

FSI Environmental Benchmark Protocol

Version 4 – Update April 2025



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1 Introduction

The FSI Basket of Standards includes a set of benchmarked social and agricultural sustainability compliance standards. It is used as an instrument to identify, measure and promote responsible sources of flowers & plants. FSI has updated the Basket by adding environmental benchmarking criteria with an emphasis on reliable data and record-keeping.

The additional environmental benchmarking is not a new standard nor replacing current benchmarks. It is a set of benchmarking criteria supporting the mainstreaming of environmental principles across compliance standards, strengthening the FSI basket as international reference for sustainability practices. It supplements the existing Social (GSCP/SSCI) and Agricultural (GLOBALG.A.P) benchmarking.

2 Scope

The benchmark of standards against the latest version of the FSI environmental criteria.

3 Benchmarking procedure

The process is described below in chronological order.

3.1 Application

An application shall be submitted per benchmarking process. Each standard or versions of the same standard requires an independent application and benchmarking process. The latest version of the application package can be obtained from FoodExperts: customer.support@food-experts.com

The standard owner shall complete and submit to FoodExperts the following documentation:

- **Application form** (template included at the end of this document)
- **FSI_EnvBenchmark_Checklist excel file** completed with the details of the standard to benchmark. The checklist includes all FSI environmental criteria and, when required, clarifications and compliance criteria.
- A copy of the standard and any other supporting documentation, in English or Spanish.

FoodExperts will notify the standard owner and FSI by email the reception of the application package and, if applicable, request any missing information.

3.2 Invoicing

After receiving the application package, FoodExperts will invoice the Benchmarking Base fee (see section 5 Benchmarking Fees) to the standard owner.

The Base Fee covers the costs for the typical benchmarking process where the scheme owner provides accurate information with minimum iterations. Nevertheless, in some complex situations or with a bigger need for iterations, additional fees might be applicable. In such a case the standard owner will be notified, and a confirmation requested before any invoice for Benchmarking Additional fees is raised.

3.3 Assessment process

Desktop assessment. FoodExperts will undertake a technical desktop evaluation of the information submitted with the application package to assess how the standard complies with each one of the FSI environmental criteria. FoodExperts will request any clarifications needed from the standard owner.

The assessment process might include live webinars to check how the data is being recorded and processed to comply with the FSI criteria.

Provisional report: once the assessment is completed and payment received, a provisional report indicating the compliance level with each one of the FSI criteria will be submitted to the standard owner. This provides the standard owner the opportunity to clarify any pending issue.

Final report. FoodExperts will send a final report to the standard owner and FSI after receiving and processing the feedback to the provisional report.

3.4 FSI recognition process

FSI Secretariat / FSI Board will decide on admitting a scheme to the Basket Environmental scope, taking into account the following criteria:

1. All FSI approval criteria from the FSI benchmarking document are marked as 'full/mostly compliance'.
2. The scheme is documented, published and in use by at least 1 grower demonstrating the implementation of the scheme.

FSI Secretariat will communicate the scheme its decision on the recognition.

When a scheme has demonstrated to be compliant, FSI will communicate to the scheme and the public about acceptance to the environmental scope of the basket.

4 Timescales

Phase	Working days	Who	Start phase	End phase
Confirmation of application	10	FEXP*	Reception of application package	Confirmation of reception (or request of complementary information).
Desktop assessment	20	FEXP	Reception of the complete application package	Send the provisional report (provided scheme owner replies promptly and accurately to any clarifications needed).
Comments to provisional report	10	Scheme owner	Reception of provisional report	Send comments to provisional report
Final report	10	FEXP	Reception of feedback to provisional report	Send final report
Recognition process		FSI	Reception of final report	Decision on recognition of benchmarked scheme

*Fexp = Food Experts.

Timescales are just an orientation to provide an expectation. Multiple factors, such as local bank-holidays, annual holidays (typically Easter, Christmas and summer), incomplete or contradictory information, delayed responses, etc. can extend these target timescales.

5 Benchmarking Fees

Benchmarking base fee1.500 Euros

Benchmarking Additional fee 75 Euros/h

- Prices do not include VAT. VAT will be added to the above prices if applicable.
- All bank charges and conversion fees shall be covered by the company making the payment.
- The Benchmarking base fee includes:
 - Reception and processing of the application form. Opening the benchmarking file and raising the invoice.
 - Process the **FSI_EnvBenchmark_Checklist** excel file (that should be dully completed by the scheme owner with the details of the standard that is being benchmarked) and supporting documentation.
 - Preparation of the benchmarking report.
 - **6 hours** of additional work that can be used to request additional information or clarifications, process new or complex evidences, iterations, and webinars with scheme owners.
- The Benchmarking base fee does not include:
 - Translation. All documentation and information shall be provided by the scheme owner in English or Spanish.
 - Excess worktime over the 6 hours included in the Base Fee. Applicable for complex situations, when information received is incomplete or inconsistent, situations that require multiple iterations with scheme owners to clarify issues, etc.
 - Any other issue not explicitly included in the base fee.
- The Benchmarking Additional fee:
 - Should only be appliable in exceptional circumstances to cover work or situations not covered by the Base fee.
 - Will not be invoiced unless previously agreed with the applicant.

