

Triple Standards:
Integrating Developing Country
Producers into the Value Chain

Quick Reference Guide
to Private Environmental,
Quality, and Social Standards

2007
Fourth Edition



3-3. Triple standards-value chain

Standards are the language of trade. To ensure the competitiveness of developing country producers it is imperative that systems for affordable access and credible implementation of these standards are established. Emerging standards are both complex and dynamic, incorporating features that go beyond simple quality, to less apparent characteristics of product safety, environmental management, and human rights. This is driven by the philosophy of the Triple Bottom Line, which integrates profitability with continual improvement in environmental and social performance in everyday business practices.

There remains, however, an uneven understanding of how these emerging standards can be implemented in the context of developing countries. Producers and suppliers must speak a common language based on these standards and a realistic accreditation and auditing infrastructure. Only when there is common understanding about standards and the capacity to implement them, can the benefits - financial, social, and environmental - be felt by all links in the value chain.

This booklet provides a synopsis of some of the major standards that impact developing country producers. This is not designed to be an exhaustive source of information, but rather a primer with tools for sourcing further information.

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Definitions

The following terms are defined to help ease use of this reference guide. They have been generalized to be appropriate for all the standards presented.

Accreditation

Formal recognition to a body or person to certify to a specific standard.

Accreditation Body

Authoritative Body for a specific standard that gives formal recognition to body or person to certify to the standard.

Audit

Formal check by Certifying Body of compliance to a specific standard.

Certification

Written assurance from a Certifying Body of compliance to a specific standard.

Certifying Body

Body given formal recognition to assess compliance to a specific standard.

Focus

Desired aspects of product and production that a standard is designed to control.

Requirement

Specific topics for compliance of standard.

IFOAM Basic Standards

Full Name

IFOAM, International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements

Standard For

Organic agricultural goods

Focus

Production and processing of agricultural products that provide assurance of adherence to organic standards.

Structure

The IFOAM Basic Standards are largely considered the benchmark for most national programs for organic standards. There is a general set of standards for agricultural products, with separate standards for animal husbandry, beekeeping, aquaculture, processing and handling, textiles, and sustainable forest management.

Requirements

Address ecosystem management (water, soil, biodiversity), genetically modified materials, pesticides and fertilizers, social justice, transport, and processing.

Background

IFOAM represents a worldwide network of organic practitioners. This grassroots-oriented organization seeks to establish universally accepted standards for organic production and processing. Because organic agriculture adheres to globally accepted principles that are implemented locally, IFOAM works to develop self-sufficient systems at the local and regional levels.

Accreditation Body

International Organic Accreditation Services, Inc. (IOAS)

Auditing System

Third-party, IOAS-accredited certifying bodies.

Labeling

System developed through certifying bodies based on IFOAM regulations.

Resources

<http://www.ifoam.org/>

<http://www.ifoam.org/standard/norms/cover.html>

EU Organic

Full Name

European Union Statutory Law on Organic Food Labeling

Standard For

Agricultural products, at the level of both production and processing

Focus

Production and processing of agricultural products that provide assurance of adherence to organic standards.

Structure

Standard for organic labeling for products sold in the European market. There is a general set of standards for agricultural products, with separate standards for animal husbandry, beekeeping, aquaculture, processing and handling, textiles, and forest management.

Requirements

Address ecosystem management (water, soil, biodiversity), genetically modified materials, pesticides and fertilizers, transport and processing, and social justice.

Background

The European Commission adopted Council Regulation No. 2092/91 to officially recognize the notion of organic farming in certain member states. It was done not only to define the concept of organic farming and processing, but also to combat widespread fraud.

Auditing System

Varies by country.

Labeling

System for labeling certified organic products in process.

Resources

http://europa.eu.int/comm/agriculture/qual/organic/index_en.htm

US NOP

Full Name

United States National Organic Program

Standard For

The production and processing of agriculture products.

Focus

Production and processing of agricultural products that provide assurance of adherence to organic standards.

Structure

Standards for organic labeling of products sold in the United States. There is a general set of standards for agricultural products, with separate standards for animal husbandry, beekeeping, aquaculture, processing and handling, textiles, and forest management.

Requirements

Address ecosystem management (water, soil, biodiversity), genetically modified materials, pesticides and fertilizers, transport and processing, and social justice.

