



# FOOD SECURITY STANDARD

Principles, Criteria  
and Indicators

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# Introduction

**Hunger and malnutrition persist in many countries that produce agricultural commodities for global markets. To date, food security has been seldom addressed in sustainability standards and certification schemes.**

**The Food Security Standard aims to address this deficit.**

International demand for agricultural commodities is growing due to population growth, changes in consumption patterns and the current shift from petroleum-based to bio-based economies. More and more agricultural production is needed for food, feed, energy and industrial purposes, leading to increasing competition between uses. This can have adverse effects, particularly in food-insecure countries, as agricultural production for export can often compete with local food production while also encouraging labor exploitation, environmental pollution and resource depletion.

Importing countries are becoming more concerned about the environmental and social impacts that imported products have had in their countries of origin. In the last two decades, voluntary sustainability standards addressing environmental and social sustainability issues connected to the production of agricultural commodities have emerged. Sustainability standards and certification systems are recognized as valid instruments to address biomass sustainability issues. Nevertheless, the issue of food security has only been partially addressed, due to its complexity and the difficulty in allocating responsibility between individuals, the private sector and government.

The FSS provides a practical instrument for demonstrating that the “right to food” enjoyed by farm workers, small-holder farmers and communities impacted by agricultural production is respected. It is designed to be integrated in any existing sustainability standard in the agricultural sector and is applicable to all biomass types and uses, farm sizes and business types.

The FSS includes a set of Food Security Principles, Criteria and Indicators; a Handbook for Auditors; and the following three audit tools:

- Audit Procedure Tool
- National Food Security Assessment Tool (NaFSA)
- Local Food Security Quick Assessment Tool (FSS-QAT)

This document outlines the scope of the FSS, including its principles, criteria and indicators.

The FSS principles, criteria and indicators build on the rights-based food security principles and criteria formulated by Mohr et al. (2015, 2016), which are based on the Human Right to Adequate Food, the definition of food security offered by the World Food Summit (1996) and the Right to Food Guidelines adopted by the FAO Council in 2004 (FAO 2005). Within the framework of the FSS Project “Implementation of food security criteria within the framework of biomass sustainability standards,” the principles and criteria were further elaborated and developed, and respective indicators were formulated.



*The FSS is a joint initiative of WWF Germany, the Center for Development Research of the University of Bonn (ZEF) and the Deutsche Welthungerhilfe e. V. (WHH) with the financial support of the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL) via FNR (Fachagentur für Nachwachsende Rohstoffe).*

# Scope



The FSS is intended for use in combination with well-recognized sustainability standards. If all FSS indicators are fulfilled, a farm or group of farms is considered to respect the right to food at the local level. The intended scope of application of the criteria and indicators is described below.

For further details, please refer to the → [FSS Handbook for Auditors](#)

### A focus on agricultural production.

The FSS is focused on issues affecting the food security of farm workers and communities living within the area of influence of a farm or group of farms. The entities that can be subject to an audit and that are responsible for the fulfillment of FSS criteria and indicators are:

- **Single farm:** A farm is an agricultural operation where crops are cultivated sustainably, or where agricultural crop residues from sustainable cultivation occur. A farm is defined either as a distinct legal entity or as an organization managing an agricultural operation and having control of compliance with FSS requirements. The farm's entire landholdings (including agricultural land, pasture, forest and any other land, including land owned, leased or rented) is subject to the FSS audit. The FSS focuses on all farm activities, including those outside of the physical boundaries of the farm (e.g. water abstraction).
- **Group of farms:** Most sustainability schemes allow agricultural producers to be audited as a group, represented by a group manager, based on predefined conditions. The eligibility of a group of farms for a group audit is defined by the requirements of the sustainability schemes.

An FSS audit considers the entire farm and cannot be limited to part of the cultivated surface. In the case of group audits, the criteria and indicators must be met by all the farms in the group subject to certification/verification (and not only part of them). All crops produced by the farm and on related lands are subject to full compliance with the FSS.

### Types of farms.

To better address the differences between farms and business types, the FSS distinguishes between:

- Large and medium size farms
- Smallholders

All FSS criteria and indicators apply to large/medium size farms and smallholders. However, the procedure for demonstrating fulfillment has been adapted to take into account the particularities of smallholders in terms of land availability, the number of workers, capital goods, management and organizational structures, etc. Accordingly, there are three separate audit checklists included in the Audit Procedure Tool (see Section 1 and FSS Audit Handbook): one for smallholder farms, one for group managers of smallholder farms and one for larger farms.

### Workers and their families.

The FSS criteria and indicators concerning workers are applicable to all persons working on the farm following the definition of workers adopted by the FSS (see glossary in the FSS Audit Handbook). People working on smallholder farms are also included.

### Communities in the area of influence.

Some of the FSS criteria and indicators are extended to communities potentially affected by farm operations, i.e. communities located within the area of influence of farm activities, including resettled communities.



# Pillars and FSS principles



The FSS is organized into five pillars. Four of them correspond to the FAO Pillars of Food Security. The fifth pillar has been derived from the Right to Food Guidelines in order to address cross-cutting aspects relevant to fulfilling the right to food. The pillars are further specified through 17 principles. These principles are partially interrelated and can contribute to substantiating more than one pillar. However, for practical purposes, each principle is allocated to a single pillar. These principles are operationalized through one or several criteria. The criteria describe requirements that must be fulfilled to ensure the right to food is respected within the field of responsibility of a farm operation. The indicators are used to demonstrate that a criterion is fulfilled.

