

# **FEFAC**

## SOY SOURCING GUIDELINES

### **2023 UPDATE**

**TOWARDS A  
MAINSTREAM MARKET  
TRANSITION FOR  
RESPONSIBLE SOY**

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**JULY 2023**



## ABOUT FEFAC

The European Compound Feed Manufacturers' Federation (FEFAC) represents the European compound feed and premix industry at the level of the European Institutions. FEFAC represents 23 national Associations in 23 EU Member States as well as associate members in the UK, Switzerland, Turkey and Norway.

The sustainability of livestock and aquaculture production is a key business driver for the European feed industry. FEFAC has been assisting its members in providing animal nutrition solutions that help to increase the sustainability of livestock farming operations, from the respective environmental, economic and social perspectives. Substantial progress has been achieved already over the past decades, but clearly, there are still many challenges for the livestock sector that require the continued European feed industry involvement and support providing new tools to farmers to effectively address them.

In September 2020, FEFAC released its Feed Sustainability Charter 2030 which includes five core ambitions:

- Contribute to climate-neutral livestock and aquaculture production through feed.
- Foster sustainable food systems through increased resource & nutrient efficiency.
- Promote responsible sourcing practices.
- Contribute to improving farm animal health & welfare.
- Enhance the socio-economic environment and resilience of the livestock & aquaculture sectors.

The FEFAC Soy Sourcing Guidelines are FEFAC's key commitment under the ambition to promote responsible sourcing practices. FEFAC sees the sourcing of soy in accordance with the criteria of the FEFAC Soy Sourcing Guidelines 2021 as a core pillar of a sustainable European livestock sector.

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# INTRODUCING THE FEFAC SOY SOURCING GUIDELINES

FEFAC's journey in facilitating responsible sourcing practices for the procurement of soy started in 2006. The publication of the FEFAC Soy Sourcing Guidelines in 2015 marked an important milestone in that journey, being FEFAC's most visible contribution to assisting the soy value chain in its efforts to facilitate the mainstream market transition for responsible soy production and purchasing. The Guidelines brought improved market transparency by setting a baseline to a fragmented European market with a plethora of schemes, using different terminologies and verification approaches for describing their market solutions to address deforestation, good agricultural practice and responsible working conditions. The FEFAC Soy Sourcing Guidelines 2021 made an additional step to further increase the market transparency for the sourcing of 'conversion-free soy', which was made an essential criterion in the 2023 review update.



### Essence of the FEFAC Soy Sourcing Guidelines

The FEFAC Soy Sourcing Guidelines are not a new standard or certification system. They are also not intended to set the bar for ordinary sourcing policies or provide guidance on risk management. The FEFAC Soy Sourcing Guidelines are a benchmarking programme and in essence a professional recommendation for feed operators and chain partners who wish to source their soy in accordance with the European feed industry's requirements for responsible soy production from within and outside Europe. The Guidelines consist of a range of essential and desired criteria which in combination set the European feed industry's minimum required level for responsible soy production and the chain of custody. Responsible soy scheme owners voluntarily apply to have their respective (certification) standard or program benchmarked against the criteria in the Guidelines. This benchmarking exercise is independently facilitated and executed by ITC (the International Trade Centre).

The criteria in the Guidelines are clustered under 6 pillars:

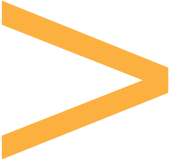
- Legal compliance
- Responsible working conditions
- Environmental responsibility
- Good agricultural practices
- Respect for legal land use
- Protection of community relations

With the 2023 review update, the FEFAC Soy Sourcing Guidelines include 73 criteria, of which 55 are considered essential (obligatory) and 18 are desired (optional). Each scheme must meet at least 8 out of 18 desired criteria to pass the benchmarking exercise. In addition, also the verification requirements must be met. The schemes that have successfully passed the benchmarking exercise are displayed on [the FEFAC webpage on ITC Standards Map](#), which is a customized platform in the ITC Standards Map infrastructure. In the context of the appropriate benchmarking terminology, it is important to see FEFAC as a “convenor” of responsible soy sourcing and its Guidelines as having a threshold / continuous improvement benchmarking model. The benchmarking programme is managed by the ITC.









**The Changes in the FEFAC Soy Sourcing Guidelines 2023**

The main reason for doing a mid-term review of the FEFAC Soy Sourcing Guidelines was to turn the desired criterion on the non-conversion of natural eco-systems into an essential one. At the same time, there was reason to update some other criteria. With the changes, the FEFAC Soy Sourcing Guidelines now still have 73 criteria, but one more essential criterion and one less desired criterion. Also some improvements were applied in the area of the verification requirements (see the chapter on Verification on page 31). Below the changes in the FEFAC Soy Sourcing Guidelines 2023 compared to the version released in 2021 in terms of criteria:

FEFAC SOY SOURCING GUIDELINES 2021	FEFAC SOY SOURCING GUIDELINES 2023 UPDATE
<p><b>12:</b> Farmers implement policies and procedures to address workers grievances.</p>	<p>This criterion is removed in view of duplication.</p>
<p><b>30:</b> Areas that are assigned as legal reserve, conservation area or otherwise secured by law have to be protected. These areas must be restored <b>to its former state</b> if any alteration has taken place or legally approved compensating actions should be taken.</p>	<p><b>30:</b> Areas that are assigned as legal reserve, conservation area or otherwise secured by law have to be protected. These areas must be restored <b>[deleted]</b> if any alteration has taken place or legally approved compensating actions should be taken.</p>
<p><b>33:</b> Farms should maintain and safeguard native vegetation on their farm in order to protect and provide habitat for wildlife species. There is a map of the farm which shows the native vegetation and there is a plan to protect and restore native vegetation.</p>	<p><b>33:</b> Farms should maintain and safeguard <b>the remaining</b> native vegetation on their farm in order to protect and provide habitat for wildlife species. There is a map of the farm which shows the native vegetation and there is a plan to protect and restore native vegetation.</p>