Background

The United States Congress mandated the United States Department of Agriculture develop regulations for organic agricultural products because the unregulated organic market expanded significantly.

Accreditation Body

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Auditing System

USDA-accredited certifying inspectors.

Labeling

Labeling system under development.

Resources

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop/>
<http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop/NOP/standards.html>
(look at the regulatory text only)

EUREPGAP

Full Name

Euro-Retailer Produce Working Group, Good Agricultural Practices

Standard For

Quality standards for agricultural products, including fresh produce, livestock, and fresh-cut flowers

Focus

Food safety standard for agricultural products sourced by participating European suppliers and processors.

Structure

EUREPGAP applies to products purchased by a wide range of European suppliers, though it has been adopted as a quality, social, and environmental benchmark for products imported and sold throughout the European Community.

Requirements

Address seeds and shoots, soil and water management, fertilizer and pesticides, harvest, post-harvest treatments, waste management, worker safety, and environmental management.

Background

EUREPGAP is a standard developed to provide a verification framework over a range of agricultural products. The standards were developed by a group of European representatives from all stages of the agribusiness supply chain. They were born out of food scares in Europe and a public outcry to know the source and safety of food purchased in Europe.

Accreditation Body

EUREPGAP

Auditor

EUREPGAP-accredited certification bodies.

Labeling

There is no established labeling system.

Resources

<http://www.eurep.org/>

http://www.eurep.org/sites/index_e.html

HACCP

Full Name

Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point

Standard For

Food products, from raw materials to finished products. Special control points have also been developed for seafood and juice, as well as meat and poultry processing.

Focus

Food safety and preventing food-borne diseases.

Structure

Voluntary standard to evaluate the entire production process for food safety.

Requirements

Address analysis of hazards, preventive measures, system of monitoring, and effective record-keeping.

Background

HACCP was originally developed by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration to prevent food-borne diseases in the space program. It has been picked up by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), which intends to make it the food safety standard throughout the food service industry, including both domestic and imported food products. HACCP has been endorsed by the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

Accreditation Body

This is a voluntary program recommended by the FDA for companies to use in their production process to alleviate the hazard of food-borne diseases.

Auditing System

Internal audit, random food sampling.

Labeling

There is no established labeling system.

Resources

<http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~comm/haccpov.html>

<http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~comm/nacmcfp.html>

Codex Alimentarius

Full Name

Codex Alimentarius

Standard For

Food Products. There are general standards to be adhered to and specific standards for a large number of individual food products.

Focus

Food Safety. There are general standards to be adhered to and specific standards for a large number of individual food products. Codex is designed to ensure that food is correctly labeled, correctly presented, and not adulterated.

Structure

The Codex standards are the basis for individual national food safety standards for specific products. The standards are designed to be accepted by WTO member countries to ensure food safety and facilitate trade.

Requirements

Food products must be disease-free, good quality, labeled correctly, and packaged and transported in a sanitary fashion.

Background

The FAO and the World Health Organization established Codex Alimentarius to provide universal standards for the ever-evolving global food market. These standards were set up to prevent food-borne diseases and ensure a common standard to facilitate international trade.

Auditing System

Internal audit, random food sampling.

Resources

<http://www.codexalimentarius.net/>

http://www.codexalimentarius.net/standard_list.asp

FSC

Full Name

Forest Stewardship Council, Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship

Standard For

Certifying forest management and chain of custody of forest products.

Focus

Encouraging well-managed forests that adhere to agreed-upon social, economic, and environmental standards.

Structure

Voluntary standards for certifying and labeling forests and forest products.

Requirements

Must have an established forest management system, and address environmental impact, indigenous rights, land tenure, and equity of benefits.

Background

The Forest Stewardship Council is an association of diverse environmental and social groups, the timber trade and the forestry profession, indigenous people's organizations, community forestry groups, and forest product certification organizations from around the world. FSC supports the development of national and local standards that implement the international Principles and Criteria of Forest Stewardship at the local level. FSC has developed guidelines for developing regional certification standards to encourage social, economic, and environmentally sustainable forest management.

Accreditation Body

FSC has developed guidelines for certification bodies.

Auditing System

FSC-accredited certification bodies certify to the FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship.

Labeling

Established system of labeling compliant products.

