

Evaluation Report

ITC Standards Map

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INTRODUCTION

The Standards Map was initiated in 2011 by the International Trade Centre (ITC) as part of the Trade for Sustainable Development Program (T4SD), with support from BMZ and SECO. It has since grown into the world's primary database for voluntary sustainability standards (VSS), supplying comprehensive and transparent information on standards covering areas such as environmental protection, labor rights, economic development, quality, food safety, and business ethics.

Given the evolving regulatory landscape and the increased attention to benchmarking various sustainability initiatives, including VSS, Standards Map has come under greater scrutiny by a diverse range of stakeholders. To maintain its relevance, it's imperative for the tool to meet the needs of these stakeholders.

The ITC Standards Map employs a database of over 1600 individual sustainability criteria to document and classify more than 300 different VSS. The data collection process is organized as a collaborative effort involving external experts, the ITC Standards Map team, and the VSS themselves. This report's primary aim is to assess the quality of both the sustainability criteria utilized by the ITC Standards Map and the data collection process, identify any gaps or weaknesses in the database and recommend strategies for improvement.

Additionally, in light of the rapidly changing institutional and regulatory landscape, this evaluation strongly emphasizes the ITC Standards Maps relevance in the context of due diligence. It focuses on the database's ability to provide information concerning environmental, social, and governance (ESG) risks and opportunities, along with related due diligence obligations. The evaluation also aims to assess the potential benefits and risks associated with utilizing the database for due diligence purposes and to provide recommendations for integrating due diligence requirements into the ITC Standards Map criteria.

CONCEPTS AND METHODS

In any evaluation study, the first step is to define the criteria upon which the assessment will be based. The Terms of Reference (ToR) provided by the ITC Standards Map highlights **relevance** as the primary overarching assessment criterion for this evaluation. In the context of the ITC Standards Map, relevance pertains to how directly applicable and beneficial the database and its contents are to its designated users, including companies, policymakers, researchers, and other stakeholders. The degree of relevance of the ITC Standards Map depends on how effectively the database addresses the core issues and questions that users aim to explore or address, enabling them to make informed decisions and conduct research on VSS.

Since relevance is a broad assessment criterion that can be challenging to measure directly, we have outlined several more detailed data quality dimensions to assess the suitability of the ITC Standards Map for its intended purposes. The initial two data quality dimensions focus on the set of over 1600 sustainability criteria used by the Standards Map for the classification¹ of VSS. Specifically, this evaluation will concentrate on both the **comprehensiveness** and **uniqueness** of this set of criteria.

- **Comprehensiveness** measures the extent to which the sustainability criteria within the ITC Standards Map adequately cover all relevant sustainability issues related to VSS.

¹ The term "classification" refers to the process of evaluating the degree to which a VSS meets the 1600+ criteria outlined in the ITC Standards Map. This usage is consistent throughout the report.

- **Uniqueness** assesses whether the over 1600 criteria within the ITC Standards Map classification system are distinctive from each other and do not unintentionally overlap or duplicate when applied to classifying individual VSS.

While the first two dimensions focus on the quality of the sustainability criteria used by ITC Standards Map, the following dimensions assess the application of these criteria. We are particularly concerned with the degree to which the data collection process of the ITC Standards Map produces **reliable** results. To address this issue, we introduce three additional data quality criteria into the conceptual framework of this evaluation study: **Inter-coder reliability**, **accuracy**, and **consistency**.

- **Inter-coder reliability** refers to the degree of consistency in the application of the criteria in the ITC Standards Map among various experts, ensuring they are free from any bias in their data collection and classification.
- **Accuracy** pertains to the extent to which these classifications are factually correct.
- **Consistency** deals with the uniformity of information stored in the ITC Standards Map database. It assesses whether the attributes of different VSS classified under a given criterion are genuinely similar and not divergent from each other.

Lastly, we include the quality dimension of **timeliness** and **transparency** in this evaluation study.

- **Timeliness** refers to the extent to which the data presented in the ITC Standards Map is both current and readily accessible for its main users within the expected timeframes.
- **Transparency** pertains to the clarity of the structure and processes employed by the ITC Standards Map to document information about VSS. It reflects the extent to which users can easily comprehend the system in place.

In the following sections, we will frequently refer to these data quality dimensions without restating the definitions developed in the paragraphs above. This section also serves as a sort of **glossary** for the upcoming parts of this report.

The overarching assumption underlying this evaluation is that the better the ITC Standards Map performs on the individual quality dimensions defined above, the more likely it will continue to be the primary resource for obtaining information about (VSS). Following the conceptual discussion, in the main part of this report, we will triangulate various qualitative and quantitative methods and data sources to develop a detailed and nuanced assessment of how the ITC Standards Map performs within the defined data quality dimensions. As a first step in this complex endeavor, we present the results of a series of Stakeholder-Interviews on this issue.

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Expert knowledge is a crucial source of information since experts possess in-depth, specialized knowledge in their respective fields allowing them to provide deep insights and details that are often not directly available through other sources. To evaluate the performance of the ITC Standards Map, we conducted ten in-depth expert interviews with individuals who possess extensive experience in using or working with the ITC Standards Map. These experts were selected based on their profound understanding of the database, having been initially contacted by the ITC Standards Map team. Subsequently, we scheduled interview appointments conducted over Zoom in September 2023. For a list of the interviewed experts please see Table 1A in the Annex.

The purpose of these interviews was to gain valuable insights into the strengths and weaknesses of the ITC Standards Map from the perspective of those with hands-on experience. To gather this information, we devised a questionnaire with guiding questions (see Annex 2) that we customized to each expert's unique experience and interactions with the ITC Standards Map.

Stakeholders confirm high relevance of the ITC Standards Map

Overall, the interviews confirm that the ITC Standards Map database is used for a variety of different purposes. VSS organizations use the data to compare the structure of their own sustainability systems with those of others and to identify potential niches where they can become active. In addition, government, business, and civil society institutions use the database to compare existing VSS based on selected criteria, depending on their area of interest in sustainability. These comparisons can encompass a broad spectrum of information, including the structure and credibility of various standards. They can also concentrate on specific topics, such as gender-related aspects, environmental sustainability, or, notably, due diligence requirements. In the case of online available benchmarking tools, a direct interface is established between the respective tool and the backend of the ITC Standards Map. Finally, the data from the ITC Standards Map also form the basis for a variety of scientific publications in the field of sustainability studies.

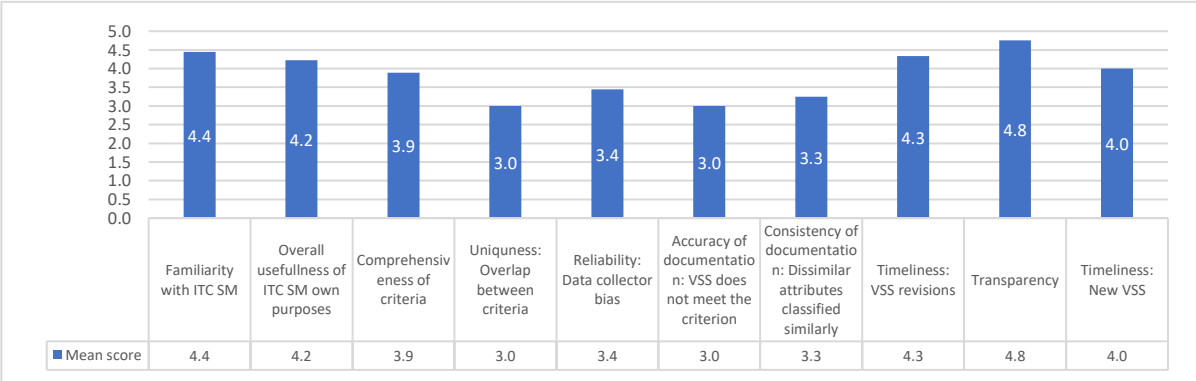
The stakeholder interviews have made it clear that there is no alternative database of comparable scale that provides data on this rapidly growing field of VSS in such diversity, comprehensiveness and quality. Thus, the ITC Standards Map serves as the knowledge foundation for a wide range of activities in the realm of global sustainability policy and standards, and as such, it has gained tremendous significance today.

The subsequent sections will provide the details of how the interviewed experts perceive the strengths and weaknesses of the ITC Standards Map.

Overview Stakeholder Interviews

During the stakeholder interviews, we asked the participants to rate, on a scale of 1 to 5, the extent to which the ITC Standards Map aligns with the evaluation criteria outlined in the conceptual section. Higher ratings reflect the interviewed experts' perception that the ITC Standards Map performs well in a particular data quality dimension. To clarify, these stakeholder interviews represent the subjective assessments of the respective interviewees. The purpose of these ratings is to help us identify potential areas for improvement.

Figure 1. Stakeholder Rating on ITC Standards Map



As becomes clear in the graph above, the majority of interviewed stakeholders indicated that they are quite familiar with the ITC Standards Map. On average, the sample demonstrates a familiarity score of

4.4 with this database, 5 being the highest possible value. With an overall score of 4.8 the interviewed experts also confirmed a very high level of transparency in the ITC Standards Map.

Regarding the major outputs that the ITC Standards Map provides for its users, it received high scores for its timeliness in staying up-to-date by integrating both revisions of existing VSS (4.3) and incorporating new VSS into the database (4.0). In terms of the completeness of its criteria, the ITC Standards Map received an average rating of 3.9, while it scored 3.0 for the uniqueness of its criteria². The ITC Standards Map received a rating of 3.3 for its consistency and 2.9 for its accuracy. When it comes to its ability to control data collection processes to minimize collector bias, the ITC Standards Map received a score of 3.4. The interviewed stakeholders assessed its overall relevance with an average rating of 4,0 points, which accurately reflects their perception of its performance across various criteria.

Overall, these numbers allow us to discern a preliminary pattern indicating areas where there is potential to enhance the quality and relevance of ITC Standards criteria and processes. The highest rating was achieved by the ITC Standards Map for its transparency. All experts provided ratings of 4 and 5 when asked about the transparency of the ITC Map. They clearly indicated that they have a very good understanding of how the data collection processes are organized. In particular, they commended the ITC Standards Map team for being cooperative, helpful, and professional in their interactions with various stakeholders. On average, the stakeholders interviewed expressed greater satisfaction with the comprehensiveness of criteria compared to the uniqueness of criteria. While the ratings for controlling potential biases in data collection and ensuring the accuracy and consistency of the collected data are generally favorable (≥ 3), the interviews suggest that there is still some room for improvement in these areas.

In the following sections, we will delve more deeply into the material gathered from the stakeholder interviews. This will allow us to refine the current picture and provide a more detailed and concrete understanding of the challenges that the ITC Standards Map is currently facing with regard to the above-mentioned performance criteria. We begin this analysis with the evaluation criteria that have comparatively lower values in the overview chart above.

Identifying Areas for Improvement

All interviewed stakeholders emphasize the significance of the ITC Standards Map. They value the professionalism and willingness to cooperate exhibited by the ITC team. It is precisely these team efforts that lead to users being highly satisfied with the data and analyses provided by the ITC Standards Map. Further the interviewed experts highlighted the profound significance of the ITC Standards Map for their specific needs. No other database currently exists that can offer such an extensive and detailed repository of information about VSS. Consequently, the experts expressed a strong interest in actively contributing to evaluating and further improving the data offered by the ITC. Three potential areas of improvement, as mentioned by stakeholders, stand out. The first area relates to the accuracy of the data presented in the ITC Standards Map. The second area addresses the inclusion of additional criteria that are currently not covered by the database. The third point involves the rationalization the currently extensive set of over 1600 existing criteria used to structure the data

² Please note that, as defined in the conceptual framework section above, the term 'uniqueness' in this context specifically refers to the ITC criteria. This implies that the interviews assess distinctiveness of the more than 1600 ITC criteria as moderately good, suggesting some room for improvement to streamline the set of criteria in the database. More broadly, the interviews express a high regard for the ITC Standards Map as the only comprehensive resource to obtain information about VSS. In these terms, the ITC Standards Map is evaluated as highly unique.

about VSS in the ITC Standards Map. In the following, we provide the details for each of these three points.

Accuracy

Some of the interviewed stakeholders suggested enhancing the accuracy of the data presented in the ITC Standards Map further. For instance, during the interviews, it was noted that the database confirms the fulfillment of a criterion even when, from the perspective of the interviewed stakeholder, it is either not met or only inadequately addressed. Additionally, a stakeholder interviewed pointed out that a criterion is not marked as fulfilled, even though, from their perspective, the VSS satisfies this criterion. Thirdly, interviewees expressed the impression that the same standards have been evaluated differently by various data collectors. Moreover, one interviewee pointed out discovering inconsistencies between different reviews while analyzing the data. Another interviewee recalled that, after reaching a consensus with the ITC team on the fulfillment of a specific criterion through a particular VSS, they engaged in discussions with the VSS organization. However, the VSS organization interpreted the results differently, initiating a kind of negotiation process regarding the fulfillment of that criterion.

To provide context to these critical points, it is essential to acknowledge that the ITC Standards Map has established this database as a valuable tool catering to a diverse array of stakeholders and serving a broad spectrum of purposes. In part, the issues raised above stem from initiatives that utilize the ITC data for their own VSS benchmarking activities. Naturally, a certain coordination process will always be necessary when such initiatives use the ITC data to classify VSS according to their often more specific classification frameworks. However, experts using the ITC database for advising companies or generating comprehensive reports also expressed similar concerns. As an illustration, there has been criticism regarding the marking of checkboxes for gender-related criteria, even when a VSS does not extend beyond the standard anti-discrimination regulations in labor rights that are already covered in other parts of DET. Similar critiques have been mentioned in connection with biodiversity and living wage related criteria.

