

# 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.

**SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT GOALS**



# 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:**  
Management system, compliance with laws, 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

Management system, compliance with laws, 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 relates to all other ProTerra Principles and the topics they cover.

Principle 1 determines that organisations shall comply with whatever provides the highest level of protection, the ProTerra Standard requirements or laws and regulations.

### Key Elements

- Compliance with all applicable national and local laws, regulations, and applicable international conventions.
- Continuous improvement.
- Use of ProTerra logos, seals, trustmark and certificates.
- Management system.

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### Did you know that...

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

<sup>1</sup><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 aims to ensure that certified organisations provide safe working environments and do not engage in forced labour, irresponsible recruitment practices or 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
- Training in health and safety
- Parental leave
- Freedom for workers to organise, join and form associations

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



### 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 hazards<sup>2</sup>.

ILO estimates that **1 in 4 people**, victims of modern slavery, are children<sup>3</sup>.

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

<sup>3</sup><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 and considering, as applicable, what they have to say.

Certified organisations must provide a mechanism for the communication of grievances that protects the grievant and ensures that 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

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



### 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 operations<sup>4</sup>.

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 development<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>4</sup>[https://unglobalcompact.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/4261-UNGC-Grievance-Mechanisms-GUIDANCE-DOC\\_28pp-9-FA.pdf](https://unglobalcompact.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/4261-UNGC-Grievance-Mechanisms-GUIDANCE-DOC_28pp-9-FA.pdf)

<sup>5</sup><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 a relevant cause of climate change and of the loss of natural habitats leading to biodiversity loss, and loss of ecosystem services. This Principle seeks to radicate the clearing of high conservation values areas (HCV) for agriculture. Through implementing this principle, businesses will protect ecosystems 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 resources<sup>6</sup>.

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



<sup>6</sup>[https://www.fair-and-precious.org/files/upload/stories/Basic\\_facts\\_and\\_figures\\_Probos\\_Layout.pdf](https://www.fair-and-precious.org/files/upload/stories/Basic_facts_and_figures_Probos_Layout.pdf)

# ProTerra Principles



## 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 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.

### 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 countries<sup>7</sup>.

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**<sup>8</sup>.

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

<sup>8</sup><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 practices associated with the food and feed supply chain. This Principle aims to support certified organisations in using methods to store, handle and dispose of waste and hazardous materials 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 industries<sup>9</sup>.

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

# ProTerra Principles



## 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
- Good practices for water management

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### Did you know that...

The UN estimates that the amount of wastewater produced annually is about **1,500 km<sup>3</sup>**, six times more water than exists in all the rivers of the world<sup>10</sup>.

**Wastewater treatment** contributes to climate change as it generates GHGs, accounting for an estimated **3% to 7%** of all emissions<sup>11</sup>.

**Agriculture irrigation** represents **70%** of water use worldwide and over **40%** in many OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) countries<sup>12</sup>.

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

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

<sup>12</sup> <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
- Energy management



### 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**<sup>13</sup>.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



<sup>13</sup> <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 maximise the benefits of agricultural activity while minimising negative impacts on the environment, workers and neighbouring communities. This principle aims to support organisations to maximise soil health while reducing and optimising the use of agricultural inputs, especially the use of pesticides, and other toxic/polluting materials.

### 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

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



### Did you know that...

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

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 period<sup>15</sup>

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

<sup>15</sup> <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 of a product's journey, from the farm to the supermarket.

Chain of custody refers to a documented 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 trail of the product's journey.

### Key Elements

- Traceability and Chain of Custody System
- Mass balance
- Segregation

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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**.<sup>16</sup>

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



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