



# SUSTAINABLE PROGRAM FOR IRRIGATION AND GROUNDWATER USE (SPRING)

Principles and Criteria for Plants

ENGLISH VERSION 2.0\_SEP23

VALID FROM: 1 OCTOBER 2023

OBLIGATORY FROM: 1 JANUARY 2024

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**1 ASSESSMENT OF WATER RISKS AND OBJECTIVES .....3**

**2 ASSESSMENT OF LEGAL COMPLIANCE.....6**

**3 MANAGEMENT AND USE OF WATER RESOURCES .....8**

**4 ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT: PROTECTING WATER SOURCES .....10**

**5 TRACEABILITY .....13**

**QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM.....14**

**VERSION/EDITION UPDATE REGISTER .....15**

Section	Principle	Criteria	Level
1	<b>ASSESSMENT OF WATER RISKS AND OBJECTIVES</b>		
1.1	Register of producer group members, production sites, and water resources is available and up to date.	<p>Complete registers shall be kept for all producer group members (in the case of producer groups) and/or all production sites (in the case of multisite producers) comprising sources of water supply covered by the SPRING add-on.</p> <p>This register shall include, as a minimum, the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Producer group members (production sites in the case of multisite producers) and their identification</li> <li>b) Land registry references (municipality/commune, parcel, industrial area, etc.)</li> <li>c) Crops grown</li> <li>d) Origin and identification of sources of water supply (organization managing shared water resources, artificial lake, well, etc.)</li> <li>e) Identification and exact geographical location (coordinates in decimal degrees and minutes of latitude and longitude) of the farms and storage facilities for water</li> <li>f) Any water sources and/or water infrastructure which are out of use</li> </ul> <p>The register shall be updated every time a change occurs – at least annually – and signed by the responsible manager. No “N/A.”</p>	Major Must

Section	Principle	Criteria	Level
1.2	The farm and product handling units (PHUs) have a documented water risk assessment.	<p>Impacts (environmental, social, etc.) on and of the water sources, water collection, water distribution, and water use shall be assessed. As a minimum, such an assessment shall cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Current legislation</li> <li>b) Origin of the water sources and quality of the water concerned (contaminants)</li> <li>c) Storage system (evaporation, leaks, etc.)</li> <li>d) Distribution and irrigation systems (efficiency, leaks, etc.)</li> <li>e) Soil (water retention capacity, permeability, etc.)</li> <li>f) Depth of groundwater</li> <li>g) Sources of pollution (organic waste, fertilizers, phytosanitary products, etc.)</li> <li>h) Possibilities for subsequent clean-up (water treatment, treatment of effluents, etc.)</li> <li>i) Influence of the farm operations and the PHUs on the sustainability of the watershed</li> <li>j) If there is a PHU on the farm, the risk of effluent water contaminating the water sources</li> </ul> <p>A basin characterization prior to the analysis is recommended. This is not a food safety risk assessment. No "N/A."</p>	Major Must
1.3	The water risk assessment is updated and approved by the management.	The water risk assessment shall have been written or reviewed within the last 12 months and shall be signed by the management.	Major Must

Section	Principle	Criteria	Level
1.4	There is a documented identification of water stakeholders in the watershed and documentation of their risks and challenges.	The producer shall have a list of the most important water stakeholders (authorities, producers, watering associations, local communities, NGOs, etc.) in the watershed. There shall be a description of the water stakeholders and a summary of the water-related risks, challenges, and commitments.	Minor Must
1.5	The objectives based on the risk assessment are documented in a water management plan or program.	On the basis of the water risk assessment, and in accordance with current legislation, the management shall have defined and approved aims and objectives and a water management plan or program to make production activity compatible with the protection of the natural environment and to ensure appropriate and sustainable use of water on the farm and in the product handling units (PHUs). These objectives shall be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, appropriate, limited in time, and documented. The water management plan or program shall have been drawn up specifying means, resources, responsible staff, and deadlines, in order to achieve the set objectives. The water management plan or program shall be in line with current legislation and sustainable watershed management initiatives, if available. No "N/A."	Major Must
1.6	The objectives and procedures are updated and approved by the management.	The objectives and procedures to make production activity compatible with the protection of the natural environment and to ensure appropriate and sustainable use of water shall have been written or reviewed within the last 12 months and shall be signed by the management.	Major Must
1.7	The persons responsible for achieving the objectives have received training for their tasks and areas of responsibility.	The training plan and list of participants, signed by the persons concerned, shall attest that the participants have been trained and have received the instruction necessary for achieving the objectives.	Major Must