To be clear, the processing of qualitative data along a predefined set of criteria, as it is happening in the ITC Standards Map, is not a straightforward black-and-white effort. Different stakeholders, looking at the data through the lens of their particular interests, may arrive at different conclusions on how VSS should be represented in the ITC Standards Map. Nevertheless, the quality of the database relies on clear-cut criteria in combination with strong descriptions and guidance that allow for a largely unanimous documentation of VSS. Some stakeholders recommend allocating additional funds and efforts to engage in a process to evaluate this analytical framework, with the aim of further refining the criteria, definitions, and guidance that play such a pivotal role in the functioning of this database. Based on this small sample of qualitative interviews, it is challenging to determine the extent to which this advice should be implemented in practice. These critiques are based on individual examples gathered from various stakeholder interviews. These insights should not be generalized across the board. Before reaching final recommendations in this report, we will therefore further investigate these points in the section on empirical tests below.

Additional criteria

Secondly, the interviewed stakeholders have made several suggestions to expand the current DET to encompass more aspects of VSS that, from their perspectives, are currently not sufficiently covered. The ITC has gone at great lengths to organize the ITC Standards Map in an inclusive and comprehensive manner, facilitating the use of data for a diverse range of stakeholders. Since its beginning, the ITC Standards Map has been consistently facing the challenge that different stakeholder groups have specific interests in adding particular criteria to the DET to better align the database with their specific

purposes. In this evaluation round, the interviewed stakeholders expressed the following suggestions to expand the scope of the database. During one interview, the suggestion was made to add more criteria to the DET, encompassing the economic situation of certified entities. Another interviewee mentioned to better cover standards on greenhouse gas emission. Thirdly, it was suggested that the database could incorporate additional information regarding the real on-the-ground up-take of VSS. This could include details such as the sectors in which certifications have actually verified producers and the extent to which standards have been factually implemented in the smallholder sector. Furthermore, there were suggestions that an improved set of criteria is needed, particularly concerning the evaluation of the credibility of the standards concerning new due diligence obligations and it was suggested to better cover VSS from developing countries. Last but not least, during an interview, a suggestion was made to add an additional layer to the database that covers which actors (whether upstream or downstream) in the value chain are obliged by the VSS to implement a particular requirement. This addition would offer a critical perspective on who bears the greatest workload and costs within the VSS governance frameworks.

First of all, it can be noted that, apart from the additional criteria for capturing the activities of VSS in the field of climate protection, which have already been extensively incorporated into the DET, the proposed extensions are not currently part of the ITC Standards Map. Another question, however, is whether the new criteria should indeed be implemented from a strategic perspective. We would currently view this point with some skepticism. Certainly, it would make sense for the ITC team, with all its experience in managing the database, to thoroughly reflect on the extent to which these points would significantly enhance the quality of the database. From our perspective, the suggested improvements would certainly lead to specific new information about VSS, but would not have a broader positive effect on the overall relevance of the database. Given that each expansion of the DET requires significant effort and financial resources, and considering the ongoing transition phase in the world of VSS, we recommend prioritizing major aspects, especially in response to the emergence of new Due Diligence processes and ESG Risks. We suggest temporarily putting these other expansions on hold for the time being.

Rationalizing Standard's map criteria

As mentioned earlier, the interviewed stakeholders express a high appreciation for the comprehensiveness of the ITC Standards Map. They highly value the ability to access detailed information across a wide range of attributes. Indeed, the stakeholders consider this capability a unique selling point of the ITC Standard's map that no other database can provide. At the same time, various stakeholders perceive this database as highly complex. Based on our interpretation of the stakeholder interviews, some experts feel overwhelmed by the extensive information in the database, prompting them to question the possibility of rationalizing or streamlining the current DET. As the information on this point derived from expert interviews remains at a relatively general level, we have designed some of the empirical tests in the next section specifically to further explore potential reasons for these stakeholder perceptions.

Transparency

There was hardly any criticism of the transparency aspect. All interviewed experts unanimously emphasized the highly cooperative and open collaboration with the ITC team. However, it was also noted that the complexity is extremely high for external users, and it cannot be assumed that these processes are transparently understandable based on the information available on the website.

Also, this point will be further analyzed in the following section (Empirical Tests). Subsequently, we will integrate the information obtained from both the stakeholder interviews and the various empirical tests into a more concrete set of recommendations towards the end of this evaluation.

EMPIRICAL TESTS

After presenting the results from the stakeholder interviews, we will further refine our understanding of how well the ITC Standards Map performs across the various quality dimensions by conducting a series of empirical tests. As becomes obvious in the following, through this triangulation of data and methods we are able to significantly nuance the evaluation of the ITC Standards Maps performance.

Sample Selection and Case Studies

For the empirical tests, the final sample included a total of 35 VSS based on the sectors listed in the ITC Standards Map (Table 1). Initially, the 339 VSS in the ITC Standards Map were categorized according to the sectors they cover. If a standard covered multiple sectors, it was listed under each relevant sector. However, to avoid duplications VSS that were selected in one sector were excluded from the lists in the other sectors (sampling without replacement). The sample size was determined proportionally based on the number of standards within each sector. Some sectors were grouped based on the strong connections and high overlap of the VSS in these sectors. (e.g., education, tourism, and culture). To select the VSS for the sample, a list was created, and random numbers ranging from 1 to 50 were utilized. The following table provides an overview of this sampling process and the VSS selected.

Table 1. Sample selection by sector

Final sample	Total (including duplicated Standards)	Unique	Sample	Selected VSS
Forestry	46	46	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Union For Ethical BioTrade - UEBT • Guide on Social Responsibility for Chinese Int Contractors • Regio-garantie
Education, tourism, and culture	113	47	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amfori BSCI • Seychelles Sustainable Tourism Label
Finance and services	78	52	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certified Wildlife Friendly • Bluesign System • Verified Carbon Standard - VCS
Processed food and retail	89	64	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ZNU Standard - driving sustainable change • Bio-Knosp
Energy, mining, and Chemicals	95	65	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • XertifiX • UN Global Compact
Aquaculture and fisheries	110	71	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethical Trading Initiative - ETI • IFOAM Standard • Alliance for Water Stewardship • Pacific Organic Standard Aquaculture
Clothing	73	73	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises - Edition 2011 • WFTO Guarantee System • The Social & Labour Convergence Program (SLCP) CAF Version 1.5 - Step 2
Livestock	75	75	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VietFarm • Food Alliance • Climate, Community & Biodiversity Standards - CCB Standards
Textiles	99	99	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STeP by OEKO Tex

Final sample	Total (including duplicated Standards)	Unique	Sample	Selected VSS
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability Assessment of Food and Agriculture systems -SAFA • The Blue Angel - Leather
Floriculture	111	111	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IP - Suisse Generic • UNCTAD BioTrade Principles & Criteria - Terrestrial Food Sectors • Chinese National Organic Products Certification Program • Global G.A.P. Floriculture • OFDC Organic Certification Standard
Agriculture	175	175	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coffee Sustainability Reference Code • Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) - Spanish version • Predator Friendly Standards • ProTerra Europe • Singapore Green Labelling Scheme • ARSO - Agriculture - Sustainability and eco labelling • ISO 34101 Series Sustainable and traceable cocoa: Entry level •
Manufactured products	188	188	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EU - Ecolabel - Paper • Green Mark Taiwan • OEKO-Tex Responsible Business • PrimusGFS • The Social & Labour Convergence Program (SLCP) CAF Version 1.4 - Step 1 • Together for Sustainability AISBL (TfS) • BRCGS Ethical Trade and Responsible Sourcing • Fair Wear Foundation
Total			45	

From the original created sample of 45 standards, ITC shared in the first round the information for 35, the other 10 standards would have been provided on demand if necessary to complete the analysis. This second group of standards was not necessary for the analysis, as the manufactured products is the sector covered by the larger number of Standards, the overlapping with the other sectors is significant. From the 35 selected standards 31 also cover manufactured products, consequently, the sample is not affected in terms of representation of the sectors.

The following analyses will use the entire sample of 35 VSS to empirically evaluate the performance of the ITC Standards Map across the various data quality dimensions specified above. However, we also selected three specific VSS for in-depth case studies to complement this analysis when needed. The VSS that selected for these in-depth case studies are the following:

- Case study 1: AMFORI BSCI (a standard currently under review by SSO),
- Case study 2: Food Alliance (A North American standard) and
- Case study 3: UNCTAD BioTrade Principles & Criteria - Terrestrial Food Sectors.

The case studies were selected to maximize the diversity of sectors covered and standards characteristics.

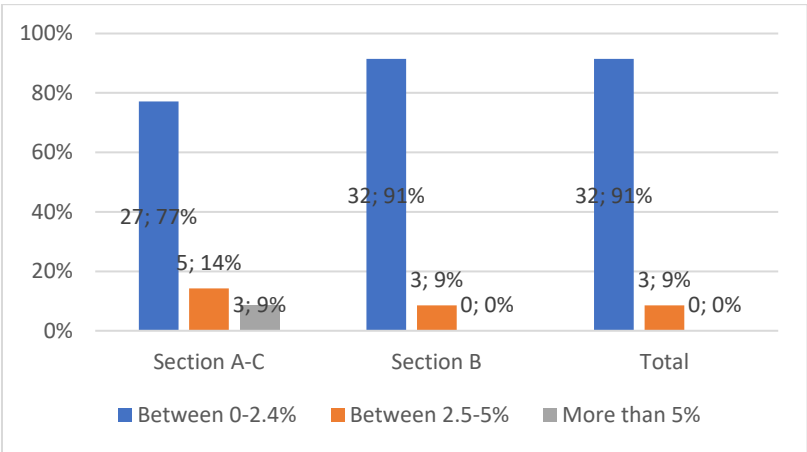
Standardization and homogeneity of the data for selected sample

A Standardized and homogeneous documentation of data during the phases of data collection and entry are essential principles for ensuring the quality of databases Standardizing the collection and coding of data, including handling missing values, is essential for facilitating sound statistical analysis and minimizing the risks of analytical errors arising from non-identified values or misclassified data. This becomes particularly vital when the intent is to leverage the extensive ITC Standards Map data for advanced purposes and in-depth analysis by the ITC or other stakeholders in the future. The data base is constructed as follows: a criterion becomes part of the DET, and after each criteria a series of items or variables related to that criterion should be reported. The experts responsible for the data entry may complete all or some of these items/variables.

The initial step in analyzing the standardization and homogeneity of the data entry process was to determine the number of empty fields per item/variable. In detail, this step involved identifying the number of empty fields within sections A (Overall) and C (Operational requirements), as well as B (Requirements and indicators) of the dataset provided by ITC Standards Map. According to the structure of the data set, one can notice that empty fields should not exist in this data base, as it is possible to assign a value for not applicable or not completed data, consequently, the existence of empty fields is not a standard coding for this specific dataset. To exemplify this point, see Figure 3. The VSS summarized in column 3 represents a standardized way of coding when a criterion is not covered by a VSS (no empty fields observed). The criteria reported on the top of the fourth column shows the items completed when a criterion is reported (notice that here not reported fields are coded as #N/A).

Figure 2 summarizes the percentage and number of standards from the sample by the completeness of their data reporting, and a detailed table is available in the annex (Table 2A, Annexes).

Figure 2. Number and percentage of VSS, grouped by their percentage of missing fields



Overall, the analysis, summarized in Figure 2, suggests that the dataset is highly complete, confirming the high quality of the ITC data entry process. The presence of blank data is likely a result of inconsistencies in reporting items corresponding to 'not applicable' or 'not covered' criteria.³

³ Further, we found a series of 54 criteria (from in total 586 criteria in sections A and C) that were not completed for any standard (Table 2A, Annexes), these criteria were not taken into account for the calculation of the percentage of missing fields, as it is not clear why they were not completed (They were all marked on bold font). The reason for why the criteria in Table 2A is not complete in the dataset provided by ITC for any of the provided

The second part of this analysis describes these inconsistencies through a case study.

Figure 3. Visual example of inconsistencies in the coding of criteria

	Col. 1	Col. 2	Col. 3	Col. 4	Col. 5
Biodiversity: overarching DESCRIPTION GUIDANCE Are there	Recommendation	Recommendation	Not covered	Immediate	Not covered
Reference document	OECD Guidelines for	WFTO Fair Trade S	#N/A	VietFarm Standard	
Explicit reference	yes	yes	#N/A	yes	no
Degree of criticality	Optional	Optional	#N/A	Deal-breaker	#N/A
Degree of intensity	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A
Compliance assessed against a metric	no	no	#N/A	#N/A	no
Compliance assessed based on legislation	yes	no	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A
Localisation of details in the reference document	VI. Environment	10.3	#N/A	PS 5.2	
Web link	http://www.oecd.org	http://wfto.com/v	#N/A	https://vietfarm.org	
Extract from standard document	6. Continually seek	Conservation, biod	#N/A	PS 5.2 Member org	There is no specific
Additional information on guidelines and indicators	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A
Criteria to ensure adhere DESCRIPTION GUIDANCE Are there	Not covered	Not covered	Not covered	#N/A	#N/A
Reference document	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A
Explicit reference	no	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A
Degree of criticality	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A
Degree of intensity	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A
Compliance assessed against a metric	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A
Compliance assessed based on legislation	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A
Localisation of details in the reference document	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A
Web link	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A
Extract from standard document	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A
Additional information on guidelines and indicators	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A

Continuing with analysis in the following part, we look into the question on how homogeneously the data is reported in the database. This information is particularly important for stakeholders who want to use the data for statistical analysis, as for these cases the data needs to be available in a unified format. It is important that this issue of standardization of the data is relevant only for the use of the back-end data, as this issue does not affect the front-end of the ITC Standards Map website.

