

4.3.2

Levels I
and III

CORE - Farms shall maintain and safeguard native vegetation existing on their land, in order to protect and provide habitat for wild species. A map of the farm shall be available, showing the native vegetation as well as a plan to protect and restore native vegetation where necessary.

Guidance: In the case of smallholders that are part of the supply chain of industrial processors, the implementation of this indicator shall be supported by the processor.

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

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 GMOs has led to changes in farming practices that have resulted in less crop diversity and to an increase in herbicide-resistant weeds, leading to increased use of pesticides, with all the associated side effects (pollution of aquifers, detrimental effects 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 choices about where their food comes from. This includes understanding the social and environmental footprint of their choices.

This Principle aims to ensure that GMOs are not present in certified organisations.

The applicability of this Principle is determined by assessing risks of GMO presence, contamination or use. The auditor should refer to Appendix A for risk assessment. If risk is non-existent this Principle is not applicable.

Organisations must also follow the ProTerra Guidance on GMO testing and sampling as part of this Principle.

In the case of smallholders that are part of the supply chain of industrial processors, the implementation of all indicators that are under Principle 5 must be supported by the processor.

5.1

GMOs and Genetically Engineered Organisms are excluded

5.1.1 Levels I, II and III

CORE - Genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and their by-products shall not be used in the production of ProTerra- certified products. This includes technologies that can be used to edit genes within organisms such as CRISPR/Cas9.

Guidance: This indicator applies to seeds and other agricultural inputs, as well as ingredients, processing aids, additives, and other inputs used in the processing of agricultural products and in manufacturing food, feed, fibre, derived products, and fuel products. Not applicable if there are no genetically modified varieties existing of the specific crop to which this Standard is being applied.

Where there is GMO risk, ProTerra determines that the certified organisation meets one of the non-GMO standards that have been benchmarked against the ProTerra Standard and made publicly available on the ProTerra Foundation website, which includes:

- FoodChain ID Non-GMO Global Standard;
- The German VLOG “ohne Gentechnik” Standard;
- The Guidelines on the definition of GMO-free production of Food and it’s labelling according to the Austrian Codex Alimentarius, respecting their scope of applicability.

If another Standard is used outside the positively benchmarked Standard, the organisation must document, justify and demonstrate equivalence of the Standard used to one of the references considered by ProTerra, including demonstrating how it complies with ProTerra’s Guidance on GMO testing and sampling. This equivalence must be confirmed during the ProTerra certification audit.

GMO risk shall be checked based on guidance provided under **APPENDIX A: IDENTIFICATION OF COMMERCIALISED GM CROPS AND THEIR DERIVATIVES.**

5.1.2
Levels I, II
and III

CORE - All certified organisations shall avoid contamination of certified products with GMOs from external sources and shall demonstrate that the non-GMO control system is set up to assure compliance with the non-GMO requirements of their target market(s), which includes defining (1) the Targeted Threshold Tolerance Level - i.e., the level of acceptable GM contamination found in a specified product for a specified region (country) - and (2) approved/ non-approved GMOs.

Where the Target Threshold is not defined, it will be considered 0.1% as “technically unavoidable” or “adventitious” up to 0.9% of approved GMOs per feed material/ingredient (feed/food). For claims on products, certified organisations shall refer to the document entitled Guidelines and Requirements for the Use of the ProTerra Logos and Seals.

5.1.3
Levels I, II
and III

CORE - Certified organisations may use certain substances, which are produced by GMOs, or which are from unknown genetic origin, if:

- The substances are not continuously available in non-GMO quality as defined in this Standard (based on origin, production process, quantity and analysis);
- The substances cannot be replaced by alternative products or methods;

- The substances are necessary for animal health and protection reasons;
- The substances are necessary for the production of food products; or
- The substances' use in food or animal feed is required by law or by regulation in the country or region where they are produced and/or consumed.

Guidance: Such exemptions shall be limited to a minimum and a time limit shall be imposed, if necessary. Substances that are exempted according to this guideline include food additives, processing aids, flavours, amino acids, other micro-nutrients, vitamins and animal feed additives. Exemptions are only possible, according to the Recommendations of the Expert Group to the Austrian “platform gmofree” or to the recommendations of the EU Commission based on the labelling of organic food and will be approved by the CB on a case-by-case basis. Such uses shall be documented by the organisation.

5.2

System of identity preservation and segregation

Certified organisations, shall have in place an adequate system of segregation of GMO material, achieved by one of the following methods:

5.2.1 Levels I, II and III

- Use of dedicated sites, facilities, equipment, conveyances, handling equipment and/or related infrastructure.
- By inspecting and/or cleaning and/or flushing facilities, equipment and conveyances between use in contact with GMO material and non-GMO material.
- A combination of the above methods.

5.2.2
Levels I, II
and III

Certified organisations shall have procedures and records in place to ensure and demonstrate that segregation of ProTerra certified material is maintained. Procedures shall be developed, implemented and maintained and shall include GMO testing, records of flushing or cleaning for product change in non-dedicated sites and inspection checklist of trucks and other conveyances.

Guidance: Applicability of the evidence demonstrating that segregation is maintained shall be proportional to the type and size of the operation, particularly in the case of smallholders. For example, at farm level in general, only a sampling plan and strip test procedures and records may be required. For elevators and industrial plants (Level III), additional PCR sampling and testing protocols and results will be required, linked to production periods and lots. Certified organisations shall justify, and document the approach used. Certified organisations must follow the ProTerra Guidance on GMO testing and sampling. Certified organisations are expected to be able to demonstrate compliance with such Guidance.

5.2.3
Level I

Certified farms shall take measures (e.g., staggered planting times, planting of distinguishable varieties, instituting physical barriers, creating buffer planting zones, etc.) to avoid cross-contamination associated with potential pollen drift from nearby GMO sources.

Guidance: In the case of smallholders that are part of the supply chain of industrial processors, the implementation of this indicator shall be supported by the processor.

PRINCIPLE 6: **Pollution and waste management**