Section	Principle	Criteria	Level
1.8	The relevant documents are transmitted to the managers and persons responsible for achieving the objectives.	The responsibilities and tasks to achieve the objectives shall be in writing and communicated to the persons responsible. A register signed by the participants shall confirm that they have received the documents.	Major Must
1.9	The extent to which objectives have been achieved and the results obtained are regularly analyzed and assessed.	The producer shall keep reports from regular meetings to show that the objectives are assessed and analyzed at least once a year.	Minor Must
1.10	The producer completes a minimum of one self-assessment/internal audit against SPRING annually.	The self- assessment/internal audit against SPRING shall have been completed under the responsibility of the producer.	Major Must
<b>2</b>	<b>ASSESSMENT OF LEGAL COMPLIANCE</b>		
2.1	Current legal requirements regarding the environment have been identified and are accessible.	The producer shall identify and have access to the sources of information they need (internet, producers' associations, customers, etc.) to guarantee legal conformance, or they shall have copies of the legislation and directives in force (protected areas, nature reserves, contamination of water resources by nitrates, use of wastewater, rights of way, etc.).	Major Must
2.2	There are documents that prove that production sites are intended for agricultural use.	The producer shall have a valid official document issued by the competent authority attesting that the production sites and land on which they operate are intended for established agricultural purposes and, if applicable, that the way in which they are farmed is compatible with the territorial development plans.	Major Must

Section	Principle	Criteria	Level
2.3	There is an official document or permit that defines the flow rates and/or at least the maximum quantity of water that can be used (e.g., in relation to the irrigated area).	For each source of supply, the official document or permit shall indicate the water source (well, artificial lake, river, desalination station, etc.), the location of the land to be irrigated, the total flow rates and/or maximum water quantities permitted (or the applicable limit in the region), and the duration of validity of the authorization. In the case of producers who are members of an association/group managing shared water resources, it is sufficient if the association/group provides this evidence. During the certification body (CB) audit, no unauthorized well or other source of supply shall be discovered.	Minor Must
2.4	There are documents that prove the legality of buildings and infrastructure	The buildings and infrastructure related to water use (ponds or reservoirs, treatment plants, etc.) on the farm shall be authorized by the competent authorities. No building or infrastructure lacking a technical plan or corresponding official authorization shall be found during the certification body (CB) audit.	Major Must
2.5	The water sources and areas mentioned in the official document correspond to the actual circumstances.	The data recorded in the official document, the irrigation system and agricultural use plans (see section 3.1.), and the results of the certification body (CB) audit shall be consistent with one another.	Major Must
2.6	Corrective actions to deal with legal and administrative non-conformances are in place.	If non-conformances are found with respect to current laws and directives, the producer shall implement appropriate corrective actions that shall be considered when identifying environmental risks and objectives and corrected before the certification body (CB) audit.	Major Must

Section	Principle	Criteria	Level
<b>3</b>	<b>MANAGEMENT AND USE OF WATER RESOURCES</b>		
3.1	There is a farm map which identifies all production sites.	The farm map shall be complete, up to date, and signed by the management. The information shall include explicit references to production sites to be irrigated, all water sources and their origin, all water storage facilities, all water distribution and irrigation systems, and all product handling units. Information shown on the farm map shall comply with administrative authorizations and territorial planning arrangements.	Major Must
3.2	The distribution and irrigation system are designed to optimize water consumption.	The distribution and irrigation system shall be suited to soil characteristics and the crops being grown and shall be efficient from a technical point of view. If the irrigation system is not appropriate, or irrigation is being performed by immersion, corrective measures shall have been planned in the medium term and shall be in the process of being implemented.	Minor Must
3.3	The irrigation system is designed to recycle the drainage solution used.	For hydroponic crops, the drainage solution shall be recycled and reused. Records shall be kept. N/A if there is no hydroponic production.	Minor Must
3.4	There are records of water consumption.	As a minimum, these records shall include the following data: Areas, irrigation dates (periods), duration of cycles, flow rates, and water quantities used in m <sup>3</sup> /ha/year monthly and as an annual total.	Major Must
3.5	No fossil water sources are used.	There shall be evidence that the producer does not use fossil water sources for irrigation or any other production step. Note: Fossil water refers to water that usually infiltrated millennia ago, often under climatic conditions that were different from those of today, and that has been stored underground since that time. Fossil water sources cannot be replenished.	Major Must



