



FoodChain ID
Regenerative Farming Standard
Version 2.2 – August, 2023



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FOREWORD

The Regenerative Farming Standard (RGN) is a pilot private standard in regenerative agriculture.

The document was prepared by COSMOCERT SA in collaboration with FoodChain ID Group and external experts. COSMOCERT SA was founded in 2013, aiming to offer high quality and innovation services in the scopes of Organic Products Certification, Good Agricultural Practice (GLOBAL. G.A.P.), Quality Management Systems (ISO standards), hotels classification certification and hotel services certification ('We do local', Greek Breakfast, Boutique Hotels), and other international standards (VEGAN, DEMETER, BIOSUISSE, ANIMAL WELFARE).

Equipped with the experience, expertise and knowledge of its executives and with the use of high-tech and innovation tools, the company seeks to be a helper at every step of the business effort, providing complete and effective solutions.

The high level of knowledge and the continuous training of human resources combined with the excellent collaborative conditions, make the company creative and pioneering, flexible and adaptable to the constantly changing market conditions. The company's priority is to provide certification services that will have a rewarding effect and added value. Since October 2022, COSMOCERT is part of FoodChain ID Group Inc.

1. INTRODUCTION

Regenerative Agriculture is a philosophy (followed by a set of agricultural practices) that aims to reverse the depletion of natural resources that Industrial Agriculture caused.

Regenerative Agriculture aims to build healthy soil for years to come, increase biodiversity, restore balance in ecosystems, and mitigate climate change.

The Regenerative Farming Standard (RGN), is a third-party certification standard, which incorporates environmental elements as well as regenerative farming requirements for soil health and land management.

The desired outcome of the Standard is the widespread development and application of Regenerative Agriculture for soil health and land management in the field of plant production.

2. SCOPE

The RGN is applicable to any producer, group of producers as well as processing and commercial enterprises covered by the RGN Standard according to the three following certification categories:

- 1) Individual producer certification (OPTION 1)
- 2) Group certification (OPTION 2)
- 3) Chain of custody (COC)

Option 1 and Option 2 categories concern the verification of cultivation practices covered by RGN Standard, while COC category concerns traceability and record control rules.

3. APPLICATION PROCESS

3.1 Application form

Every operator interested in being certified by RGN, should submit the application form to approved Certification Body (CB) The application shall cover at least the information required for the registration of the operator in accordance with Standard's requirements.

Operators that were previously subject to the Certification Scheme and which either voluntarily withdrew or were expelled from the Certification Scheme due to sanctions, may re-submit an application to the CB.

3.2 Application review

CB reviews the data collected by the application form and other attachments to ensure that:

- a) the information is sufficient to carry out the certification process
- b) any possible detail that is not clear between the CB and the operator has been clarified, including the certification agreement on the RGN's requirements
- c) the requested scope of certification has been determined,
- d) means are available to carry out all assessment activities.

As long as the data of the application and the attached documents are complete and verified and the application review has been completed, the Certification Agreement is signed by the applicant or an authorized representative and by the CB's legal representative.

By signing, the applicant commits to comply with the certification requirements at all times, the communication of data updates to the CB and the payment of the applicable fees established by the CB.

The payment of the applicable fees does not guarantee the positive outcome of the evaluation process and the issuance of the certificate. Certification only depends on the compliance with the minimum requirements of the Standard.

3.3 Rejection of application

Reasons for rejection of application can be the following:

- Requested fields are not covered by the scope of the Standard.
- Insufficient data in the application form
- Sites are located in Country (ies) where the CB has not developed certification activity etc.

In case of rejection of application, the applicant receives from the CB a written notification explaining the reason of rejection.

In case that the reason for rejection can be collapsed (eg. lack of documents, incomplete form filling, etc.), the applicant can have the possibility to correct the reason for rejection by submitting the pending data to the CB. In this case, the CB takes into account the new documentation in the application review process.

4. CERTIFICATION OPTIONS

The RGN is applicable to any producer, group of producers as well as processing and commercial enterprises. Especially, in the case of group of producers satisfactory guarantees must be provided for the internal audits that the group applies to its member producers.

The RGN includes specific requirements for group of producers, in order to ensure equivalent guarantees regarding compliance of member producers with the relevant guarantees of individual producers.

4.1 Individual producer certification and Chain of custody certification (Option 1 & COC)

The RGN requirements are applied by the individual producers and businesses immediately after the submission of the application to the CB. The evaluation of the compliance of the applicants is carried out by the CB after the signing of the contract between the CB and the applicant.

The assessment is completed by carrying out an on-site audit in order to assess compliance in all production units of the producer or company. The individual producer and/or business is the certificate holder once certified.

4.2 Group certification

RGN certification is also available to producer groups, provided that the conditions set out in Annex II of the Standard are met, provided that the group's internal control system provides sufficient evidence of its effectiveness and reliability.

The group, as a legal entity, is the certificate holder once certified. A group of producers must have implemented a common system and comply with the requirements of the Standard.

5. PARALLEL PRODUCTION (PP) OR PARALLEL OWNERSHIP (PO)

Parallel Production (PP): PP is a situation where individual producers, producer members or producer groups produce the same product partly as certified and partly as non-certified.

In these cases, producers shall keep separate records for certified and non-certified products.

Parallel Ownership (PO): PO is a situation where individual producers, producer members or producer groups buy non-certified products of the same products they grow under certified production.

In these cases, all products shall be traceable to the respective production site, and certified and non-certified products shall be fully segregated at all times. Producers shall be able to demonstrate that their traceability and recording system guarantees full traceability and segregation. Moreover, appropriate records shall be kept in order to verifying the mass balance of certified products as well as non-certified products.

Records shall be available during on-site audits as well as whenever the CB requests them for the purpose of verifying compliance.

5.1 Registration steps

The producer shall inform the respective CB of the application for PP/PO during the registration process. Producer groups shall also include clear identification of their producer members who buy/sell non-certified products of the same products included in the scope of certification (and, therefore, also the products that have to be registered as “with PO” for each producer member).

Producers can register for PP/PO at any time if they start carrying out PP/PO activities, but cannot use the registration as immediate corrective action to avoid sanctions in the case of a non-conformance.

In case producers want to register for PP/PO during the validity of their certificates (eg. because they need to purchase non-certified products, which they did not expect at the time of their registration), CBs will have to carry out an extraordinary inspection/audit to check the applicable control points, with an extra cost for the producer.

In case producers want to register for Parallel Ownership at the beginning of the season, when they are not sure whether they will buy non-certified products, CBs shall evaluate that the traceability and segregation procedures are available and ready for implementation.

When the purchase of products from non-certified sources begins, CBs shall require evidences of implementation (documentation or on-site assessment). In any case, commercial enterprises should prefer certified products, so that more producers and businesses are constantly encouraged to apply the Principles of Regenerative Agriculture.

5.2 Additional requirements for producers with PP/PO

All products shall be traceable to the respective production site/PHU, and certified and non-certified products shall be fully segregated at all times. Producers shall be able to demonstrate that their traceability and recording system guarantees full traceability and segregation.

The handling of certified and non-certified products is possible within the same product handling facility.

6. CERTIFICATION PROCESS

Certification process begins with the signing of the contract between the CB and the applicant. The CB will carry out inspections annually in order to verify the compliance or not of the operators with the requirements of the Standard.

6.1 Internal audit

After the signing of the contract between the CB and the operator and before the initial audit, the operator must carry out an internal audit.

The internal audit is carried out by an agronomist - consultant, who has a contract with the operator or is an internal partner. The purpose of the internal audit for the operator is to know the level of compliance, before the initial audit by the CB.