This section explains the FSS principles. The criteria and indicators are presented in the next section.

## Stability

**To be considered food secure, a population, household or individual must have access to adequate food at all times and must always be able to adequately process that food for consumption. Individuals must have the physical constitution required to benefit from available nutrients. The concept of stability is thus also relevant to the other dimensions of food security. People should not risk losing access to food because of sudden shocks (e.g. extreme weather events like a drought or flood, or food and crop price volatility) or cyclical events (e.g. seasonal food insecurity) (FAO 2006). Even if food intake is adequate for some period of the year, a person is still considered to be food insecure if he or she has inadequate access to food on a periodic basis or risks a deteriorating nutritional status. Adverse weather conditions and natural or human-made disasters, political instability, or economic factors (like unemployment, seasonal contracts or rising food prices), may impact food stability. Food stability therefore also requires good governance, respect for laws and development strategies that facilitate broadly shared economic progress.**

### Principle 1:

#### **Apply good governance and respect the rule of law**

Sustainability standards must necessarily build upon national laws and regulations. All national laws and regulations should be respected. Furthermore, the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which have been signed by nearly all countries worldwide, should be observed. Many of the FSS criteria address issues regulated under domestic legislation and international

treaties – for example, issues regarding social security, wages and workers' rights. Land rights are also important, as biomass operations often experience conflicts regarding unclear or mutually exclusive land rights or titles.

### Principle 2:

#### **Respect national food security and development strategies**

In food-insecure regions, agricultural production that is destined for export should respond to the overall development objectives of the country in terms of social, economic and environmental development. The farm management/group manager has an obligation to revise and adapt its activities to national strategies concerning food security, poverty and rural development, including national food security and agricultural strategies, poverty reduction strategy papers, national development plans, climate change adaptation plans. The business planning and strategies of the operation should not contradict or hinder the implementation of national food security and development strategies. Rather, in a best case, they should contribute to them.

### Principle 3:

#### **Mitigate natural and human-made disaster risks**

Natural and human-made disasters can generate food insecurity shocks that affect workers, farmers and communities. The mitigation of both natural and human-made disasters is essential to protect food security for workers and farmers as well as ensure the economic sustainability of agricultural production.

## Access

**Food access refers to the ability of individuals to obtain foods for a nutritious diet. Physical and economic access to food is determined by self-cultivation activities and/or the purchasing power of the population/household (i.e. based on employment, pensions, safety nets) as well as by the existence of appropriate transport and market infrastructure.**

**Principle 4:  
Ensure market access and contribute to local development**

This principle focuses on two aspects: First, on local economic activity to provide access to income (and hence also food), including the responsibility of the farm management/group manager in supporting local jobs. Second, it addresses access to the local market system and associated infrastructure. While this second aspect is generally a responsibility of the public sector agriculture operations must ensure that market access is not reduced by their activities, i.e. in terms of the use of available infrastructure or property easements to enable access to markets.

**Principle 5:  
Safeguard long-term farm profitability and fair business conduct**

When farms have a documented business model, including a strategy for the future, this reduces economic risks while supporting the long-term health of the business. It also prevents negative socio-economic impacts to workers, contract farmers, smallholders and the community in general. An abrupt stop to agricultural operations could have negative effects on local food security. This is particularly relevant when land use is focused on perennial crops. In addition, the business model should reflect the recommendations included in environmental and social impact assessments.



**FOOD ACCESS REFERS TO ACCESS BY INDIVIDUALS TO SUITABLE FOODS FOR A NUTRITIOUS DIET.**

**Principle 6:  
Respect labor rights and ensure good working conditions**

All employees should have decent working conditions, a right that is also enshrined in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and in the fundamental conventions of the International Labour Organization (ILO). Ensuring this right requires the avoidance of occupational accidents and disease; the prohibition of forced labor, child labor or discriminatory practices; and decent, fair remuneration to enable an adequate standard of living. It also should ensure workplace security, social protection, non-discrimination, equal opportunity and treatment, and freedom to express workplace concerns. Similarly, trade union rights, freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining are crucial means of introducing, maintaining and defending just and favorable working conditions.

**Principle 7:  
Provide training and capacity building**

Often, agricultural support is provided by national programs. However, private organizations are also expected to support training for contract farmers/smallholders. When communities live inside large and medium-size farms, the farm management has a direct responsibility to support them in agricultural capacity building, e.g. with training in good agricultural practice or integrated pest management. There should be a direct dialog with communities so that training and activities are jointly planned.

**Principle 8:  
Offer social safety nets**

Providing social protection is essential for individuals and households to be protected against risks to their livelihoods, to ensure an adequate level of food consumption and to improve food security. The availability of medical care for accidents or work-related diseases and illnesses is important, as occupational accidents often lead to an inability to work, which may leave an individual without a means to purchase food. Ensuring the availability of retirement pensions is equally important for food security in old age.