Resources

<http://www.fscoax.org/>

<http://www.fscoax.org/principal.htm>

(look at Manual and Guidelines for Certification Bodies)

MSC

Full Name

Marine Stewardship Council, Principles and Criteria for Sustainable Fishing

Standard For

Marine products

Focus

Encourage sustainable fishing practices to ensure healthy species population and ecosystem integrity.

Structure

Voluntary standards for certifying and labeling of individual species-based commercial fisheries.

Requirements

Address ecosystem integrity and sustainable exploitation through socially and economically sound methods.

Background

The MSC Principles and Criteria for Sustainable Fishing use a product label to reward environmentally responsible fishery management and practices. Consumers concerned about overfishing and its environmental and social consequences will increasingly be able to choose seafood products that have been independently assessed against the MSC Standard. Certified products will be labeled to prove it. This will assure consumers that the product has not contributed to the environmental problem of overfishing.

Accreditation Body

Marine Stewardship Council

Auditing System

Third-party, MSC-accredited assessors that certify to the MSC Principles and Criteria for Sustainable Fishing.

Labeling

Established system of labeling compliant products.

Resources

<http://www.msc.org/>
(see MSC Standards Ps and Cs under certification)

ISO 14001

Full Name

International Organization for Standardization 14000 Series

Standard For

Not sector specific, could be used for any industry. Currently being used in agrifood production, forest and wood products, fisheries, mining, energy, and manufacturing.

Focus

Continual improvement system for developing and maintaining workplace and employee health and safety management systems.

Structure

A management system approach that concentrates on processes rather than specific outcomes. Outlines the roles, responsibilities, and authorities of personnel charged with managing, verifying, and documenting an enterprise-wide health and safety system. Built on the "plan-do-check-act" management system model.

Requirements

Requires developing an environment management policy, environmental management plan, implementation plan, and a system for checking and taking corrective action.

Background

ISO 14001 is an EMS based on ISO 9001, organized to manage environmental issues within an organization. It does not assure good environmental performance or improvement.

Accrediting Body

National membership organization in each country.

Auditing System

Written internal and external audit procedures should be rooted in risk assessment results and describe the scope, frequency, methodologies and competencies for auditing. Routine internal audits conducted by personnel independent of activity being examined. Second party audits by supply chain (buyers) recognized as viable component. Third party registration audits and annual updates encouraged and performed by third party ISO accredited certifying body.

Labeling

Alphanumeric representation "ISO 14001: the norm.

Resources

<http://www.iso.ch/iso/en/ISOOnline.frontpage>

<http://www.iso.ch/iso/en/iso9000-14000/tour/magical.html>

SA8000

Full Name

Social Accountability 8000

Standard For

Products produced by companies that adhere to specific standards for working conditions and labor rights.

Focus

Improve work environment and workers rights.

Structure

SA8000 is a voluntary standard that is auditable by third-party verification.

Requirements

Address child labor, forced labor, health and safety, freedom of association, discrimination, disciplinary practices, working hours, and remuneration.

Background

SAI is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the development, implementation, and oversight of voluntary, verifiable social accountability standards. SAI is committed to ensuring that standards and the systems for verifying compliance with such standards are highly reputable and publicly accessible. SAI's social accountability system, SA8000, is a way for retailers, brand companies, suppliers, and other organizations to maintain just and decent working conditions throughout the supply chain.

Accreditation Body

Social Accountability International (SAI)

Auditing System

Third-party, SAI-accredited certifying bodies

Labeling

There is no established labeling system.

Resources

<http://www.sa-intl.org/>

<http://www.sa-intl.org/Document%20Center/Documents.htm>

(note that the standards are produced in multiple languages)

FairTrade

Full Name

FairTrade Labeling Organizations (FLO) International

Standard For

Primarily agricultural products, but increasingly applied to manufactured goods (starting with sports balls).

Focus

Human and worker rights.

Structure

Standard for socially conscious product labeling.

Requirements

Address social development, economic development, environmental development, and labor conditions.

Background

FairTrade Labeling Organizations (FLO) International exists to improve the position of poor and marginalized producers in the developing world, by setting the FairTrade standards and by creating a framework that enables trade to take place at conditions respecting producers' interests. FLO gives credibility to national FairTrade labels by providing an independent, transparent, and competent certification of social and economic development.

Accreditation Body

FLO International

Auditing System

FLO certification is run by an autonomous unit within FLO International.

Labeling

Participating countries have national labeling systems.