The internal audit is carried out before the initial external on-site audit and at least once a year and before the CB annual audit. The results of the internal audit should be available during the CB external on-site audit. Any non-conformities identified during the internal audit must have been successfully closed by the date of CB on-site external audit.

6.2 Preliminary audit

This section is applicable to producers seeking RGN Certification for the first time, as well as for changes to an already existing RGN Certificate.

Each production process for products accepted for certification for the first time shall be completely assessed (all applicable control points shall be verified), prior to issuing the certificate.

The applicant shall have records from the registration date onwards or for at least 3 months before the first inspection takes place, whichever is longer and the CB shall inspect them.

The documentation must be submitted for the needs of the preliminary audit are the following: description of the location of the production units (crops, previous land use, neighboring land uses), biodiversity records, water management description, water waste management description, pollution prevention plan, fertilization management description, engineering and tillage plan description, regenerative practices plan, lab tests, internal audit, review or other related documents.

The preliminary audit is evaluated in office by the CB's Assessor in order to assess the readiness for conducting the certification audit. A positive assessment result should be ensured in order to finalize the planning of the on-site audit.

6.3 Planning initial audit

The initial audit is carried out under the responsibility of the CB after the successful completion of the evaluation of the preliminary audit as well as any corrections and corrective actions carried out by the operator. The initial audit can be conducted in two stages.

1st stage off-site documentation review (optional)

The operator sends the requested documentation to the CB and the off-site control is carried out within 4 weeks before the on-site audit.

2nd stage on-site audit

The external auditor may inspect any sites used for activities related to the production unit under control. Furthermore, the external auditor checks any necessary documentation of the operator.

6.4 Surveillance audit

Surveillance audits are carried out once per year in order to verify by the CB the continued compliance with the requirements of the Standard.

Surveillance audits are carried out in the same way as the initial audit.

In any case, the certified operators must have completed the annual internal audit and corrected any non-conformities before the external surveillance audit

6.5 Additional audit

Additional audit is conducted, following regular audits, necessitated by non-compliance by the operator and in relation to the follow-up of corrective actions or after complaint. The cost of follow-up audit is paid by the operator.

6.6 Extension audit

Extension audits are carried out in order to evaluate the application and effectiveness of the requirements of the Standard in additional activities and/or sites in order to expand the scope of the certificate. The extension audit can be carried out independently or combined with the surveillance audit.

7. LEVELS, CONTROL POINTS AND HANDLING OF NON-CONFORMITIES

The RGN consists of three types of control points: Mandatory(M), Critical, Optional (O)

- **Mandatory Requirements:** 100% compliance with all applicable Mandatory Requirements is compulsory.
- **Critical Requirements** (concern regenerative practices in Annex I): The operators must comply with a minimum number of critical requirements depending on their level.
- **Optional Requirements:** These are non-mandatory control points which on a higher level may have become mandatory.

The operators must comply with all mandatory requirements, as well as the minimum number of critical requirements of the level they are aiming for according to Annex III.

The levels define the minimum quantitative compliance of the operators, from the second year and beyond.

Therefore, an operator in order to achieve a higher level of compliance it should comply with as many of the requirements as possible. It is not obligated for an operator to raise the level of compliance beyond the basic level (ie from the second year onwards). In any case, ensuring a high compliance rate in requirements ensures the operator ranking directly at a higher level than the basic.

Levels scale as follows:

- **1st Level (Under conversion):** The 1st level includes the operators who are certified during the 1st year of implementation of the Standard and who comply with at least 100% of the applicable mandatory requirements and minimum three critical requirements as shown in Annex III
- **2nd Level (Basic):** The 2nd level includes the operators who are certified from the 2nd year of implementation of the Standard and who comply at least with at least 100% of the applicable mandatory requirements and minimum three critical requirements as shown in Annex III
- **3rd Level (Advanced):** The 3rd level includes the operators who are certified from the 2nd year of implementation of the Standard and who comply at least with at least 100% of the applicable mandatory requirements of the level and minimum four critical requirements as shown in Annex III
- **4th Level (Expert):** The 4th level includes the operators who are certified from the 2nd year of implementation of the Standard and who comply at least with at least 100% of the applicable mandatory requirements of the level and minimum five critical requirements as shown in Annex III.

If auditors find out non-conformities, these are recorded during the audit. Corrective actions proposed by the operator must be agreed with the auditor. The CB decides whether an additional audit may be required to confirm the assessment of corrections and/or corrective actions. The cost of follow-up audit is paid by the operator.

In case of failure to meet the requirements of the Standard within the agreed period, for the initial certification we are not led to a certification. For the surveillance audits, the certification is suspended and a period of 30 days is given in order to confirm the removal of the non-compliance. After the 30 days, the certification is revoked and the contract is automatically terminated.

For the initial audit, the time to close the non-conformities is 3 months.

If the operator, which is in the 2nd year of implementation of the Standard, after the completion of the annual evaluation does not manage to raise a level, it shall make the necessary corrections in order to achieve the minimum required level of compliance of the 2nd level.

The implementation of the corrective actions by the operator should not exceed 6 months from the date of the on-site audit.

After the expiration of 6 months and if the operator does not achieve the minimum requirements of compliance of the 2nd level, certification is revoked with termination of the contract between the CB and the operator.

In the cases of suspension and revocation, the operator does not have the right to use claims regarding its certification against the Standard. The right to use the relevant claims is restored when the operator restores the certification in accordance with the requirements of the Standard.

If an operator achieves its affiliation to the highest level (Expert), it should ensure the maintenance of the same level of compliance for the following years.

In case that there is a reduction in the minimum required compliance criteria corresponding to the level to which an operator falls at the time of the annual assessment, then the operator will fall to that level (2-4) corresponding to the compliance rate.

8. CERTIFICATION

The assessment process is reviewed by the Certification Manager. For this reason, the lead auditor provides the following documentation:

- Audit report - questionnaire accompanied with annexes (signed by the auditor and the operator)
- Personal notes – comments
- Files required by this process.

The Certification Manager reviews the audit documentation and decides on certification for the specific scope and level of compliance. The Certification Manager approves the issuance of the certificate.

The certificate can only be issued when all non-conformities have been resolved.

The surveillance process of the producer, producer Group and/or commercial enterprise is reverified annually by the CB.

The inspector shall complete the entire checklist and the verification process annually.

Initial certificates are valid for one (1) year rather than one day. Certificates issued from the 2nd year onwards keep the original certification cycle renewed for the following year.

If the certified operator has more than one object of application, the main certificate is issued with an attached list of each object of application, (eg. Appendix of certified member of a producer group, appendix of certified fields).

Certificates have a unique number: the certificate number.

The CB must have the valid current list of holdings participating in the Certification Scheme. In case this list does not correspond with any changes made to the holdings participating in the Certification Scheme, this will be considered as misuse of the certificate by the CB and will be dealt with accordingly.

9. USE OF LOGO AND TERMS OF CERTIFICATION

Certified producers / groups of producers have the right to use the logo of the Standard and references to certification in the labeling and advertising of its products.

The use of logo is allowed only in the labeling of the products that have been included in the Certification Scheme and/or in promotional material which is directly connected to these products.

Use of the Standard's references and/or logo may not be made in a manner that misleads consumers or any third party.