## Availability

**Food availability refers to the availability of food in a quantity and quality sufficient to satisfy the dietary needs of individuals, free from adverse substances, and acceptable within a given culture. Food can be supplied through domestic production and imports, including, if necessary, food aid. Food availability is linked to the availability and use of natural resources. It necessitates respect for land rights, fair access to land and the sustainable management of natural resources.**

### **Principle 9: Respect land rights**

For farmers, secure land tenure is a prerequisite for agricultural production geared to self-consumption as well as for income generation. This principle refers mainly to the FAO's Voluntary Guidelines on Tenure (VGGT). The guidelines intend to secure tenure rights and equitable access to land, fisheries and forests with respect to all forms of tenure: public, private, communal, indigenous, customary and informal. The key principle for any land acquisition and resettlement process and a key component of effective stakeholder engagement and consultation is Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC). In conjunction with the VGGT, the FAO has published a technical guide that supports the identification of stakeholders, land rights holders and the FPIC implementation process (FAO 2014). These documents are the touchstone for any land acquisitions or disputes in areas certified under the FSS.

### **Principle 10: Respect water rights and ensure that water quality and availability are maintained or improved**

The overuse and pollution of water resources can have strong adverse impacts on local food safety and security, foremost in water scarce regions, as water is needed for food production, food preparation and direct consumption. Farm operations must not impair the ability of local communities to use and access water resources. It must also be demonstrated that the farm's water use is not in conflict with the interests of the local community, even if use rights were duly awarded by the regional authority. As water rights often are coupled with land rights, the existence of legitimate land tenure rights is also essential in this context. The agricultural operation should not contaminate or harm groundwater, surface water or downstream water resources.

### **Principle 11: Implement sustainable agricultural practices**

This criterion demands compliance with Good Agricultural Practices. Food security strongly depends on the preservation and sustainable management of soil resources, which includes water management (as addressed by principle 10) and sustainable farming techniques.



**FOOD AVAILABILITY  
REFERS TO THE  
AVAILABILITY OF FOOD  
IN A QUANTITY AND  
QUALITY SUFFICIENT  
TO SATISFY THE DIETARY  
NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS.**

## Utilization

**Food utilization refers to the conditions that allow for adequate food consumption in terms of quality and diversity. This includes, on the one hand, appropriate food preparation and food safety aspects. On the other hand, it covers access to clean water as well as adequate sanitation and health care relevant to achieve nutritional well-being in which all physiological needs are met. It emphasizes the importance of non-food inputs in food security (FAO, 2006).**

### **Principle 12:**

#### **Provide a setting for the safe utilization of food**

This principle focuses on providing conditions that enable safe food intake on the part of workers, smallholder farmers and communities. This includes supplying and ensuring access to clean drinking water for workers and smallholders, as well as providing decent accommodations, sanitary facilities and living and dining areas for workers, particularly on large farms. Furthermore, this principle addresses the prevention of biological or chemical contamination of water sources (e.g. through the spraying of pesticides). It also encompasses the avoidance of negative impacts from the use of pesticides to the health of workers and the local population (see also Principle 11).

### **Principle 13:**

#### **Guarantee good nutrition**

All people involved in the operation (workers, farmers) must have the possibility to eat healthy and nutritious food in sufficient quantity and quality at all times. The farm management/group manager is obligated to ensure access to adequate, safe, sufficient and affordable food for workers and smallholder farmers in an environment where it is safe to prepare and consume. In practical terms, access to food can be provided through wages (e.g. with a canteen or shop providing nutritious food at affordable prices), or through support for agriculture geared toward self-consumption.

**FOOD UTILIZATION REFERS TO THE CONDITIONS THAT ALLOW FOR ADEQUATE FOOD CONSUMPTION IN TERMS OF QUALITY AND DIVERSITY.**



## Cross-cutting elements

**Cross-cutting elements are aspects contained in the Right to Food Guidelines that are not directly addressed by the four dimensions of food security, but which are nevertheless important to its implementation. This section includes aspects such as education, participation, accountability, non-discrimination, transparency, human dignity, empowerment, rule of law, women rights, gender equity and the monitoring of food security.**

### **Principle 14:**

#### **Provide complaint and grievance mechanisms**

Farm managers have an obligation to provide adequate complaint and grievance procedures, both internally for employees and externally for impacted communities. The grievance mechanism must be directly coupled to a conflict resolution process. The monitoring and documentation of the procedure for submitted grievances must be demonstrated during the FSS audit.

### **Principle 15:**

#### **Respect women's rights and ensure gender equity**

Non-discrimination and equality are fundamental human rights and apply also to the right to food. Any discrimination in access to food, as well as to the means of obtaining food (labor, land, credits, education, training, payments, etc.) constitutes a violation of the right to food. Women must be equally addressed and appropriately included in stakeholder processes, to make sure their voices are heard and respected.

### **Principle 16:**

#### **Raise awareness for nutrition and support child education**

To be free from hunger and malnutrition, individuals must know how to maintain a nutritious diet and have the skills and capacity to produce or obtain food. Thus, access to education, including vocational training, is essential for the enjoyment of the right to food.

### **Principle 17:**

#### **Assess and monitor local food security**

Evaluating adherence to this principle requires:

- a right to food ex-ante impact assessment, and
- an ex-post monitoring procedure.

The ex-ante impact assessment is an indispensable tool for addressing food and nutrition security, especially the possible negative impact of farm operations, before investments take place. Ideally, it consists of a three-part review:

- possible changes in the supply of food to the domestic market;
- changes to resource availability and efficiency of use; and
- physical displacement, changes in access to resources, and changes to compensation and income generation (FAO, 2012).

