Implementation Guide for CTH Startups

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This guide walks a CTH portfolio startup through building their SUI from zero to investor-ready verification. It is designed to be followed by a founding team without a dedicated impact measurement staff member. The CTH Impact Team is available to support each step.

Before You Start: What You Need

Gather the following before your first SUI definition session:

- Your product's technical specification or LCA (if one exists)
- Your current operational data — production records, sales data, customer delivery records (in whatever format they currently exist)
- Any market or industry data you use to describe your impact in pitch decks
- The name of at least one academic or government source that describes the problem you solve (e.g., the average synthetic fertiliser application in your target region)

Step 1: Define Your Application Event (Week 1)

The application event is the single most important definitional choice in the SUI process. It defines the boundary of "one SUI."

Guiding questions:

1. What is the smallest unit of your product or service that produces a measurable outcome? (1 kg of product, 1 kWh delivered, 1 session, 1 device)
2. Is this unit consistently countable in your operational records? (Can you tell from your current data how many of these events occurred last month?)
3. Does your team agree on the definition? (Product, sales, and impact team should all point to the same thing)

Common mistakes:

- Defining the application event too broadly ("one customer contract") — too aggregated to verify at unit level
- Defining it too narrowly ("one CFU of bacteria") — not operationally countable
- Conflating the application event with the outcome ("one tonne of CO?e avoided" is an outcome, not an application event)

Output: A one-sentence application event definition. *Example: "Application of 1 kg Becaps biostimulant to 1 hectare of cultivated land."*

Step 2: Map to Taxonomy (Week 1)

Open the IRIS+ 5.3b metric browser at thegiin.org and search for indicators that match your outcome domain. You are looking for the most specific indicator that applies — not the most impressive-sounding one.

Output: IRIS+ code(s) + SDG target(s) added to the SUI Specification template.

Step 3: Research Your Baseline (Weeks 1–2)

The baseline research is often the step that takes the most time and produces the most value. You need to find an official or peer-reviewed source that quantifies what happens in your sector *without* your product.

Sources by sector:

- **Agriculture:** National agricultural census (DANE in Colombia, INDEC in Argentina, IBGE in Brazil), FAO country statistics, CIMMYT research papers
- **Energy:** National utility regulator grid emission factors (UPME in Colombia, CAMMESA in Argentina), IEA country profiles, national energy ministry statistics
- **Water:** IDEAM water quality data (Colombia), ANA (Brazil), national environment ministry reports, WHO/UNICEF JMP data
- **Transport:** IDEAM vehicle fleet emission factors, national transport ministry statistics, ECLAC transport data for Latin America

Output: Baseline value with source citation, year, geographic scope, and any limitations documented in the SUI Specification.

Step 4: Calculate Your SUI Magnitude (Week 2)

With your baseline and your observed data (from your own field trials, lab reports, or operational records), calculate the net impact per application event.

Required calculation elements:

1. Baseline value (from Step 3)
2. Observed value (from your data)
3. Net difference: Baseline ? Observed
4. Conversion factor (from IPCC, EPA, or relevant standard): converts the net difference into your SUI unit (e.g., kg N displaced ? kg CO?e)
5. Uncertainty: estimate the range based on your sample size and measurement variability

Document every step. A future auditor needs to be able to follow your calculation from raw numbers to final SUI magnitude without asking you for help.

Output: SUI magnitude with uncertainty range, documented calculation methodology.

Step 5: Audit Your Data (Week 2–3)

Before engaging an external verifier, conduct an internal data audit:

1. Can you locate the source data for every number in your SUI calculation?
2. Is each data source stored in a consistent, dated format?
3. Is there a chain of custody between raw data and the calculated SUI magnitude?
4. Are there any gaps — periods where data was not collected, or records that were lost or overwritten?

Document gaps honestly. Verifiers prefer disclosed gaps with mitigation plans to hidden gaps discovered during audit.

Step 6: SSOT Assessment (Week 3)

Assess your current SSOT maturity level (0–3) using the criteria in the Scoring Rubric. Then design your path to Level 2:

- Which data source systems will feed the SSOT? (List each system and what data it holds)
- What is the central repository? (Start simple: a well-structured PostgreSQL database, Notion database, or even a Google Sheet with strict access control)
- Who can write data? Who can read? Who can export?
- How will you implement version control for corrections?

Step 7: Engage a Verifier (Week 3–4)

CTH maintains a directory of impact verifiers with sector experience in Latin American cleantech. Contact CTH's Impact Team at impact@cleantechhub.net to request an introduction. When approaching a verifier, provide:

- Your completed SUI Specification Document
- A brief description of your SSOT current state
- The volume of SUI events you want verified (approximate)
- Your target timeline for a verification statement

Step 8: Build Your Impact Investor Package (Week 4–6)

With the SUI defined and verification in progress, assemble your Impact Investor Package:

1. **SUI Summary (1 page):** The non-technical executive summary of your SUI — what you measure, why it matters, what the magnitude is
2. **SUI Specification (full document):** The complete parameter set, taxonomy mapping, baseline documentation
3. **SSOT Architecture Summary (1 page):** Current maturity, data sources, governance, path to Level 3
4. **Verification Status Letter:** Letter from your verifier confirming engagement and current status
5. **AIMM Self-Score (1 page):** Your self-assessment against IFC's AIMM framework
6. **Blended Finance Opportunity Map (1 page):** Which instruments you are eligible for now, and which you will be eligible for as verification progresses

CTH's Impact Team reviews this package before investor introductions. Use the Scoring Rubric to identify any sections below 70% before submitting for review.

Timeline Summary

Week	Deliverable	CTH Support Available
1	Application event defined; taxonomy mapped; baseline identified	SUI Workshop (2hr facilitated session)
2	SUI magnitude calculated; uncertainty range estimated; data audit complete	Data advisory call (1hr)
3	SSOT assessment complete; SSOT roadmap drafted; verifier shortlist identified	Technical advisory call; verifier introductions
4	Verifier engaged; verification scope agreed; SSOT Level 1 confirmed	Verification scope review
5–6	Impact Investor Package assembled; CTH review complete	Package review session; investor matching

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Continue to Chapter 7: SUI Fundamentals Course — the structured learning path for deeper understanding.

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