

ProTerra Sustainability Standard

**Principles
and Facts**



Mission and Vision



ProTerra Foundation is a non-for-profit organization that advances and promotes sustainability at all levels of the feed and food production system.

ProTerra Foundation's **mission** is to be a global network of businesses supporting more sustainable agricultural practices, in the food and feed supply chains, where relevant the conversion to non-GMOs and full respect of workers and communities' dignity.

We **envisage** a world where all businesses contribute to the protection of biodiversity by switching to sustainable production, conserve natural resources and ensure that local communities are treated with dignity and respect.



ProTerra Sustainability Standard

Principles and Facts

ProTerra Standard, against which an organisation is certified, was created in 2006 aimed at promoting **social and environmental sustainability**. It has four core aims:

- Foster good agricultural practices;
- Secure the supply of sustainably produced, fully traceable, non-GMO ingredients for feed and food;
- Protect the environment, and
- Promote that workers and communities be treated with dignity and respect.

With **ProTerra Certification**, everyone involved in the supply chain can communicate their non-GMO status and their commitment to sustainability to shareholders, employees and regulators and consumers.

ProTerra Foundation believes in the relevance of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a way forward for the construction of a sustainable society. There is a significant alignment between certain [ProTerra requirements and the UN SDGs](#), and we have a role in supporting SDGs becoming a reality.

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Scope of Certification



The ProTerra Certification is applicable to distinct **levels of operation** across the food and feed production chains:



LEVEL 01

Agricultural production



LEVEL 02

Transport, Storage, Traders and Dealers



LEVEL 03

Industrial Processing

The Certification can apply to **raw materials, ingredients or multi-ingredient products.**

ProTerra Principles



The ProTerra Certification Standard is organised in **Principles** that have a set of Key Elements (**Criteria**) which are deployed to **Indicators** used in the audit process.



PRINCIPLE 1:
Compliance with law, international conventions and the ProTerra Standard



PRINCIPLE 2:
Human rights and responsible labour policies and practices



PRINCIPLE 3:
Responsible relations with workers and community



PRINCIPLE 4:
Biodiversity conservation, effective environmental management and environmental services



PRINCIPLE 5:
No use of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs)



PRINCIPLE 6:
Pollution and waste management



PRINCIPLE 7:
Water Management



PRINCIPLE 8:
Greenhouse gases and energy management



PRINCIPLE 9:
Adoption of good agricultural practices



PRINCIPLE 10:
Traceability and Chain of Custody

ProTerra Principles

Principle 01

Compliance with law, international conventions and the ProTerra Standard

Why is this principle important?

International, national and local laws are in place to protect human rights, ecosystems and promote sustainable business practices. This principle carries across all other principles in asking that organisations follow whichever offers the highest level of protection, the ProTerra Standard or local law and regulations.

Key Elements

- Comply with all applicable national and local laws, regulations, and applicable international conventions.
- Continuous improvement.
- Use of ProTerra logo, seal, trust mark and certificates.

Did you know that...

There are currently **190** ILO Conventions and **206** Recommendations, some dating back as far as 1919, and **six** Protocols.¹

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¹<https://www.ilo.org/global/standards/introduction-to-international-labour-standards/international-labour-standards-creation/lang-en/index.htm>

ProTerra Principles

Principle 02

Human rights and responsible labour policies and practices

Why is this principle important?

All workers should be treated with dignity and respect. Responsible business practices help ensure the rights and general well-being of workers. This principle references ILO conventions and other international standards to ensure that certified organisations provide safe working environments and do not engage in the likes of forced labour, irresponsible recruitment practices and discriminatory behaviour.

Key Elements

- Absence of slave and forced labour, child labour, and coercive disciplinary or control methods
- Weekly working hours and overtime
- Personnel Management Programme
- Equal opportunities and treatment for workers
- Workers' working and living conditions
- Clear and comprehensive labour contracts and legal rights
- Qualification, working experience and training of workers
- Salaries, payments and benefits
- Safety and health of workers protected
- Training in health and safety
- Parental leave
- Freedom for workers to organize, join and form associations

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Did you know that...

The agriculture sector concentrates **71% of child labour** in the world. There are **108 million boys and girls** working in this sector, including crop production, livestock, forestry, fisheries or aquaculture, often working long hours and facing occupational hazards².