The second step involves the ex-post monitoring of possible impacts to:

- communities inside the production site,
- resettled communities due to the agricultural operation, and
- on communities within the area of influence of the agricultural operation.





# FSS criteria and indicators

# Stability



Criteria	Indicators
<b>1. Apply good governance and respect the rule of law</b>	
<b>1.1</b> All parties involved in the agricultural operation and related activities shall comply with applicable national, regional and local laws and regulations and ratified international treaties.	<b>1.1.1</b> A documented system for ensuring legal compliance by the farm management/ group manager, contract/smallholder farmers, service providers and contractors shall be implemented and maintained.
	<b>1.1.2</b> All parties involved in the agricultural operation and related activities shall be aware of the law and regulations and comply with them.
	<b>1.1.3</b> A system to ensure the prevention of all forms of bribery, conflicts of interest and fraudulent practices shall be implemented and maintained.
<b>1.2</b> All parties involved in the agricultural operation and related activities shall be committed to respecting human rights in all operations and transactions.	<b>1.2.1</b> A written policy, in a language understood by all parties involved in the agricultural operation and related activities, shall make a commitment to human rights, including the human right to food, in all operations and transactions, and this policy shall be made available and communicated to all parties involved in the operation.
<b>2. Respect national food security and development strategies</b>	
<b>2.1</b> The farm management/ group manager shall endorse national strategies with regard to food security and these strategies shall not be contradicted by any business activities.	<b>2.1.1</b> The management staff shall be aware of the overall food-security situation in the country.
	<b>2.1.2</b> All relevant and applicable national and local strategies connected with food security shall be well known and not contradicted.
<b>3. Mitigate natural and human-made disaster risks</b>	
<b>3.1</b> Natural and human-made disaster risks shall be mitigated and procedures shall be in place to ensure a proper response to emergencies.	<b>3.1.1</b> Natural and human-made disaster risks in the area of influence of the operation have been identified. Relevant governmental emergency/contingency plans are known.
	<b>3.1.2</b> A contingency and risk mitigation plan for the farm and its area of influence has been developed and implemented. This plan shall be in line with existing government plans and appropriate for addressing local risks.

# Access



Criteria	Indicators
<b>4. Ensure market access and contribute to local development</b>	
<b>4.1</b> Local value creation must be supported.	<b>4.1.1</b> Measures to support local value creation and close income gaps in the area of influence of the operation shall be identified in a consultation process with relevant stakeholders and implemented.
<b>4.2</b> Access to markets for local communities must not be reduced.	<b>4.2.1</b> The time and effort required for local communities to access food markets must not be negatively influenced by the farm's operations.
<b>5. Safeguard long-term farm profitability and fair business conducts</b>	
<b>5.1</b> The operation shall be economically viable in the long term.	<b>5.1.1</b> A business or management plan shall be available, implemented, and regularly reviewed and updated, and shall include plans and measures to support the long-term economic viability of the operation.
<b>5.2</b> Fair, legal and transparent arrangements shall be implemented with all contract/smallholder farmers and service providers.	<b>5.2.1</b> Written contracts/agreements formulated in a language understood by all parties shall be in place and co-signed copies shall be made available to all parties. In the case of group contractual arrangements (e.g. cooperatives), all members shall have a copy. Agreement/contracts shall clearly define: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– price/quality parameters,</li> <li>– exit arrangements, and</li> <li>– compensation measures in the event of farm/group manager bankruptcy.</li> </ul>
	<b>5.2.2</b> The prices paid to contract farmers/smallholders must be fair. In the case of smallholders, the prices shall be based on living income estimates, when they are available for the region. If no living income estimates are available, prices shall be set following the FAO Guiding Principles for Responsible Contract Farming.
	<b>5.2.3</b> Agreed-upon payments to farmers/smallholders shall be made in a transparent and timely manner.
<b>6. Respect labor rights and ensure good working conditions</b>	
<b>6.1</b> All workers shall be provided with written contractual agreements that are fair and legally valid.	<b>6.1.1</b> Workers shall have written employment contracts. Employment contracts shall be in a language understood by all parties, signed by the worker and employer, and include at least the following: job description; working hours; pay rate; overtime regulations; social benefit entitlements and deductions; annual paid leave; maternity leave; protection of the worker from loss of pay in the case of illness, disability or accident; and a notice period for termination that is the same as the notice period for the employer.

# Access



Criteria	Indicators
<p><b>6.2</b> The farm management/ smallholder shall pay all workers a decent wage and provide conditions of employment that respect legal requirements or collective bargaining agreements, whichever sets the higher standards.</p>	<p><b>6.2.1</b> All workers shall receive at least a living wage in line with the estimations for the country or region made by the Global Living Wage Coalition (if available). If no living wage has been calculated for the country or region, then wages shall at least fulfil legal regulations (government regulated minimum wages), industry minimum standards or collective bargaining agreements (whichever sets the highest standard).</p>
	<p><b>6.2.2</b> If payments are calculated by piecework (i.e. based on production rather than hours) or by task, the pay rate must allow workers to earn at least the wage set in line with Indicator 6.2.1, based on regular (legal) working hours under average conditions. Information about this pay rate must be transparent and available to all workers and worker’s organizations.</p>
	<p><b>6.2.3</b> Working hours, leave and additional benefits shall comply with, or exceed, applicable statutory regulations, sector minimum standards or collective bargaining agreements (the conditions most beneficial to workers should apply).</p>
	<p><b>6.2.4</b> It shall be demonstrated that no deductions from wages are made unless they are permitted by national laws or fixed by a collective bargaining agreement. If deductions from wages are made for any provided service, the amounts deducted must be fair and in line with the actual costs incurred, and deductions shall not be used as a disciplinary mechanism.</p>
	<p><b>6.2.5</b> It shall be demonstrated that workers are not requested to bring their own protective equipment, uniforms or tools.</p>
	<p><b>6.2.6</b> Workers shall be paid at regularly scheduled intervals (at least monthly) and in a legal tender.</p>
	<p><b>6.2.7</b> Payments shall be documented with a payslip containing all relevant information and in a language understood by all parties.</p>
	<p><b>6.2.8</b> Permanent employment relationships shall be used for all core work performed in the operation. Temporary, seasonal and casual (day labor) must be limited to jobs that are temporary, seasonal or occasional/intermittent, and not used to avoid the obligations of permanent employment.</p>

