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Social and Environmental Policy

1 Introduction

Social and Environmental Sustainability are a core issue of AgroFair. AgroFair was established in 1996 for the sole purpose of launching the Fairtrade banana on the market. Fairtrade was a new initiative at the time, proposed by the Dutch NGO Solidaridad, and first introduced for coffee. The evolving Fairtrade standard codifies the highest standards for the protection of plantation workers and small farmers, covering wage and salary conditions, occupational health and social development. Though essentially a social standard, Fairtrade covers many environmental aspects because of its relation with occupational health. It poses the severest restrictions on pesticide use outside the organic certification.

Our Social and Environmental Policy covers our own organization and our supply chain. By our Social and Environmental Policy, which are aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations, we uphold the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights of the United Nations, as well as other relevant principles and guidelines of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the International Labour Organization (ILO). The SDG matrix in our sustainability report shows the material topics and how these are related to individual goals and targets.

2 Social Policy

2.1 Principles

The principles of our social principles are fair trading policies, good employership, no discrimination, gender equality, inclusivity, good and safe labour conditions, freedom of association, compliance with local labour legislation, complaint procedures. We translate this for our supply chain and our own company.

2.2 In our supply chain


With our roots in Fairtrade, we require of every supplier to have adequate social compliance with laws and regulations and principles of good social compliance. Ideally, our suppliers have valid Fairtrade certification, as this is the highest standard in social certification, that goes well beyond the minimum requirements. In other cases, we expect the supplier to be fully compliant with the requirements of the ETI Base Code of the Ethical Trading Initiative, shown by a valid audit result. Alternatively, we recognize valid Rainforest Alliance, BioSuisse and Naturland certification. In case none of these are in place, the supplier must have a valid GlobaGAP Risk Analysis for Social Compliance (GRASP).

In our supplier selection, approval and review, we also check if we believe a supplier fits our identity as a leader of social responsibility. The way in which suppliers deal with social sustainability, is an important consideration in our supplier selection. We warrant the compliance with the required social standards by requiring from all our producers to have valid, externally, regularly and independently audited social compliance certificates that meet our requirements.

2.3 In our company

In our own company, we follow the same social principles that we expect from our suppliers. We conform to the national labour legislation, if applicable, we follow and surpass the collective bargaining agreement for the Fruit and Vegetable Wholesale, we have a confidence person.



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3 Environmental policy

3.1 Principles

Our environmental policy is based on reducing the harmful impact of agriculture on the environment. With the environment we mean the immediate environment of a farm, but also the areas further downstream, such as built communities, wild areas, marine wetlands. Our objective is to reduce as much as possible the exploitation of unrenovable resources, such as fossil fuel. When renewable resources are used, they have to be sustainably produced and not be at the expense of food production. As much as possible, we favour organic production, using no synthetic chemicals, but instead using the principles of integrated farm management and circularity. We have to use scarce resources in a responsible way. This relates especially to land and water use. Water use should be necessary and efficient.

3.2 In our supply chain

We work as much as possible with organic produce. The organic way of production is the best way to protect workers from exposure to harmful substances, protect the natural insect population and fosters soil fertility and biodiversity. Natural resources like water need to be protected. High-yield agriculture is required for affordable prices but comes at the expense of biodiversity, soil exhaustion, pollution and wasteful use of manufactured resources, such as paper and plastic. We require all our producers to constantly think of environmental innovation, lessening the burden on the natural environment and strive for constant improvement. As a base line, we require of non-organic producers that they have at least the Rainforest Alliance certification in place, which is a reasonable environmental standard. We consider non-organic Fairtrade also compliant with our base line, as there are good environmental foundations in this standard. It contains the strictest list of forbidden chemicals. All of our producers need to comply with the GlobalGAP standard, which contains also environmental elements, especially pertaining to waste disposal. The way in which suppliers deal with environmental sustainability, is an important consideration in our supplier selection.

3.3 In our own company

Dealing in tropical produce, we cannot avoid sea transport that is using fossil fuel. However, we favour shipping lines that have a lower carbon emission per ton.km of transported product. As much as possible, we avoid air transport. Where staff has to travel overseas by air, we compensate the carbon emissions by certified carbon credit schemes. If travel is within Europe, we use the least polluting way of travel, notably the train, if that is practically possible. Staff cars have to be in the highest energy efficiency categories. We do not use harmful cooling substances and invest in more energy efficient cooling facilities when this is economically feasible. We aim at compensating carbon emissions as far as economically possible, while realizing that offsetting is not enough and that reduction and prevention is of highest importance.

4 Grievance mechanism

If you feel human rights or environmental practices are negatively affected by our business activities, contrary to our commitment to the OECD Guiding Principles, you can submit a complaint to the Dutch National Contact Point: <https://www.oesorichtlijnen.nl/meldingen/melding-doen>, or your local National Contact Point.