FEFAC SOY SOURCING GUIDELINES 2021	FEFAC SOY SOURCING GUIDELINES 2023 UPDATE
<p><b>34:</b> No soy is produced in converted natural ecosystems (natural forest, native grasslands, wetlands, swamps, peatlands, savannas, steep slopes and riparian areas) after a specific cut-off date no later than 31 December 2020. (Desired)</p>	<p><b>31:</b> No soy is produced in converted natural ecosystems (natural forest, native grasslands, wetlands, swamps, peatlands, savannas, steep slopes and riparian areas) in line with the Accountability Framework Initiative after a specific cut-off date no later than 31 December 2020. (Essential)</p>
<p><b>38:</b> Farmers make sure that there is no run-off of waste-water, chemical residues, minerals and organic substances.</p>	<p><b>37:</b> Farmers make sure that there is no run-off of waste-water, oil spills, chemical residues, minerals and organic substances.</p>
<p><b>60:</b> There is no use of PAN Dirty Dozen, WHO 1A, 1B and 2 chemicals.</p>	<p><b>59:</b> There is no use of [deleted] WHO 1A, 1B and 2 chemicals.</p>
<p><b>NEW – essential criterion</b></p>	<p><b>66:</b> International laws and standards on the rights of indigenous people and tenure rights of local communities need to be respected.</p>
<p><b>68:</b> There is no conversion of land where there is an unresolved land use claim by traditional land users under litigation, without the agreement of both parties.</p>	<p><b>68:</b> There is no soy production on land where there is an unresolved land use claim by traditional land users under litigation, without the agreement of both parties.</p>
<p><b>72:</b> In case a relevant competent authority requires the farmer to react to a complaint or grievance in a certain way, the farmer will do so in a timely manner.</p>	<p>This criterion is removed in view of duplication.</p>
<p><b>NEW – desired criterion</b></p>	<p><b>73:</b> The farmer has a policy and reporting actions to ensure a zero-tolerance approach for threats and violence against Forest, Land and Human Rights Defenders.</p>



### Transparency as Regards Standards that Offer Conversion-Free Soy

By moving the desired criterion on conversion-free soy to an essential one, FEFAC moves beyond the scope of the incoming regulatory framework on deforestation-free supply chains, the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR). FEFAC has pointed to the value of certification schemes in contributing to deforestation & conversion-free supply chains. In the updated FEFAC webtool on ITC Standards Map, schemes can demonstrate the availability of satellite polygons to underpin the conversion-free status of a soy farmer supplier. FEFAC however has not designed the Soy Sourcing Guidelines or the webtool as an 'EUDR compliance tool'. Further details on the FEFAC-developed qualification mechanism for conversion-free soy and the corresponding transparency tool can be found further down this publication.



### Transition of FEFAC Soy Sourcing Guidelines 2021 to FEFAC Soy Sourcing Guidelines 2023

Schemes and programmes that were benchmarked against the FEFAC Soy Sourcing Guidelines 2021 were invited to submit a benchmarking application to the FEFAC Soy Sourcing Guidelines 2023. The validity of their positive benchmarking result against the FEFAC Soy Sourcing Guidelines 2021 will expire on 31 December 2023. The FEFAC Soy Sourcing Guidelines webtool on ITC Standards Map will allow users to distinguish between the benchmarking results of both FEFAC Soy Sourcing Guidelines versions. At the same time, an invitation has been made for new applications by responsible soy schemes and programmes.









# THE FEFAC SOY SOURCING GUIDELINES 2023

The following section includes the 6 pillars and the 73 criteria of the FEFAC Soy Sourcing Guidelines.

## 1. LEGAL COMPLIANCE

In respect of the legality principle FEFAC, considers compliance with the relevant forest and eco-systems protection legislation as the first key step towards responsible soy production. Most soy producing countries have a comprehensive legislative framework including several (ratified) international conventions. However, FEFAC notes that proof of compliance with the relevant national and local legislation remains an issue and challenge for many soy value chain operators. Verification of compliance with the law - and all other items - remains a very important part of the FEFAC's approach.



### Theme 1.1

The producer is aware of the applicable laws and applicable laws are being complied with.

#### ESSENTIAL CRITERIA

- 1 Awareness of responsibilities according to applicable laws can be demonstrated.
- 2 Applicable laws are being complied with.





## 2. RESPONSIBLE WORKING CONDITIONS

The main criteria under this principle are directly derived from the core ILO-conventions, supplemented with criteria on worker health and safety. It is very important that all workers in soy production can perform their work in a safe and healthy manner and are fairly compensated for their work. Fundamental human rights need to be protected at all times and workers need to be able to organize themselves and perform collective bargaining on behalf of others.



### Theme 2.1

Child labour, forced labour, discrimination and harassment are not engaged in or supported.

#### ESSENTIAL CRITERIA

- 3 No forced, compulsory, bonded, trafficked or otherwise involuntary labour is used in any stage of production.
- 4 Children under 15 (or a higher age as established in national law) do not carry out productive work. Young workers (15-18) must not undertake hazardous work that jeopardizes their health and welfare, including by interfering with their education.
- 5 There is no engagement in, support for, or tolerance of any form of discrimination.
- 6 Workers are not subject to corporal punishment, mental or physical oppression or coercion, verbal or physical abuse, sexual harassment or any kind of intimidation.
- 7 No workers of any type are required to lodge their identity papers with anyone, unless required by law.

8 The work week shall be set according to local and national laws, shall be consistent with local industry standards, and shall, at maximum, not routinely exceed 48 hours per week (not including overtime).

9 Overtime is always voluntary and should be paid in accordance to local and national laws or sector agreements.

10 Overtime in excess of 12 hours per week is only allowable if it happens in extraordinary, limited periods where there are time constraints or risks of economic loss and where conditions regarding overtime in excess of 12 hours per week have been agreed between workers and management.

#### DESIRED CRITERIA

11 All workers receive equal remuneration for work of equal value, equal access to training and benefits and equal opportunities for promotion and for filling all available position.



**Theme 2.2**

A safe and healthy workplace is provided for all workers.

**ESSENTIAL CRITERIA**

- 12** A safe and healthy workplace is provided for all workers, this includes at least access to safe drinking water, basic sanitary facilities and protective equipment.
- 13** Potentially hazardous tasks are only carried out by capable and competent people, who received training about performing those tasks safely.
- 14** Adequate and appropriate protective equipment and clothing is provided and used in all potentially hazardous operations.
- 15** Medical treatment / first aid shall be provided without delay and first aid kits are present at all permanent sites and in the vicinity of fieldwork.
- 16** Producers and their employees demonstrate an awareness and understanding of health and safety matters. Relevant health and safety risks are identified, procedures are developed to address these risks by employers, and these are monitored.
- 17** Accident and emergency procedures exist and instructions are clearly understood by all workers.

**DESIRED CRITERIA**

- 18** There is a system of warnings followed by legally-permitted sanctions for workers that do not apply safety requirements.
- 19** Producers make sure there is regular maintenance of machinery, equipment and materials in order to ensure safe functioning of these devices.
- 20** Producers make sure their workers receive regular training on safety, health, good agri-

cultural practices and sustainable soy production.