# Access



Criteria	Indicators
<p><b>6.3</b> People involved in farm operations shall not be subjected to any form of discrimination based on race, color, gender, religion, political opinion, national extraction, social origin, sexual orientation, family responsibilities, marital status, union membership, age or any other condition that could give rise to discrimination.</p>	<p><b>6.3.1</b> An equal opportunities policy that identifies relevant/affected groups shall be made available and publicly communicated.</p> <hr/> <p><b>6.3.2</b> Awareness shall be raised regarding equal opportunity as part of regular training activities.</p> <hr/> <p><b>6.3.3</b> Workers shall not be subjected to any form of discrimination in hiring, pay, benefits, access to training, promotion, termination, retirement or any other aspect of employment, based on race, color, gender, religion, political opinion, national extraction, social origin, sexual orientation, family responsibilities, marital status, union membership, age or any other condition that could give rise to discrimination.</p> <hr/> <p><b>6.3.4</b> Contract farmers/smallholders shall not be subjected to discrimination in contracts, payments, access to training or any other aspect of the business relationship, based on race, color, gender, religion, political opinion, national extraction, social origin, sexual orientation, family responsibilities, marital status, union membership, age or any other condition that could give rise to discrimination.</p>
<p><b>6.4</b> Occupational safety and health conditions for workers shall adhere to recognized national and international standards.</p>	<p><b>6.4.1</b> A health and safety policy appropriate to the type and size of the operation, and which applies to all people working for the operation, shall be adopted and follow ILO Convention 184 (Safety and Health in Agriculture) or national laws (if they are more stringent).</p> <hr/> <p><b>6.4.2</b> All people working for the operation shall be provided with health and safety training specific and relevant to the task performed. Training shall cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Work-related health and safety risks</li> <li>– Preventative measures for minimising those risks</li> <li>– Work-related risks to the environment and/or society</li> <li>– The proper transport, storage and handling of hazardous substances and waste</li> <li>– Accident and emergency procedures and measures, including the interpretation of labels, markings, signs, and other safety relevant audio and/or visual signals (see Indicator 6.4.3).</li> </ul> <hr/> <p><b>6.4.3</b> Emergency and accident procedures appropriate for the operation shall be made available and periodically updated based on records of work-related accidents (see Indicator 6.4.4).</p> <hr/> <p><b>6.4.4</b> Records of all work-related accidents shall be kept.</p>



# Access



Criteria	Indicators
<p><b>6.4</b> Occupational safety and health conditions for workers shall adhere to recognized national and international standards.</p>	<p><b>6.4.5</b> First aid and emergency response material shall be available in sufficient quantity (i.e. readily available and accessible to workers) and in sufficient quality (i.e. up-to-date, periodically inspected and appropriate to address relevant hazards and risks) at all sites, including mobile facilities and in the vicinity of agricultural sites. Designated people on the farm shall be knowledgeable as to the presence and use of such equipment.</p> <hr/> <p><b>6.4.6</b> Personal protective equipment (PPE) shall be provided to all people working for the operation to protect them from all occupational health and safety hazards associated with their respective tasks (e.g. use of agrochemicals or power tools).</p>
<p><b>6.5</b> The right of all personnel to form and join trade unions of their choice and to bargain collectively shall be respected.</p>	<p><b>6.5.1</b> A policy recognising freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining shall be made available and explained to all workers in languages that they understand. If the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining is restricted under domestic law, alternative means of independent and free association and bargaining for all personnel shall be provided.</p> <hr/> <p><b>6.5.2</b> Workers shall have the right to establish and join worker organizations based on their own free choice, without influence or interference by the farm management/ group manager/smallholder.</p> <hr/> <p><b>6.5.3</b> Worker organizations shall operate without interference or influence by farm management, the farm owner or group manager.</p> <hr/> <p><b>6.5.4</b> Members of workers' organizations shall be provided with time needed to fulfil their tasks, whether during or outside regular working hours. Workers exercising this right should not be discriminated against or suffer repercussions.</p>
<p><b>6.6</b> No forms of forced or trafficked labor shall be used.</p>	<p><b>6.6.1</b> All work shall be performed voluntarily and the following practices shall be prohibited:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Retention of identity documents or passports</li> <li>– Payment of recruitment or training fees</li> <li>– Contract substitution</li> <li>– Involuntary overtime</li> <li>– Lack of freedom for workers to quit</li> <li>– Penalties for termination of employment</li> <li>– Debt bondage</li> <li>– Withholding of wages</li> <li>– Restrictions to freedom of movement</li> </ul>