Section	Principle	Criteria	Level
3.6	There are records of the water use in cubic meters, and an efficient measurement system for producing the records.	An efficient system shall be in place to measure the water use in cubic meters on all production sites. Wherever possible, a water meter or several water meters shall be applied to precisely measure water quantities used.	Minor Must
3.7	There are documents that prove the proactive contribution of the producer to the sustainable governance of the watershed.	The producer shall participate positively in the governance of the watershed and engage in collective actions to tackle shared water challenges. Where collective actions to tackle shared water challenges are carried out, the producer shall keep a list of these activities, including a description of their engagement.	Minor Must
3.8	The irrigation cycles are short to avoid water wastage by percolation-filtration.	The producer shall adjust the timing and duration of irrigation cycles to take into account the actual soil moisture level, in particular on sandy soils. Registers shall be available and updated.	Minor Must
3.9	The irrigation installations are in good condition and are regularly inspected.	The producer shall have documents (maintenance reports, invoices, etc.) proving that they perform regular maintenance on the irrigation installations throughout the year by a specially trained person or by a specialized third-party company.	Major Must
3.10	The irrigation installations are regularly inspected to prevent leakages.	The producer shall regularly inspect the installations, in particular the water pipes, to detect any leaks or wastage of water. The frequency of such inspections shall be determined by the risk assessment, and the results of inspections shall be recorded in a register.	Minor Must
3.11	The agricultural installation is equipped with systems for recovering and storing rainwater.	During the certification body (CB) audit, the presence of systems for recovering and storing rainwater, located, for example, on the roofs of buildings, shall be noted. If there is no such installation, a technical and financial analysis confirming that this is not feasible shall be available. This requirement is not applicable in countries and/or regions where local legislation prohibits systems for rainwater recovery and/or storage.	Minor Must

Section	Principle	Criteria	Level
3.12	There is a crop irrigation plan.	The producer shall have performed a technical study concerning water requirements and shall have used that data to draw up a crop irrigation plan. This irrigation plan shall be based on the water consumption needs of the crops concerned (evapotranspiration), the macro and micro-climatic conditions specific to the area, measurements of soil humidity, and the technologies adopted.	Minor Must
3.13	Deviations from the irrigation plan are justified and documented.	Irrigation records shall prove that the irrigation plan is followed. Deviations from the irrigation plan shall be justified by data (soil humidity, meteorological data, etc.) and recorded.	Minor Must
<b>4</b>	<b>ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT: PROTECTING WATER SOURCES</b>		
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Wastewater management</b>		
4.1.1	There is a documented wastewater management plan.	The producer shall identify and document the different sources and types of wastewater.	Minor Must
4.1.2	Measures to properly manage wastewater are implemented.	Wastewater from farm activities shall not be a source of pollution. In particular, if buildings are used for accommodation of workers, wastewater shall be managed responsibly in order to avoid negative impacts on the environment and human health.	Minor Must
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Protection of water resources</b>		
4.2.1	Measures to avoid the contamination of areas of natural surface water are taken.	A 10-meter buffer zone shall be maintained around areas of natural surface water (streams, rivers, and wetlands) present on the farm. It shall be strictly forbidden to use phytosanitary products or fertilizers within 10 meters of such water sources.	Major Must

Section	Principle	Criteria	Level
4.2.2	Biodiversity is protected and promoted in the buffer zones.	The producer shall have implemented practical measures to promote biodiversity in the immediate vicinity of streams, rivers, and wetlands located on their land. The buffer zone shall be planted and restocked with native species. If the local environmental authorities prohibit planting in buffer zones, or planting is not possible for other reasons, other measures shall be taken to promote biodiversity.	Major Must
4.2.3	Plant residues are disposed of in a controlled way.	The producer shall designate certain areas for the disposal of plant residues in accordance with the applicable local legislation. These areas shall not pose a risk to the environment and in particular to water sources.	Major Must
<b>4.3</b>	<b>Efficient energy management for water installations and infrastructures</b>		
4.3.1	There is a documented energy efficiency assessment and plan for all water installations and infrastructures.	The producer shall assess the energy use of water systems (e.g., pumps), including the feasibility of using renewable energy sources. Based on the assessment, an energy efficiency plan shall be in place for all water installations and infrastructures with the aim of replacing inefficient traditional systems with efficient, self-sufficient systems which, if possible, use renewable energy sources.	Minor Must
<b>4.4</b>	<b>Responsible use of agricultural chemicals and organic fertilizers</b>		
4.4.1	Plant protection products (PPPs) or fertilizers are not used in protected or sensitive areas.	The producer shall prove that they do not use any PPPs or fertilizers in protected areas and in areas where surface water resources could easily be polluted (on the borders of their farm or in the vicinity of rivers and streams, wetlands, and fallow land). Clear instructions (documents, signs set up in the areas concerned) shall exist and persons responsible for using PPPs and fertilizers shall be familiar with them.	Major Must