**Theme 2.3**

There is freedom of association and the right of collective bargaining for all workers.

**ESSENTIAL CRITERIA**

- 21** There is the right for all workers to establish and/or join an organization of choice.
- 22** All workers have the right to perform collective bargaining.
- 23** The effective functioning of worker associations / organizations of workers is not impeded. Representatives are not subject to discrimination and have access to their members in the workplace on request.

**Theme 2.4**

Remuneration at least equal to national legislation and sector agreements is received by all workers directly or indirectly employed on the farm.

**ESSENTIAL CRITERIA**

- 24** Gross wages comply with national legislation and sector agreements.
- 25** All workers have a written contract in a language they can understand. In those countries where there are no requirements for formal labour agreements between workers and employers, alternative documented evidence of a labour relationship must be present.
- 26** There is monitoring in place of working hours and overtime.
- 27** Deductions from wages for disciplinary purposes are not made, unless legally permitted. Wages paid are recorded by the employer.











### 3. ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Standards and programmes for responsible soy have to make sure that there are adequate checks to ensure the relevant soy expansion, forest, biodiversity and nature legislation is being complied with.

#### Theme 3.1

The expansion of soy cultivation is done in a legal and responsible manner to protect natural ecosystems

#### ESSENTIAL CRITERIA

**28** The farmer complies with the legislation relevant for the expansion of soy production (e.g. land ownership, biodiversity legislation, forest legislation, land management policies). No soy is produced on land that is illegally converted after a certain cut-off date mentioned in national legislation.

**29** Areas that are assigned as legal reserve, conservation area or otherwise secured by law have to be protected. These areas must be restored if any alteration has taken place or legally approved compensating actions should be taken.

**30** Areas of natural vegetation around bodies of water (riparian vegetation and flood plains)

and on areas sensitive to erosion (steep slopes and hills) must be maintained or restored. Wetlands (Ramsar Convention\*) must be protected.

**31** No soy is produced in converted natural ecosystems (natural forest, native grasslands, wetlands, swamps, peatlands, savannas, steep slopes and riparian areas) after a specific cut-off date no later than 2020.

#### DESIRED CRITERIA

**32** Farmers protect rare, threatened or endangered wildlife species on their lands.

**33** Farms should maintain and safeguard the remaining native vegetation on their farm in order to protect and provide habitat for wildlife species. There is a map of the farm which shows the native vegetation and there is a plan to protect and restore native vegetation.



### Theme 3.2

Production waste is managed responsibly.

#### ESSENTIAL CRITERIA

- 34 There is adequate storage and disposal of fuel, batteries, tires, lubricants, sewage and other waste in accordance with national legislation.
- 35 The burning on any part of the property of crop residues, waste, or as part of vegetation clearance is not allowed, unless it is needed for drying crops or obliged by national legislation as a sanitary measure.
- 36 Measures are taken to reduce or recycle waste as much as possible.

#### DESIRED CRITERIA

- 37 Farmers make sure that there is no run-off of waste water, oil spills, chemical residues, minerals and organic substances.

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### Theme 3.3

Efforts are made to reduce the use of fossil fuels.

#### ESSENTIAL CRITERIA

- 38 Use of fossil fuels is monitored.
- 39 Farmers reduce the use of fossil fuels, for instance by implementing precision agriculture techniques, controlled traffic farming or lighter machinery.

#### DESIRED CRITERIA

- 40 Farmers actively work on carbon sequestration in the soil, for instance by applying no-tillage, planting of cover crops or applying intercropping practices.









## 4. GOOD AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES

Farmers can make their production more sustainable by using precision farming techniques and by incorporating knowledge on relevant good practices to improve production. Good farming practices start with a healthy soil that has the capacity to capture water and provide nutrients to the plant. Healthy soils are the basis for healthy crops. In case agrochemicals are applied, they need to be applied in a careful manner, minimizing potential harm to people, plants and the environment.

### > Theme 4.1

The quality and supply of surface and ground water is maintained or improved.

#### ESSENTIAL CRITERIA

**41** Good agricultural practices\* are implemented to minimize diffuse and localized impacts on surface and ground water quality from chemical residues, fertilizers and erosion or other sources.

\*for example maintaining a buffer zone around water bodies, treating waste water, precision farming etc.

**42** Any direct evidence of localized contamination of ground or surface water is reported to, and monitored in collaboration with local authorities.

**43** When irrigation is used, relevant legislation is being complied with.

#### DESIRED CRITERIA

**44** Farmers make sure their practices (e.g. water extraction) do not impact sensitive wetlands or swamps in the vicinity of their operation.

**45** There is monitoring, appropriate to scale, to demonstrate that the practices to protect water quality are effective.

**46** Water use on the farm is carefully monitored. Actions are implemented to reduce water use wherever possible.

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### Theme 4.2

Soil quality is maintained or improved and measures are taken to avoid erosion.

#### ESSENTIAL CRITERIA

**47** The farmer has knowledge of techniques\* to maintain and control soil quality (physical, chemical and biological) and the relevant techniques are implemented. \*for example: precision farming, residue management, crop rotation, no tillage, contour tillage, grass waterways, terraces, nitrogen-fixing plants, green manures and agro-forestry techniques.

**48** The farmer has knowledge of techniques\* to prevent soil erosion and the relevant techniques are implemented. \*for example: following contours with operations for soil preparation, using terraces, using cover crops, minimizing tillage and placing wind breaks.

**49** There is monitoring, appropriate to scale, to demonstrate that the practices to protect soil quality and prevent soil erosion are in place.

**DESIRED CRITERIA**

**50** Farmers enhance the soil by applying crop rotation (minimum of 2 crops).

**51** Farmers enhance their soils and avoid soil compaction by applying no-tillage practices.

**52** Farmers improve their soils with the use of cover crops and or intercropping practices.

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**Theme 4.3**

Agrochemicals listed in the Stockholm and Rotterdam Convention are not used and all application of agrochemicals is in accordance with best practices.

**ESSENTIAL CRITERIA**

**53** There is no use of agrochemicals listed in the Stockholm and Rotterdam Conventions.

**54** Producers are required to ensure that any use of biological control agents complies with national legislation.

**55** The application of agrochemicals (crop protection and fertilizers) is documented. All handling, storage, collection and disposal of agrochemical waste and empty agrochemical containers, is monitored. Use, storage and waste disposal of agrochemicals is in line with the professional recommendations and applicable legislation.

