

Excerpt from the Bio Suisse Standards

## **Social accountability**

Based on part I, chapter 4

### **1 General information**

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

### **2 Employer-employee relations**

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
- the 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 contractor is hired, the management has the responsibility to ensure that the contractor'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 must 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 must neither impede children's regular school attendance nor impair their physical, emotional or intellectual development.

### **3 Wages**

The wages provided must at the least be in compliance with local legislation or existing collective agreements and 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 shall be governed by regional or national laws 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. Employees 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 management must guarantee access to drinking water, sanitation facilities and medical care. The management 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 shall enjoy equal rights, regardless of gender, religion, skin colour, nationality, ethnic origin, political leanings or sexual orientation or any other situation that could cause them to be subject to discrimination. All employees shall have equal access to training measures and services provided by the employer (e.g., payments in kind, transportation opportunities, etc.) and receive equal pay, in terms of wages or payments in kind, for equal work.

### **7 Labour law**

Employees shall have the opportunity to exercise their rights. They have the right to associate 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 shall be implemented on a risk basis. 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 Bio Suisse Standards.

#### **8.1 Mandatory external social certification or auditing**

The obligation to introduce external social certification or auditing shall be fulfilled gradually and on a risk basis. The list of countries, products and Bio Suisse-approved certification and auditing programmes undergoes regular review and revision.

**List of countries and products**

Products	Country
<p>Primary production (including 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 (including berries, citrus fruit and table grapes; except 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, Morocco, Peru, Portugal, Spain</p>
<p>Primary production (including 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 (including 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 Global G.A.P. are subject to GRASP audits in compliance with GlobalG.A.P. regulations.

**List of approved social accountability certification and auditing programmes:**

Auditing / certification programme	Comments
BSCI Primary Production	
SA8000	
Fair Trade (FLO)	
SEDEX/SMETA	
GlobalG.A.P. GRASP	Only possible if already GlobalG.A.P. certified. Not accepted for hazelnuts from Turkey.
UTZ	Only for hazelnuts from Turkey.

**Exceptions:**

- Operations with less than five employees are exempted from this obligation unless the employees can be represented through the group, as in the case of GRASP for GlobalG.A.P. Option 2.
- Operations with existing social accountability certification according to the standards of Naturland, Ecovalia or Valore Sociale do not need any further social auditing.
- Operations that are not or cannot be GlobalG.A.P. certified can apply for a derogation.
- Hazelnuts from Turkey: Bio Suisse can grant temporary derogations for social accountability standards that do not fully meet the ILO norms.

**8.2 Confirmation by means of a Bio Suisse ‘Social Accountability’ self-declaration form**

Operations with employees which do not fall under the external social accountability certification/auditing obligation (section 1.3.8.1) and which have 20 or more employees must fill out and sign a self-declaration form (checklist) supplied by Bio Suisse.

Operations which possess a valid document (certificate / audit report) from one of the following programmes need not fill out the Bio Suisse ‘Social Accountability’ self-declaration form:

- BSCI Primary Production
- Ecocert Fair Trade
- Fair for Life (IMO)
- Fair Trade (FLO)
- FLO CERT (smallholder)
- For Life (IMO)
- Global G.A.P GRASP
- IBD Fair Trade
- Naturland
- Rapunzel Hand in Hand
- SA8000
- SEDEX/SMETA
- Soil Association Ethical Trade
- Union Fair Choice