Figure 3 shows two criteria reported for five different VSS (each column presents a VSS, the VSS names have been omitted). The data for the VSS in column 3 reports both criteria as not covered, and the system adds a #N/A symbol to all subcategories of the two criteria. However, the data present in column 5 uses a different way of coding for the same purpose, using sometimes #N/A, other times no, and other times leaving the space in blank. Similarly, the second “no” in column 1 seems to be inconsistent and should be replaced through an “#N/A”.

Our analysis revealed two key results. First, we observed variations in how the same field or item is coded (see Evidence 15-17 in the Annexes). For example, when data collectors come to conclusion that a field is not applicable to a VSS they may document this as “not applicable”. Multiple forms to report this term add to inconsistencies in the documentation of the data. Secondly, we identified discrepancies in how certain fields were filled out. (Evidence 16 in Annex)

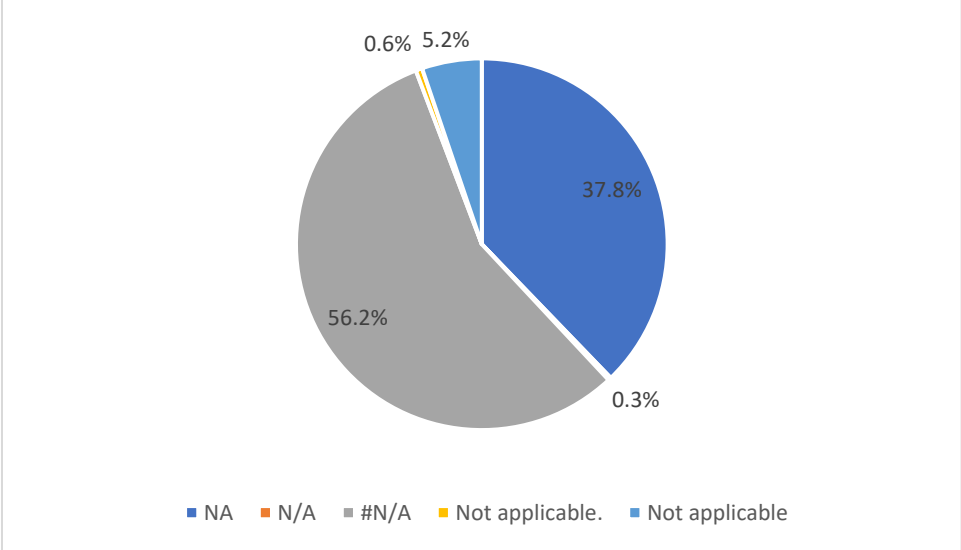
As an example, we quantified this inconsistency in the coding for the term “not applicable” for sections A and C (Figure 4). The most common term used by the ITC Standards Map to report the fact that a criterion does apply to a particular VSS is “#N/A” (56.2%) and NA (37.8%). But in rare cases also other terms are used.

Inconsistencies as the ones presented in our analysis, are not a direct threat to the quality of the database as the information is still accurate in its substance but it may complicate further analysis of the data by researchers or interested stakeholders who before they can start the actual analysis are

standards cannot be determined from the dataset. The empty cells are always associated to not applicable or not covered criteria. The missing fields are not marked as not applicable and no other information is provided. It is important to define a standard coding for not applicable or not reported data.

forced to spend time and efforts on data cleaning and preparation as researchers would have to firstly identify all the different codes given to a same data category. It is important to emphasize that this issue does not affect the front end of the standards map.

Figure 4. Usage of different terms for “non applicable” in data reporting



Accuracy/Consistency

The first comprehensive empirical tests we conducted involved both the VSS selected for the entire sample and the 3 VSS chosen for the case studies. Specifically, we selected from the DET 2 criteria within the 'living wages' domain and 22 criteria within the 'gender' domain⁴, and assessed the accuracy and consistency of the data reported by the ITC Standards Map concerning these 24 criteria across all 35 VSS in our sample. We consider these examples as hard cases because the criteria are relatively broad and open to interpretation, increasing the likelihood of inaccuracies.

The ITC Standards Map uses 11 variables⁵ to report its findings on each criterion in the DET. From these variables, we derived the following **4 accuracy and consistency indicators** for our analysis:

1. Documentation is are correct: The data provided in the ITC Standards Map justifies the fulfillment of a criteria by a VSS.
2. Web Link is correct and working.
3. The mentioning of reference documents shown in the database to verify the information are correct.
4. The extract displayed in the database to justify the classifications exists and can be accessed.

We used these selected indicators to evaluate the quality of the reported data in the ITC Standards Map for all criteria covered by the 35 VSS in our sample in the domains of 'living wages' and 'gender'.

⁴ For the full list of criteria see Table 4A in Annex.

⁵

- Degree of obligation
- Reference document
- Explicit reference
- Degree of criticality
- Degree of intensity,
- Compliance assessed against a metric
- Compliance assessed based on legislation
- Localization of details in the reference document
- Web link
- Extract from the standard document

First, we showed for each VSS in our sample how many of the 'living wages' and 'gender' criteria they cover. Next, we used the five indicators to assess whether the data reported by the ITC Standards Map for each individual VSS was accurate and consistent. If we found that the data exhibits flaws, we also specified the type of inaccuracies and inconsistencies we encountered.

Finally, we quantified these findings by rating the data that the ITC Standards Map reports for a particular VSS.

- We assigned a rating of **1** if the data showed no flaws at all, but was accurately and consistently reported by the ITC Standards Map for all five indicators across all criteria covered by a particular VSS in the gender and living wage domain.
- We assigned a rating of **0.5** if the reported data exhibited some flaws across the covered criteria or indicators.
- We assigned a rating of **0** if the data showed flaws for all five indicators across all covered criteria.⁶

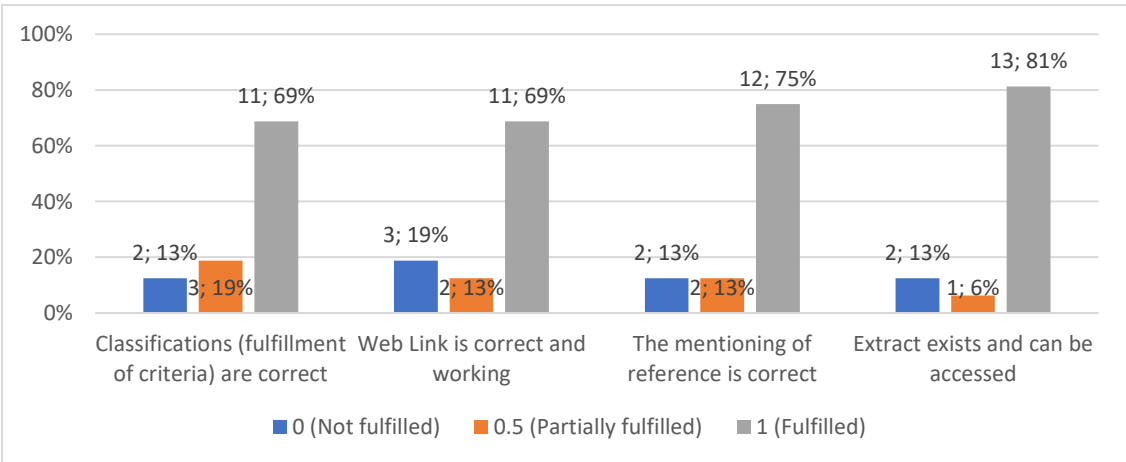
All the results obtained through this comprehensive analysis are presented in Table 6A in the annex. This table serves as a central reference point, offering a highly detailed account of the quality of the information provided by the ITC Standards Map for each of the VSS within our sample, focusing on the domains of living wages and gender.

In general, we would like to emphasize two key findings. Firstly, when we examine the results presented in Table 6A, with a particular focus on the specific inaccuracies and inconsistencies identified throughout the analysis, we can distinguish three major types of inaccuracies and inconsistencies. These categories are:

- The extract provided does not justify the fulfillment of the criteria
- The extract provided was in another document
- The provided link to the VSS documents was not correct. This means, the link could not be opened, or opened a different document or webpage than the mentioned

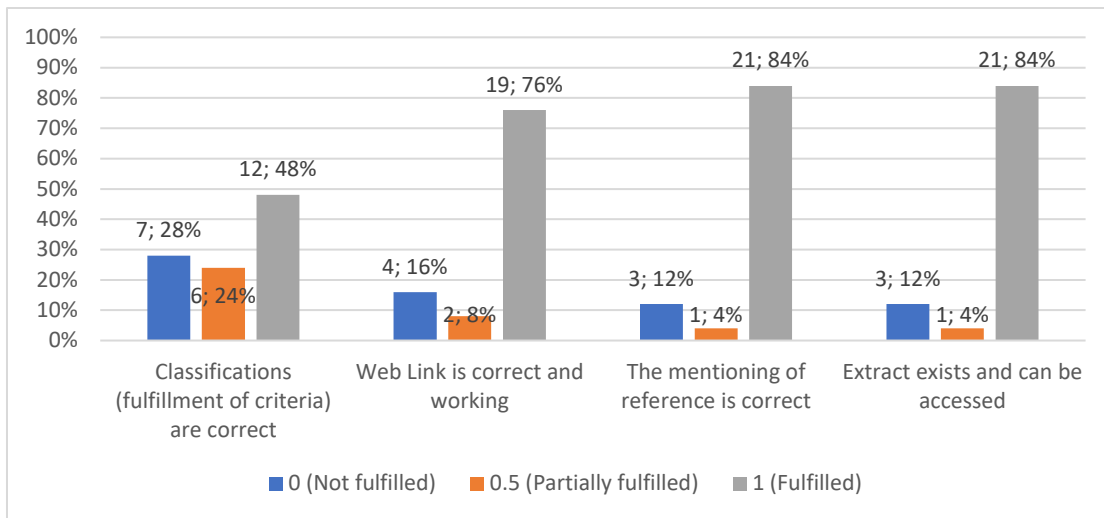
Secondly, when we adopt a more comprehensive perspective, as demonstrated in Figures 5 and 6 below, we observe that the majority of VSS are reported with correct data. But there is also a significant portion of VSS in the database whose documentation for the analyzed indicators is not without flaws.

Figure 5. Percentage / Number of standards fulfilling the measured quality indicators for living wages criteria



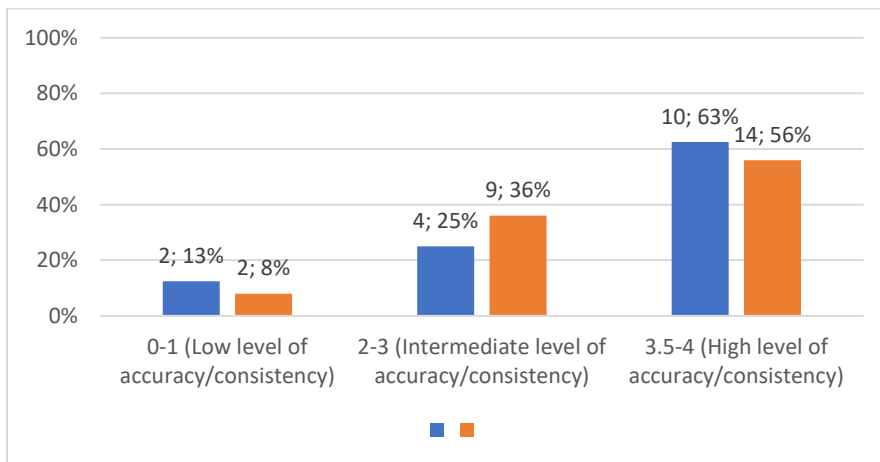
⁶ The details of this rating procedure and how the values have been assigned can be seen in table 5A In the Annex

Figure 6. Percentage / Number of standards fulfilling the measured quality indicators for gender criteria



Lastly, for each VSS in Table 6A (Annexes), we aggregated the data quality ratings from all five accuracy and consistency indicators. The results for each VSS are presented on a scale from 0 to 4, where 0 denotes low levels of accuracy and consistency, while 4 represents high levels of accuracy and consistency. As depicted in Figure 7 below, the data reported in the ITC Standards Map exhibits very high quality for the majority of the VSS, with scores ranging between 3.5 and 4. It is important to highlight that for approximately one-third of the VSS, the reported data does exhibit some flaws.

Figure 7. Average quality score for accuracy and consistency



Uniqueness

Our empirical test of the data quality dimensions of uniqueness assesses the extent to which the set of criteria enables a meaningful mapping of VSS, systematically accounting for similarities and differences between them.

We analyze the data reported in the ITC Standards Map for all VSS in our sample (see Table 1) across the 8 criteria associated with 'Soil' and the 22 criteria associated with 'Gender'. We concentrate on the excerpts provided by the VSS organizations to substantiate the fulfillment of these criteria. Our analysis comprises two distinct steps: Firstly, we evaluate the degree to which a (VSS) utilizes identical or similar extracts to justify the fulfillment of different criteria. In this context, we refer to exact or partial matches. An example of an exact match is evident in the VSS Coffee code for the criteria of soil erosion and soil conservation. For both criteria, the VSS organization provides identical information as follows:

“10.1 Soil is protected from erosion by adequate soil conservation measures.”