10. TERMS AND DEFINITION

Agricultural land: Land used for agricultural production

Agrochemicals: The broad range of pesticides, including insecticides, herbicides, and fungicides

Applicant: The person who apply for the RGN certification

Biodiversity: Biodiversity is a term used to describe all of the species in one region or ecosystem

Compliance: Conforming to requirements of standards

Deforestation: Clearing of virgin forests, or intentional destruction or removal of trees and other vegetation for agricultural, commercial, housing, or firewood use without replanting (reforesting) and without allowing time for the forest to regenerate itself

Distribution: A facility that sells or distributes certified RGN products

Erosion: Erosion is the gradual destruction and removal of rock or soil in a particular area by water or the weather

Fertilizer: A material of natural or synthetic origin used to supply one or more nutrients essential to the growth of plants

Genetically Modified Organism (GMO): An organism whose genome has been artificially altered through biotechnology

Good collection practices: Good collection practices are a set of principles, regulations and technical recommendations applicable to harvest and environment

Herbaceous matter: Low growing non-woody perennial plants

Minimum tillage practices: A soil conservation system with the goal of minimum soil manipulation

Non-compliance: Failing to meet the applicable RGN requirements

Organic matter: Soil organic matter is the fraction of the soil that consists of plant or animal tissue in various stages of breakdown

Pasture: Land covered with vegetation suitable for grazing or foraging by farm animals

Pesticides: Categories of chemicals including herbicides, fungides, insecticides and rodenticides

Plan: A plan is an intention to carry out an action, and a decision about what steps will be taken to achieve this

Plant Protection Products: Substances, including pesticides, that protect crops or useful plants. They are primarily used in the agricultural sector but also in forestry and horticulture.

They have one of the following functions: Protect plants or plant products against pests, before or after harvest; Influence the life processes of plants (such as substances influencing their growth, excluding nutrients); Preserve plant products; Destroy or prevent growth of undesired plants or parts of plants

Producer: The individual or entity that owns the products thereof

Producer group: Individual producers who agree to cooperatively pool their products

Regenerative agriculture: A set of planned agricultural practices that ensure the holding is not depleted by agriculture practices, and over time the soil, water and biodiversity are improved or maintained to the greatest extent possible

Regenerative plan: A plan designed by the farmer with or without help from experts outlining the actions and activities the farmer will undertake to manage and maintain the holding in accordance with RGN

Review: An assessment of current practice against a set of guidelines with the intent of instituting change where necessary

Rotational grazing: Method of maintaining vegetative growth and animal health by planned movement of animals from one area to another

Sites: Points or areas on the holding

Soil compaction: The reduction of soil volume due to external factors; this reduction lowers soil productivity and environmental quality

Soil structure: Soil structure is the arrangement of pores and fissures (porosity) within a matrix of solid materials (soil particles and organic matter)

Water quality: Water quality refers to the physical, chemical and biological characteristics of both water and sediment

11. REVISION HISTORY

Revision History			
Title	Date	Notes	Version
Regenerative Farming Standard	August 2023	Revised standard	V2.2
Regenerative Farming Standard	May 2023	Original standard	V2.1

Annex I – Critical Regenerative Practices for the soil health and the land management that can be included to Regenerative Agriculture Plan

- Cover cropping
- Crop rotation
- Livestock grazing
- Windbreak establishment
- Vegetative Barriers
- Use of fire-resistant plants in field borders
- Agroforestry
- Planting bushes, individual trees or groups of trees
- Syntropic farming
- Compost application & Recycling of On-Farm Biomass
- Use of compost tea as a means of nutrition or as a means of disease prevention
- Riparian Restoration and wildlife habitat
- Intercropping or interseeding
- Green manure (Planting supporting species that fix nitrogen and provide organic matter)
- Cultivation in lines and planting biomass lines
- In the case of tree crops, ensuring that the planting density is such that it does not gradually deplete the soil and does not cause an excessive need for inputs
- Application of natural ground covers (inert ground cover materials)
- Use of active microorganisms

Annex II– Group certification requirements

1. General

Group certification is applicable only to producers of primary agricultural products.

The producers – members of the group must apply a common production system and the holdings must be located close to each other and in any case no more than 200 Km from the headquarters of the group.

By way of derogation, it is possible to accept producers whose sites are located in locations more than 200 Km from the headquarters of the group, as long as the group is able to demonstrate to the CB that it maintains effective control over the remote producer-members equivalent to the other producer-members.

2. Establishment of group of producers - commitments

A group of producers in order to be accepted by the Certification Scheme must have a formal legal status. The legal entity leads the group of producers and represents its members vis-à-vis the CB. The group, as a legal entity, will be the holder of the certificate once certified. The legal entity must have entered into written agreements with the producers - members of the group, where the following commitments will be included among other terms:

- I) Producers – members of the group accept the recommendations and suggestions of the group and/or the administrator of the group regarding the organization of the annual production and related tasks, based on the central management plan.
- II) Producers – members agree to participate in the trainings organized by the group in the framework of the implementation of the Standard
- III) Producers - members accept the annual audits carried out internally and externally by the CB.
- IV) Producers – Member agree to continuously comply with the requirements of the Standard.
- V) In case of non-conformities, producers-members accept the imposition of the prescribed sanctions by the group and/or by the CB.
- VI) If a producer-member realizes that the production units under his/her management, in whole or in part, do not comply with the requirements of the Standard, he/she undertakes to inform the group in writing without delay
- VII) Producers – members of the group undertake to market their certified products exclusively through the group to which they belong. For the sale of products to a third party, other than the group to which they belong, they must obtain the written consent of the group and keep detailed accounts for all products sold in order to ensure the verification of the production - sales balance
- VIII) Producers – members of the group accept the imposition of sanctions by the group and/or the CB in case of non-compliance with the minimum requirements of the Standard as well as the taking of measures in order to restore their compliance

- IX) Producer-members accept that they may be expelled from the Certification Scheme at the responsibility of the group in cases where significant non-conformities are observed, which create prolonged negative effects for the overall certification of the group
- X) In case of voluntary withdrawal or expulsion from the group, the producers-members are committed to the immediate cessation of any type of reference to the Standard and the use of the relevant indications
- XI) Producers may participate in the Standard Certification Scheme with only one group, for the same product and/or product category. Exceptionally, the cases of producers who have parcels in different regional units, have the possibility to join different groups per regional unit.

3. Trading of certified product

Upon successful completion of the assessment, the CB issues a Product Certificate to the group. The certificate includes an appendix with a nominal list of producers - members of the group. However, producers – members cannot make use of the group's certificate individually.

4. Structure of management groups

Groups must appoint a group manager. The group manager is responsible for the operation of the group, the effective implementation of the internal control system and represents the group vis-à-vis the CB. The group manager must have knowledge of the activities of the producer-members and the production activity of the group in general.

Groups must employ at least an internal auditor. Internal auditors must have documented training in the scope of the group's activities (eg. Agronomists).

It is acceptable for the group manager to perform internal auditor duties.

In case of non-compliance of any producer -member, the producer - member is removed from the group certificate. Alternatively, the group manager may remove the producer - member from the group by notifying written the CB.

5. Structure of Internal Control System

In accordance with the requirements of this Standard, groups undertake most of the controls concerning their members. For the effective management of these controls, they must organize a documented system of internal audits of producer – members.

The internal auditors carry out at least one audit visit per year to each individual producer - member, during which all production units of the producer -members and their used facilities will be checked.

6. Internal audits

The group under the responsibility of the internal auditor must carry out internal audits of the system and in particular of the internal control system, in order to examine their effectiveness.

The group must carry out at least one internal audit annually and in time before the scheduled external audit of the CB.

7. Application of sanctions to producer - members

The group must apply appropriate sanctions to producer - members who do not comply with the minimum requirements of the Standard.

Sanctions must be imposed whenever such non-conformities are recognized in producer-members, which do not allow their inclusion in the certification of the group.

