



# ProTerra Standard Contribution to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals







# INTRODUCTION



## INTRODUCTION

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ProTerra Foundation is a non-for-profit organisation, which's mission is to be a global network of businesses supporting more sustainable agricultural practices in the food and feed supply chains. ProTerra also supports the use of non-genetically modified (non-GMO) seeds and the full respect of workers and communities' rights and dignity. The ProTerra Foundation owns the ProTerra Certification Standard, a voluntary initiative, that has a set of indicators associated to suitability topics. These indicators are the basis to help organizations develop, maintain and improve overtime their sustainable production practices. A list of ProTerra Principles can be found in table 1.

For more information on ProTerra Foundation and ProTerra Standard, please visit our web page: [www.proterrafoundation.org](http://www.proterrafoundation.org)





## INTRODUCTION

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The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were born at the United Nations (UN) Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro in 2012. The objective of the SDGs is to address environmental, political and economic challenges facing our world. A list of the SDGs can be found in table 1.

ProTerra Foundation believes in the relevance of the SDGs as a way forward for the construction of a sustainable society and understands that ProTerra Standard has a role in supporting SDGs becoming a reality. This supporting role is, in some cases, more than just the common objective of sustainability as there are relevant alignment between ProTerra requirements and several of the SDGs specific targets.





### **Facts informed by UN indicated that<sup>1</sup>:**

- Agriculture is the single largest employer in the world, providing livelihoods for 40 per cent of today's global population. It is the largest source of income and jobs for poor rural households.
- Since the 1900s, some 75 per cent of crop diversity has been lost from farmers' fields. Better use of agricultural biodiversity can contribute to more nutritious diets, enhanced livelihoods for farming communities and more resilient and sustainable farming systems.



## INTRODUCTION

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With these figures in mind, it is clear the size of the impact that sustainable agricultural practices like the ones proposed by ProTerra can have in helping disseminated environmental, social and health and safety awareness and practices, fostering agricultural biodiversity by rejecting the use of genetic modified organism and ultimately helping shifting towards a more sustainable world.

The objective of this booklet is to objectively discuss and detail the supporting role of ProTerra towards the SDGs and the specific relation existing between theses and ProTerra Standard.

While it is not possible to directly relate ProTerra requirements to all SDGs, there are cases with a very relevant association. Only those SDGs with a clear relation to ProTerra are mentioned herein.







**PROTERRA STANDARD CONTRIBUTION TO SDGs**





## GOAL 2: ZERO HUNGER



Associated to this SDG are several targets one of which is highlighted:

- *By 2030, ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters and that progressively improve land and soil quality.*



## PROTERRA STANDARD CONTRIBUTION TO SDGs

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ProTerra fosters the sustainable food production from the farm level to the industrial processor (discussion on the supply chain aspect of ProTerra is found ahead in this text). Additionally, ProTerra has several indicators that directly related to this SDG target such as those listed under Principle 9: Adoption of Good Agricultural Practices. Some are:

- **9.1.1** Certified organisations shall adopt agricultural good practices and, where possible, adopt conservation systems such as Integrated Pest Management and organic agricultural practices.
- **9.3.1** Certified organisations shall define a soil and crop management regime that monitors soil quality, builds soil, enhances fertility and manages pests and diseases.
- **9.3.4** Certified organisations shall minimise soil erosion and damage to soil structure caused by wind, water, human activity and presence of farm animals.





### GOAL 3: ENSURE HEALTHY LIVES AND PROMOTE WELL-BEING FOR ALL AT ALL AGES



Many efforts are needed to eradicate diseases and to address different and emerging health issues. One important aspect is related to eating good and healthy food, free of unnecessary and unsafe pesticides and of GMOs.

Agricultural practices and the reduction of the use of chemical in agricultural production, such as the requirements proposed by ProTerra Standard, have a role to play when the topic is health. Aside from supporting healthy food production, the adequate handling, storage and ultimate reduction of the use of chemicals contribute to minimizing health risk to workers and communities as well as minimizing environmental contamination and its subsequent impacts to human health.



