

Social responsibility in operations that are certified according to Bio Suisse standards

Information note for operations outside of Switzerland (Version 01/2024)

Based on: [The Bio Suisse Standards, part V, section 3.3: Social responsibility](#)

Background information

Bio Suisse actively advocates social responsibility in organic production. This topic has always been a guiding principle of the organic farming sector.

Requirements

Bio Suisse requires a social certificate/audit according to Bio Suisse Standards from farming operations in France, Italy (except in regions where a Bio Suisse social audit is mandatory), Morocco, Peru and Portugal that have more than four employees and produce vegetables, fruit or herbs. The same requirement also applies to banana producers from all countries of origin, as well as to hazelnut producers from Turkey. The lists of countries, products and certifications and audits recognised by Bio Suisse are regularly reviewed and updated.

Bio Suisse social audits have been introduced around the world in stages since 2023. In 2024, Bio Suisse social audits will be mandatory for operations in Spain and in defined regions of Italy. No external social audits are accepted for these operations, the only exception being the Naturland social audit.

Farming operations in the following countries that produce the products listed must provide proof of social responsibility certification/auditing:

List of countries and products	
Products	Country
Primary production (including packaging or processing on an affiliated production operation*) of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Fresh vegetables (excluding seedlings and products that will undergo further processing in the country of origin) ■ Fresh fruit (including berries, citrus fruit and table grapes; excluding seedlings and products that will undergo further processing in the country of origin) ■ Fresh herbs (excluding products that will undergo further processing in the country of origin) 	France, Italy (except regions with Bio Suisse social audit obligation), Morocco, Peru, Portugal
Primary production (including packaging or processing on an affiliated production operation*) of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Bananas fresh (excluding products that will undergo further processing in the country of origin) 	All countries of origin
Primary production (including packaging or processing on an affiliated production operation) of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Hazelnuts 	Turkey

*Producer groups that have been certified by GlobalG.A.P. are subject to GRASP audits in compliance with GlobalG.A.P. regulations.

Bio Suisse recognizes the following certification and auditing programmes ((does not apply to Spain and the regions in Italy with Bio Suisse social audit obligation):

List of approved social responsibility certification and auditing programmes	
Auditing / certification	Comments
BSCI Primary Production	
Fairtrade	
GlobalG.A.P. GRASP	Only possible with existing GlobalG.A.P. certification. Not accepted for hazelnuts from Turkey.
SA8000	
Sedex SMETA	
Rainforest Alliance	Only for hazelnuts from Turkey

Exceptions

- Operations with less than 5 employees are exempted from this obligation unless worker representation is possible through the group, like with GRASP for GlobalG.A.P Option 2.
- Operations that already have social responsibility certification according to Naturland, Ecovalia or Valore Social standards do not need any other kind of social responsibility auditing.
- Operations that are not or cannot be GlobalG.A.P. certified can apply for a derogation.
- Hazelnuts from Turkey: Bio Suisse can grant temporary derogations for social responsibility standards that do not fully meet ILO norms.

Confirmation by means of a Bio Suisse 'Social responsibility' self-declaration form

Operations that have employees, that do not fall under the external social responsibility certification/auditing obligation (as per [part V, section 3.3.8.1](#)), and that have 20 or more employees must fill out and sign a [self-declaration form \(checklist\)](#) supplied by Bio Suisse.

Operations which meet one of the following criteria and which possess a valid document (certificate/audit report no older than 18 months) need not fill out the Bio Suisse 'Social responsibility' self-declaration form:

- BSCI
- Control Union Fair Choice
- Fair for Life/For Life
- Fair Trade USA
- Fairtrade
- GlobalG.A.P. GRASP
- IBD Fair Trade
- Naturland/Naturland Fair
- Rainforest Alliance
- Rapunzel Hand in Hand
- RSPO P&C 2018/RSPO ISH 2019 or corresponding follow-up standard
- SA8000
- Sedex SMETA
- Soil Association Ethical Trade

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