ILO estimates that **1 in 4 people**, victims of modern slavery, are children³.

²<http://www.fao.org/childlabouragriculture/en/>

³<https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/lang-en/index.htm>

ProTerra Principles



Principle 03

Responsible relations with workers and community

Why is this principle important?

Respecting workers and local communities means listening to what they have to say. Workers can often feel that speaking on an issue might cost them their job or jeopardise their well-being.

Certified organisations provide a means of communicating grievances that protects the grievant and ensures their complaints are fairly assessed. This principle also aims at extending such a mechanism to the local community.

Key Elements

- Systems of communication and grievance mechanism
- Land use does not impair the rights of traditional other users
- Economic development and support to local economy

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Did you know that...

Grievance mechanisms are necessary for businesses to responsibly address human rights issues, establish responsible business activities and help integrate resilience into business strategies and operations⁴.

ProTerra Foundation strengthens the principle of **free, prior and informed consent (FPIC)**, guaranteeing to indigenous people their right to be active in the decision-making process and to freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development⁵.

⁴https://unglobalcompact.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/4261-UNGC-Grievance-Mechanisms-GUIDANCE-DOC_28pp-9-FA.pdf

⁵<https://www.proterrafoundation.org/news/free-prior-and-informed-consent/>

ProTerra Principles

Principle 04

Biodiversity conservation, effective environmental management and environmental services

Why is this principle important?

Deforestation is one of the primary causes of climate change. This principle seeks to eradicate the clearing of native vegetation for agriculture. Certified organisations perform comprehensive environmental and social impact assessments to identify risks relating to any large expansion of their activities. Through implementing this principle, businesses will protect natural eco-systems and adhere to governmental and international regulations.

Key Elements

- Land use and forest conservation
- Maintenance and enrichment of biodiversity
- Social and environmental impact assessment and management plan



Did you know that...

The world has a total forest cover of **4.06 billion hectares**, of which **1.8 billion hectares (or 45%)** is tropical forest.

Tropical forests play an important role in global environmental systems being **major climate regulators**, taking up and storing carbon to mitigate climate change and providing multiple other ecosystem services, such as provision of food, fresh water, raw materials and medicinal resources⁶.

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Principle 05

No use of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs)

Why is this principle important?

There is still a scientific debate about whether genetic engineering is harmless for animal and human health, as proponents of GMOs claim. However, the use of GMO has led to changes in farming practices that have caused less crop diversity. This has led to an increase in herbicide-resistant weeds and therefore a higher use of pesticides, with all their related side effects (pollution of aquifers, detrimental effect on workers' health, loss of micro-biodiversity). It has also increased costs for producers. Many consumers and producers are concerned about GMO ingredients and want to make informed decisions about where their food comes from. This includes understanding the social and environmental footprint of their choices.

This principle aims to ensure that GMO is not present at the certified organisations. The applicability of this principle is determined by assessing risk of GMO presence, contamination or use.

Key Elements

- GMOs and Genetically Engineered Organisms are excluded
- System of Identity Preservation and segregation



Did you know that...

GMO-free food production has established itself in Europe as an important quality standard and labelling systems for food without genetic engineering are now available in many countries⁷.

A recent market research study carried out in Austria pointed out that, **71,1%** of those questioned pay attention to GMO-free food when shopping and a total of **74,1%** would be willing to **pay extra for foods produced without genetic engineering**⁸.

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⁷<https://www.proterrafoundation.org/news/new-trends-in-consumer-behaviour/>

⁸<http://www.gentechnikfrei.at/studie-gentechnik-freie-produktion-wichtiger-faktor-beim-lebensmitteleinkauf>

ProTerra Principles



Principle 06

Pollution and waste management

Why is this principle important?

Minimising the pollution of the environment should be a focal point of sustainable farming practices. This principle aims to support certified organisations in using methods to store, handle and dispose of waste that do not harm the natural environment or local communities.

Key Elements

- Appropriate management of hazardous wastes and pollutant materials
- Management and appropriate disposal of non-hazardous wastes
- Control of atmospheric pollution



Did you know that...

Agriculture plays a major role in **water pollution** due to discharge of agrochemicals and fertilisers, organic matter, drug residues, sediments and saline drainage into water bodies. The other main sources of water pollution are human settlements and industries⁹.