# Access



Criteria	Indicators
<p><b>6.7</b> Children shall not be employed or exploited.</p>	<p><b>6.7.1</b> A formal policy for the protection of children, including child-labor prohibition and remediation provisions, shall be in place and implemented.</p>
	<p><b>6.7.2</b> Any type of paid or unpaid work by a child under the age of 15 shall be prohibited. The only exception shall be work by children on family smallholdings within the community, and this shall only be acceptable under adult supervision and when it does not interfere with the child’s schooling or put his or her health at risk.</p>
	<p><b>6.7.3</b> Young persons shall only be employed in non-hazardous work, and protective restrictions shall be in place for such work.</p>
<p><b>7. Provide training and capacity building</b></p>	
<p><b>7.1</b> Training and capacity building focused on improving the agricultural livelihood of all farmers involved in the operation shall be provided.</p>	<p><b>7.1.1</b> A training and capacity building program that is addressed at all farmers involved in the operation shall be implemented and available. This program must be developed in consultation with farmers to ensure its contents are tailored to their needs.</p>
<p><b>8. Offer social safety nets</b></p>	
<p><b>8.1</b> All people working for the operation shall have access to medical care.</p>	<p><b>8.1.1</b> All people working for the operation shall have sufficient and adequate medical care. Their families shall also have access to medical care if this is required by domestic law.</p>
	<p><b>8.1.2</b> All people working for the operation shall have access to appropriate healthcare in the event of work-related illness or injury. These individuals shall have access to free transportation to the nearest hospital or on-site medical facility during working hours. In the event permanent on-site medical support is provided, equipment and training should be adequate to deal with accidents and acute poisoning. All people working for the operation shall have occupational accident insurance coverage.</p>
	<p><b>8.1.3</b> A policy shall be in place regarding regular sick leave and leave caused by employment injury. This policy must ensure that workers are protected from being dismissed during temporary sick leave. It must also guarantee the worker some form of income during sick leave. Sick leave should not count towards annual holiday leave. The policy should, at a minimum, adhere to domestic regulations.</p>
<p><b>8.2</b> All people working for the operation shall have access to a provident fund, pension system or equivalent compensation.</p>	<p><b>8.2.1</b> All people working for the operation shall have a provident fund or pension scheme. If national legislation has more stringent requirements, then this legislation must be adhered to. If pension arrangements cannot be provided to a subset of workers, e.g. migrant or temporary/seasonal workers, these workers must receive equivalent compensation.</p>

# Availability



Criteria	Indicators
<b>9. Respect land rights</b>	
<p><b>9.1</b> Existing land rights and land-use rights, including formal, informal and customary rights, shall be respected in accordance with the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure (VGGT). All decisions regarding land rights and land use rights, such as purchase, sale or valuation, shall be based on the free, prior and informed consent of all stakeholders.</p>	<p><b>9.1.1</b> Existing land rights and land-use rights, including formal, informal and customary rights, shall be assessed prior to the first audit, including FSS verification. Such an assessment shall also be conducted prior to acquisition/rental of land, and – in the case of contract farming or group certification – when new contract farmers or group members are added.</p>
	<p><b>9.1.2</b> It shall be demonstrated that there are legal, customary land-rights or land-use rights for the operation. For the period from 2012 onward, it must be demonstrated that the land-rights or land-use rights were obtained based on ‘free, prior and informed consent’ (FPIC) and following negotiated agreement with affected parties.</p>
	<p><b>9.1.3</b> Land under legitimate dispute shall not be used for operations until such disputes have been settled through free, prior and informed consent and negotiated agreements with affected parties. Maps of an appropriate scale showing the extent of recognised legal, customary or use rights must be developed in a participatory process that involves affected parties (including neighbouring communities, when applicable, and relevant authorities).</p>
	<p><b>9.1.4</b> Traditional and customary land use rights shall be respected. Against this backdrop, the use of the land by pastoralists, indigenous people, artisanal fishers and other comparable users must be allowed. This shall exclude any illegal hunting, illegal fishing or illegal collection of products.</p>
	<p><b>9.1.5</b> There has been no forced or involuntary physical or economic displacement, resettlement or relinquishment of land rights for the purpose of agricultural production. Extra-judicial intimidation or harassment by contracted security forces shall be also prohibited. There shall be no evidence that the operation has instigated violence.</p>
	<p><b>9.1.6</b> In any negotiations, all relevant information shall be available to all affected parties in appropriate forms and languages, including impact assessments, proposed benefit sharing and associated legal arrangements.</p>
	<p><b>9.1.7</b> When negotiating communities’ land or land-use rights, these communities must be represented through institutions or representatives of their own choosing, including legal counsel.</p>