6 FSI environmental benchmark application

Application made by (hereinafter **COMPANY**):

Legal company

VAT identification number

Address

Invoicing details (if different from above)

Standard to benchmark (hereinafter **STANDARD**)

Scheme name

Standard (name and version)

Standard applicable from date

1. COMPANY applies to benchmark the STANDARD against the latest version of the FSI environmental criteria.
2. The benchmarking procedure will be undertaken by Food Experts, S.L. (hereinafter **FEXP**).
3. The applicable rates will be invoiced by FEXP to the COMPANY and its payment must be effective within 30 days from the invoice date.
4. COMPANY agrees to comply with the procedures and requirements laid down by the protocol in its most recent version as described in this document and the latest version of "FEXP-General Conditions of service".
5. FEXP does not assume any responsibility derived from the outcome of the benchmark.
6. You are informed that the personal data provided will become part of a file owned by FEXP, whose purpose is the maintenance of the contractual or pre-contractual and commercial relationship related to what is described in this application. You may exercise your rights of access, rectification or deletion, limitation of your data treatment, portability and/or opposition, by writing to dpo@food-experts.com indicating in the subject Data Protection.

Signed in representation of COMPANY

Name:

Position:

Date:

Complete and sign this form and send scanned to customer.support@food-experts.com

Please attach to this application form:

- The **FSI_EnvBenchmark_Checklist** excel file completed with the details of the STANDARD
- A copy of the STANDARD and any other supporting documentation.



IDH/FSI new environmental benchmarking

*Update V2:
19 FEBRUARY 2021*



the sustainable
trade initiative



IDH/FSI new environmental benchmarking Control points and Compliance Criteria
Version 2 - February 2021

No.	FSI requirements	Level
Scheme Management Criteria		
Scheme implementation level		
	The standard and version benchmarked shall be defined, published and implemented.	Required
Schemes that have not yet been benchmarked against GG and GSCP must adhere to the benchmarking criteria AND:		
A1.01	The Scheme Owner shall be an organization that is a legal entity, which could be held legally responsible for the schemes' operations	Required
A1.02	The scheme cannot be managed or owned in whole or in part by an audit firm or group of audit firms to ensure they are not directly engaged in the auditing or certification of the program.	Required
B1.01	At a minimum, Scheme Owners shall require that audit firms achieve and maintain accreditation against ISO/IEC 17065:2012.	Required
The scheme owner shall ensure that audit firms base the recognition of the auditors in relation to the relevant scopes.		
B3.01/B3.09-1	Auditors must be approved by the Certification Body against defined criteria.	Required
B3.01/B3.09-2	Auditors should have the relevant technical knowledge to perform environmental audits and have a Farming, Agronomy or Environmental sciences diploma.	Required
B3.01/B3.09-3	It is recommended that auditors have the following technical knowledge: – Plant nutrition, fertilizer needs and risks, reliability of NP records. – Proper handling of PPP risks, reliability of PPP records, residue testing, ability to do good sampling. – IPM for crops in the region; determine state of the IPM system. – Efficient use of water sources; estimating efficient use of rainwater, technical understanding of irrigation systems, reliability of Water records and estimations (rainwater, efficient use). – Estimating / measuring energy use and efficiency, renewable sources, greenhouse gas emissions. – Waste management. – Conservation and biodiversity actions.	Recommendation
Audit frequency		
B4.04-1	The scheme owner shall require that audits for certificate renewal take place every year . The audit is complete and includes at least, all obligatory / mandatory scheme requirements. A consideration on spacing audits up to every three (3) years is possible only if it can be justified based on good performance from data surveillance, periodic desk audits and residue testing*. *For those schemes including independent residue testing, all points indicated in B 4.04-2 and B 4.12 must be complied with.	Required
B4.04-2	The scheme owner shall require audit firms to carry out periodic surveillance audits at sufficiently close intervals to verify compliance with the standards' requirements. The rationale behind these intervals shall be clearly defined and transparent.	Optional
The scheme owner shall require growers to keep records.		
B7.03-1	PPP. Producer shall collect and input data on a daily basis for PPP (including biopesticides) in a digital system using standardised formats.	Required