**56** There is no application of pesticides within 30 meters (or more when as such prescribed in national legislation) of any populated area or water body and all necessary precautions are taken to avoid people entering into recently sprayed areas.

**57** Agrochemicals shall be applied using methods that minimize harm to human health, wildlife, plant biodiversity, and water and air quality.

**58** Aerial application of pesticides is carried out in such a way that it does not have an impact on populated areas and water bodies. All aerial application is preceded by advance notification to residents within 500 m (or more when as such prescribed in national legislation) of the planned application. There is no aerial application of pesticides in WHO Class Ia, Ib and II within 500 m (or more when as such prescribed in national legislation) of populated areas or water bodies.

**DESIRED CRITERIA**

**59** There is no use of WHO 1A, 1B and 2 chemicals.

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**Theme 4.4**

Negative environmental and health impacts of phytosanitary products are reduced by implementation of systematic, recognized Integrated Crop Management Techniques.

**ESSENTIAL CRITERIA**

**60** Use of phytosanitary products follows legal requirements (or professional recommendations) in the country of origin and measures to prevent resistance should be taken.

**61** Appropriate measures are implemented to allow for coexistence of different production systems.

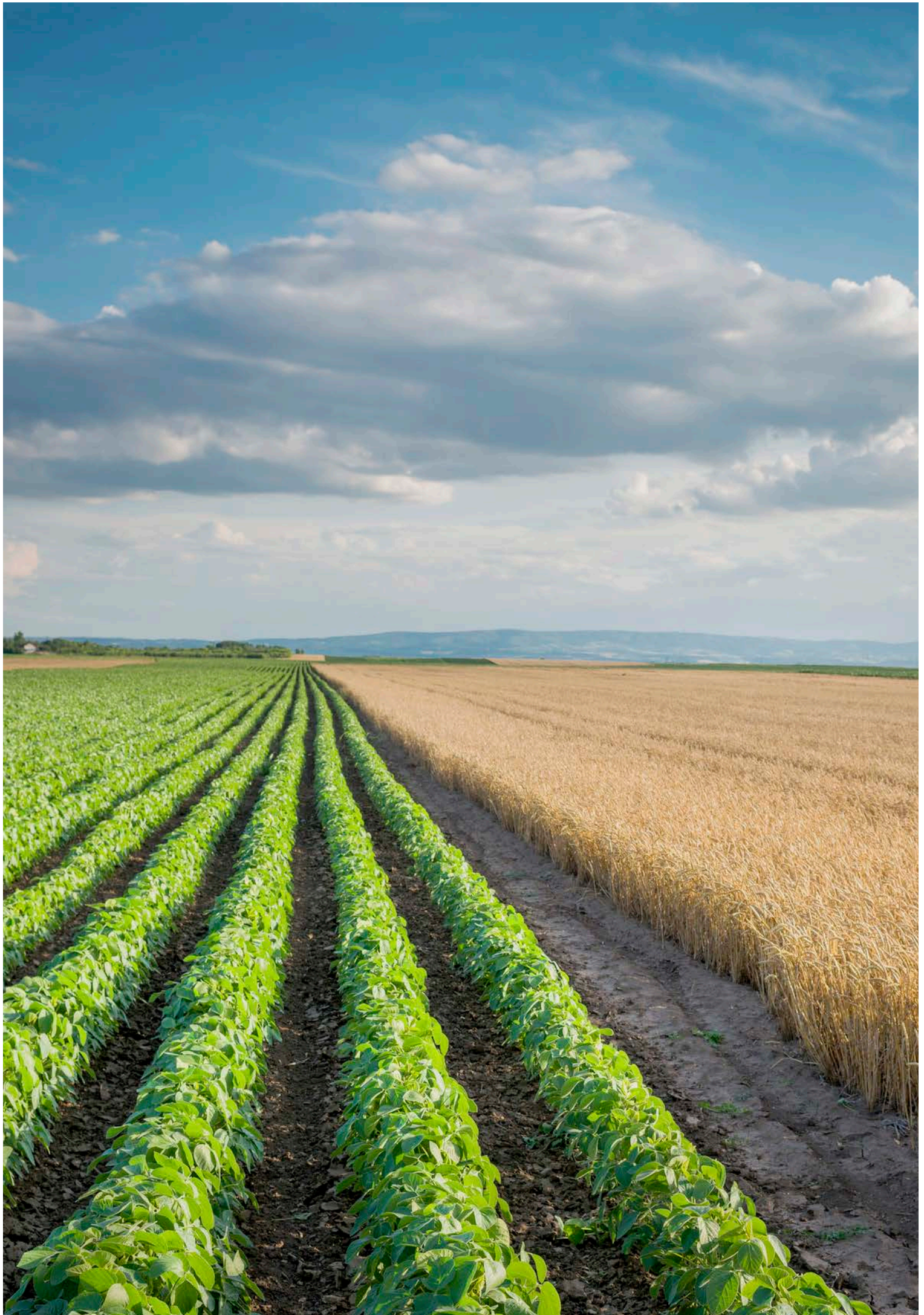


**62** Farmers make use of Integrated Crop Management technologies. This includes adequate and continuous monitoring of crop health, use of non-chemical and chemical control means and measures to improve crop resilience.

**DESIRED CRITERIA**

**63** Systematic measures are planned and implemented to monitor, control and minimize the spread of invasive introduced species and new pests.

**64** Farmers have an Integrated Crop Management plan that includes targets for reduction of potentially harmful phytosanitary products over time.





## 5. RESPECT FOR LEGAL USE OF LAND

FEFAC considers it crucial that soy production and expansion only takes place on land for which ownership is clearly defined and undisputed. In soy expansion areas there can be multiple claims on one piece of land or the land rights of indigenous peoples and local communities can be poorly protected. Programmes and standards included in the benchmark have to make sure soy is only produced on lands for which ownership is not subject to conflict.

### Theme 5.1

Legal use rights to the land are clearly defined and demonstrable.

#### ESSENTIAL CRITERIA

- 65 There is documented evidence of rights to use the land (e.g. ownership document, rental agreement, court order etc.).



### Theme 5.2

In areas with traditional land users, conflicting land uses are avoided or resolved.