## PROTERRA STANDARD CONTRIBUTION TO SDGs

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One of the targets associated to this SDG is:

- *By 2030, substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination.*

ProTerra has several indicators that directly related to this SDG target such as those listed under Principle 9: Adoption of Good Agricultural Practices and Principle 6: Pollution and waste management. Some are:

- **9.6.1** Certified organisations shall avoid or reduce the use of toxic or polluting materials whenever possible, and shall select agrochemical inputs having the least possible toxicity and environmental impact for the required application.
- **6.1.2** Certified organisations shall handle, store and dispose of pollutant materials properly, having appropriate facilities to prevent spills. Management of pollutant materials shall at least comply with national laws relevant to the location of the certified operation, as stated in Principle 1 of this Standard.





### GOAL 6: ENSURE ACCESS TO WATER AND SANITATION FOR ALL



UN webpage associated to this SDG indicated that<sup>2</sup> “water scarcity, poor water quality and inadequate sanitation negatively impact food security, livelihood choices and educational opportunities for poor families across the world. Approximately 70 per cent of all water abstracted from rivers, lakes and aquifers is used for irrigation and more than 80 per cent of wastewater resulting from human activities is discharged into rivers or sea without any pollution removal”.

<sup>2</sup><https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/water-and-sanitation/>



Associated to this SDG are several targets two of which are highlighted:

- *By 2030, improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally.*
- *By 2030, substantially increase water-use efficiency across all sectors and ensure sustainable withdrawals and supply of freshwater to address water scarcity and substantially reduce the number of people suffering from water scarcity.*





## PROTERRA STANDARD CONTRIBUTION TO SDGs

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ProTerra has several indicators that directly related to this SDG target such as those listed under Principle Water Management. Some of these are:

- **7.1.1** Certified organisations shall conserve quantity and quality of existing natural water resources, such as lakes, rivers, artificial lakes, dams, water tables and aquifers around their facilities. Guidance: Traditional uses of water by certified organisations must likewise be shown to still be viable and sustainable. Practices that once were considered sustainable may no longer be due to increased population pressure or other recent ecosystem or climatic changes.
- **7.1.2** Certified organisations shall not undertake new initiatives that reduce the availability of water for neighbouring communities and farms for drinking and irrigation, or for traditional uses.
- **7.1.3** In cases where activities carried out prior to the certification application have damaged water resources, certified organisations shall undertake mitigation actions based on a plan agreed with the local environmental authority.





### GOAL 8: PROMOTE INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH, EMPLOYMENT AND DECENT WORK FOR ALL



Associated to this SDG are several targets several of which are highlighted:

- *Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms.*
- *Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment.*



## PROTERRA STANDARD CONTRIBUTION TO SDGs

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Responsible business practices help ensure the rights and general well-being of workers. ProTerra enforces ILO conventions 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. The absence of forced labour, child labour and forms of modern slavery are considered core aspects under ProTerra that dedicates Principle 2 - Human Rights and responsible labour policies and practices - to this aspect.

Several relevant indicators in ProTerra help achieve these specific SDG targets:

- **2.2.1** Certified organisations shall not use slave labour, forced labour, indentured servants, and their equivalents. Guidance: This applies also to workers supplied by third parties and contracted labour, including migrant and seasonal workers.
- **2.1.4** Child labour, except in contexts permitted within national law and the ILO, whatever is more stringent, shall not be used in certified organisations.



## PROTERRA STANDARD CONTRIBUTION TO SDGs

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Additionally, ProTerra brings a set of requirements to minimize the potential of modern slavery occurring, such as no worker being required to lodge their identity papers with their employers, no illegal retention of payment, no existence of coercive disciplinary control methods, only voluntary overtime work and when living onsite workers must have appropriate, fairly priced, and safe food, water and housing.







### GOAL 12: ENSURE SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION PATTERNS



UN indicates that<sup>3</sup> “since sustainable consumption and production aims at “doing more and better with less, net welfare gains from economic activities can increase by reducing resource use, degradation and pollution along the whole life cycle, while increasing quality of life. There also needs to be significant focus on **operating on supply chain**, involving everyone from producer to final consumer. This includes educating consumers on sustainable consumption and lifestyles, **providing them with adequate information through standards and labels** and engaging in sustainable public procurement, among others” (bold added by ProTerra).

<sup>3</sup><https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-consumption-production/>



The ProTerra Certification can apply to raw materials, ingredients or multi-ingredient products. This may be accomplished using two basic approaches: each actor in the food and feed supply chain can be certified in its own right against ProTerra Standard or certified organisations that use inputs from actors that are not ProTerra certified implement systems to control and monitor its supply chain(s) to ensure that the relevant ProTerra Standard indicators are met.