# Availability



Criteria	Indicators
<b>10. Respect water rights and ensure that water quality and availability are maintained or improved</b>	
<b>10.1</b> Existing water rights must be respected.	<p><b>10.1.1</b> Downstream and groundwater users shall be identified and existing formal or customary water rights determined. The potential impacts of the operation on such rights shall be evaluated and documented.</p> <hr/> <p><b>10.1.2</b> Water rights must be obtained through legal means. All existing formal or customary water rights, including the rights of pastoralists, indigenous people, artisanal fishers and other comparable users shall be respected and protected. Free prior and informed consent shall be obtained from impacted parties prior to the acquisition of new or existing rights.</p> <hr/> <p><b>10.1.3</b> Water resources under legitimate dispute shall not be used until such disputes have been settled through agreement with affected stakeholders based free, prior and informed consent.</p>
<b>10.2</b> Water quality and availability in the operation's area of influence shall be assessed.	<p><b>10.2.1</b> Water resources potentially affected both within and outside of the farm shall be identified, and key risks and challenges shall be assessed.</p>
<b>10.3</b> Water quality shall be maintained or improved.	<p><b>10.3.1</b> Measures to contain effluents and avoid runoff and leaching, as well as to prevent pollution and siltation of surface and ground water, shall be implemented.</p> <hr/> <p><b>10.3.2</b> The quality of potentially affected water bodies and of all drinking water sources in the area of influence of the operation shall be periodically monitored based on the results of a risk assessment (see Indicator 10.2.1). The results must show that water quality is being maintained or improved.</p>
<b>10.4</b> Local water availability shall not be negatively affected.	<p><b>10.4.1</b> Situations of water scarcity shall not be created and long-term water availability shall not be affected.</p> <hr/> <p><b>10.4.2</b> Important water-related areas, including wetlands, affected by the operation shall be protected, restored (if damaged) and always maintained.</p> <hr/> <p><b>10.4.3</b> Impacts on water availability within the area of influence of the operation, including water sources for human consumption, shall be assessed and regularly monitored.</p> <hr/> <p><b>10.4.4</b> When irrigation is performed, effective action shall be taken to ensure that water is efficiently used and that water scarcity is not aggravated (see Indicator 10.4.1).</p>

# Availability



Criteria	Indicators
<b>11. Implement sustainable agricultural practices</b>	
<p><b>11.1</b> Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) shall be applied.</p>	<p><b>11.1.1</b> Soil erosion shall be prevented or minimized through the design of the agricultural production site and sustainable practices shall be used to enhance soil health.</p> <hr/> <p><b>11.1.2</b> Practices to protect the soil structure, including the prevention of compaction, as well as to maintain or enhance soil organic matter at the production site, shall be implemented.</p> <hr/> <p><b>11.1.3</b> Practices to maintain and improve the soil nutrient balance while taking into account soil conditions and crop needs and reduce nitrate pollution shall be implemented.</p> <hr/> <p><b>11.1.4</b> Producers of annual crops shall practise crop rotation.</p> <hr/> <p><b>11.1.5</b> Integrated Pest Management techniques (IPM) that are adequate for the target crop to reduce the development of pest populations and minimise risks to human health and the environment shall be implemented and monitored.</p> <hr/> <p><b>11.1.6</b> Records of pesticide use shall be maintained, including, at a minimum, documentation of the reason for use; the name of the pest treated; the product designation, including active ingredients; the amount applied per hectare; the location, date, and target crop; and the number of applications.</p>
<p><b>11.2</b> Good practices shall be implemented for the storage, handling, use and disposal of chemicals (pesticides, fuels, fertilizers, etc.)</p>	<p><b>11.2.1</b> None of the chemicals recorded in the WHO's 1a, 1b and 2 lists, the Rotterdam Convention or in the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants shall be used. Pesticides included in the PAN list of highly hazardous pesticides under the categories H330 (fatal if inhaled) and/or with long term effects according to the EU GHS classification are also prohibited.</p> <hr/> <p><b>11.2.2</b> Manufacturer's safety instructions for the storage, handling, use and disposal of chemicals shall be followed.</p> <hr/> <p><b>11.2.3</b> Pesticides shall be used in accordance with proven methods that minimize risk and do not harm the environment, communities, people working for the operation, women or children. No pesticides shall be used in or near water sources or protected areas.</p> <hr/> <p><b>11.2.4</b> No work with pesticides shall be undertaken by young workers or pregnant or breast-feeding women. These individuals must be offered alternative work.</p>

# Utilization



Criteria	Indicators
<b>12. Provide a setting for the safe utilization of food</b>	
<b>12.1</b> All people working for the operation shall have access to clean and safe facilities.	<b>12.1.1</b> Accommodations (including collectively used accommodations like dormitories and living areas), sanitary facilities (e.g. toilets, portable WCs, showers) and kitchen/dining/food storage areas, provided to people working for the operation and their families shall be designed, built and maintained to meet basic needs, to comply with legal requirements, and to ensure safe and healthy conditions. Toilet paper or bidet shower and soap shall be made available in all sanitary facilities.
<b>12.2</b> All people working for the operation shall be provided with access to potable water.	<b>12.2.1</b> All people working for the operations shall have access to potable water.
<b>13. Guarantee good nutrition</b>	
<b>13.1</b> Measures to improve access to adequate, safe, sufficient and affordable food for all people working for the operation shall be undertaken.	<b>13.1.1</b> Appropriate, clean and safe dining and food storage facilities must be provided.
	<b>13.1.2</b> If workers do not have the option of bringing their own food or purchasing it nearby, options to buy diversified and nutritious food must be provided at fair prices.
	<b>13.1.3</b> All people working for the operation (including those involved in other activities such as cooking or cleaning) shall be granted sufficient breaks for eating and drinking in consideration of weather conditions and the type of work performed.
	<b>13.1.4</b> All people working for the operation shall have access to healthy and nutritious food of sufficient quality and quantity at all times.
<b>13.2</b> Breastfeeding women shall be provided with adequate conditions to nurture their children.	<b>13.2.1</b> Nursing mothers shall be granted at least two additional 30-minute daily breaks during paid working time to breastfeed children up to 9 months after birth.