A partial match for the same VSS is identified for the criteria of soil contamination and soil enhancement through crop rotation or intercropping. For the first criteria, the extract states:

“10.2.2 Practices to increase fertility are in place, e.g. use of cover crops, soil is covered with leaf litter or organic mulch, (coffee) byproducts available at farm level, composting, reducing soil acidity, planting shade trees and/or boundary plants, intercropping practices. 10.2.3 The application of synthetic fertilizer follows agronomic Within 3 years, is documented and if feasible reduced over time.”

For the second criterion the extract states:

“10.2.2 Practices to increase fertility are in place, e.g. use of cover crops, soil is covered with leaf litter or organic mulch, (coffee) by products available at farm level, composting, reducing soil acidity, planting shade trees and/or boundary plants, intercropping practices.”

Please note, in both cases the documentation of the data as such is correct. The question here is what additional value this high level of detail generates. The less distinct the set of criteria gets the more likely it becomes that the VSS report redundant information. As mentioned, this does not make the data incorrect per se, but attention should be paid to avoid unnecessarily inflating the database without a significant benefit from the user's perspective. The more criteria the database contains, the more challenging it becomes to manage. Therefore, it would certainly be another goal to keep data redundancy as low as possible.

For the 8 soil criteria we expanded the analysis in order to identify possible reasons for the overlap of extracts used by the VSS organizations across different criteria. The main two identified reasons are:

- The description and guidance overlap across criteria.
- One criterion defines a practice that is related to another more broad criterion; for example, cover crops are a practice related to soil conservation and the prevention of soil erosion, which are two separate criteria.

The second step of our analysis includes a subjective evaluation of the extent to which an extract provided by a VSS organization matches the information required by the descriptions and guidance of the criteria. To qualify this, we assigned a value between 0 to 5, where zero was the extract does not relate to the criteria description and guidance, and 5 the extract totally matches to the description and guidance. Below, we present the empirical evidence generated by our analysis in this section.

Table 2 summarizes the percentage of repeated extracts per VSS in our sample for the 8 criteria related to 'Soil'. The average values and percentage are calculated based on the total number of criteria reported by a VSS organization. Those cells marked in orange identify repeated extracts of 50% or more. This means, for a standard reporting 8 criteria, 4 or more of these criteria will have a partial or exact match of extracts. The cells marked in green indicate that the percentage of repeated extracts is lower than 50%. For the degree of (subjective) matching between the ITC criteria and extracts provided by the VSS organizations, we defined the cutting point of 2.5 points to determine green and orange fields.

Those standards marked in green in the left column of Table 2 demonstrate both low level of repeated extracts and high level of matching of the extracts. Those marked in orange (in this case only ZNU) indicate high percentage of repeated extracts and low levels of matching. High level of matching and high level of repeated extracts occurs when the VSS uses either rather generic criteria on soil conservation which cover other criteria or when the standard has justified each criterion with a long series of extracts (for example IP-Suisse, ARSO).

Table 2. Number of reported soil criteria per Standard, percentage of repeated extract and average adherence score

Standard	Reported criteria	Percentage of repeated extracts	Matching between criteria and provided extract (0-5)
ARSO	11	81.8%	4.30
UEBT	11	72.7%	3.90
GlobalGAP	10	20.0%	3.33
IFOAM	10	70.0%	3.80
ProTerra Europe	10	80.0%	4.50
Bioknospe	9	22.2%	3.78
OFDC	9	55.6%	4.25
SAFA	9	44.4%	2.33
IP-Suisse	8	50.0%	4.50
CNOPCC	7	71.4%	4.00
Coffee Code	7	57.1%	3.57
ZNU	7	100.0%	2.86
Food Alliance	5	60.0%	3.50
VietFarm	5	0.0%	3.40
VCS	3	66.7%	3.67
Bluesign	2	0.0%	2.00
Certified Wildlife Friendly	2	0.0%	5.00
GRI	2	100.0%	3.50
Predator	2	0.0%	5.00
Step	2	0.0%	2.00
UNCTAD	2	100.0%	3.50
BSCI	1	0.0%	2.00
OECD	1	0.0%	2.00
UN Global Compact	1	0.0%	4.00
AWS	0	NA	NA
Blue Angel leather	0	NA	NA
CCB	0	NA	NA
CHINCA	0	NA	NA
ETI	0	NA	NA
regio.garantie	0	NA	NA

Standard	Reported criteria	Percentage of repeated extracts	Matching between criteria and provided extract (0-5)
Seychelles	0	NA	NA
SGLS	0	NA	NA
SLCP	0	NA	NA
WFTO	0	NA	NA
Xertifix	0	NA	NA

Table 3 provides the same analysis for the gender criteria. The number of reported criteria is generally lower, considering that the ITC Standards Map has 22 gender criteria that can be reported. For this set of criteria, four were not reported by any standard:

- "Criteria on upgrading the status of and wages for traditional areas of women's work"
- "Criteria relating on distribution networks and access to markets / buyers for women"
- "Criteria on access to financial services for women (payment, credit, savings, subsidies)"
- "Criteria on increased access to finance and support services for women entrepreneurs"

It could be further analyzed by the ITC team if these criteria are only relevant for some specific set of standards, or if their content is already or could be covered by extending the description or guidance of another criteria.

The results indicate that the excerpts provided by VSS organizations to demonstrate the fulfillment of gender-related criteria are highly plausible. These findings contradict a subjective observation from a stakeholder who holds a critical perspective on the documentation of the gender criteria. Moreover, among the 24 reporting VSS, only three (Step, Bioknospe, OECD) exhibit a high level of repeated extracts and low levels of matching in their provided extracts. This observation may suggest that the descriptions and guidance of the gender related criteria are clearer and exhibit less overlap compared to the soil criteria.

Table 3. Number of reported gender criteria per Standard, percentage of repeated extract and average adherence score

Standard	Reported criteria	Percentage of repeated extracts	Average adherence score (0-5)
BSCI	13	30.8%	3.69
Step	9	66.7%	2.78
WFTO	9	66.7%	3.78
CCB	8	75.0%	3.75
SAFA	8	62.5%	3.75
SLCP	8	25.0%	4.75
GRI	7	28.6%	3.29
UEBT	6	83.3%	3.50
UN Global Compact	6	33.3%	2.83
Xertifix	6	66.7%	3.17
Coffee Code	5	60.0%	3.60
ZNU	4	75.0%	3.00
ARSO	3	0.0%	3.33
Bioknospe	3	66.7%	2.33
Bluesign	3	66.7%	3.67
OECD	3	66.7%	2.33

Seychelles	3	0.0%	3.00
UNCTAD	3	66.7%	3.00
VCS	3	100.0%	4.00
ETI	2	0.0%	3.00
ProTerra Europe	2	0.0%	2.50
CHINCA	1	0.0%	2.00
IP-Suisse	1	0.0%	3.00
OFDC	1	0.0%	0.00
AWS	0	NA	NA
Blue Angel leather	0	NA	NA
Certified Wildlife Friendly	0	NA	NA
CNOPCC	0	NA	NA
Food Alliance	0	NA	NA
GlobalGAP	0	NA	NA
IFOAM	0	NA	NA
Predator	0	NA	NA
regio.garantie	0	NA	NA
SGLS	0	NA	NA
VietFarm	0	NA	NA

Conducting a similar analysis by criteria (Table 4) enables the identification of criteria that are more susceptible to having repeated extract.

Table 4. Total number of standards reporting the criteria, total number and percentage of repeated extracts per criteria, average adherence score per criteria, and percentage of degree of intensity reported (when requested).

Variable	Reported total	Repeated total	Percentage of repeated extracts	Adherence score average	Reported intensity percentage	Reported intensity criteria
Soil: general principle	19	7	36.8%	3.63	NA	0
Criteria on soil erosion	14	9	64.3%	3.64	7.1%	14
Criteria on soil conservation	13	12	92.3%	3.77	NA	0
Criteria on soil quality, productivity and biodiversity	12	8	66.7%	3.25	NA	0
Criteria on soil nutrients	15	9	60.0%	3.40	NA	0
Criteria on soil contamination	16	6	37.5%	3.56	25.0%	16
Criteria on soil preparation for specific crops / plant spacing	7	4	57.1%	2.00	NA	0
Criteria on soil enhancement by crop rotation or intercropping	14	6	42.9%	4.64	NA	0
Criteria on soil enhancement by use of cover crops	13	6	46.2%	4.62	NA	0
Criteria on soil compaction	9	5	55.6%	3.13	12.5%	8
Other criteria relating to soil	6	2	33.3%	NA	NA	0

As mentioned earlier, the primary reasons for full or partial duplication of extracts can be attributed to the descriptions and guidance provided in the Standard's Map criteria or may arise from the structure of VSS standard catalogues, where a single extract may cover several criteria or include general statements related to specific criteria.

Specific examples (Table 6) follow these conclusions after presenting the quantitative analysis. As presented in Table 4 above, the criterion of soil conservation shows the highest percentage of repeated extracts across the VSS in our sample. The reason is because the description/guidance of soil conservation, as it currently is in the Standards Map, overlaps with other criteria, such as soil erosion, soil nutrients, soil quality ⁷. Other more specific criteria such as soil contamination have less risk of overlapping with other criteria, even though it was identified that its description and guidance overlaps with criteria on soil conservation as they both mention actions to prevent salinization, alkalization, and acidification. With soil erosion, the duplication occurs because the description and guidance of soil erosion includes also chemical soil contamination, opening the door for a duplication of extracts. The full detail is presented in Table 7A in the annexes.

An additional test of data completion was done for the reported level of intensity for the three related soil criteria of soil erosion, soil contamination, and soil compaction Table 4). This scan identified low rates of completion for these items. For some indicators (specifically 3 for soil) the guidance provided in the standards map specifies three different levels of intensity. The three levels of intensity are 1. Measures, 2. Monitor over time, and 3. Prevent. This information can help users of the Standards Map to better understand the standards’ coverage for these criteria. However, as one can observe in the last two columns of Table 4, the percentage of VSS reporting this item is low and could potentially be improved.

Table 5 summarizes the analysis for the gender criteria. From all reported 18 criteria⁸, 9 showed low levels of repeated extracts and 9 showed high levels. Regarding the matching score of the extracts, only the criteria on integration of women migrants in labor force received an average score of 2.5, all other are above 3, reflecting a high level of matching of the shared extract to the description and guidance of the criteria. The criterion with the highest percentage of repeated extracts was the criterion on “female workers’ entitlement to breaks (e.g. meals/breastfeeding breaks)”, the reason for this is that it overlaps with the description and guidance of the criteria “Criteria on women’s access to health and safety services”, and “Criteria on family-friendly policies to increase the labor force participation of women”, especially on the point related to breastfeeding breaks. Similarly, to the soil criteria, those general criteria also showed high levels of overlap, specifically:

- Criteria on gender policies at work - general principles
- Criteria relating to women’s rights at work
- Gender issues: general principle
- Criteria on gender policies and best practices
-

Table 5. Total number of standards reporting the criteria, total number and percentage of repeated extracts per criteria, average adherence score per criteria.

Variable	Reported total	Repeated total	Percentage of repeated extracts	Adherence score average
Criteria on gender policies at work - general principles	14	10	71.4%	3.29
Criteria relating to women’s rights at work	12	8	66.7%	4.00
Criteria relating to sexual exploitation / harassment	18	4	22.2%	3.17
Criteria on women’s access to health and safety services	7	2	28.6%	3.86

⁷ Review the Excel table complementary document for details comparing this criterion to all other soil related criteria, sheet soil full analysis

⁸ Only 18 of 22 gender criteria were reported by at least one standard

Variable	Reported total	Repeated total	Percentage of repeated extracts	Adherence score average
Criteria on scope of female workers' rights and benefits applicable equally to all types of female workers (full time, seasonal, part time, migrants, coming from minority groups, etc.)	2	1	50.0%	3.00
Criteria on management systems practices to monitor, evaluate and remediate gender specific issues	2	0	0.0%	3.00
Criteria to reduce the gender wage gap	1	0	0.0%	3.00
Criteria on female workers' entitlement to breaks (e.g. meals/breastfeeding breaks)	4	4	100.0%	4.00
Criteria for assessment of female workers performance (for promotion, trainings)	5	1	20.0%	3.20
Criteria on incentives to women to develop their careers (e.g. specific training)	2	1	50.0%	4.50
Criteria on family-friendly policies to increase the labour force participation of women	7	2	28.6%	3.43
Criteria on integration of women migrants in labour force	2	0	0.0%	2.50
Criteria relating to factoring gender considerations in impacts and risks assessment of production	5	3	60.0%	3.80
Criteria on ensuring participation of women/minorities in management	4	1	25.0%	3.75
Criteria on development assistance policies which promote the economic role of women	2	0	0.0%	4.00
Gender issues: general principle	16	12	75.0%	2.63
Criteria on gender policies and best practices	11	8	72.7%	3.64
Criteria on factoring gender equity considerations in stakeholder engagement process	3	2	66.7%	3.00
Criteria on upgrading the status of and wages for traditional areas of womens work	0	0	NA	NA
Criteria relating on distribution networks and access to markets / buyers for women	0	0	NA	NA
Criteria on access to financial services for women (payment, credit, savings, subsidies)	0	0	NA	NA
Criteria on increased access to finance and support services for women entrepreneurs	0	0	NA	NA

Table 6 presents some examples of repeated extracts, including those showing higher and lower levels of specificity and matching. The full set of repeated extracts and the matching analysis is summarized in the complementary excel documents⁹. These excel matrix also summarize possible reasons of duplication per criteria for soil.