Sanctions must be communicated in writing to the members and the CB must also be informed immediately.

8. Admission of new members

After the first formation of a group, new members can be registered if they meet the relevant criteria for their acceptance by the group. Before accepting and registering a new member, the group must carry out an on-site audit of the producer, documenting in detail the current situation regarding the compliance with the requirements of the Standard.

The internal auditor, who reviews and approves the internal audit reports, after the first formation of the group, must prepare a report identifying opportunities for improvement to ensure the new member's compliance with its minimum requirements Standard and the implementation time of the relevant corrections and/or corrective actions.

The group should inform the CB about new members entering as well as related member withdrawals, at least by January 15 of each new calendar year. If there has been a change in the registered members between the annual announcement and the announcement of the planned annual audit, the group must inform the CB of the relevant changes immediately and in any case before the audit is carried out.

New members who join a group have a greater chance of being selected for external sampling by the CB in the year they join the group.

9. External audits

Groups differ in terms of external audit requirements both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Group certification is based on the guarantees provided by the organization and operation of the internal control system of the groups, therefore the greater burden of the checks is carried out annually by the groups themselves. Groups have 2 audit levels.

The CB audits the structure and effectiveness of the group's internal control system and randomly selects producers for external audits based on specific criteria.

The number of producers who are externally audited each year by the CB for the expert level cannot be less than 1/3 of the total number of producer-members who were registered as members of the group on December 31 of the previous calendar year and their selection is made by aim within three years to have audited all producer - members of the group and based on risk analysis.

For the other levels, the group sampling shall be calculated using the square root of the total number of members (N) + 1, multiplied by the risk multiplier identified in the sampling methodology, rounded up to the nearest whole number, plus an audit of the Group Leader.

For low-risk operations, risk multiplier is 1,0, for medium-risk operations risk multiplier is 1.2 and for high-risk operations, risk multiplier is 1,5.

10. Internal Control System Audit

The CB, initially, evaluates the internal control system applied by the group and if it is judged to be suitable and effective, the audit is completed by carrying out on-site audits of selected producer – members.

During the on-site audit at the headquarters of the group, the auditor also evaluates the unified production system of the group, the training of the producer-members and any other elements of the implementation of the management system.

The groups before the annual audit must have completed all the audits on their producer - members and the relevant reports must be available to the CB's auditor. Finally, during the audit, the procedure for handling non-conformities that have been recognized by the internal auditors of the group is checked, as well as the procedure for imposing sanctions on producer-members, if there has been a relevant application.

The audit report must be signed by the CB's auditor and the representative of the group.

11. Producers – member audits

At the end of the audit at the headquarters of the group and if it is judged by the external auditor that the internal control system of the group is suitable and effective, the producers - members who will be included in the sample are selected on site, in accordance with the requirements of the audit program. The representative of the group must be continuously present during the auditor and then accompany the external auditor in the on-site audits of producer-members. If the group can appoint more representatives, external audits can be carried out simultaneously on producer - members.

In order to evaluate the group's internal control system, external audits must confirm the results of internal audits.

At the end of each audit, the auditor's report must be signed by him, the group representative and the operator manager.

Annex III

Categorization of the requirements of the Standard based on the levels of compliance into Mandatory (M) and Optional (O)

REQUIREMENT	REQUIREMENT'S DESCRIPTION	UNDER CONVERSION	BASIC LEVEL	ADVANCED LEVEL	EXPERT LEVEL
1. RGN FILE	The operator shall hold all the necessary documents for the RGN file (operation license, contract with the CB, certification agreement etc).	M	M	M	M
2.LOCATION	The operator shall have a description that identifies all its productive plots with detailed information on the established crops, their intended use as well as their previous use (at least 10 years prior to their inclusion in the Control System). The description must also include information concerning the uses of the neighboring land.	M	M	M	M
3.BIODIVERSITY	The operator shall compile once and maintain a description that enumerates the different species (plant, animal) within its exploitation, focusing and including all the possible risks that its activity may cause to the local ecosystem of the area where production units and facilities are located. In relation to the description, the operator must identify the necessary preventive actions that it will take in order to limit the possibility of causing damage to the local ecosystem and possible loss of biodiversity (eg creation of pollinator habitats within the farm, existence of areas without interventions).	M	M	M	M
4.WATER MANAGEMENT	The operator shall identify and describe all water resources in the area in which its activities take place (eg drilling, rivers). The description must include the sources of origin of the water used in the farm as well as information regarding its quality depending on its use. The water management description should highlight the potential negative impacts on water resources from the farm's activities as well as the measures it takes to maintain quality. The Unit shall	M	M	M	M

Annex III

Categorization of the requirements of the Standard based on the levels of compliance into Mandatory (M) and Optional (O)

REQUIREMENT	REQUIREMENT'S DESCRIPTION	UNDER CONVERSION	BASIC LEVEL	ADVANCED LEVEL	EXPERT LEVEL
	have a monitoring mechanism for the distribution of water uses / consumptions.				
5. WATER WASTE MANAGEMENT	The operator shall identify and describe all possible water wastes produced by its activities, in relation to the production of agricultural products. The description shall include detailed information on the hazardousness of the water waste, its management and its expected annual quantity. The operator will ensure that the management of its water waste will be done in the most appropriate and efficient way.	M	M	M	M
6.POLLUTION PREVENTION	The operator shall ensure that the by-products from its activities are managed in the most appropriate and efficient way and their annual quantity are recorded.	M	M	M	M
7. CARBON SEQUESTRATION	The operator, by using internationally recognized calculation standards, can calculate and monitor the carbon footprint of its products.	O	O	O	O
8.SOIL MANAGEMENT	The operator shall aim to minimize the mechanical treatment of the soil, avoid its compaction, avoid its erosion as well as maintain and improve its biodiversity and organic matter.	M	M	M	M
9.FERTILIZATION	The operator shall have a fertilization management in which he/she aims to increase organic matter through green manure, use of compost as well as limiting the use of synthetic fertilizers. The use of synthetic fertilizers, if required, shall be done in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions	M	M	M	M
10.SOIL LAB TESTS	The operator, during first year certification cycle and at least every two years, shall carry out soil lab tests in accordance with the	M	M	M	M

Annex III

Categorization of the requirements of the Standard based on the levels of compliance into Mandatory (M) and Optional (O)

REQUIREMENT	REQUIREMENT'S DESCRIPTION	UNDER CONVERSION	BASIC LEVEL	ADVANCED LEVEL	EXPERT LEVEL
	directive of the Standard and keep an electronic record of their results.				
11. MACROSCOPIC SOIL TESTS	In addition to lab tests, the operator can also conduct macroscopic soil tests in accordance with the directive of the Standard and keep an electronic record of their results.	O	O	O	O
12. FARMING PRACTICES/CROP ROTATIONS	The operator shall plan an appropriate annual crop rotation program, where applicable, to maintain and/or increase organic matter (eg legumes or other nitrogen-fixing crops).	M	M	M	M
13.VEGETATIVE COVER	The operator should aim for maximum crop coverage using improved practices. In case that the specific requirement was not implemented, eg. due to severe weather conditions, appropriate documentation is required.	M (plan with minimum 50% of vegetative coverage)	M (minimum 50% of vegetative coverage)	M (minimum 65% of vegetative coverage)	M (minimum 80% of vegetative coverage)
14.ROTATIONAL GLAZING	If the operator has both crops and animals for commercial use, he/she must encourage holistic grazing on an annual basis and have the corresponding grazing program.	O	O	M	M
15.REGENERATIVE PRACTICES (ANNEX I)	The operator shall draw up a Regenerative Plan adapted to its characteristics, the crops and the area in which it is located. The Plan shall include the regenerative practices to be selected, according to the relevant annex of the Standard, as well as the timetable for their implementation, so that the operator complies with the minimum requirements of the Standard. Every operator should set a responsible person for the implementation of the Regenerative Plan.	M (submission of a regenerative plan with at least 3 critical regenerative practices)	M (implementation of at least 3 critical regenerative practices)	M (implementation of at least 4 critical regenerative practices)	M (implementation of at least 5 critical regenerative practices)
16.PESTICIDE INPUTS	The management of pests / diseases shall be carried out in such a way as to minimize the need for external interventions and the use	O	O	O	M