B7.03-2	<p>PPP. All the following data shall be recorded for each PPP application:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trade name. - Active ingredient. - Concentration of a.i. i.(%) of active ingredient in commercial product. - Kg or Liters of commercial product applied. - Area of application (ha). - Date application ends - Crop treated - Identification of producer and farm treated. 	Required
B7.03-3	<p>PPP Indicator. Total PPP used per crop per month (kg a.i./crop/ha). Indicator can be calculated per farm and month/4-weekly interval basis.</p>	Required
B7.03-4	<p>Fertilizer. Producer shall collect and input data on a daily basis for Fertilizers in a digital system using standardised formats.</p>	Required
B7.03-5	<p>Fertilizer. All the following data shall be recorded for each application:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kg of N used. - Kg of P used. - Area of application (ha). - Crop treated - Date application ends - Identification of producer and farm treated. 	Required
B7.03-6	<p>Fertilizer indicator.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Total number of kilograms of Nitrogen (N) used / divided by total number of hectares in production. - Total number of kilograms of Phosphorus (P) used / divided by total number of hectares in production. - Indicator can be calculated per farm and month/4-weekly interval basis. 	Required
B7.03-7	<p>Water. Collect and input data at least on a monthly/4 week intervals basis for Water in a digital system using standardised formats.</p>	Required
B7.03-8	<p>Water records shall include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Total water abstracted from a source (M3) - Total water used in crop irrigation per week or month (M3) - Percentage of abstraction water that is applied as irrigation - Identification of producer and farm. 	Required
B7.03-9	<p>Water indicator: Percentage of water abstracted of total water used (%). Indicator can be calculated per farm and month/4-weekly interval basis.</p>	Required
B7.03-10	<p>Energy. Collect and input data at least on a monthly/4 week intervals basis for energy in a digital system using standardised formats.</p>	Required

B7.03-11	Energy records shall include: - Sum of all energy used in the farm (kWh). Distinguish between renewable and non-renewable sources and the exact source (wind, solar, gas, fossil fuel...) - Area (Ha) - Identification of producer, farm.	Required
B7.03-12	Energy indicator: Total energy used in the farm per month (kWh/ha) Indicator can be calculated per farm and month/4-weekly interval basis.	Required
B7.03-13	Upload the records to the scheme owner on a monthly/4 week intervals basis.	Required
Access to records and reports		
B7.04	The scheme owner shall aggregate the information and prepare comparison reports for the participants. Consolidated reports will be presented electronically for comparison on a monthly/4 week intervals basis, names of individual flower growers will be kept confidential.	Required
B7.05	The producer shall authorize Certification Bodies access to records for the purpose of confirming evidence as found during on site audits.	Required
The Scheme Owner can offer multi residue testing for pesticides as an additional means of verification of record keeping.		
B4.12-1	The pesticide residue testing should cover a broad spectrum of active ingredients, including non approved products.	Optional
B4.12-2	The scheme owner will inform the grower about the sample taking, its purpose, method and when/how the results will be shared with the grower.	Optional
B4.12-3	The purpose for sample taking is to validate record keeping and a check on legal and permitted use of pesticides.	Optional
B4.12-4	The sample taker can be the auditor, a scheme owner delegate or a lab employee. The sample taker follows the instructions on sample taking and collection method and avoiding contamination given by the scheme owner.	Optional
B4.12-5	The sample taking itself will be un announced, or at least not be announced more than 5 days in advance.	Optional
B4.12-6	The sample will be taken from the main crop, randomly selected and ideally composed of a variety of leaves and at least 200 grams in total.	Optional
B4.12-7	Laboratories performing the residue tests must be ISO 17025 accredited.	Optional
Environmental Criteria		
The standard shall require that the farm has a documented IPM plan describing the strategies being adopted.		
3.8-1	The farm IPM plan describes per crop the pests (including insects, diseases and weeds) of economic importance.	Required
3.8-2	The farm IPM plan, for each pest, includes images showing how it can be recognized, symptoms on an affected plant, description of the life cycle and the favorable conditions for propagation of the pest. The plan should include possible preventive measures and measures to avoid the buildup of PPP resistance (e.g. rotation of PPP mode of action).	Required
3.8-3	The farm IPM plan, for each pest, includes the (economic) intervention threshold.	Required
3.8-4	The farm should keep records of: - The preventive measures employed, - The pest monitoring methods used and records of the monitorings made.	Required
3.8-5	Chemical and not chemical interventions should be recorded. Intervention justification shall be recorded and comply with the defined thresholds. The strategy followed should avoid PPP resistance build up.	Required
Approved pesticides		
3.30-1	The standard shall require that producers only use PPP approved by the appropriate governmental organization in the country of production for the use on the crop against the targeted pest (where required in the country of production legislation).	Required
3.30-2	The standard shall advise growers on minimizing PPP listed as persistent organic pollutants, in Annex A of the Stockholm Convention and Extremely hazardous PPP as listed under the WHO 1a.	Required
3.30-3	The scheme shall send growers a warning when a PPP has been used on a crop where it is not registered for use.	Recommendation
3.30-4	An updated list of approved PPP in the country and allowed PPP per crop as indicated by the appropriate governmental authority must be kept at the farm.	Required
Regional concern on water sources		
4.6	Where information is known to be available, the standard shall require that producers are aware of regional concerns on water sources under stress.	Required