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⁹<http://www.fao.org/land-water/news-archive/news-detail/en/c/1032702/>

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Principle 07

Water Management

Why is this principle important?

Water is a scarce resource in many parts of the world. It is also a resource constantly under threat of contamination and misuse. This principle aims to ensure responsible use of water by preserving the quality and quantity of local water reserves and protecting them from contamination.

Key Elements

- Conservation of natural water resources
- Best practices for water management



Did you know that...

The UN estimates that the amount of wastewater produced annually is about **1,500 km³**, six times more water than exists in all the rivers of the world¹⁰.

Wastewater treatment contributes to climate change as it generates GHGs, accounting for an estimated **3% to 7%** of all emissions¹¹.

Agriculture irrigation represents **70%** of water use worldwide and over **40%** in many OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) countries¹².

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¹⁰ <https://en.unesco.org/themes/water-security/wwap/wwdr/series#2003>

¹¹ <https://www.unwater.org/world-water-development-report-2020-water-and-climate-change/>

¹² <https://www.oecd.org/agriculture/topics/water-and-agriculture/>

ProTerra Principles

Principle 08

Greenhouse gases and energy management

Why is this principle important?

Global warming poses a major threat to the environment and to people's lives, but it also threatens the way the world conducts business. The management of greenhouse gas emissions and its reduction are key to reducing global warming. This principle encourages organisations to incrementally minimise non-renewable energy usage in favour of renewable sources.

Key Elements

- Management of greenhouse gas emissions
- Management of energy use



Did you know that...

COVID-19 effect: GHG emission dropped from **8 Mt CO2 eq.** (Jan, 2020) to **<1 Mt CO2 eq.** (April & May, 2020), allowing the **increase of renewable energy generation**¹³.

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¹³ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7480331/>

ProTerra Principles



Principle 09

Adoption of good agricultural practices

Why is this principle important?

Good agricultural practices are fundamental to minimise the impact of agricultural activity on the health of the environment, workers and neighbouring communities. This principle aims to support organisations to reduce the use of toxic and polluting materials, especially pesticides, and manage the potential impact of their agricultural activity.

Key Elements

- Systems of good practices
- Control of burning
- Soil and crop management
- Documentation of agricultural production
- Management of propagation material
- Reduction of toxic and polluting materials
- Management of agrochemicals and chemical residues

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Did you know that...

Pesticides can cause short-term adverse health effects, including **stinging eyes, rashes, blisters, blindness, nausea, dizziness, diarrhoea and death**¹⁴.

The Global Pesticides market reached **\$57.00 billion** in 2019 and is expected to achieve **\$88.82 billion** by 2027 growing at a CAGR (Compound annual growth rate) of **5.7%** during the forecast period¹⁵

¹⁴ <https://www.pesticidereform.org/pesticides-human-health/>

¹⁵ <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20200814005279/en/Global-Pesticides-Market-Outlook-2019-to-2027--Featuring-BASF-Bayer-DowDuPont-Among-Others--ResearchAndMarkets.com>

ProTerra Principles



Principle 10

Traceability and Chain of Custody

Why is this principle important?

Traceability enables the market to have a full view over a product's journey, making it possible to identify if and where GMOs were used.

Chain of custody refers to a paper trail that records the sequence of custody, control and transfer of materials. It is evidence of ownership of the materials and permits tracing back their physical movement.

This principle aims at ensuring certified organisations maintain a paper trail of the product journey. Chain of custody requirements apply to the different levels of operation considered under ProTerra Standard, that is Levels I, II and III. This is because organisations pass their products on to another certified operator or receive materials for its processing.

Traceability indicators are part of the chain of custody. Fulfilment of the indicators outlined in this principle qualify an economic operator to make a sustainability claim on final products offered to consumers and on any intermediate product as well.

Key Elements

- Chain of Custody System
- Mass balance
- Segregated chain of custody

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Did you know that...

- In 2019, the **total volume certified soybeans globally** reached **33.614.216** metric tonnes out of which, **2.988.373 mt were certified under ProTerra Standard**. In 2020, this number increased to **3.031.171 mt**.¹⁶

¹⁶ <https://responsiblesoy.org/global-production-of-rtrs-certified-soy-continues-to-grow-around-the-world?lang=en>



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