Annex III

Categorization of the requirements of the Standard based on the levels of compliance into Mandatory (M) and Optional (O)

REQUIREMENT	REQUIREMENT'S DESCRIPTION	UNDER CONVERSION	BASIC LEVEL	ADVANCED LEVEL	EXPERT LEVEL
	of inputs that are as environmentally friendly as possible. Pest / disease management will follow the relevant requirements of the Codes of Good Agricultural Practice and will only include integrated control methods.				
17. USING A DIGITAL INPUT MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING APP	<p>The operator may purchase a digital application for environmental data input management and monitoring, and use it for one or more of the following practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Application of plant protection products ▪ Application of nutrients ▪ Application of irrigation ▪ Crop timetable 	O	O	O	O
18. NON-APPROVED PRACTICES	The operator shall not carry out practices that are inconsistent with the philosophy of regenerative agriculture such as deforestation, the use of dynamite to break the deep crust of the soil, mining, except in cases where there is a documented threat to the crops and there is the relevant documentation of its necessity. In addition, burning should be avoided, except in cases where there is a threat to the crops and there is a relevant documentation of its necessity.	M	M	M	M
19. NON-GMO FREE	The operator does not use genetically modified organisms	O	O	M	M

Annex III

Categorization of the requirements of the Standard based on the levels of compliance into Mandatory (M) and Optional (O)

REQUIREMENT	REQUIREMENT'S DESCRIPTION	UNDER CONVERSION	BASIC LEVEL	ADVANCED LEVEL	EXPERT LEVEL
20 EXISTING CERTIFICATION	The operator is certified for the implementation of internationally recognized Standards related to the integrated management of agricultural production, organic farming, as well as other equivalent environmental Standards.	O	O	O	M
21. TRACEABILITY	The operator shall maintain traceability records for a minimum of five years. In the case of producers, the sales invoices must be linked to the corresponding parcel of land. If after-harvest practices are carried out, there must be an up-to-date flow chart of the entire process. In the case of COC, the minimum traceability is at producer level. In addition, sales invoices, production records, warehouse records shall be maintained. The operator shall verify and test the effectiveness of the traceability system. Since the operator manages non-certified products, all the necessary separations shall be maintained. Finally, the operator shall have a recall / returns procedure and be able to document its effectiveness (a successful recall test must be available, and in cases of recalls / returns the relevant procedure has been followed).	M	M	M	M
22. INTERNAL AUDIT	The operator shall design a system of internal audits to verify compliance with the requirements of the Standard. The system of internal audit shall include at least one full internal audit per producer annually and in time before the scheduled audit by the CB. The audit must be done by the appropriate partner.	M	M	M	M

Annex III

Categorization of the requirements of the Standard based on the levels of compliance into Mandatory (M) and Optional (O)

REQUIREMENT	REQUIREMENT'S DESCRIPTION	UNDER CONVERSION	BASIC LEVEL	ADVANCED LEVEL	EXPERT LEVEL
23. MANAGEMENT REVIEW	<p>Top Management is responsible for implementing the Standard. Through the management review which is carried out at regular intervals and at least once a year, the operator shall ensure the improvement of the effectiveness of the Standard and its processes and review, if necessary, regenerative practices.</p> <p>It is applicable in cases where the management of the agricultural holding is carried out by companies.</p>	M	M	M	M
24. COMPLAINS / CUSTOMER SATISFACTION	The operator shall implement an effective mechanism for handling complaints submitted by any third party. The mechanism must cover at least the complaints submitted to the operators and related to the products produced or the services provided	M	M	M	M
25. USE OF LOGO & REFERENCES TO CERTIFICATION	Use of logo and references to certification should be done in accordance with the requirements of the Standard and the corresponding regulation on the use of logo and references to certification	M	M	M	M

Annex IV – Soil testing guidance

1. Frequency test

During first year certification cycle and certainly before the initial audit, each producer (individual or member of a group) must conduct health soil lab tests and macroscopic soil tests.

Health soil lab tests are required while soil tests are optional. For soil lab tests, the mandatory indicators are pH, electrical conductivity and soil organic matter.

For the first year, tests can be accepted up to 3 months before the application as long as they are representative according to the Standard. After initial certification, these tests should be performed every two years. The purpose of the tests is to evaluate the effectiveness of selected regenerative practices.

2. Number and Methodology of soil lab test

Depending on the number of plots, a representative number of samples is selected for tests according to the following formula:

Soil lab tests samples = square root of total number of producer's slot divided by two, with minimum one lab sample per producer.

In the case of one sample, the sample is taken from the most representative area.

In the case of two samples, the samples are taken from the best and the worst.

In the case of three and more samples, the samples are taken from the best, the worst and the representatives plots.

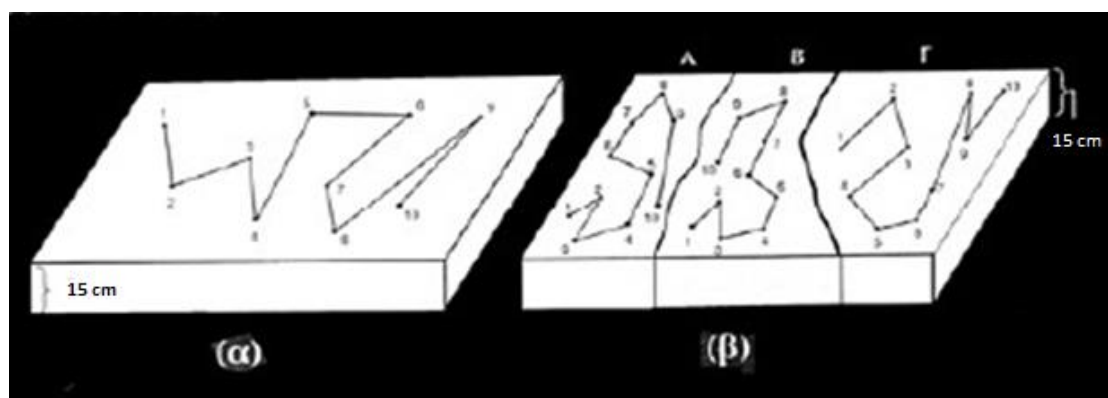
3. Soil Sampling

The sample must be representative of the plot from which it was taken. In order to obtain a representative soil sampling, the sampler must comply with the following:

We observe the field to see if the ground is even or not. This is done by observing whether there are obvious differences in the ground at least by criteria visible to the eye, eg. color, vegetation, relief, slope, rocks.

In case the field is uniform, collect the samples according to figure (α). In case the field is not uniform, collect the samples according to figure (β).

