase report and see what % of the botanicals you have sourced falls under each category)

2e. What percentage of your sourcing would you like to be sustainably sourced in the future?

- ☐ < 25%
- ☐ 25–50%
- ☐ 50–75%
- ☐ > 75%

3. TRANSPARENCY AND TRACEABILITY

Traceability refers to your ability to track material back to the farm or wild-collection site. **Transparency** refers to how much information is available, shared, and verified along the chain.

3a. How do you purchase your botanical materials? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Self-produced (own farms or wild-collection operations)
- ☐ Directly from farmers or wild-collection groups
- ☐ Through brokers or traders with limited or no traceability
- ☐ Through brokers or traders who provide transparency back to source
- ☐ Through processors (cut & sifted, powdered, extracts, essential oils, etc.)
- ☐ Open market purchases with no traceability
- ☐ Contract manufacturers with no traceability
- ☐ Contract manufacturers with traceability to source

3b. What percentage of the botanicals you source can be traced to the source?

- ☐ 0% ☐ < 25% ☐ 25–50% ☐ 50–75% ☐ > 75%

3c. How do you verify your suppliers? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Supplier visits (in person)
- ☐ Third-party certifications or audits
- ☐ Internal supplier approval or verification process
- ☐ Photo or video documentation
- ☐ Peer or industry references

Which of these are done regularly (e.g. annually), and which are ad hoc?

3d. What is the approximate tenure of your supplier relationships?

(Estimate the percentage of suppliers by spend or volume.)

- ☐ < 12 months: _____ %
- ☐ 1–3 years: _____ %
- ☐ 3–5 years: _____ %
- ☐ > 5 years: _____ %
- ☐ Don't know

(Long-term relationships tend to enhance but don't always guarantee quality or sustainability.)

4. RISK ASSESSMENT

Risk assessments may be formal or informal. They can include desk research, supplier conversations, site visits, or country-level tools. Risks may be environmental, social, economic, or political.

4a. Do you have a methodology for assessing sourcing risks?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

4b. For approximately what percentage of your raw materials do you have some form of risk assessment?

- ☐ 0% ☐ < 25% ☐ 25–50% ☐ 50–75% ☐ > 75%

4c. Do you use this information to identify opportunities to invest in or support sourcing regions?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

PART II — REFLECTION: What's working and what's not?

5a. Overall, are you satisfied with the quality of the botanical materials you source?

☐ Yes ☐ No

5b. If not, what would you like to change? (Check all that apply and explain.)

AREA	EXPLANATION
☐ Quality	
☐ Price	
☐ Quality (testing etc.)	
☐ Relationships (vendor/manufacturer is not listening, meeting your needs, etc.)	
☐ Sustainability (i.e. product is not organic or fair certified, distance is too far, too much energy required to process the botanical, diminishing supply due to climate change, at-risk plants, etc.)	
☐ Other: _____	
☐ Nothing. They're exactly what you want.	Great! Share your success story so others can learn from you.



Harvesting chamomile at Oshala Farm

PART III — PLANNING: Where do you want to go?

6. TRANSPARENCY GOALS

6a. What are your 5-year goals for transparency and traceability?

6b. What is your 1-year goal?

6c. What actions can you take in the next 3–6 months?

6d. What is one concrete action you can take in the next month?

7. RISK MITIGATION GOALS

7a. What are your 5-year goals for risk assessment and mitigation?

7b. What is your 1-year goal?

7c. What actions can you take in the next 3–6 months?

7d. What is one action you can take in the next month?



Reflecting at the SHI Appalachia Learning Journey

8. SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Social responsibility may include fair pricing, payment terms, pre-financing, labor conditions, long-term relationships, and/or certification.

8a. Are there one or two herbs where you are considering fair trade or similar certification? If not, how are fair trade principles reflected in your purchasing practices?

8b. What are your 5-year goals?

8c. What is your 1-year goal?

8d. What actions can you take in the next 3–6 months?

8e. What is one action you can take in the next month?

9. ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

9a. Are you implementing or actively supporting any of the following? (At your company and/or through suppliers.)

- ☐ Carbon measurement or mapping

☐ Energy or water efficiency projects

☐ Organic production

☐ Regenerative agriculture

☐ Agroforestry
- ☐ Renewable energy (e.g. solar)

☐ Waste reduction initiatives, including recycling, composting, and zero waste goals

☐ More eco-friendly packaging

☐ Other

9b. What are your 5-year environmental goals across sourcing, processing, and packaging?

9c. What is your 1-year goal?

9d. What actions can you take in the next 3–6 months?

9e. What is one action you can take in the next month?

Review this assessment annually. Use it to track progress, guide supplier conversations, and identify one or two priorities to work on internally or through SHI working groups. Progress comes from consistency!