Table 6. Examples of repeated criteria by standards

Standard	Criteria	Extract	Details
WFTO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Criteria relating to women's rights at work - Criteria relating to sexual exploitation / harassment 	"Violence/sexual harassment in your organization: You have a system to enable confidential reporting of violence, harassment or sexual abuse and you follow up and resolve any such incidents."	Both criteria were reported as immediate and explicit.
GlobalGAP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Soil: general principle - Criteria on soil conservation 	"Good soil husbandry ensures the long-term fertility of the soil, aids yield, and contributes to profitability. Not applicable in the case of crops that are not grown directly in soil (e.g. hydroponic or potted plants)."	Both criteria were reported as immediate and explicit

⁹ Sheet soil full analysis.

Standard	Criteria	Extract	Details
UEBT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Criteria on soil quality, productivity and biodiversity - Criteria on soil nutrients 	<p>"2.3.4. (Critical stepwise) (For cultivation) Information on soil structure, fertility and nutrient contents, stability, moisture and drainage conditions in cultivation sites is gathered through soil analysis, existing studies and other scientific or local knowledge.</p> <p>2.3.5. (Critical) (For cultivation) Practices are adopted to maintain or improve soil fertility and nutrient contents, by for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of local varieties better adapted to soil conditions in the cultivation sites • Consideration of nutrient requirements of the cultivated species and compensation for nutrient loss • Cover soil with appropriate cover crops or organic matter (e.g. mulch, crop residue, green leaf manure, vermicompost, neem cake) • Crop rotation plans that include planting nitrogen-fixing species, crops with different soil use, and plants with deep roots and good foliage that decomposes into biomass • Establish fallow periods • Intercropping or inter-tillage with grasses, oilseeds, etc. <p>2.3.6. (Critical) Practices are adopted to conserve and improve soil stability and drainage, by for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planting tree borders to reduce soil erosion • Revegetate steep areas • Planting cover vegetation that contributes to aggregate soil stability • Not using fire to clear vegetation when preparing fields • Avoiding use of heavy machinery, especially in areas with wet, fragile soils or with high risk of soil erosion • Building terraces and other natural structures to reduce land slope • Digging trenches, water canals and other natural structures to contribute to drainage <p>2.3.8. (Regular stepwise) Practices to conserve or improve soil and water conditions are assessed for performance and impact and adjusted with a view to continuous improvement, changing conditions, and/or addressing unintended negative effects."</p>	Both criteria were reported as immediate and explicit

To close this section, Table 7 summarizes the main reasons for duplication for the 8 criteria on “Soil”. The criteria highlighted in green showed low levels of repeated extracts (less than 40%) those in yellow had mid-levels of repeated extracts, between 40% and 60%, and those highlighted in red had high levels of repeated extracts, higher than 60%. The table shows the total number of exact matches found as well as the total number of partial matches. The table also lists those extracts that we found not to match the criteria. A potential general reason for the overlap of extracts is provided for each criterion. The details comparing one criterion against each other for possible reasons of overlap is found in the complementary Excel matrix.¹⁰

Table 7. Number of partial or exact overlap of extracts and possible reasons for this overlap

Principle	Detail
Soil: general principle	6 exact matches 1 partial match 2 extracts did not relate to the criteria

¹⁰ Sheet soil full analysis.

Principle	Detail
	Possible reasons for overlap: standards report any action to conserve soil as a soil management plan. Some standards descriptions are too general
Criteria on soil erosion	It had in total 5 exact matches and 4 partial matches with the extracts from other criteria. Possible reason for overlap includes the comprehensive list of erosion causes, covering topics from other criteria, such as soil contamination, soil conservation, soil quality
Criteria on soil conservation	8 exact matches 4 partial matches 1 shared extract did not relate to the criteria Possible reason for overlap: Soil conservation includes, directly and indirectly, all the other criteria. This criterion could be deleted and covered also in the soil management plan
Criteria on soil quality, productivity and biodiversity	4 exact match 4 partial match 1 extract does not match the criteria Possible reason for overlap: it shares concepts from other criteria such as conservation of biodiversity and productivity
Criteria on soil nutrients	5 exact match 4 partial match Possible reason for overlap: organic matter conservation is covering in more than one criteria. Soil nutrient conservation relates also with productivity, this term overlaps with other criteria, such as soil quality and soil conservation.
Criteria on soil contamination	3 exact match 3 partial match Possible reason for overlap: this criteria share goals with other criteria in the prevention of salinization, acidification, and management of fertilization
Criteria on soil preparation for specific crops / plant spacing	4 partial match Possible reason for overlap: soil preparation is a general concept which include practices in soil nutrition, soil quality, soil compaction, cover crops, crop rotation.
Criteria on soil enhancement by crop rotation or intercropping	1 exact match 5 partial match 1 extract does not correspond to the description or guidance of the criteria Possible reason for overlap: these criteria share goals with other criteria related to nutrient and organic matter conservation. This relates also to productivity and fertility conservation, which is a goal shared by more than one criterion
Criteria on soil enhancement by use of cover crops	3 exact match 3 partial match Possible reason for overlap: cover crops is a practice related to preservation of nutrients, organic matter, and prevention of erosion, which are also covered in other criteria, such as soil nutrients, soil conservation, soil quality.
Criteria on soil compaction	2 exact match 3 partial match Possible reason for overlap: the use of heavy machinery is also a cause of erosion, and lost of soil structure. This last also relates to nutrients availability and drainage. All these aspects are already covered in other criteria.

In sum: The ITC has formulated a comprehensive set of criteria (exceeding 1600), providing users with a clear understanding of the various VSS included. This enables them to make comparisons between standards based on this detailed set of criteria. These criteria encompass all key aspects within the three pillars of VSS: environmental, social, and economic sustainability and much more. This detailed set of criteria could be further enhanced through a review of their descriptions and guidance, aiming to mitigate overlaps, as observed in the case study on the soil-related criteria.

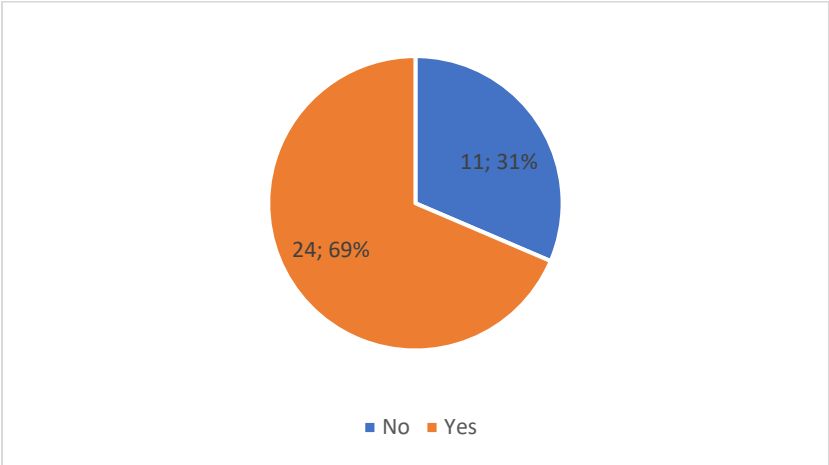
Another option would be to adjust the structure of the dataset to include a primary criterion indicating whether a VSS generally covers a particular sustainability issue. Then, determine a subset of unique secondary criteria that precisely measure how a VSS addresses this issue. In doing so, it may be possible to further avoid the overlap of certain criteria in reporting with others that are more specific. An

alternative approach to avoiding duplication in the descriptions and guidance could involve either omitting those general criteria or making them more explicit. For instance, In the case of the general principle criteria for soil, it might be advisable not to allow the listing of a set of activities as evidence. Instead, insist on the mention of a comprehensive plan in the guidelines. According to our analysis such a gradual adaption of the criteria set could make an additional contribution to ensuring the high relevance as well as the manageability of the ITC Standards Map in the future.

Timeliness

We used the selected sample to conduct two types of empirical tests. The first test was designed to provide a more comprehensive assessment of the timeliness of the ITC Standards Map database. In this test, we retrieved information from the websites of the VSS to determine the date of their last updates. We then compared this information to the versions included in the database provided by ITC to identify whether it featured the most recent versions or if it contained outdated data (Figure 7). The table with the detailed information can be found in the Annexes (Table 7A). Results show that 69% of all the standards are updated. This means that the last version of the standard reported in the Standards Map database matches the last version published in the website of the VSS.

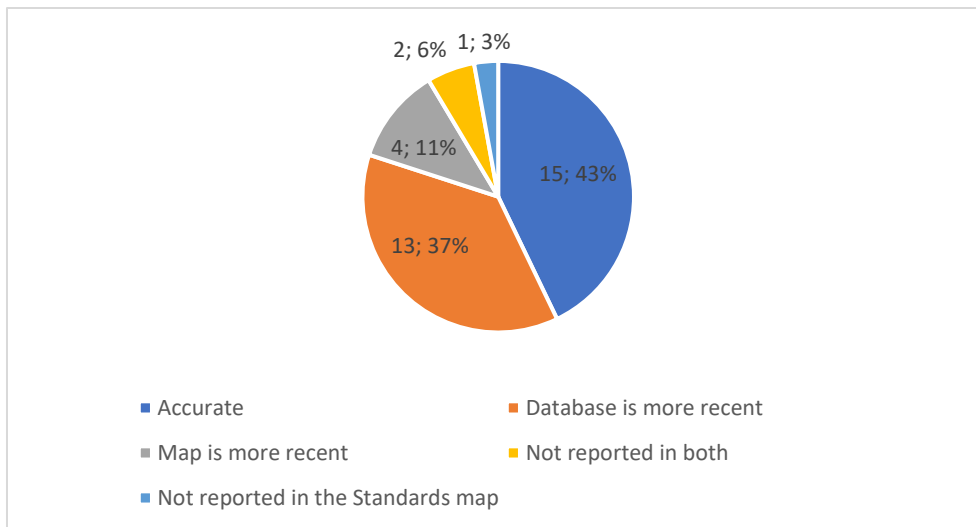
Figure 8. Percentage of standards with the last versions of the Standards Documents published in the Standards Map



For the second test, to measure internal timeliness, we compared the date of the last update reported on the ITC Standards map website¹¹ against the date reported in the database shared by ITC for this study. Results showed the same date of update for 48% (17) of the cases. For 28% (10) of the cases the date in the database was more recent than the one published in the published standards map, these dates varied from three years to one month. It is important to notice that only one Standard had the three years delay, this can occur for extraordinary reasons out of the control of the map’s team, and does not represent a threat to the quality of the map. For 11% (4) of the cases the date in the database was older than the date last updated in the standards map, the largest gap was for Singapore Green Labelling Scheme (SGLS), the gap was one year and three months. Only for IP-Suisse the date was reported in the database but not in the Standards map website (Figure 8). The table presenting the exact comparison can be found in the Annexes (Table 8A).

¹¹ database as reported by the knowledge center¹¹

Figure 9. Accuracy in last update in the Standards map (Public) and the Database (Shared by ITC for this study)



Transparency

Finally, we checked the information provided by the ITC Standards Map Knowledge Centre (<https://resources.standardsmap.org/knowledge/>). Here we find general information about the methodology and the data availability (last update). In addition, some documents about VSS in general and some tutorials about how to review and compare standards are presented. The tutorials also explain how VSS can use the ITC Standards Map for self-assessments.

The areas covered in the methodology section are:

- How to add standards to the map?
- How are benchmarks developed?
- Who enters and reviews the data?
- How frequently is data updated?
- Is data neutral?

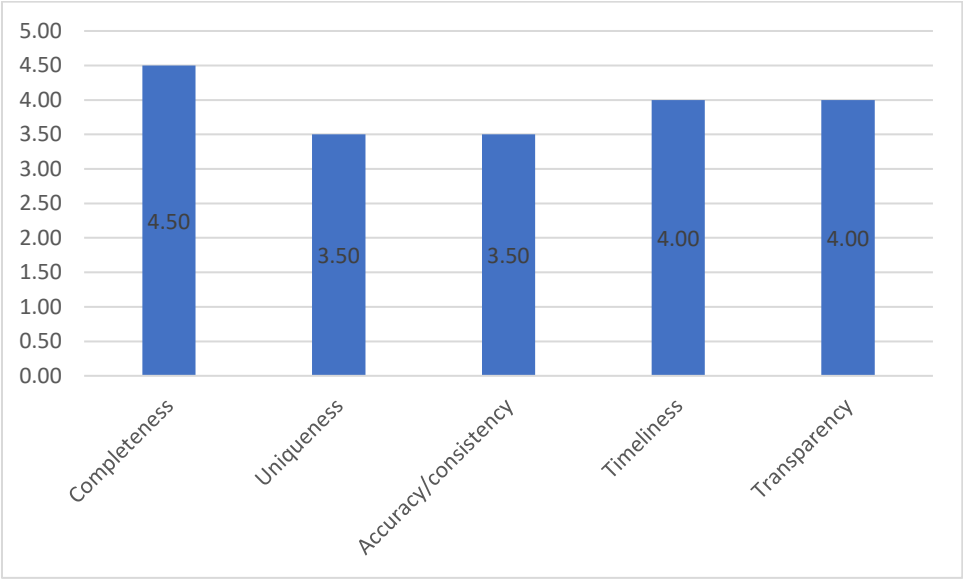
What's missing, however, is a detailed explanation of how the reviewing process is conducted and how decisions are made regarding whether or not a VSS meets a specific criterion. This is a crucial aspect that significantly affects the tool's reliability. While the ITC Standards Map is transparent to stakeholders and experts who work closely with the ITC Standards Map Team, there is room for improvement to enhance the transparency of this database for a broader audience, particularly those primarily using the front end of the database.