ProTerra certification brings traceability requirements (Principle 10: Traceability and Chain of Custody), that enables the market to have a full view over a product's journey through the supply chain. The fulfilment of the indicators outlined in ProTerra Principle 10 qualify companies to make a sustainability claims on final products offered to consumers related to the non-GMO and sustainability aspects of the product. These claims are directly communicated to consumers and stakeholders by the use of ProTerra seal.





Through certification under ProTerra Standard, ProTerra Foundation believes to contribute to empowering farms and businesses throughout the food/feed supply chain, to become vectors of environmentally and socially responsible business practices and to provide valuable information to consumers to help them make informed and sustainable decisions over what they consume.





### GOAL 13: TAKE URGENT ACTION TO COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE AND ITS IMPACTS



Climate change poses a major threat to the environment and to people's lives. It is one of the greatest global challenges that we face as a society once it does not respect national borders or productive sector.

Agriculture has a key role in contributing to mitigation of climate change as land use change (conversion of areas with natural vegetation to agricultural fields, for example), is a relevant aspect in this equation.



**ProTerra Principle 4** - Biodiversity conservation, effective environmental management and environmental services - poses restrictions to land use change. This principle excludes from ProTerra certification scheme products originated in areas that have been cleared of native vegetation for agriculture after 2008 (indicator 4.1.1).

**ProTerra Principle 8** - Greenhouse gases and energy management, encourages organisations to minimise non-renewable energy usage in favour of renewable sources and to measure, reduce and compensate greenhouse gas emissions (indicator 8.1.1 and 8.2.1).

Both ProTerra principles mentioned despite having no direct relation to this SDG targets, contributes towards meeting this SDG.





### GOAL 15: SUSTAINABLY MANAGE FORESTS, COMBAT DESERTIFICATION, HALT AND REVERSE LAND DEGRADATION, HALT BIODIVERSITY LOSS



In line with what UN indicates, ProTerra understands that forests are key in combating climate change and protecting biodiversity. By protecting forests, we will also be able to strengthen natural resource management and increase land productivity<sup>4</sup>.

Some of the targets, associated to this SDG are:

- *By 2020, ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands, in line with obligations under international agreements.*

<sup>4</sup><https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/biodiversity/>



## PROTERRA STANDARD CONTRIBUTION TO SDGs

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- *By 2030, combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a land degradation-neutral world.*
- *By 2020, introduce measures to prevent the introduction and significantly reduce the impact of invasive alien species on land and water ecosystems and control or eradicate the priority species.*





## PROTERRA STANDARD CONTRIBUTION TO SDGs

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By adhering to ProTerra Standards organizations are to meet the requirements below related to Principle 4: Biodiversity conservation, effective environmental management and environmental services and Principle 7: Water management and that relate to the above mentioned SDG targets.

- **4.2.1** Certified organisations shall identify and maintain valuable biodiversity within their areas and shall, with the involvement of an external expert, restore areas of natural vegetation around bodies of water and on steep slopes and hills, and other sensitive parts of the ecosystem. Guidance: The width or area of vegetation shall be sufficient to maintain and foster the continued survival of the natural biodiversity of the area and to avoid erosion. To the extent possible, large agricultural developments (industrial level), shall support and stimulate the identification and maintenance of valuable biodiversity outside its farmed areas.
- **4.2.3** The introduction of invasive species and new pests shall be avoided, and past introductions must be controlled and monitored, and any invasive expansion of these shall be reported to the authorities.



## PROTERRA STANDARD CONTRIBUTION TO SDGs

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- **7.2.1** Certified organisations shall implement best practices for water conservation and avoidance of contamination of surface and groundwater. If irrigating, salinisation and desertification shall be prevented.
- **7.2.2** Any evidence of contamination of ground or surface water shall be reported to the local environmental authority and mitigated based on a plan agreed with such authority if necessary.







### GOAL 16: PROMOTE JUST, PEACEFUL AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES



To tackle the challenges associated to violence a set of actions are necessary involving governments but also private organizations. The targets associated to this SGD cover several distinct topics including ending the abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against children<sup>5</sup>. In this respect ProTerra has, as already mentioned in this text, core requirements against child labour and modern slavery.