#### ESSENTIAL CRITERIA

- 66 International laws and standards on the rights of indigenous people and tenure rights of local communities need to be respected.
- 67 Producers make sure that, prior to any new activity (acquiring or developing land) that may affect IPLC rights, land, resources, livelihoods, and food security, their free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) is secured.
- 68 There is no soy production on land where there is an unresolved land use claim by traditional land users under litigation, without the agreement of both parties.
- 69 In the case of disputed use rights, a comprehensive, participatory and documented community right assessment is carried out and the recommendations from the assessment are being followed.







## 6. PROTECTION OF COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Farmers are not producing in isolation but need to take into account the concerns of their customers, supply chain and neighbours. It is important that farmers are open for questions and concerns and that they are accessible to their neighbours, whether farmers, local communities or indigenous peoples. Therefore, the FEFAC Soy Sourcing Guidelines also include criteria for communication with others and adequately dealing with complaints.

### > Theme 6.1

A mechanism for resolving complaints and grievances is implemented and available to local communities and traditional land users.

#### ESSENTIAL CRITERIA

**70** Complaints and grievances from workers, neighbors, local communities and traditional land users are dealt with in an appropriate manner. Documented evidence of complaints and grievances received is maintained.

**71** The complaint mechanism (e.g. written complaint form, being accessible via email, phone or written post) is transparent, has been made known and is available to all workers, local communities and traditional land users.

### Theme 6.2

Channels are available for communication and dialogue with the local community on topics related to the activities of the soy farming operation and its impacts.

#### ESSENTIAL CRITERIA

**72** There are communication channels (written sign or website with the following information: email, cell-phone, mailbox) that adequately enable communication between the producer and the community. The communication channels have been made known to the local communities.

#### DESIRED CRITERIA

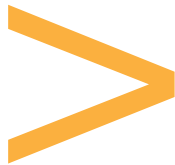
**73** The farmer has a policy and reporting actions to ensure a zero-tolerance approach for threats and violence against Forest, Land and Human Rights Defenders





# VERIFICATION

The verification section sets the minimum requirements for soy standards and programs making sure they can guarantee in a credible and robust manner that all criteria in their standard or program are met.



## Pre-requirements for the benchmark

- Schemes that want to apply for the (re-)benchmark have to publish their standard documentation online on their website or a separate dedicated website on their sustainable soy offer. All interested stakeholders should be able to easily find these documents. The documentation should include a clear description of the verification system and (if applicable) the non-conversion approach.
- All schemes should make sure that the latest version of their standard is included in the ITC Sustainability Map and that any modifications to the standards are shared with ITC and FEFAC.

## Verification requirements

In previous Soy Sourcing Guidelines versions, there were two optional verification routes presented for schemes; Farmer certification and External verification of an internal control system. The requirements in these routes have now been merged, schemes that rely on official controls by competent authorities must provide proof that the audits are carried out according to relevant ISO standards. Other changes in the general verification requirements for schemes is that they must demonstrate that the third-party auditor has accurate environmental and social expertise to execute the audits and that there are clear mechanisms in place to avoid double counting of certified soy or certificates for sustainable soy. The following general verification requirements are included in the FEFAC Soy Sourcing Guidelines to support the credibility of responsible soy production schemes and programmes.

### Auditing procedures

- Legal owner of the standard
- Steps for a farmer (or group of farmers) to take to be certified for the first time
- Description of internal audit (or verified self-declaration of compliance with all criteria) before certification is granted for the first time
- Maximum validity of 5 years of the certification
- Actions to ensure that after certification is granted, the good practices are implemented and no violations of the criteria take place
- Annual verification of the conversion-free status

### Auditing procedures

- Independent third-party involvement in the auditing of farmers
- Third-party accreditation based on ISO 17021 or ISO 17065
- Third-party accreditation by a national accreditation party affiliated to the International
- Accreditation Forum (IAF) or in compliance with ISO 17011
- Third-party environmental and social expertise in order to accurately verify the criteria
- Third-party own grievance mechanism

### Transparency

- Online availability of relevant documentation of the standard
- At least 5 year storing of audit reports

### Non-conformities

- Rules when non-conformities are discovered
- Mechanism for farmers to lose certification

### Accessibility

- A contact person and procedure for external actors to ask questions about the standard
- Complaint and grievance mechanisms for the standard
- Clear rules for avoiding double counting of certified soy









Foto: Lucas Pezeta



# TRANSPARENCY ON CONVERSION- FREE SOY APPROACHES IN THE MARKET

FEFAC already previously developed a qualification mechanism and a transparency tool to facilitate the market transparency on conversion-free soy available on the market. This mechanism has remained in place, with minor changes.



## Qualification mechanism for conversion-free soy

The qualification mechanism for conversion-free soy considers provisions for nature protection, a cut-off date, the chain of custody model and the assurance mechanism to guarantee conversion-free soy in a credible way. These four key elements of the qualification are further explained below. Standards must now meet the requirements on conversion-free soy in order to be displayed on the FEFAC webpage on ITC Standards Map as having passed the the benchmarking exercise.

### Protection of natural ecosystems

Standards must have provisions to adequately protect natural eco-systems. FEFAC concluded that the different standards and programmes for responsible soy production can credibly deliver adequate natural ecosystem protection provisions in three different ways:

- Referring to specific natural ecosystems that should not be converted (natural forest, native grasslands, wetlands, swamps, peatlands, savannas, steep slopes and riparian areas) after a specific cut-off date not later than 2020. The definitions from the Accountability Framework need to be followed.
- Referring to protecting specific areas of “High Conservation Value” after a certain cut-off date. Here FEFAC requires that an official HCV-assessment needs to be carried out and made available upon request.
- Referring to an absolute prohibition to convert natural ecosystems for soy production after a specific cut-off date.

### Cut-off dates

The standard must indicate a cut-off date as from when the conversion-free status applies. This cut-off date may not be later than 31 December 2020. The transparency tool allows to filter on the basis of two time period clusters of cut-off dates.

- 2007-2009
- 2010-2020

The two clusters are mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive, making them complementary to the ITC Database. The clusters allow for different levels of ambition to be set, as certain markets consider recent cut-off dates as acceptable and ambitious whereas other markets only recognize schemes with a 2008/2009 cut-off date as credible.

