

Excerpt from the Bio Suisse Standards

## Social accountability

Basis: see Social requirements Part V, Chap. 3.3

### 1 General information

Social responsibility is an integral requirement for certification according to the Bio Suisse Standards. The points in the following articles are based on the international labour standards established by the International Labour Organization (ILO), and they must be implemented.

### 2 Employee-employer relationship

All employees must have a written employment contract.

The management of the operation must provide employees with the following information in a clearly understandable form:

- A job description
- Wages
- The pay period and mode of payment
- Permissible payroll deductions
- Working time / free time
- Overtime procedures
- Procedures and benefits for holidays and leave due to illness / accident / maternity
- Health and safety procedures
- Recognition of the right to freedom of assembly and collective bargaining
- The period of notice and grounds for dismissal
- Possibilities of appeal

Operations are obliged not to use forced labour or any type of involuntary labour.

If an employee has complied with the terms of notice, the operation may not retain wages, belongings or documents in order to force the employee to remain at the operation.

The same conditions apply to seasonal employees, who must also have employment contracts.

If a subcontractor is hired, the operator has the responsibility to ensure that the subcontractor's employees enjoy the same rights.

The general working conditions must be such that employees are treated with dignity and respect and their physical and mental health are protected. Disciplinary measures may not infringe upon human rights and must be fair and transparent.

Children (under 15 years of age) may not be employed by the operation. In order for children to experience agricultural work, they are exceptionally permitted to perform light and safe tasks under the supervision of adults on their family farm or on a neighbouring farm. Farm work may neither impede children's regular school attendance nor impair their physical, emotional or intellectual development.

### 3 Wages

The wages provided must be in compliance with local legislation or existing collective agreements and must at the least be at levels that are customary in the sector. If the wages are too low to cover the generally accepted cost of living in the respective region ("living wages"), then employers must take other measures to secure the livelihood of their employees.

#### **4 Working hours and overtime**

The maximum working hours are determined by the applicable regional or national legislation for the sector. All employees are entitled to a minimum of one day (24 hours) of leave after working for six consecutive days. Overtime work must be voluntary. If employees work overtime, they must receive overtime pay or compensatory time off.

#### **5 Health and safety**

The management must ensure that the health and safety of the people on the operation are not compromised through their work. The management must provide relevant health and safety instructions and training and must supply proper protective equipment.

The operation must guarantee access to drinking water, sanitation facilities and medical care. The operation must provide at least the minimum coverage for loss of earnings due to illness, maternity leave or accidents, as prescribed by law. Housing provided for employees must, at a minimum, correspond to standards customary in the region in terms of size, amenities (running water, heating, lighting and furnishings), hygiene (toilets), accessibility, and protection of privacy.

#### **6 Equality**

All employees enjoy equal rights, regardless of gender, religion, skin colour, nationality, ethnic origin, political leanings, sexual orientation or any other condition that could cause them to be subject to discrimination. All employees have equal access to training measures and services provided by the employer (e.g. payments in kind, transportation opportunities, etc.) They also receive equal pay in terms of wages or payments in kind for equal work.

#### **7 Labour law**

Employees have the opportunity to exercise their rights. They have the right to assemble and to bargain collectively, and they may not be discriminated against or intimidated when exercising these rights. Employee representatives must be able to interact freely with the employees.

#### **8 Implementation**

Social responsibility standards are to be implemented based on the risk involved. Depending on their level of risk, operations with employees must either furnish an external social certificate or social audit or confirm by means of a self-declaration form that the Bio Suisse requirements have been met in order to receive certification according to the Bio Suisse Standards.

## 8.1 Mandatory external social certification or auditing

The obligation to introduce external social certification or auditing must be fulfilled gradually and based on the risk involved. The list of countries, products and Bio Suisse-approved certification and audit programmes undergoes regular review and revision. Bio Suisse social audits have been introduced around the world in stages since 2023. In 2024, Bio Suisse social audits will be mandatory for operations in Spain and in defined regions of Italy in the year of introduction. No external social audits are accepted for these operations, the only exception being the Naturland social audit.

### List of products and countries

Products	Country
<p>Primary production (incl. packaging or processing on an affiliated production operation*) of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fresh vegetables (except seedlings and products that will undergo further processing in the country of origin)</li> <li>• Fresh fruit (incl. berries, citrus fruit and table grapes; excl. seedlings and products that will undergo further processing in the country of origin)</li> <li>• Fresh herbs (except products that will undergo further processing in the country of origin)</li> </ul>	<p>France, Italy, (except regions with Bio Suisse social audit obligation), Morocco, Peru, Portugal</p>
<p>Primary production (incl. packaging or processing on an affiliated production operation*) of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fresh bananas (except products that will undergo further processing in the country of origin)</li> </ul>	<p>All countries of origin</p>
<p>Primary production (incl. packaging or processing on an affiliated production operation) of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• hazelnuts</li> </ul>	<p>Turkey</p>

\*Producer groups that have been certified by GlobalG.A.P. are subject to GRASP audits in compliance with GlobalG.A.P. regulations.

**List of approved social responsibility certification and auditing programmes (does not apply to Spain and the regions in Italy with Bio Suisse social audit obligation)**

Auditing / certification programme	Comments
BSCI	
Fairtrade	
GlobalG.A.P. GRASP	Only possible when GLOBALG.A.P. certification has already been issued. Not accepted for hazelnuts from Turkey.
SA8000	
Sedex / SMETA	
UTZ	Only for hazelnuts from Turkey.

**Exceptions:**

- Operations with less than five employees are exempted from this obligation unless worker representation is possible through the group, like with GRASP for GLOBALG.A.P. Option 2.
- Operations that already have social responsibility certifications according to Naturland, Ecovalia or Valore Sociale standards do not need any other kind of social auditing.
- Operations that are not or cannot be GlobalG.A.P. certified can apply for a derogation.
- Hazelnuts from Turkey: Bio Suisse can issue temporary derogations for social responsibility standards that do not completely meet ILO norms.

## **8.2 Confirmation by means of a Bio Suisse Social responsibility self-declaration form**

Farms that have 20 or more employees and that do not fall under the external social responsibility certification/auditing obligation (according to Art. 8.1) must fill out and sign a self-declaration form (checklist) provided by Bio Suisse.

Operations that meet one of the following criteria and that possess a valid document (certificate/audit report not older than 18 months) do not need to fill out the Bio Suisse social responsibility self-declaration form:

- BSCI
- Control Union FairChoice
- Fair for Life/For Life
- Fair Trade USA
- Fairtrade
- Global G.A.P GRASP
- IBD Fair Trade
- Naturland/Naturland Fair
- Rainforest Alliance/UTZ
- Rapunzel Hand in Hand
- RSPO P&C 2018/RSPO ISH 2019 or corresponding follow-up standard
- SA8000
- Sedex/SMETA
- Soil Association Ethical Trade