Overview Empirical Test

Lastly, based on the general analysis presented, we interpreted the results from all test and assigned a score between 1 and 5 to each of the evaluated data quality dimensions (see Figure 9). Completeness received the highest rating (4.5). The ITC Standards Map reports data with a high degree of standardization and homogeneity, achieving a completeness rate of over 95% for all possible fields that need to be reported across a wide range of VSS and sustainability issues. This results in a highly detailed information base on VSS. Uniqueness and accuracy both achieve a score of 3.5, as criteria description and guidance overlap sometimes, which leads for some criteria to a duplication of the information provided about VSS in the Standards Map. Inconsistencies on the coding of not applicable data were found. In terms of timeliness, it was evaluated as high (4.0). One observed discrepancy is the difference between the time of the last update registered in the database and the time of the last

update published in the knowledge center. The reasons for the scores of accuracy/consistency and transparency have been discussed in detail in their respective sections.

Figure 10. Final score (1-5) based on the empirical analysis, by quality criteria



ITC STANDARDS MAP AND DUE DILIGENCE

The evaluation report also aimed to assess the relevance of the Standards Map database in the context of due diligence. Specifically, it sought to determine its capacity to provide valuable insights into environmental, social, and governance (ESG) risks and opportunities, as well as its suitability for presenting due diligence criteria.

While the most prominent due diligence policy frameworks, such as those developed by the UN and the OECD, started as voluntary governance frameworks around a decade ago, a significant shift has occurred in recent years. This transformation is characterized by national governments and the European Union's (EU) efforts to translate these transnational policy frameworks into mandatory laws. This momentum has notably accelerated since 2017. Countries like France and Germany, among others, have taken the lead in developing their own mandatory due diligence frameworks, with a primary focus on human rights issues. However, especially within the EU, we observe highly advanced legislative processes extending these due diligence frameworks to address a broader spectrum of concerns, including environmental, social, and governance risks.

One fundamental difference between voluntary and mandatory due diligence is the following: In voluntary procedures, companies have more flexibility to develop their own strategies for integrating VSS. They can, for example, use these standards to demonstrate that they have effectively managed specific risks within their value chains. With the advent of new mandatory developments, this flexibility undergoes a significant transformation. Companies are now required to adhere to specified due diligence standards as prescribed by law, reducing the latitude for independent customization.

One major driving force behind the development of mandatory due diligence obligations was the recognition that voluntary governance by companies often leaned towards greenwashing efforts. As a result, companies that incurred the costs of truly sustainable business practices faced competitive disadvantages. As a result, the EU sought to establish a level playing field that would ensure similar conditions for all companies.

While most stakeholders anticipate the continuous and significant role of VSS in managing sustainability issues across global value chains, the specific details of VSS within the emerging system of mandatory due diligence laws are yet to be fully determined.

Rise of Due Diligence laws will drive demand for comprehensive information about the credibility of VSS

One possible pathway is that EU legislation recognizes that, in the implementation of due diligence laws, VSS possess extensive experience, knowledge, and skills that significantly facilitate the execution of sustainable practices. This approach aligns with how the EU has dealt with other regulatory frameworks by formally acknowledging VSS as a tool for meeting due diligence obligations. However, it's important to note that such recognition will not be uniformly applied to all types of VSS. Instead, it will be contingent on specific credibility criteria, potentially imposing stringent requirements for VSS to gain acceptance.

In this scenario, one can foresee a growing demand from companies and stakeholders interested in distinguishing VSS according to their strength and credibility. In contrast to earlier practices, especially in mandatory due diligence, there is now a liability component. This means that companies not thoroughly fulfilling their due diligence obligations may be held accountable, either through civil courts or by public enforcement agencies. Given this, there is a specific pressure on the audit and verification systems of VSS to ensure that the results they produce are reliable and in line with the new mandatory legal requirements for proof of due diligence. Legal initiatives such as the tightening of green claims add to this challenge, highlighting the importance of reliable audit systems.

Against this background, one of the key informational demands that the ITC Standards Map will be expected to fulfill in the future is to provide data and insights about VSS in a format that enables interested stakeholders to develop their own benchmarking tools. These tools would facilitate the comparison of the credibility of various standard systems, with a particular emphasis on the criteria employed as recognition benchmarks in EU and international laws, including recent trade agreements.

ITC Standards Map is well furnished to provide information about the credibility of VSS

At this point, it's important to note that the development of such criteria has been a long-standing concern for the ITC Standards Map (see for example the section on assurance in the current DET). Furthermore, external initiatives, such as Siegelklarheit by the GIZ, have undertaken the development of specific systems to benchmark VSS according to their credibility. In the course of these initiatives, the ITC criteria were aligned with the ISEAL credibility principles. Consequently, the ITC Standards Map is already relatively well-prepared to meet these informational requirements. ISEAL is in the final stages of overhauling its credibility principles. Once this process is complete, we would recommend assessing the extent to which it makes sense to again align the ITC Standards Map criteria with this new development. According to the ITC team, this coordination is already in place, and therefore, we see no need for further improvements on this point

Rise of due diligence laws will drive demand on information about the coverage of substantive sustainability issues through VSS

VSS have the potential to facilitate the proliferation of due diligence principles throughout the value chain, extending down to the producer level. Many VSS have already started integrating due diligence principles into their standards catalogues, benchmarking their systems against due diligence requirements, and taking steps to align their standard systems with these principles. This alignment has primarily occurred in the realm of human rights, especially due to recent legal developments in this area. However, driven by new or proposed legal developments such as the EU Action Plan on

Deforestation (EUDR) or the European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS), this trend is gaining momentum and expanding to encompass the broader scope of environmental, social, and economic sustainability.

Most crucially, this shift is reflected in the ESRS which outline ten areas of sustainable development on which companies in the EU are required to report and apply due diligence approaches.¹²

Given this dynamic trend towards the expansion of due diligence regulations throughout value chains, especially within the EU, and particularly when these proposals become actual laws, there is a growing demand to understand how VSS align with these developments. Due diligence governance is well on its way to becoming the preeminent framework for the sustainable management of global supply chains. These frameworks extend their scope beyond human rights, encompassing the entire spectrum of sustainable development and addressing Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) risks. This transition is already evident in various VSS systems.

The challenge for the ITC Standards Map will be to systematically capture and reflect this evolving landscape. The demand for information on the extent to which VSS systems integrate due diligence principles, covering not only human rights but the broader scope of sustainable development and ESG risks, is expected to increase significantly.

[ITC Standards Map is well furnished to provide information about the coverage of substantive sustainability issues through VSS](#)

Clearly, our analysis of this question has proven that the ITC Standards Map offers extensive coverage of sustainability policies across environmental, social, and economic sustainability areas. Companies or other stakeholders aiming to enhance the sustainability of their value chains within specific sustainability domains where they've identified room for improvement in their due diligence process can efficiently search for suitable VSS within the ITC Standards Map database.

Recommendation

We currently advise proceeding with only one additional step in this matter. During the expert interviews, the criteria related to climate issues were highlighted as one area that could benefit from further elaboration. When reviewing these criteria, we agree with this perspective. It would be advisable to check whether there are any significant developments within VSS systems on climate mitigation efforts that are currently not covered or inadequately addressed by the existing criteria set.

[Rise of due diligence laws will drive demand on information about the insertion of due diligence type of procedures into VSS Systems](#)

VSS and due diligence policy frameworks exhibit substantial overlap in addressing core sustainability concerns. However, their procedural governance structures diverge significantly. In essence, VSS utilize audits in various forms to gauge how well certified entities have implemented their policies and regulations. On the other hand, due diligence governance revolves around the process of identifying,

¹² These areas are categorized into environmental, social, and governance risks:

Environmental Risks: 1. Climate Change, 2. Pollution, 3. Water and Marine Resources, 4. Biodiversity and Ecosystems, 5. Resource Use and Circular Economy

Social Risks: 6. Own Workforce, 7. Workers in the Value Chain, 8. Affected Communities, 9. Consumers and End-Users

Governance Risks: 10. Good Business Conduct, which includes principles such as reporting on lobbying activities and anti-bribery measures.

assessing, and prioritizing potential risks and uncertainties associated with defined sustainability objectives. The primary goal of due diligence is to proactively handle and mitigate these risks, thus minimizing their impact on the organization.

In contrast to VSS, due diligence frameworks according to the OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Business Conduct¹³ typically encompass six procedural steps:

- Embed responsible business conduct into policies and management systems
- Identify and assess actual and potential adverse impacts associated with the enterprise's operations, products, or services
- Cease, prevent, and mitigate adverse impacts
- Track implementation and results
- Communicate how impacts are addressed
- Provide for or cooperate in remediation when appropriate

This process also includes monitoring identified risks and providing remedies where necessary. Due diligence is therefore less of a checkbox tool focused solely on assessing compliance with standards; it's a tool designed to foster a deep understanding of value chains. It uncovers potential and actual sustainability issues within these value chains. In essence, it's about building a comprehensive perspective of sustainability throughout the supply chain.

The six steps outlined for due diligence processes offer a general framework for organizing an effective due diligence regime. However, it's essential to understand that each national or EU law specifies these guidelines with specific legal requirements. For instance, one key aspect to consider is what constitutes sufficient data to fulfill the due diligence obligation, particularly in the risk analysis phase (step 2). The data requirements can vary significantly among different laws.

Take, for example, the new EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR), where data requirements are particularly stringent. Companies must provide precise information, including the exact origin (polygon of plots) of agricultural commodities, as proof of fulfilling their due diligence obligations. In contrast, other laws, like the proposed new ESRS, offer more flexibility. While they suggest detailed metrics to be used in the risk analysis, there's more flexibility in the choice of appropriate data.

A critical concern for companies regarding their due diligence responsibilities will revolve around the nature of data and reporting they must present to public enforcement agencies as evidence of compliance. For VSS, the extent to which the data requirements in their risk analysis correspond to the demands of public agencies will determine their potential significance in upcoming due diligence systems.

As previously explained, risk assessments constitute just one facet of the entire due diligence process. With growing legislative emphasis, also the definition of the other steps in due diligence is increasingly determined by national and supranational authorities. Consequently, due diligence policies will become fragmented. While they adhere to a common framework, they will also diverge significantly in legal particulars.

For companies seeking to employ VSS to meet their due diligence requirements, there will be a growing need for information that offers an overview of how various VSS align their standard systems with these complex developments. It is the role of the ITC to provide this information, which can then be further utilized by subsequent initiatives to develop benchmarking tools that provide more specific

¹³ <https://mneguidelines.oecd.org//OECD-Due-Diligence-Guidance-for-Responsible-Business-Conduct.pdf>

information on the extent to which VSS have aligned their systems to different due diligence policies and laws.

ITC Standards Map shows some gaps in providing information about the insertion of due diligence type of procedures into VSS Systems

To what extent have existing Voluntary Sustainability Standards (VSS) integrated the various procedural steps for organizing robust due diligence procedures into their standard and verification systems? The ITC Standards Map exhibits some gaps in addressing this issue, as the criteria of the database are presently organized. This gap can be observed in four main aspects.

First, the explicit set of criteria primarily focuses on human rights due diligence but somewhat neglects other processes related to social and environmental governance. As explained above, current legislation in the EU drives a development which extends due diligence approaches to the management of global value chains beyond the area of human rights to a broad set of ESG risks. We analyzed the most comprehensive documents in this area and we identified 10 areas of sustainable development on which companies in the EU are required to report and apply due diligence approaches (see following Table 3).

Table 8. Sustainability Areas in Due Diligence and Sustainability Reporting Frameworks

Environmental Risks	Social Risks	Governance Risks
Climate Change	Own Workforce	Good Business Conduct
Pollution	Workers in the Value Chain	
Water and Marine Resources	Affected Communities	
Biodiversity and Ecosystems		
Resource Use and Circular Economy		
Deforestation		

With the current set of criteria ITC Standards Map primarily provides information on the extent to which VSS have integrated procedural steps related to human rights due diligence into their systems concerning their own workforce and affected communities.¹⁴ However, stakeholders interested in understanding the extent to which VSS have integrated due diligence processes for the other mentioned areas of sustainable development that are part of the above table into their standard systems cannot be adequately assessed based on the existing criteria.

Second, when examining existing voluntary and mandatory due diligence frameworks, it's apparent that some important information is missing. As mentioned earlier, risk analysis is at the heart of the due diligence process, and legislators will more or less precisely regulate what data they accept as adequate proof of due diligence. Therefore, the ITC Standards Map should include a criterion

¹⁴ Criteria on human rights: general principle
 Criteria on policies and procedures addressing human rights
 Criteria on ongoing processes for human rights due diligence
 Criteria on human rights due diligence in conflict-affected areas
 Criteria on respect international humanitarian law when operating in high-risk areas (e.g. armed conflict)
 Criteria on human rights policy endorsed at appropriate level (seniority& budget)
 Criteria on human rights violations grievance mechanism
 Criteria on grievance committee being gender balanced in its composition
 Criteria on grievance procedures being transparent and accessible
 Criteria on using independent expertise to assess human rights violations risks and adequate policies to address them

documenting the potential data requirements for risk analysis stipulated by VSS systems. Most importantly, the new EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR) mandates businesses to incorporate geospatial data, including polygons of plots, from their sourcing locations into their risk analysis. However, as of now, the DET lacks criteria that document which VSS have already integrated this data requirement into their standard systems.