### Chain of custody model

Different supply chain solutions are offered for conversion-free soy, in accordance with market demand. In addition, certain scheme owners offer more than one chain of custody model for their conversion-free soy. FEFAC does not consider itself a party in determining the rules and guidance for the different chain of custody models. The chain of custody models that are available in the market place and for the filter are:

- Book and Claim (Credits)
- Mass Balance
- Area Mass Balance
- Segregation
- IP Protected



## Assurance

There are specific verification requirements that apply to assuring the conversion-free status of a farmer. The Accountability Framework gives guidance on how verification can be checked in their Operational Guidance on Monitoring and Verification and their specific guidance for specific biomes. FEFAC translated this information into the following requirements for an adequate level of assurance:

- Verification of the non-conversion claim needs to be based on satellite images of a resolution of 30 meter (or a higher resolution). In those areas where context specific-data are available, they should be used (e.g. PRODES Amazon, PRODES Cerrado).
- The conversion-free status of farmers is annually verified, with help from an independent third-party with knowledge on interpreting satellite images.
- The satellite images used and the method used to define and distinguish the different ecosystem types needs to be described in publicly available standard documentation.
- The standard owner needs to collect and store the satellite maps of all certified farms (in the group) and share them upon request.
- When a standard is implemented in an area with no-conversion risk, it should provide accurate proof that no-conversion is taking place with region specific satellite images or other publicly available sources that clearly state that conversion of natural lands is not an issue.







## DEFINITIONS

In the creation of the FEFAC Soy Sourcing Guidelines, FEFAC follows internationally recognised definitions. All relevant concepts and terms are explained in the section below.

<b>Accountability Framework</b>	A practical, consensus-based guide for achieving and monitoring ethical supply chains. The Framework brings together accepted international norms, best practices, and expectations of commodity buyers, investors, and civil society into a single integrated resource for effective action to address the deforestation, conversion, and human rights impacts of supply chains.
<b>Agro-forestry techniques</b>	Land use systems and techniques where woody perennials (trees, shrubs, palms, bamboos, etc.) are deliberately used on the same land-management units as agricultural crops and/or animals, in some form of spatial arrangement or temporal sequence (Source: FAO).
<b>Amazon Soy Moratorium</b>	The Amazon Soy Moratorium is an agreement from 2006 made between companies (especially grain traders) and civil society to ensure that soy production in the Amazon region only occurs on existing converted agricultural land and not through deforestation of native vegetation.
<b>Amsterdam Declaration Partnership</b>	The Amsterdam Declarations Partnership is based on the Amsterdam Declarations on deforestation from 2015. Since 2021 the country signatories include Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom. The commitment is to eliminate deforestation in relation to agricultural commodities by 2025.
<b>Area Mass Balance</b>	A supply chain model that combines mass balance and book & claim. Collectors / traders who buy a physical flow of material/product on the regular market can buy 'credits for responsible production' from growers. These credits must come from growers working in the same area where the physical material/product is purchased. The certificates of the purchasing area are administratively linked to the delivery of the material or product from that area via a mass balance model (Source: Cefetra & GMP+).
<b>Benchmark</b>	To benchmark is the act of determining (or judging) alignment with the fixed reference point (Source: ISEAL).

<b>Benchmarking exercise</b>	A 'one-off' benchmark, which is not part of a long-term programme, policy or strategy. For example, a scoping report delivered by a consultant to inform a policy process might include a benchmarking exercise but does not constitute a benchmarking programme. (Source: ISEAL).
<b>Benchmarking programme</b>	A structured and systematic way of carrying out evaluations against benchmarks, often coupled to specific organisational or policy goals. (Source: ISEAL).
<b>Book &amp; Claim</b>	A chain of custody model in which the administrative record flow is not necessarily connected to the physical flow of material or product throughout the supply chain. This chain of custody model is also referred to as "certificate trading model" or "credit trading". This is often used where the certified/specified material cannot, or only with difficulty, be kept separate from the non-certified/specified material, such as green credits in an electricity supply (Source: ISO 22095).
<b>Certification system</b>	Sustainability standards and certifications are voluntary, usually third party-assessed, norms and standards relating to environmental, social and ethical issues, adopted by companies to demonstrate the performance of their organizations or products in specific areas.
<b>Carbon sequestration</b>	Carbon sequestration is the process of capturing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere into the soil or oceans/water bodies.
<b>Contour tillage</b>	A method of planting crops across the slope of the land or perpendicular to the flow of water.
<b>Conversion</b>	Change of a natural ecosystem to another land use or profound change in the natural ecosystem's species composition, structure, or function. (Source: Accountability Framework Initiative)
<b>Convenor</b>	The organisation that leads development of a benchmarking exercise or programme and makes key decisions about its purpose, structure and process (in this case FEFAC). The convenor can implement the benchmarking programme or outsource this to external experts or consultancies (in this case ITC) (Source: ISEAL).



<b>Conversion-free</b>	Another word for produced with no-conversion (see no-conversion).
<b>Conversion-free soy Qualification Mechanism</b>	The mechanism developed by FEFAC to determine whether a soy scheme has a credible proposition to deliver conversion-free soy. Soy schemes that meet the requirements of the qualification mechanism are displayed in the Transparency Tool on the FEFAC webpage on ITC Standards Map Map.
<b>Crop rotation</b>	Crop rotation is the practice of growing a series of different types of crops in the same area across a sequence of growing seasons.
<b>Cover crops</b>	Plants that are planted to cover the soil (and hence protect it against erosion) rather than for the purpose of being harvested.
<b>Comprehensive, participatory and documented community rights assessment</b>	Community rights assessment should aim at: a) identifying the individual and collective uses and rights of local communities and traditional land users; b) identifying uses of water resources c) identifying the places and landscape conditions needed to meet these rights; d) identifying the places/issues where there is conflict between property rights and traditional land use rights and ecosystem services; e) finding a solution to resolve possible conflicting land uses and/or agree on proposals for compensation. Where a legal judgment has been reached, the terms of this judgment will be respected. Should there a litigation process, while this is sub judice (under litigation; decision pending), this will not hinder access to certification provided that guidance given by the judge is followed. In the absence of such guidance, traditional land users may continue exercising their rights until the case is resolved (Source RTRS).
<b>Cut-off date</b>	(Related to no-deforestation and no-conversion commitments): The date after which deforestation or conversion renders a given area or production unit non-compliant with no-deforestation or no-conversion commitments, respectively.
<b>Deforestation</b>	Loss of natural forest as a result of: i) conversion to agriculture or other non-forest land use; ii) conversion to a tree plantation; or iii) severe and sustained degradation. Loss of natural forest that meets this definition is considered to be deforestation regardless of whether or not it is legal. The Ac-

countability Framework’s definition of deforestation signifies “gross deforestation” of natural forest where “gross” is used in the sense of “total; aggregate; without deduction for reforestation or other offset. (Source: The Accountability Framework).