# Cross-cutting elements



Criteria	Indicators
<b>14. Provide complaint and grievance mechanisms</b>	
<p><b>14.1</b> Complaints and grievances mechanisms for workers, contract farmers, communities and stakeholders shall be implemented and maintained.</p>	<p><b>14.1.1</b> A documented system for dealing with complaints and grievances voiced by workers, contract farmers, communities and stakeholders shall be implemented and maintained. The system shall allow resolution of disputes in an effective, timely and appropriate manner while also ensuring the anonymity of complainants and whistle-blowers, when requested. This mechanism shall have the following characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The mechanisms are communicated and made easily accessible to workers, contract farmers, communities and stakeholders. Special consideration shall be given to illiterate people.</li> <li>– Procedures shall be in place to ensure that anyone can confidentially communicate grievances or complaints without risk of reprisal or intimidation.</li> <li>– The system shall ensure anonymity of complainants and whistle-blowers</li> <li>– The dispute-resolution mechanism shall be based on negotiations between affected parties and decisions shall be agreed to by the vast majority of negatively affected workers/contract farmers/community members/stakeholders.</li> <li>– Any complaint or grievance must be acknowledged and dealt with in an effective and timely manner.</li> <li>– Records of all complaints and grievances must be kept, including steps taken to address them and the outcome of the process.</li> </ul>
<b>15. Respect women’s rights and ensure gender equity</b>	
<p><b>15.1</b> Women shall not experience discrimination and their rights must be respected.</p>	<p><b>15.1.1</b> All workers shall receive the same payment and benefits for the same scope of work, regardless of gender.</p> <hr/> <p><b>15.1.2</b> All women shall have the possibility to articulate and communicate their concerns and ideas through a dedicated gender representative or committee. Confidentiality must be granted if desired.</p> <hr/> <p><b>15.1.3</b> In all stakeholder consultation processes, including the FPIC, women must be appropriately included (proportionally represented) and their voices equally heard and respected.</p>

# Cross-cutting elements



Criteria	Indicators
<p><b>15.1</b> Women shall not experience discrimination and their rights must be respected.</p>	<p><b>15.1.4</b> A policy to prevent sexual harassment and all other forms of harassment or violence shall be implemented and communicated at all levels of the workforce, including contract farmers and service providers. This shall include a procedure concerning where complaints are received, how complaints are handled, which remedial actions are performed and how the process is documented.</p>
	<p><b>15.1.5</b> Workers shall be granted at least eight weeks of maternity leave with compensation consistent with national laws or not less than 2/3 of regular pay, whichever is higher, not including annual leave, and in the absence of any loss or privilege on account of such leave. The employment contract of a woman during her pregnancy or maternity leave shall not be terminated, except on grounds unrelated to the pregnancy or birth of the child. National legislation must be adhered to if it provides more stringent requirements.</p>
	<p><b>15.1.6</b> Policies must be in place to ensure that women working for the farm operation are protected while pregnant. This includes specific procedures relating to their safety, such as protection against physical, chemical or biological agents that could cause harm. Pregnant women shall not work excessive hours and shall be provided with rest periods as appropriate. Legal requirements have priority, if they exceed the requirements laid down in this standard.</p>
<p><b>16. Raise awareness for nutrition and support child education</b></p>	
<p><b>16.1</b> Awareness regarding food security and nutrition shall be raised.</p>	<p><b>16.1.1</b> A training program that focuses on improving food and nutrition security shall be provided to all people working for the operation. At a minimum, this training must cover proper nutrition and healthy diets. Other aspects of the training should be determined in collaboration with the target group.</p>
	<p><b>16.1.2</b> In regions with a high risk of food insecurity, training programs for communities within the area of influence shall be supported. These programs shall focus on improving food and nutrition security. The type of support provided must be defined in consultation with local communities and/or authorities.</p>
<p><b>16.2</b> All children living at the agricultural operation shall have access to quality primary school education.</p>	<p><b>16.2.1</b> It shall be demonstrated that all children living directly at the agricultural operation or in accommodations provided to workers and their families attend at least primary school.</p>



# Cross-cutting elements



Criteria	Indicators
<b>17. Assess and monitor local food security</b>	
<p><b>17.1</b> Awareness for the overall food-security situation in the area of influence of the operation must be demonstrated. Responsibility for impacts on food security in the area of influence of the operation shall be assumed.</p>	<p><b>17.1.1</b> Awareness for the food security situation in the area of influence of the operation must be demonstrated. Any change in food security must be registered and causes identified.</p> <hr/> <p><b>17.1.2</b> The food and nutrition security situation of communities in the area of influence of the operation does not deteriorate due to the operation.</p>
<p><b>17.2</b> New agricultural operations or the expansion of existing operations must not have a negative effect on the food security situation within the operation's area of influence, and they must not impair the right to food at the national level.</p>	<p><b>17.2.1</b> Prior to starting or expanding operations, the potential impact of planned activities on local and national food security must be assessed. It must be demonstrated that these operations will not have negative effects on national food security. Mitigation measures to ensure that local food security does not deteriorate within the area of influence of the operation must be implemented.</p>

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