Third, some VSS have integrated requirements into their system that demand certified units to expand due diligence obligations beyond own operations. For instance, consider that Bonsucro commits its members to the principles of continuous improvement and respect for human rights in sugarcane supply chains, act to embed this commitment into their operations and business relationships, and communicate their progress to stakeholders. In essence, Bonsucro requires that its certified mills extend their human rights due diligence processes beyond their own workforce to encompass both certified and non-certified entities up their value chains.¹⁵ For companies seeking support from VSS to meet their due diligence requirements, this is crucial information that is currently insufficiently covered by the ITC Standards Map criteria

Fourth, recent due diligence legislation and reporting requirements explicitly emphasize the need for a thorough integration of due diligence processes into a company's business model and strategy. In the current DET, we find criteria "Criteria on human rights policy endorsed at the appropriate level (seniority & budget)." However, in the context of environmental due diligence legal frameworks, regulatory proposal by the EU on ESG risks explicitly contain specific regulations to assess risks and business opportunities and to develop incentive-based schemes to promote more climate and environmentally-friendly production systems. This may, for example, extend to establishing internal carbon pricing systems or specific bonuses for managers related to the achievement of predefined sustainability goals. We find that also these aspects seem not be sufficiently represented in the current set of ITC criteria.

Recommendation

Considering these four informational gaps, we suggest implementing the following changes to the current DET to enhance the ITC Standards Map's capability to provide relevant information on Due Diligence and VSS.

1. Add criterion on data requirements for due diligence processes and reporting, in particular criteria on geospatial data, including polygons of plots (take Rainforest Alliance as an example)
2. Add criterion on extending due diligence requirements for up-stream value chain partners (take Bonsucro above as example)
3. Add criterion covering the aspect of integration of responsible business conduct and due diligence policies into business models and strategies.
4. Add more explicit criteria on environmental, social and governance due diligence processes This pertains to the most comprehensive potential expansions of the current DET 10. We recommend incorporating these criteria into Section B of the DET. A preliminary proposal of how the changes could be implemented are presented in the following Table 4.

¹⁵ See point: 1.2.3 in the following document:

https://bonsucro.com/wp-content/uploads/SCH_Bonsucro-Production-Standard-V5.2-July-2023-ENG.pdf

Table 9. Potential to adjust DET 10 concerning new Due Diligence Policies beyond the Area of Human Rights.

Section B in DET	Updates to Section B in DET 10?				
	Requirements to integrate goals related to "... "into business strategy and models	Requirements to identify and assess risks and opportunities related to "... "	Requirements to define targets related to "... "	Requirements to define and implement policies specifically designed to mitigate the identified risks related to...	Requirements to assess financial impacts on the enterprise arising from risks and opportunities related to "... "
B2.1. Soil	Add Criterion	Revise or Replace Criteria (30106, 300453)	Add Criterion	Add Criterion	Add Criterion
B2.2. Water	Add Criterion	Revise or Replace Criteria (2037, 300455, 700414, 700415)	Add Criterion	Add Criterion	Add Criterion
B2.3. Biodiversity	Add Criterion	Revise or Replace Criteria (30106, 4092, 30020, 30024, 300547)	Add Criterion	Add Criterion	Add Criterion
B2.4. Forest	Revise or Replace Criteria (700353)	Revise or Replace Criteria (30106)	Revise or Replace Criteria (700338)	Add Criterion	Add Criterion
B2.5. Input	Add Criterion	Revise or Replace Criteria (30106)	Add Criterion	Add Criterion	Add Criterion
B2.6. Waste	Add Criterion	Revise or Replace Criteria (30106)	Add Criterion	Add Criterion	Add Criterion
B.2.7. Energy	Add Criterion	Add Criterion	Add Criterion	Add Criterion	Add Criterion
B2.8. Climate	Add Criterion	Add Criterion	Add Criterion	Add Criterion	Add Criterion
B6. Corruption (Ethics)	Criterion Present (34000)	Criterion Present (34000)	Add Criterion	Criterion Present (34000, 10186)	Add Criterion
B4. Circular Economy (Sustainable Business)	Add Criterion	Revise or Replace Criteria (700504)	Add Criterion	Add Criterion	Add Criterion

The table above identifies areas where the ongoing DET would require supplementation to be able to capture the extent to which VSS organizations are aligning their standard systems with the new requirements of Due Diligence and ESG Risk regulations. This table represents a comprehensive and very detailed solution, and it's essential to underscore that its implementation would entail a substantial investment of both labor and financial resources. Precise definitions and guidelines must be developed for a number of approximately 40 new criteria. Additionally, these new criteria would need to be applied across a broad spectrum of VSS. Embarking on this path will be crucial to safeguard the relevance of the ITC Standard's Map, especially if the new Due Diligence and ESG Risk regulations will in the future lead to significant changes in the institutional designs of VSS. However, the exact extent of these adaptations cannot be conclusively assessed at this point in time. As an initial step, we recommend engaging in a dialogue with VSS organizations, perhaps through a brief online survey, to assess the extent to which they already have or are currently planning to adapt their standards to the new regulatory environment. Based on this feedback, a consultancy or the ITC team could prioritize certain potential changes outlined in Table 4, or alternatively, consolidate specific criteria at a broader level. Apparently, the ITC team has already initiated a stakeholder process to align the DET with the new Due Diligence and ESG Risk regulations. We are not aware to what extent such a survey is part of this effort.

Last but not least, it is essential to note that the most significant EU-level developments, such as the new EU Sustainability Reporting Standards and EU due diligence regulations, have not yet fully entered into force. Given the upcoming elections next year, it remains uncertain in what form, or if at all, these frameworks will eventually become EU law. Hence, before contemplating any substantial alterations to the DET, we advise closely monitoring ongoing legal developments. Adjustments to the database should be made under the condition that the existing proposals on due diligence and ESG reporting materialize into actual EU laws.

FINAL EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The International Trade Centre's (ITC) Standards Map, initiated in 2011, has become the key global database for ca. 340 voluntary sustainability standards (VSS), covering diverse areas like environmental protection, labor rights, and business ethics. Supported by BMZ and SECO, the tool faces increasing scrutiny amid evolving regulations and a heightened attention to sustainability benchmarks. The primary objective of this report was to assess the relevance and quality of this data base to ensure its fitness for purpose in the future. Given the rapidly changing institutional and regulatory landscape, this evaluation also places a strong emphasis on the Standards Maps relevance in the context of due diligence.

The Terms of Reference (ToR) for this evaluation report defines relevance as the primary overarching assessment criterion. Relevance pertains to how directly applicable and beneficial the database and its contents are to its designated users, including companies, policymakers, researchers, and other stakeholders. To assess the relevance of the ITC Standards Map, we analyzed the performance of the data along the lines of five data quality dimensions: Comprehensiveness and uniqueness focus on the set of 1600+ sustainability criteria, while inter-coder reliability, accuracy, and consistency evaluate the data collection process. Timeliness and Transparency assesses the current and accessible nature of the data for users.

In the following we consolidate the main findings into a set of recommendations designed to ensure and improve the relevance and quality of the data base and make it fit for purpose for the future. We structure the recommendation section along the lines of the above outlined data quality dimension.

Comprehensiveness

In general, comprehensiveness stands out as a critical quality dimension for any database. Specifically, the ITC Standards Map should be deemed comprehensive to the extent that its set of criteria used to document the characteristics and attributes of VSS covers all sustainability issues relevant to its users. Our results indicate that this is indeed the case. All interviewed experts appreciate the high level of detail that the ITC Standards Map achieves in providing information about VSS. Moreover, there is no alternative database to which its users could refer. In this sense, the ITC Standards Map is a unique tool crucially relied upon by many benchmarking and assessment activities related to VSS.

The interviewed stakeholders mentioned a few issues that from their individual perspectives could be added to the data base. Suggestions include adding criteria related to the economic status of certified entities, expanding coverage of greenhouse gas emissions, incorporating on-the-ground uptake details, refining criteria for new due diligence obligations, and better inclusion of VSS from developing countries. Additionally, a proposal is made to introduce a layer identifying which actors in the value chain are obligated by VSS.

While each suggested point could potentially enhance the ITC Standards Map, our assessment indicates that the missing elements have either recently been incorporated or represent incremental improvements to existing information. It's crucial to note that the inclusion of additional criteria requires significant resources, which we currently find better allocated to other priorities as we explain below.

Uniqueness

Especially for a database like the ITC Standards Map, which assesses and documents a tremendous amount of text-based qualitative data, it is crucial that the criteria used to structure this information do not overlap and are as clear as possible. If the criteria overlap or are unclear, there is a risk that the information about VSS they produce becomes either redundant or ambiguous. Our evaluation reveals that the ITC team has been highly successful in defining a comprehensive and distinct set of criteria. However, we also found that the quality of the criteria, along with their descriptions and guidance, may vary to some degree across different sections of the DET.

While no duplications can be identified in a direct comparison of the criteria, we have observed in some instances that the descriptions and guidance for individual criteria exhibit overlaps, leading to the generation of partially similar information about VSS. It must be noted that it presents an extremely complex analytical task to precisely delineate the scope of information addressed by each criterion within a group of criteria on the same overarching topic. In detail, our analysis shows that a thematic section of DET may combine various criteria with a broader focus with various criteria with a narrower focus. The issue that may arise here is that the information generated by these criteria becomes redundant across the criteria. It is important to note that the information about VSS thus generated is not, in the strict sense of the word, incorrect or faulty, but it may become to some extent inefficiently organized.

Considering that the ITC Standards Map already utilizes an extensive system of 1600+ criteria, and anticipating further expansion to encompass vital developments such as Due Diligence and ESG Risk regulations, we recommend commissioning a consultancy. The objective would be to identify areas where overlapping criteria can be consolidated without compromising the key strength of the ITC Standards Map as the most comprehensive data repository on VSS. While our study focused on a limited section of the entire database, our preliminary findings suggest that it may be possible to

reduce the number of criteria by 20% to 25%. This reduction would also create space to adapt the DET to address new challenges.

Inter-coder reliability

Inter-coder reliability refers to the degree of consistency in the application of the criteria in the ITC Standards Map among various experts, ensuring they are free from any bias in their data collection and classification. In our analyses, we could not identify systematic biases in the application of the criteria by different experts involved in the data collection processes. The interviewed stakeholders also rated this aspect relatively high, assigning it a score of 3.4 out of 5 points.

However, we discovered some technical inconsistencies regarding the format in which the data is currently reported. We understand that, in theory, the structure of the data protocol does not allow for empty fields. Nevertheless, there are instances where fields are left empty, albeit relatively rare. Further we found that data points that are not applicable to a particular VSS are documented in different formats across VSS by different experts.

All of this does not significantly compromise the quality of the data itself. But we also understand that, given the tremendous richness and value of the data presented in the ITC Standards Map, this database offers ample opportunities to employ the data for further analysis by interested stakeholders, researchers, or the ITC itself. To fully capitalize on these opportunities, it might be feasible to harmonize these aspects across the data. For future assessments, tightening the guidance documents on how to report on not covered and non-applicable data points could be considered.

We are not technical experts in database management, but we suggest that the technical staff carefully review the detailed findings outlined in the report regarding this issue. They should evaluate the possibility of implementing these corrections in a highly automated manner, such as by identifying and automatically replacing various formats with a harmonized one. Furthermore, the technical team could identify all empty fields, and the broader team could investigate the reasons for these missing values and make corrections if necessary. If ITC management comes to the conclusions that these tasks should not be put on top the existing workload – what we cannot assess in this report – we would advise to use a limited highly defined technical consultancy to fix these points. As these detected inconsistencies do not pose a risk to the database itself, this matter is not highly urgent.

Accuracy and Consistency

In this crucial data quality dimensions, we assessed the degree to which the data collection processes employed by ITC Standards Map generates correct and consistent results. We found for both evaluation criteria that this is the case for the large majority of data points that we analyzed. The quality of the data is typically accurate and consistent. The main issues that we found for a minor albeit not insignificant part of the data was that the extract provided by VSS organizations to justify the coverage of a particular criteria of the DET was in another document, or that the provided links to the VSS documents were not correct in the sense that the link could not be opened, or opened a different document or webpage than the one mentioned. Here, we recommend conducting an additional quality control throughout the database to ensure that the links are correct. These links are crucial, especially for stakeholders who use the ITC Standards Map as a starting point for further analysis.

Another key aspect we examined was the accuracy of the assessments made by the ITC Standards Map regarding whether a VSS fulfills specific criteria. In this context, it is important to note that these assessments involve a qualitative operation, and there will always be some room for interpretation.

Different stakeholders, with their diverse interests and perspectives, may nuance various solutions. Considering this, we once again observe that the ITC Standards Map attains a high level of accuracy. However, we also encountered some assessments that did not immediately align with our understanding of the underlying criteria. We assess this finding as non-critical, and therefore, we do not recommend undertaking a major systematic revision of the data aimed at correcting existing inaccuracies. However, as a beneficial step in the process to consolidate and rationalize certain aspects of the DET as mentioned above, it might be useful to review and enhance the clarity of individual criteria descriptions and guidance. This would further improve and facilitate future data collection processes.