**Deforestation-free**

See no-deforestation.

**Desired criteria**

To pass the benchmarking exercise against the the FEFAC Soy Sourcing Guidelines, soy schemes do not need to include all desired criteria, as opposed to the essential criteria . However, soy schemes must include at least 8 out of 18 desired criteria.

**Due dilligence**

A risk management process implemented by a company to identify, prevent, mitigate, and account for how it addresses environmental and social risks and impacts in its operations, supply chains, and investments.

**Essential criteria**

To pass the benchmarking exercise against the FEFAC Soy Sourcing Guidelines, soy schemes need to include all 55 essential criteria.

**FEFAC**

FEFAC is the European Feed Manufacturers’ Federation. It is located in Brussels, Belgium.

**First party verification**

Verification conducted by the company itself but carried out by personnel not involved in the design or implementation of the operations being verified.

**Flood plain**

Area of low-lying ground alongside a river, formed mainly of river sediments and subject to flooding.

**Free, Prior, Informed Consent**

A collective human right of indigenous peoples and local communities to give and withhold their consent prior to the commencement of any activity that may affect their rights, land, resources, territories, livelihoods, and food security. It is a right exercised through representatives of their own choosing and in a manner consistent with their own customs, values, and norms.

**Forest**

Land spanning more than 0.5 hectares with trees higher than 5 meters and a canopy cover of more than 10 percent, or trees able to reach these thresholds in situ. It does not include land that is predominantly under agricultural or other land use. Forest includes natural forests and tree plantations. For the purpose of implementing no-deforestation supply chain commitments, the fo-



cus is on preventing the conversion of natural forests.

### **Consumer Goods Forum Forest Positive Coalition**

The Consumer Goods Forum Forest Positive Coalition is a coalition for which the members have aligned on a direction of travel to make changes within their own operations, work with governments and stakeholders to build enabling environments for forest positive soy production, and fundamentally, engage with actors in their supply chains to encourage not just a forest positive supply of soy, but also transformation towards forest positive suppliers.

### **Global Forest Watch**

Global Forest Watch (GFW) is an online platform that provides near-real-time data and tools for monitoring forests.

### **Green manure**

Green manure is created by leaving uprooted or sown crop parts to wither on a field so that they serve as a mulch and soil amendment (also referred to as cover crops).

### **Grass waterways**

Grassed waterways are constructed graded channels that are seeded to grass or other suitable vegetation. The vegetation slows the water and the grassed waterway conveys the water to a stable outlet at a non-erosive velocity (Source NCRS).

### **High Conservation Value approach**

The HCV Approach is a unique three-step methodology that helps protect HCVs where development will take place. HCVs are biological, ecological, social or cultural values of outstanding significance at the national, regional or global level or of critical importance at the local level. All natural habitats possess inherent conservation values, including the presence of rare or endemic species, provision of ecosystem services, sacred sites, or resources harvested by local residents.

### **ILO Conventions**

The ILO Conventions are international treaties about labour practices and human rights. They are instruments, which create legally binding obligations on the countries that ratify them. Recommendations are non-binding and set out guidelines orienting national policies and actions.

### **ILO Fundamental Conventions**

The eight ILO fundamental Conventions are: the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29) , the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105) , the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87) , the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98) , the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100) , the Discrimination (Employment and

Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111) , the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) , and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182).

<b>ISO 17021</b>	ISO standard on: Conformity assessment; Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems.
<b>ISO 17065</b>	ISO standard on: Conformity assessment; Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services.
<b>ISO 17011</b>	ISO standard on: Conformity assessment — Requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies.
<b>ISO 22095</b>	ISO standard on: Chain of custody — General terminology and models.
<b>ITC database</b>	See Sustainability Map. The database used by the International Trade Center to benchmark soy schemes against the FEFAC Guidelines.
<b>International Accreditation Forum (IAF)</b>	The IAF is the world association of Conformity Assessment Accreditation Bodies and other bodies interested in conformity assessment in the fields of management systems, products, services, personnel and other similar programmes of conformity assessment.
<b>Internal control system</b>	In the case of the FEFAC Guidelines, the internal control systems contains all agreements, procedures, administration and verification mechanisms to make sure production of soy is in line with the sustainability requirements.
<b>Integrated crop management</b>	An environmentally sensitive and economically viable production system or process which uses the latest available techniques to produce high quality food in an efficient manner.
<b>ITC</b>	The International Trade Centre is a multilateral agency which has a joint mandate with the World Trade Organization and the United Nations through the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. The headquarters of the ITC are in Geneva.
<b>Land Use Change (LUC)</b>	The process by which human activities transform the natural landscape, referring to how land has been used, usually emphasizing the functional role of land for economic activities.



**Landscape approaches**

The landscape approach aims to develop a shared vision for the future by integrating the objectives of all stakeholders at landscape level, in order to establish long-term integrated sustainable development.

**Landstat satellite images**

This joint NASA/USGS program provides the longest continuous space-based record of Earth's land in existence. Every day, Landsat satellites provide essential information to help land managers and policy makers make wise decisions about our resources and our environment.

**Mass balance**

A chain of custody model in which materials or products with a set of specified characteristics are mixed according to defined criteria with materials or products without that set of characteristics. The proportion of the input with specified characteristics might only match the initial proportions on average and will typically vary across different outputs (Source ISO 22095).

**Natural Forest**

Natural forests possess many or most of the characteristics of a forest native to the given site, including species composition, structure, and ecological function. Natural forests include: Primary forests that have not been subject to major human impacts in recent history, Regenerated (second-growth) forests that were subject to major impacts in the past (for instance by agriculture, livestock raising, tree plantations, or intensive logging) but where the main causes of impact have ceased or greatly diminished and the ecosystem has attained much of the species composition, structure, and ecological function of prior or other contemporary natural ecosystems. Managed natural forests where much of the ecosystem's composition, structure, and ecological function exist in the presence of activities such as: Harvesting of timber or other forest products, including management to promote high-value species, Low intensity, small-scale cultivation within the forest, such as less-intensive forms of swidden agriculture in a forest mosaic, Forests that have been partially degraded by anthropogenic or natural causes (e.g., harvesting, fire, climate change, invasive species, or others) but where the land has not been converted to another use and where degradation does not result in the sustained reduction of tree cover below the thresholds that define a forest or sustained loss of other main elements of ecosystem composition, structure, and ecological function (Source: Accountability Framework Initiative).

**Native grassland**

Native grasslands are grasslands that substantially resemble – in terms of species composition, structure, and ecological function – one that is or would be found in a given area in the absence of major human impacts.