Figure: Sampling points for obtaining a representative soil sample



- We divide the field into uniform sections of soil
- We collect the samples in random order as shown in the figure.
- In the mixed sample, a sample should be taken from 10 points, as shown in the figure above.
- Dig to a consistent depth (15cm/6in) and collect soil at each subsample location.
- We do not mix samples from different plots or from different depths.
- After collecting the samples, mix the sample very well to make it homogeneous.
- The final sample weighing 500-600 g (dry) or 1 kg (liquid) is packed in a clean plastic bag and is labelled showing the producer's name, date and time of sampling, sample location (coordinates)
- It is recommended to video the sampling process and integrate the location coordinates (GPS) using a smartphone
- Repeat sampling, in subsequent years, is always done from the same location
- Samples must be taken from fields or parts of fields that are homogeneous
- In all cases, sampling should not be done after any liming or addition of organic substances or fertilization, mainly with phosphate or potash fertilizers.
- During sampling, the soil should be easily rubbed so that the individual samples can be mixed with relative ease.
- As much as possible, keep samples out of direct heat and sunlight.
- Mail samples to the lab as soon as possible after collection and use rapid delivery where available.

4. Macroscopic soil health testing

Macroscopic tests can be performed right on your farm without special equipment by an experienced agronomist.

Test	Control Indicator
Soil compaction	How easily the soil is permeable
Crusting	The surface condition of the soil
Ground cover	Percentage of cover in plants, plant residues or mulch
Ponding	How easily water penetrates the soil after rain, irrigation, etc
Root growth	Visual observation of roots
Aggregation	How easily the soil crumbles
Soil color	The color of the soil

1. Soil compaction

Using a probe, without much force, we try to put it into the ground using only one hand

Interpret the results as follows:

Low	If you can push the probe less than 8 cm
Medium	If you can push the probe in but not further than 20 cm
High	If you can push the probe deeper than 20 cm

2. Crusting

This particular test is visual and all that is needed is the experience of the agronomist. The ideal time to do this test is immediately after rain (without it being required). The tester walks the site looking for crusted areas. They are usually places where there is no proper growth of vegetation.

Interpret the results as follows:

Low	There's lots of surface crusting in the area
Medium	Some areas, but not many, where there's surface crusting amount covering above 5% of the area
High	No areas where there's surface crusting or there's a very small amount covering less than 5% of the area

3. Ground cover

Interpret the results as follows:

Low	Less than 35%
Medium	35% - 50 %
High	Above 50%

4. Ponding

A visual test that is ideally done within 24 hours after rain, or very early in the morning. The purpose of the test is to observe ponds.

Interpret the results as follows:

Low	Lots of standing water in many places across the field 24 hours after it rains
Medium	Standing water in a few places across the field 24 hours after it rains
High	No standing water in the field 24 hours after it rains

5. Root growth

By digging a hole and looking at crop roots

Interpret the results as follows:

Low	Roots are lacking (not many of them), seem restricted and not well branched.
Medium	Roots are somewhat restricted and there are some fine roots
High	Roots are abundant, branched, and unrestricted

6. Aggregation

It is an indicator of soil structure and its resistance to heavy rains and irrigation. The test is as follows: We find an aggregate from the surface of the soil and place it in a glass of water. After 5 minutes we observe the water and the aggregate.

Interpret the results as follows:

Low	Water is very cloudy, and the soil clump has mostly broken into parts
Medium	Water is somewhat cloudy but the soil clump remains almost intact
High	Water is clear and the soil clump remains intact.

7. Soil color

Pull some soil out of a hole you have dug and check if the soil has a gray color or reddish spots.

Interpret the results as follows:

Low	Light brown color with spots
Medium	Brown color with a few spots
High	Dark brown color

Annex V – Guidance

1. RGN FILE

The operator shall hold all the necessary documents for the RGN file (operation license, contract with the CB, certification agreement etc).

The operator shall maintain a RGN file with all necessary documents. In case of changes, the documents shall be updated and at the same time the operator shall immediately inform both the Certification Body (CB) and the Group Manager.

Regenerative agriculture documents shall be kept at least 5 years.

The RGN file must include all necessary legalizing documents, as well as the contract with the Certification Body, the certification agreement, the payment invoices of the current year of the CB, the contract between the Group and the members.

Examples of legalizing documents are land titles, lease, producer's GNI, operating permits, water use permit.

2. LOCATION

The operator shall have a description that identifies all its productive plots with detailed information on the established crops, their intended use as well as their previous use (at least 10 years prior to their inclusion in the Control System). The description must also include information concerning the uses of the neighboring land.

The operator shall have a description that includes a map (eg Google Earth, GNI) on which the following are located:

- all productive plots with established crops as well as their intended use according to the regenerative agriculture plan
- its facilities
- the neighboring cultivated and/or non-cultivated facilities within a radius of 2 km from the operator's production facilities.

The description shall include information on the previous land use of the production units at least 10 years before their inclusion in the Certification Scheme as well as on the risk of contamination of neighboring facilities from its activities.

The use of land in all cases shall not interfere with the agricultural production systems of the neighbors, so as to allow the coexistence of different production systems, without affecting the rights of others.

In case of parallel production / parallel ownership, the prescribed procedure of the Standard shall have been followed and these locations are marked on the map as parallel production locations.

Parallel Production (PP): PP is a situation where individual producers, producer members or producer groups produce the same product partly as certified and partly as non-certified.

Parallel Ownership (PO): PO is a situation where individual producers, producer members or producer groups buy non-certified products of the same products they grow under certified production.

3. BIODIVERSITY

The operator shall compile once and maintain a description that enumerates the different species (plant, animal) within its exploitation, focusing and including all the possible risks that its activity may cause to the local ecosystem of the area where production units and facilities are located.

In relation to the description, the operator must identify the necessary preventive actions that it will take in order to limit the possibility of causing damage to the local ecosystem and possible loss of biodiversity (eg. creation of pollinator habitats within the farm, existence of areas without interventions).

The description shall include the risks that the operator's activity may cause to the local ecosystem of the area where its production units and facilities are located, as well as the measures taken to increase biodiversity. In addition, hazards from previous land use during the previous ten years shall also be recorded.

The description shall include a record of different plant and animal species within the farm as well as a statistical representation of them.

The preservation of biodiversity is ensured by the preservation of free spaces in which no intervention is made. These spaces in their largest part remain covered. In the case of permanent crops, wild zones must be applied around the perimeter of the Unit (without the use of synthetic fertilizers, pesticides and interventions).

Additionally or alternatively, the company can create pollinator habitats within the production unit (eg botanical gardens, vegetable garden) even for commercial use. (see regenerative agriculture plan).

In the case of terraced areas supported by dry stones, it is mandatory to preserve them as they are a refuge for wild flora and fauna.

The operator shall maintain them, repair them in case of severe weather conditions, always without the use of concrete. In addition, the use of herbicides, the removal of trees or bushes is prohibited near the terraces, and it is mandatory to set aside cultivation at a distance of 0.5 meters from them.

4. WATER MANAGEMENT

The operator shall identify and describe all water resources in the area in which its activities take place (eg drilling, rivers). The description must include the sources of origin of the water used in the farm as well as information regarding its quality depending on its use.

The water management description should highlight the potential negative impacts on water resources from the farm's activities as well as the measures it takes to maintain quality. The Unit shall have a monitoring mechanism for the distribution of water uses / consumptions.

This specific requirement is intended to ensure the responsible use of water, maintaining the quality and quantity of local supplies as well as protecting them from contamination through the operator's activities.

The description shall provide for appropriate measures to reduce water consumption as well as the collection of rainwater for use within the Unit. In any case, salinization and desertification of the soil due to irrigation must be avoided.

Indicative strategies to conserve water and minimize irrigation are soil organic matter development, ground cover, irrigation systems, water retention tactics, natural dams, soil moisture monitoring.

In any case, the activities of the operator shall not reduce the availability of water for the neighboring areas nor affect the habitats.