<sup>5</sup><https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/peace-justice/>



An important aspect of justice and peace is land conflicts resolution.

**ProTerra Principle 3:** Responsible relations with workers and community, brings requirements associated to the use of the UN Principle of free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) in any land right dispute that may exists.

ProTerra Foundation believes that this approach helps build a more peaceful and inclusive societies as it favours peaceful resolution of conflicts.

For any organization to be ProTerra certified no land right dispute can be open.







# CONCLUSIONS



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ProTerra Foundation believes that ProTerra Standard has a role in supporting SDGs becoming a reality. This supporting role is, in some cases, more general while in several others a very direct synergy exists with some of the SDGs specific targets and ProTerra requirements.

We would like specially to highlight the important contribution of Proterra Standard in relation to Goal 12: ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns, as the certification schemes paves the road for environmentally and socially responsible production practices and supports consumers, through labels, to make informed and sustainable decisions over the products they buy or not.

Table 1 brings a summary of the direct and indirect relations that have been identified between the SDG and ProTerra requirements, when considering the contributions that can be made by ProTerra certified organizations in supporting the SDGs.



# CONCLUSIONS

## Table 1 – Relation between ProTerra and the SDGs

### Understanding the table

Yellow indicates existence of synergies in the intend of the SDGs and ProTerra, therefore with an indirect contribution of ProTerra with the SDGs. Green indicates a direct relation between SDGs and ProTerra, therefore with a direct contribution. Where no colour exist, no immediate relation was identified.

ProTerra \ SDGs	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
Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere	Yellow	Yellow								
Goal 2: Zero Hunger	Yellow								Green	
Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages	Yellow			Yellow	Green	Green			Green	
Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promotion of lifelong learning opportunities for all	Yellow									
Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls	Yellow									
Goal 6: Ensure access to water and sanitation for all	Yellow			Yellow		Yellow	Green		Yellow	









# CONCLUSIONS

<b>ProTerra</b>  <b>SDGs</b>	<b>PRINCIPLE 1:</b> Compliance with law, international conventions and the ProTerra Standard	<b>PRINCIPLE 2:</b> Human rights and responsible labour policies and practices	<b>PRINCIPLE 3:</b> Responsible relations with workers and community	<b>PRINCIPLE 4:</b> Biodiversity conservation, effective environmental management and environmental services	<b>PRINCIPLE 5:</b> No use of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs)	<b>PRINCIPLE 6:</b> Pollution and waste management	<b>PRINCIPLE 7:</b> Water Management	<b>PRINCIPLE 8:</b> Greenhouse gases and energy management	<b>PRINCIPLE 9:</b> Adoption of good agricultural practices	<b>PRINCIPLE 10:</b> Traceability and Chain of Custody
Goal 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy	Yellow									
Goal 8: Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all	Yellow	Green								
Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization and foster innovation	Yellow									
Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries	Yellow									
Goal 11: Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable	Yellow									
Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts	Yellow			Green				Green		
Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources	Yellow						Yellow			



# CONCLUSIONS

<b>ProTerra</b>  <b>SDGs</b>	<b>PRINCIPLE 1:</b> Compliance with law, international conventions and the ProTerra Standard	<b>PRINCIPLE 2:</b> Human rights and responsible labour policies and practices	<b>PRINCIPLE 3:</b> Responsible relations with workers and community	<b>PRINCIPLE 4:</b> Biodiversity conservation, effective environmental management and environmental services	<b>PRINCIPLE 5:</b> No use of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs)	<b>PRINCIPLE 6:</b> Pollution and waste management	<b>PRINCIPLE 7:</b> Water Management	<b>PRINCIPLE 8:</b> Greenhouse gases and energy management	<b>PRINCIPLE 9:</b> Adoption of good agricultural practices	<b>PRINCIPLE 10:</b> Traceability and Chain of Custody
15 Sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, halt biodiversity loss										
Goal 16: Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies										
Goal 17: Revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development										





## Our Governance

The ProTerra Foundation is legally registered in the Netherlands as a Foundation (Stichting).

Companies sharing its vision and the mission can join the ProTerra Network™ and support the organisation by sharing their good practices and providing strategic advice.

The daily business of the ProTerra Foundation is managed by its Secretariat and directly supervised by the Board of Directors.

Besides, the ProTerra Foundation has set the Stakeholder Council as its advisory body.