**Natural Ecosystem**

An ecosystem that substantially resembles – in terms of species composition, structure, and ecological function – one that is or would be found in a given area in the absence of major human impacts. This includes human-managed ecosystems where much of the natural species composition, structure, and ecological function are present. Natural ecosystems include: Largely “pristine” natural ecosystems that have not been subject to major human impacts in recent history, Regenerated natural ecosystems that were subject to major impacts in the past (for instance by agriculture, livestock raising, tree plantations, or intensive logging) but where the main causes of impact have ceased or greatly diminished and the ecosystem has attained species composition, structure and ecological function similar to prior or other contemporary natural ecosystems; Managed natural ecosystems (including many ecosystems that could be referred to as “semi-natural”) where much of the ecosystem’s composition, structure, and ecological function are present; this includes managed natural forests as well as native grasslands or rangelands that are, or have historically been, grazed by livestock, Natural ecosystems that have been partially degraded by anthropogenic or natural causes (e.g., harvesting, fire, climate change, invasive species, or others) but where the land has not been converted to another use and where much of the ecosystem’s composition, structure, and ecological function remain present or are expected to regenerate naturally or by management for ecological restoration (Source: Afi).

**No-Conversion**

Commodity production, sourcing, or financial investments that do not cause or contribute to the conversion of natural ecosystems (as defined by the Accountability Framework). No-conversion refers to no gross conversion of natural ecosystems, which the Accountability Framework specifies as the appropriate policy and goal on this topic for companies and supply chains.

**No-deforestation**

No-deforestation refers to no gross deforestation of natural forests, which the Accountability Framework specifies as the appropriate policy and goal on this topic for companies and supply chains.



<b>No-tillage</b>	No-till farming is an agricultural technique for growing crops or pasture without disturbing the soil through tillage.
<b>Peatlands</b>	Pristine peatlands are characterized by the presence of water and special vegetation. The peat soil, often exceeding many meters in depth, consists of organic material and water and is created by the accumulation of partially decomposed plant materials. The layers of peat build up over sometimes thousands of years and preserve other materials including pollen grains, human artefacts and ancient bodies, giving us an unrivalled window into the past (Source: Ramsar Convention).
<b>Precision farming</b>	Precision agriculture means that plants get precisely the treatment they need, determined with great accuracy thanks to the latest technology.
<b>Prodes (Amazon/Cerrado)</b>	PRODES data are the official national statistics on deforestation, used by the Brazilian government to establish public policy and track progress towards deforestation reduction goals.
<b>Ramsar Convention</b>	The Convention on Wetlands is an intergovernmental treaty that provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources.
<b>Residue management</b>	Crop Residue Management (CRM) is a conservation practice that usually involves a reduction in the number of passes over the field with tillage implements and/or in the intensity of tillage operations, including the elimination of plowing (inversion of the surface layer of soil). This practice is designed to leave sufficient residue on the soil surface to reduce wind and/or water erosion (Source USDA).
<b>Riparian vegetation</b>	The riparian zone is characterized by both its proximity to water and by the plants and animals present. In terms of location, the riparian zone is always directly adjacent to a moving body of water such as a stream, river, or estuary (Source: <a href="https://biologydictionary.net/riparian-zone/">https://biologydictionary.net/riparian-zone/</a> ).
<b>Risk exposure</b>	In this case linked to conversion; is the probability that soy is produced in recently converted natural ecosystems and hence conversion has taken place.

<b>Rotterdam Convention</b>	The Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade) is a multilateral treaty to promote shared responsibilities in relation to importation of hazardous chemicals.
<b>Savannas</b>	A mixed woodland-grassland ecosystem characterised by the trees being sufficiently widely spaced so that the canopy does not close.
<b>Second party verification</b>	Verification conducted by a related entity with an interest in the company or operation being assessed, such as the business customer of a production/processing operation or a contractor that also provides services other than verification.
<b>Segregation</b>	A chain of custody model in which specified characteristics of a material or product are maintained from the initial input to the final output. Addition of material with different characteristics and/or grade to the input is not allowed. Commonly, material from more than one source contributes to a chain of custody under the segregated model (Source ISO-22095).
<b>Soy scheme / Soy standard / Soy certification system</b>	Sustainability schemes, standards and certifications are voluntary, usually third party-assessed, norms and standards relating to environmental, social and ethical issues, adopted by companies to demonstrate the performance of their organizations or products in specific areas.
<b>Soft Commodities Forum</b>	The Soft Commodities Forum (SCF) is a global platform for leading soft commodities companies, convened by the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) for the purpose of advancing collective action around common sustainability challenges.
<b>Standards map</b>	See Sustainability map.
<b>Stockholm Convention</b>	Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants is an international environmental treaty, signed in 2001 and effective from May 2004, that aims to eliminate or restrict the production and use of persistent organic pollutants (POPs).
<b>Sustainability map</b>	A freely available online platform managed by ITC, Sustainability Map offers users access to wide-ranging information related to sustainability initiatives and standards, allowing businesses to deploy better sustainability practices in inter-



national trade.

**Swamps**

A swamp is an area of land permanently saturated, or filled, with water. There are two main types of swamps: freshwater swamps and saltwater swamps. Swamps are dominated by trees. They are often named for the type of trees that grow in them, such as cypress swamps or hardwood swamps.

**Terraces**

A terrace is a piece of sloped plane that has been cut into a series of successively receding flat surfaces or platforms, which resemble steps, for the purposes of more effective farming.

**Transparency Tool**

The filtering mechanism on [sustainabilitymap.org/fevac](https://sustainabilitymap.org/fevac) where the non-conversion approaches of different soy standards can be compared.

**Third party verification**

Third-party verification: Verification conducted by an independent entity that does not provide other services to the company.

**Verification**

Assessment and validation of compliance, performance, and/or actions relative to a stated commitment, standard, or target. Verification processes typically utilize monitoring data but may also include other sources of information and analysis.

**Wetlands**

Areas of marsh, fen, peatland or water, whether natural or artificial, permanent or temporary, with water that is static or flowing, fresh, brackish or salt, including areas of marine water the depth of which at low tide does not exceed six metres.

**WHO classification of chemicals (1a, 1b and 2)**

Classification system to distinguish between the more and the less hazardous forms of selected pesticides based on acute risk to human health (that is the risk of single or multiple exposures over a relatively short period of time). It takes into consideration the toxicity of the technical active substance and also describes methods for the classification of formulations.



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