In addition, ecological focus zones, i.e. uncultivated protective areas within the farm where no synthetic fertilizers or pesticides are applied, shall be provided at least 3 meters wide next to or around watercourses or water sources (rivers, lakes, irrigation ditch) to protect of biodiversity and the prevention of soil erosion.

Also, in this way, water sources are protected from possible contamination due to the use of plant protection products or fertilization products.

Physico-chemical analysis of irrigation water, water used in fertilization and crop protection applications as well as physico-chemical analysis of water used in the Unit for cleaning, on the production line, post-harvest handling is recommended.

5. WATER WASTE MANAGEMENT

The operator shall identify and describe all possible water wastes produced by its activities, in relation to the production of agricultural products.

The description shall include detailed information on the hazardousness of the water waste, its management and its expected annual quantity. The operator will ensure that the management of its water waste will be done in the most appropriate and efficient way.

The operator shall manage water waste in such a way that it does not cause water pollution or contaminate the soil with heavy metals, pathogenic organisms or other chemical elements. Under no circumstances should raw aqueous waste be used for irrigation.

In case of evidence of water contamination from the operator's activities, the competent authority shall be informed.

The adequacy of preventive measures shall be reviewed at least once a year.

6. POLLUTION PREVENTION

The operator shall ensure that the by-products from its activities are managed in the most appropriate and efficient way and their annual quantity are recorded.

Operators shall properly manage their by-products (eg crop residues, manure, straw) in order to avoid pollution.

In case of their use as compost, they shall have been properly processed and comply with local legislation.

A recycling program is recommended.

7. CARBON SEQUESTRATION

The operator, by using internationally recognized calculation standards, can calculate and monitor the carbon footprint of its products.

Carbon sequestration can mitigate global warming. Regenerative agriculture with its practices should sequester carbon in the soil. Operators should avoid air pollution.

Using internationally recognized calculation Standards, operators could monitor their carbon footprint and develop plans to reduce it over time through changes in the way they operate (e.g. equipment modernization, use of alternative energy sources, recycling, etc.).

8. SOIL MANAGEMENT

The operator shall aim to minimize the mechanical treatment of the soil, avoid its compaction, avoid its erosion as well as maintain and improve its biodiversity and organic matter.

Tillage practices shall minimize soil disturbance, aiming to reduce their depth and frequency over time.

Plowing should be avoided. However, in the case of its application, it must be included in the regenerative agriculture plan with a relevant justification of the reason for not avoiding it.

Plowing operations are preferably done using machines that can perform more than one operation in one pass. Vehicles must be maintained so that there are no various leaks (eg. oil, fuel, etc.). It is recommended that they have a speed of less than 15 km/h. In addition, targeting low-emission vehicles is recommended.

Pasture shall not be plowed.

To prevent soil erosion, cover crops, green manure or wild vegetation should be used. In any case, no area may remain uncovered for more than a month without a relevant provision in the regenerative agriculture plan. In tree crops, the corresponding practice is recommended in between the tree planting lines.

9. FERTILIZATION

The operator shall have a fertilization management in which he/she aims to increase organic matter through green manure, use of compost as well as limiting the use of synthetic fertilizers. The use of synthetic fertilizers, if required, shall be done in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions

If manure is used, it is recommended to compost it before applying it to the field and always according to the instructions for the correct use of manure.

Anaerobic decomposition must be avoided if compost is used.

When new trees are planted, the application of manure must be preceded by at least 2 weeks before planting. The use of sewage sludge is prohibited.

The use of synthetic fertilizers, if required, shall be done under the supervision of the specialist or at least in accordance with the instructions for the manufacture.

In any case, fertilizer application logs shall be kept for a period of 5 years. The records shall contain at least the type of fertilizer or compost (trade name if available), date of use, quantity, plot and crop.

10. SOIL LAB TESTS

The operator, during first year certification cycle and at least every two years, shall carry out soil lab tests in accordance with the directive of the Standard and keep an electronic record of their results.

During first year certification cycle and certainly before the initial audit, each producer (individual or member of a group) must conduct health soil lab tests and macroscopic soil tests.

Health soil lab tests are required while soil tests are optional. Soil lab tests, the mandatory indicators are pH, electrical conductivity and soil organic matter.

For the first year, tests can be accepted up to 3 months before the application as long as they are representative according to the Standard.

After initial certification, these tests shall be performed every two years.

The purpose of the analyzes is to evaluate the effectiveness of selected regenerative practices over time.

Depending on the number of plots, a representative number of samples is selected for tests according to the following formula:

Soil lab tests samples = square root of total number of producer's slot divided by two, with minimum one lab sample per producer.

In the case of one sample, the sample is taken from the most representative area.

In the case of two samples, the samples are taken from the best and the worst.

In the case of three and more samples, the samples are taken from the best, the worst and the representatives plots.

Record the GPS coordinates of the sampling sites

Keep an electronic record of the results. Operators keep compliance records for at least 10 years.

See Appendix IV Soil testing guidance

11. MACROSCOPIC SOIL TESTS

In addition to lab tests, the operator can also conduct macroscopic soil tests in accordance with the directive of the Standard and keep an electronic record of their results.

Macroscopic soil tests are optional.

The purpose of the trials is to assess the effectiveness of selected regenerative practices over time.

These tests can be performed directly on the farm without special equipment by the farmer and/or an expert.

It is suggested, recording / videotaping during the macroscopic soil tests and incorporating the coordinates of the sampling sites.

Keep an electronic record of the results. Operators keep compliance records for at least 10 years.

See Appendix IV Soil testing guidance

12. FARMING PRACTICES/CROP ROTATIONS

The operator shall plan an appropriate annual crop rotation program, where applicable, to maintain and/or increase organic matter (eg legumes or other nitrogen-fixing crops).

Examples of useful practices are the use of cover crops, vegetation management, crop succession management and crop rotation.

The above practices can also be applied to the tree crops in between the planting lines, if indicated by the planting density and the cultivation method.

The operator shall maintain a log of operations (plot, date planted, date, date harvested, type of crop). The diary must be kept for at least 5 years.

13. VEGETATIVE COVER

The operator should aim for maximum crop coverage using improved practices. In case that the specific requirement was not implemented, eg. due to severe weather conditions, appropriate documentation is required.

In the case of cover crops, the use of legumes (nitrogen fixers) is recommended.

Depending on the desired level, the operator shall achieve the minimum percentage of vegetative cover.

Specifically, for the basic level the minimum percentage of vegetative cover is 50%, for the advanced level the minimum percentage of vegetative cover is 65% while for the expert level the percentage of vegetative cover is 80%.

14. ROTATIONAL GLAZING

If the operator has both crops and animals for commercial use, he/she must encourage holistic grazing on an annual basis and have the corresponding grazing program.

This requirement applies only to mixed units (agricultural and livestock).

There shall be a proper grazing plan to increase soil fertility. Overgrazing is prohibited.

The treatment of animals must be aimed at their welfare (animal abuse is prohibited) both during grazing and during transport.

Livestock must have access to clean fresh water.

Fences shall be maintained in such a way that animals are not injured. The same applies to machinery within the farm.

15. REGENERATIVE PRACTICES (ANNEX I)

The operator shall draw up a Regenerative Plan adapted to its characteristics, the crops and the area in which it is located. The Plan shall include the regenerative practices to be selected, according to the relevant annex of the Standard, as well as the timetable for their implementation, so that the operator complies with the minimum requirements of the Standard. Every operator should set a responsible person for the implementation of the Regenerative Plan.

The regenerative agriculture plan shall be at least 5 years in depth and reviewed annually, with possible revisions as needed.