Section	Principle	Criteria	Level
<b>4.5</b>	<b>Erosion</b>		
4.5.1	The producer uses techniques to prevent and remedy situations where there is a risk of erosion.	The producer shall control possible risks of erosion and reduce inputs of silt (a fine deposit of mud, clay, etc.) into surface water by implementing suitable measures. For example, banks, embankments, and slopes shall be restocked with native plant species; the natural topography shall not be substantially altered; cropping methods shall be appropriate; natural drainage networks shall be left unchanged.	Major Must

Section	Principle	Criteria	Level
<b>5</b>	<b>TRACEABILITY</b>		
<b>5.1</b>	<b>Ensuring traceability when parallel ownership applies (group certification only)</b>		
5.1.1	An effective system is in place to identify all products grown by producer group members registered for the SPRING add-on and segregate them from products grown by other producers.	<p>Producer groups shall have a system in place to ensure that products from producer group members registered for the SPRING add-on are segregated from products originating from other producers.</p> <p>An annual mass balance calculation for products from producer group members registered for the SPRING add-on shall be available for each product.</p> <p>Communication with clients about producer group members registered and not registered for the SPRING add-on shall be available.</p> <p>In the case of producer groups, products shall be identified with each producer group member's GLOBALG.A.P. Number (GGN). The producer group's GGN shall never be used for traceability. Random controls of pallets dispatched during the last 12 months shall show that only products from producer group members registered for the SPRING add-on were delivered to clients demanding it. The quality management system (QMS) manager shall communicate to their clients if not all of the producer group members are registered for the SPRING add-on.</p> <p>This principle and the relevant criteria are not applicable for Option 1 individual producers (because parallel ownership is not possible) or for Option 2 producer group in which 100% of the producer group members are registered for the SPRING add-on.</p>	Major Must

Section	Principle	Criteria	Level
<b>QMS</b>	<b>QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM</b>		
QMS 1	The implementation of the SPRING add-on is included in the producer group’s quality management system (QMS) based on the respective part of “GLOBALG.A.P. general regulations – Rules for producer groups and multisite producers with QMS.”		Major Must
QMS 2	The SPRING add-on is correctly audited internally and the internal audit reports are available. Non-compliances are identified, and corrective actions are taken to enable compliance of all participating producer group members.		Major Must
QMS 3	The quality management system (QMS) manager shall communicate to their clients if not all of the producer group members are registered for the SPRING add-on. Products shall be identified with each producer group member’s GLOBALG.A.P. Number (GGN). The producer group’s GGN shall never be used for traceability. Random controls of pallets dispatched during the last 12 months shall show that only products from producers registered for the SPRING add-on were delivered to clients demanding it.		Major Must

**VERSION/EDITION UPDATE REGISTER**

New document	Replaced document	Date of publication	Description of modifications
230905_SPRING_PC_s_v2_0_Sep23_en	180423_SPRING_Add-on_CL_V1_1_1	5 September 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No “N/A” in P&amp;Cs that were previously “Critical”</li> <li>- Registration of producers</li> <li>1.2.1 – Added j): If there is a PHU on the farm, consider risk of contaminating water sources. Recommendation: a basin characterization prior to the analysis</li> <li>1.3.1 – Added NGOs</li> <li>2.1.3 – Deleted because of duplication with IFA v6 (next points change numbering)</li> <li>2.1.4 – Changed numbering: 2.1.3</li> <li>2.1.5 – Changed numbering and wording: 2.1.4</li> <li>3.1.2 – Remarks added in the criteria</li> <li>3.1.3 – Rewording</li> <li>3.1.5 – Deleted because of duplication with IFA v6 (next points change numbering)</li> <li>3.1.12 – New wording</li> <li>3.1.1 – New numbering: 3.1.8</li> <li>3.1.8 – Deleted because of duplication with IFA v6</li> <li>4.2.2 – Rewording</li> <li>4.4.1 and 4.4.3 – Deleted because of duplication with IFA v6</li> <li>4.4.2 – Changed numbering: 4.4.1</li> <li>5.1 – Rewording. PO is only possible for Option 2</li> </ul>

If you want to receive more information on the modifications in this document, please contact the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat at [standard\\_support@globalgap.org](mailto:standard_support@globalgap.org).



If the changes do not introduce new requirements to the standard, the version will remain “5.0” and an edition update shall be indicated with “5.0-x”. If the changes do affect compliance with the standard, the version name will change to “5.x”. A new version, e.g., v6.0, v7.0, etc., will always affect the accreditation of the standard.

### **Copyright**

© Copyright: GLOBALG.A.P. c/o FoodPLUS GmbH, Spichernstr. 55, 50672 Cologne, Germany. Copying and distribution permitted only in unaltered form.