Resources

<http://www.fairtrade.net/index.htm>

<http://www.fairtrade.net/sites/standards/set.htm>

ISO 9000

Full Name

International Organization of Standardization (ISO) 9001:2000

Standard For

Not sector specific, could be used for any industry. Currently being used in agrifood production, forest and wood products, fisheries, mining, energy and manufacturing.

Focus

Continual improvement system for developing and maintaining workplace and employee health and safety management systems.

Structure

A management system approach that concentrates on process rather than specific outcomes. Outlines the roles, responsibilities, and authorities of personnel who manage, verify, and document an enterprise-wide health and safety system. Built on the "plan-do-check-act" management system model.

Requirements

Development of management policy, management plan, implementation plan, and system for checking and taking corrective action.

Background

ISO developed the ISO 9000 series to provide a framework for applying the management of any type and size of organization. The series addresses areas essential to identifying customer satisfaction and establishing a management system to control the quality of an organization's products or services. The system is generic and can be applied to all organizations and products.

Accrediting Body

National membership organization in each country.

Auditing System

Written internal and external audit procedures should be rooted in risk assessment results and describe the scope, frequency, methodologies and competences for auditing. Routine internal audits conducted by personnel independent of activity being examined. Second party audits by supply chain (buyers) recognized as viable component. Third party registration audits and annual updates encouraged and performed by third party ISO accredited certifying body.

Labeling

Alphanumeric representation. "ISO 9000" the norm.

Resources

<http://www.iso.ch/iso/en/ISOOnline.frontpage>

<http://www.iso.ch/iso/en/iso9000-14000/tour/magical.html>

OHSAS 18001

Full Name

Occupational Health & Safety Auditing System

Standard For

Not sector specific; could be used for any industry. Currently being used in agrifood production, forest and wood products, fisheries, mining, energy, and manufacturing.

Focus

Continual improvement system for developing and maintaining work-place and employee health and safety management systems.

Structure

A management system approach that concentrates on processes rather than specific outcomes. Outlines the roles, responsibilities and authorities of personnel charged with the management, verification and documentation of an enterprise-wide health and safety system. Built on the "plan-do-check-act" management system model.

Requirements

Specific requirements for policy and planning, risk assessment and mitigation planning, system implementation, internal review and periodic external assessments, systematic corrective actions, and routine management review and communication of system performance. Outlines essential competencies, internal control and documentation systems, and specifies auditing requirements.

Background

Developed as an international response to various national systems (such as BS 880, US OSHA) OHSAS 18001 is a standardized management system for insuring that health and safety risk assessment and mitigative planning become a recognized part of an enterprises management system. It is often used in firms building integrated quality, environment, and health and safety management systems and is combined with ISO 9000 and 14001.

Auditing System

Written internal and external audit procedures should be rooted in risk assessment results and should describe the scope, frequency, methodologies and competencies required for auditing. Routine internal audits conducted by personnel independent of activity being examined. Second party audits by supply chain (buyers) recognized as viable component. Third party registration audits and annual updates encouraged and performed by third parties.

Labeling

No established labeling system in use. Alphanumeric representation "OHSAS 18001" the norm.

Resources

<http://www.ohsas-18001-occupational-health-and-safety.com/>
<http://www.18001.org/>
<http://asia.bsi-global.com/OHS/Standards/index.xalter>

Comparative Matrix												
Focus of Standards						Application Focus				Structure		
Quality	Organic	Social	Environment	Food Safety	Occupational Health & Safety	Product Specific	Country Specific	Label	Allows Self-Declaration	Management System		
IFOAM	secondary	primary	secondary	secondary	secondary	secondary	agribusiness	no	yes			
EU Organic	secondary	primary	secondary	secondary	secondary	agribusiness	EU members	yes	yes			
US NOP	secondary	primary	secondary	secondary	secondary	agribusiness	United States	yes	yes			
EUREPGAP	secondary	secondary	secondary	primary	primary	agribusiness	EUREPGAP members					
HACCP				primary	primary	agribusiness	no		yes			
Codex				primary	primary	agribusiness	no		yes			
SA8000		primary	secondary			no	no					
FairTrade		primary	primary			no	no		yes			
FSC		secondary	primary			forest	no		yes			
MSC		secondary	primary			marine	no		yes			
ISO 14001			primary			no	no			yes		yes
ISO 9000	primary					no	no			yes		yes
OHSAS 18001						no	no			yes		yes

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