Depending on the desired level, the plan shall include the minimum number of regenerative practices. Specifically, for the basic level, a minimum of 3 regenerative practices shall be included, for the advanced level, a minimum of 4 regenerative practices shall be included, while for the expert level, a minimum of 5 regenerative practices shall be included.

Critical Regenerative Practices for the soil health and the land management that can be included to Regenerative Agriculture Plan are the following:

- Cover crops (Planting of cover crops between commercial crops. This combines the advantages of intensive cultivation with continuous cover and polycropping)
- Crop rotation (In the context of crop rotation: rotation of cereals with legumes and application of green fertilization).
- Livestock grazing
- Windbreak establishment (Usually consisting of trees and shrubs but can also be created from annual crops, grasses, hedges and other materials)
- Vegetative Barriers
- Use of fire-resistant plants in field borders eg. succulents, oaks, etc.
- Agroforestry (Intentional co-cultivation of woody and herbaceous plants on the same piece of land)
- Planting bushes, individual trees or groups of trees
- Application of syntropical agriculture (a form of Regenerative Agriculture that simulates rainforest ecosystems. Hundreds of different plant species coexist harmoniously and in a very dense environment).
- Composting of organic residues from the activities of the Unit if this is appropriate
- Using compost tea as a nutrient or disease prevention medium (a liquid rich in organic matter from composting. Can be used to water plants).
- Creation of ecological focus areas (eg small lakes, small wetlands, field edges, buffer zones, uncultivated zones) without interventions
- Polyculture
- Green manure (Planting supporting species that fix nitrogen and provide organic matter)
- Cultivation in lines and planting biomass lines
- In the case of tree crops, ensuring that the planting density is such that it does not gradually deplete the soil and does not cause an excessive need for inputs
- Application of natural ground covers (inert ground cover materials)
- Use of active microorganisms

In any case, any practice beyond the above if it can be proven based on the literature to favor soil regeneration, can be included in the regenerative agriculture plan by providing the corresponding documentation, in order to be evaluated by our experts and added to the list of regenerative practices.

16. PESTICIDE INPUTS

The management of pests / diseases shall be carried out in such a way as to minimize the need for external interventions and the use of inputs that are as environmentally friendly as possible. Pest / disease management will follow the relevant requirements of the Codes of Good Agricultural Practice and will only include integrated control methods.

The use of non-permitted inputs according to local legislation is prohibited. Preference is given to mechanical or biological pest control methods.

In case of use of plant protection products, they shall be managed in a way that does not affect pollinators and other beneficial insects and always under the responsibility of a specialist (prescription). In any case, the times between application and harvest should be respected.

Spraying shall not be done at a distance of less than 100 meters from settlements and 50 meters from a river, lake, sea, etc. It is not allowed to apply plant protection / herbicides in ecological focus zones or on the borders of the plot.

The operator shall keep records of plant protection and herbicide applications for at least 5 years. Records shall contain at least the active substance (trade name if available), date of use, quantity, field and crop.

17. USING A DIGITAL INPUT MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING APP

The operator may purchase a digital application for environmental data input management and monitoring, and use it for one or more of the following practices:

- *Application of plant protection products*
- *Application of nutrients*
- *Application of irrigation*
- *Crop timetable*

18. NON-APPROVED PRACTICES

The operator shall not carry out practices that are inconsistent with the philosophy of regenerative agriculture such as deforestation, the use of dynamite to break the deep crust of the soil, mining, except in cases where there is a documented threat to the crops and there is the relevant documentation of its necessity. In addition, burning should be avoided, except in cases where there is a threat to the crops and there is a relevant documentation of its necessity.

The following techniques are not allowed as they are not consistent with the philosophy of regenerative agriculture:

- Deforestation
- Mining and fracking
- Use of dynamite to break the deep crust of the soil
- Destruction of riparian zones
- Removal of the surface layer of the soil
- Burning residues or grass clippings.

In particular, burning may only be allowed in the event of a threat to the crops and only with the relevant documentation from the competent authority.

19. GMO FREE

The operator does not use genetically modified organisms

Ensuring the non-use of GMOs and/or GMO derivatives in every activity of the operator is documented through appropriate documentation (eg. supplier certificates).

20. EXISTING CERTIFICATIONS

The operator is certified for the implementation of internationally recognized Standards related to the integrated management of agricultural production, organic farming, as well as other equivalent environmental Standards.

The operators adopt good agricultural practices and are certified by standards such as Integrated Management, Organic Agriculture.

21. TRACEABILITY

The operator shall maintain traceability records for a minimum of five years. In the case of producers, the sales invoices must be linked to the corresponding parcel of land. If after-harvest practices are carried out, there must be an up-to-date flow chart of the entire process. In the case of COC, the minimum traceability is at producer level. In addition, sales invoices, production records, warehouse records shall be maintained.

The operator shall verify and test the effectiveness of the traceability system. Since the operator manages non-certified products, all the necessary separations shall be maintained.

Finally, the operator shall have a recall / returns procedure and be able to document its effectiveness (a successful recall test must be available, and in cases of recalls / returns the relevant procedure has been followed).

Examples of records that must exist in order to document traceability:

- Traceability records (production, warehouse, sales records)
- Recall process along with successful recall tests by the operator
- Possibility of a successful traceability test by the CB
- Updated flowchart of post-collection practices
- Separations in case of non-certified products
- Recording of recalls / returns and their correct handling based on the relevant procedure

Records must be kept for a period of 5 years.

22. INTERNAL AUDIT

The operator shall design a system of internal audits to verify compliance with the requirements of the Standard. The system of internal audit shall include at least one full internal audit per producer annually and in time before the scheduled audit by the CB. The audit must be done by the appropriate partner.

The internal audit is carried out by an expert, who has attached a contract with the operator or is an internal partner. In the case of individual producers, the internal audit can be carried out by the producer himself. The purpose of the internal audit is for the operator to know its level of compliance with the requirements of the Standard, before the audit by the CB.

The internal audit is carried out at least once a year and before the CBs scheduled audits. The results of the internal audit shall be available during the CB's on-site audits.

Any non-conformities identified during the internal audit shall have been successfully closed by the date of audit by the CB.

23. MANAGEMENT REVIEW

Top Management is responsible for implementing the Standard. Through the management review which is carried out at regular intervals and at least once a year, the operator shall ensure the improvement of the effectiveness of the Standard and its processes and review, if necessary, regenerative practices.

It is applicable in cases where the management of the agricultural holding is carried out by companies.

The review is carried out by the Top Management or the manager of the agricultural holding. In order to be carried out, the Management / the person in charge of the agricultural holding shall be aware of the findings of the internal audit. Both audit documentation and reports of findings shall be available during the CB's audit.

24. COMPLAINS / CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

The operator shall implement an effective mechanism for handling complaints submitted by any third party. The mechanism must cover at least the complaints submitted to the operators and related to the products produced or the services provided

An appropriate complaints procedure and record of complaints about RGN certified products shall be in place and available during the annual audit.

The file shall state both the complaint and the actions taken by the operator. The operator keeps records for at least 5 years. The following information will be included in these records: date, time, complaint, actions taken.

25. USE OF LOGO & REFERENCES TO CERTIFICATION

Use of logo and references to certification should be done in accordance with the requirements of the Standard and the corresponding regulation on the use of logo and references to certification

Certified operators may use the marks and reference to the certification only on certified products and as long as they have an active certification in force.

Under no circumstances should these references be used in a misleading manner even after the certification has been suspended/revoked.

Before using the marks and references in the certification, the operators shall send their material for approval by the CB.

Logos shall not be distorted even if they change their colors.

Any use of logo shall comply with national law.