Timeliness and Transparency

Our analysis has further demonstrated that the data presented in the database is, to a large extent, timely. The ITC has established a revision cycle of two years per VSS. Our results indicate that the ITC successfully adheres to this timeframe. It is worth noting that, according to our analysis, approximately 30 percent of the VSS covered by the ITC have updated their standards, but these updates have not yet been assessed by the database. With this information, it might be worthwhile for the ITC team to consider whether there are phases in standards development where a two-year coverage timeframe might be too broad.

Further, we found some differing time references between the information provided in the Standards Map back-end and the last update provided by the VSS on their websites. But here according to ITC an automated process has already been put in place that aligns this data.

The transparency of ITC Standards Map and especially the openness and willingness to cooperate on side of the ITC team has been highlighted as a key asset of the ITC Standards Map. Indeed, transparency is very high for stakeholders who directly engage with the team and delve into the data in detail. For outside users who primarily interact with the front-end of the database, some additional information about the data collection process could be included. This regards, in particular, the following areas to be included to the methodology section: How to add standards to the map? How are the assessments performed? Who enters and reviews the data? How frequently is the data updated, and how neutral is the data?

Due Diligence and VSS

The emergence of Due Diligence frameworks and ESG risk regulations is likely to prompt substantial institutional developments as VSS seek to adapt their standards catalogues to these increasingly predominant regulatory tools. In fact, such developments are already underway. The key task in this evaluation was to assess the extent to which the current DET of the ITC Standards Map encompasses these developments and where modifications are necessary to align with the evolving institutional landscape of VSS.

In detail, our comprehensive analysis identified five informational gaps, and for each of these, we have developed a recommendation on how to address and close them, outlined in the following.

1. Align the credibility criteria in ITC Standards Map with the updated ISEAL credibility principles. We gathered from the stakeholder interviews that ISEAL is presently organizing a thorough process to outline a renewed set of credibility criteria, considering new due diligence requirements. We recommend collaborating with ISEAL to incorporate the results of this process into the ITC Standards Map. According to the ITC team, this process has already been initiated.

2. Add criterion on geospatial data, including polygons of plots
 Risk analysis is central to the due diligence process, and legislators will more precisely regulate the data they accept as adequate proof of due diligence. Consequently, the ITC Standards Map should incorporate a criterion documenting the potential data requirements for risk analysis as stipulated by VSS systems. Of particular significance, the new EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR) mandates businesses to integrate geospatial data, including polygons of plots, from their sourcing locations into their risk analysis. We therefore recommend a criterion on this aspect to Section B of the DET.
3. Add criterion on extending due diligence requirements for up-stream value chain partners.
 If VSS require certified producers or traders to ensure that their suppliers also adhere to the principles of responsible business conduct the reach of due diligence regulations extends to non-certified producers, significantly expanding the effectiveness of certification in this area. We think, it is important to document this aspect in the ITC Standards Map in the section on Sustainable Management.
4. Add criterion covering the aspect of integration of responsible human rights business conduct into business models and strategies.
 Similar to the last point, our analyses have revealed that, from the perspective of new sustainability reporting and due diligence initiatives, it is becoming increasingly significant to establish the principles of sustainable corporate governance at the strategic business level. For example, this could involve compensating managers not only for achieving financial goals but also for human rights objectives. If VSS also require such integration of human rights goals into business strategies, the ITC Standards Map should be capable of documenting these developments.
5. Add criteria on environmental, social and governance related due diligence processes
 This recommendation concerns the most comprehensive potential expansion of the ITC Standards Map (see Table 4). Current legislation in the EU drives due diligence requirements beyond the area of human rights to a broad set of ESG risks. To cover this development, it might become advisable to incorporate additional criteria into the DET. One challenge is that the entire environment of the global value chain regulation is currently in flux and highly volatile. Neither is it clear from the legal perspective what roles VSS are allowed to play within Due Diligence and ESG risk regulations, nor is it clear to what extent VSS will go down this road to adapt their standard catalogues and certification practices to the new regulations. Implementing the suggested changes in Table 4 entails a highly significant investment for the ITC Standards Map in terms of both workload and financial funding. Therefore, we advise a gradual adaptation based on thorough assessments to determine the extent to which the inclusion of additional criteria into the DET will indeed be pivotal to ensure the relevance of this database. Note that for each criterion, the respective guidance and descriptions need to be developed first before they are applied to a large sample of VSS.

Given that the central aim of the ITC Standards is to bring transparency to the world of standards, it might be a good idea to first organize an (online) survey among the VSS in the database. This would help to find out the specific ways in which they are currently planning to adapt their requirements and audit procedures to the due diligence and ESG risk regulations. The results of this survey could be further discussed and evaluated in the stakeholder process that has already commenced on this issue. Based on the survey results and additional insights from expert discussions, a clearer decision can be made how exactly the gaps that we identified in this evaluation need to be closed. Furthermore, before considering any

substantial alterations to the DET, we also advise closely monitoring ongoing legal developments. Adjustments to the database should only be made under the condition that the existing proposals on due diligence and ESG reporting materialize into actual EU laws

Implementation

The evaluators who have prepared this report have only limited knowledge about the organizational structure, size, and budget of the ITC Team. Hence, we cannot provide detailed insights into how the recommendations can be implemented within the ITC. Nonetheless, the table below attempts to provide a very rough overview of the workload that we estimate will be necessary to execute the recommendations given in this report.

Table 10. Estimation of workload for implementation of recommendations

Dimension	Recommendation	Priority (A/B)	Expected workload (expert days)
Comprehensiveness	Do not add additional criteria	-	-
Uniqueness of criteria	Rationalize DET (control for overlaps)	A	25
Inter-coder reliability	Harmonize data reporting / check missing values	B	10
Accuracy/Consistency	Enhance clarity of criteria/guidance/descriptions	A-	25
Accuracy/Consistency	Improve web links		10
Timeliness	Assess timeframe of 2 years	B	3
Transparency	Include additional information	B	5
Due Diligence	Organize and implement changes to the DET	A	35 (ongoing)
Total			113

As evident from this table, the workload is significant, and, based on all indications, it will be challenging to execute these recommendations with the current personnel and resources in the ITC core team. At this point, it would be advisable for senior management to further calculate the costs for these crucial next development steps of the ITC Standards Map and then seek for additional funding to implement these changes. In doing so, we prioritized the individual items as A and B recommendations.

There is no alternative database that could replace the services of the ITC Standards Map, and many stakeholders and users depend on high-quality processed data. Furthermore, recognizing the high expectations placed on the ITC Standards Map and the current dynamic changes in the standard landscape, we recommend this additional funding for in the database to meet evolving requirements.

ANNEXES

Overview: Stakeholder Interviews

Table 1A. List of interviewed stakeholders

Organization	Name	Role	E-mail address
ISEAL Alliance	Patrick Mallet	Director Innovations	patrick@isealalliance.org
GIZ SETTS	Viktoria van Stegen, Sandra Pfülb	Advisor Sustainable Consumption, GIZ	viktoriam.stegen@giz.de sandra.pfuelb@giz.de
German Helpdesk on Business & Human Rights	Malte Drewes	Senior Manager	malte.drewes@helpdeskwmr.de
Liseed Consulting	Aimee Russillo	Senior advisor to T4SD, Partner	arussillo@liseed.com
OECD Typology & Due Diligence	Matteo Fiorini	Trade Policy Analyst	matteo.fiorini@oecd.org
Global Coffee Platform (GCP), Coffee benchmarking	Gelkha Buitrago	Deputy Director Global Coffee Platform (GCP)	buitrago@globalcoffeeplatform.org
IISD	Cristina Larrea	Lead, Sustainability Standards	clarrea@iisd.ca
Retraced	Anna Trips	Product Development Manager Sustainability	anna.trips@retraced.com
Max Havelaar (Fairtrade Switzerland)	Fabian Waldmeier	CEO	F.Waldmeier@maxhavelaar.ch
Kakaoplattform	Christian Robin	Executive Director	christian.robin@kakaoplattform.ch

Annex 2. Stakeholder Questionnaire ITC Standards Map Evaluation

Interview Date:

Personal Information

Name:

Organization:

Position:

Part I: Evaluation of ITC Standards Map Criteria and Processes

Introductory Questions

1. How familiar are you with the ITC Standards Map? (*1 = very familiar, 5= not familiar at all*)
2. Have you used the data about sustainability standards provided by the ITC Standards Map in the past? (Yes/No)
3. For what purposes have you utilized this data? *Please provide descriptions and concrete examples.*
4. Have you utilized the data from the ITC Standards Map for comparing or benchmarking sustainability standards?
5. If your answer is yes, which attributes of VSS have you compared or benchmarked against each other?
6. How useful was the data provided by the ITC Standards Map for these purposes? (*1 = very useful, 5 not useful at all*) *Follow-up question asking for more details, explanations and potential improvements*
7. From a broader standpoint, what types of information about sustainability standards do you believe will stakeholders in politics, business, and civil society seek both presently and in the foreseeable future?
8. How well is the ITC Standards Map positioned to fulfill this demand. What can be improved? *Follow-up question asking for more details and explanations.*
9. What are the greatest strengths of the ICT Standards Map and what are its greatest weaknesses?

Assessing the quality of ITC Standards Map

10. To what extent do you consider the set of criteria by the ITC Standards Map about the attributes and characteristics of sustainability standards as complete? (*1=highly complete, 5=not complete at all*).
11. What attributes or characteristics of sustainable standards are not covered by the ITC Standards Map? – except issues of due diligence
12. Please rank the extent to which the inclusion of the mentioned missing criteria would enhance the overall quality of the ITC Standards Map, considering also the need for manageable and efficient information.
13. To what extent do you see overlap between similar criteria, suggesting that combining or skipping some of them might be more efficient? Are there any criteria included that do not adequately reflect meaningful differences between standards? (*1= to a great extent, 5= to no extent at all*)
14. Can you give examples?
15. How significant do you assess the risk that the data collection processes, which lead to the classification of sustainability standards within the ITC Standards Map, might be biased by the data collectors? (*1= to a great extent, 5= to no extent at all*)
16. Can you give examples?
17. When data collectors utilize the ITC Standards Map criteria to classify the attributes of a sustainability standard, inaccuracies in these classifications may arise. One issue could be the confirmation of an ITC Standards Map criterion for a sustainability standard even when it doesn't fully meet the criterion's requirements. How much do you think this problem impacts the quality of the ITC Standards Map? (*1=very much, 5=not at all*)
18. Can you give examples?
19. Another potential issue could be that data collectors classify attributes of sustainability standards under the same criterion that are actually too dissimilar to belong in the same criterion. How much do you think this problem impacts the quality of the ITC Standards Map? (*1=very much, 5=not at all*)
20. Can you give examples?
21. From time-to-time sustainability standards may revise their requirements. How do you evaluate the capability of ITC Standards Map to keep the database up to date (*1=as very good, 5= as not good at all*)
22. Secondly, new sustainability standards may be developed. How do you evaluate the capability of ITC Standards Map to keep the database up to date concerning the emergence of new sustainability standards? (*1=as very good, 5= as not good at all*)
23. Follow up questions on details and explanations

24. To what extent do you consider the ITC Standards Map processes transparent: *(1=very transparent, 5=not transparent at all)*

25. Follow up questions on details and explanation.

Part II: Sustainability Standards and Due Diligence

26. How important will sustainability standards become in supporting companies to fulfill their due diligence obligations. *(1=very important, 5 not important at all)*

27. How specifically do you expect sustainability standards will play a role in supporting companies to fulfill their due diligence obligations?

Regarding which specific due diligence obligations sustainability standards will become particularly important, please evaluate each of the following 6 steps of an effective due diligence process. *(1=very important, 5=not important at all)*.

1. Embed responsible business conduct into the company's policies and management systems.
2. Identify and assess actual or potential adverse impacts in the company's operations, supply chains and business relationships.
3. Cease, prevent and mitigate adverse impacts.
4. Track implementation and results.
5. Communicate how impacts are addressed.
6. Provide for corporate remediation when appropriate.

28. Several human rights and environmental due diligence policy frameworks exist, alongside dedicated laws introduced by national legislatures and the European Union in this field. These laws may pertain to specific sectors (e.g., conflict minerals), target particular human rights concerns (e.g. slavery), or adopt a more comprehensive approach (as seen in French or German laws and EU initiatives). Can you provide the names of three to five due diligence policy frameworks or laws that you consider to be of utmost significance?

29. Do you expect that there will be a demand for benchmarking tools assessing the compatibility of sustainability standards with due diligence policies and laws? *(1=high demand, 5=no demand, at all)*

30. Have you developed or are you currently planning to develop such a benchmarking tool?

31. What information about sustainability standards and due diligence policies are you particularly interested in?

32. From a broader perspective, when companies seek to assess the potential of sustainable standards in assisting them with fulfilling their due diligence obligations, which attributes of sustainable standards will be of particular interest to them?

33. Furthermore, what characteristics do you believe a sustainability standard must possess to be particularly suitable for assisting companies in fulfilling their due diligence obligations?
34. The ITC Standards Map has begun to include due diligence criteria into their database. How useful do you consider this data for your purposes? *(1=very useful, 5=not useful at all)*
35. Follow up questions on details and explanations.
36. How useful do you consider this information by the ITC Standards Map about sustainability standards and due diligence policies generally for companies that are affected by due diligence policies and laws. *(1=very useful, 5=not useful at all)*
37. To what extent do you believe the information that the ITC Standards Map currently provides about the compatibility of sustainability standards with due diligence policies and laws is comprehensive? *(1=very comprehensive, 5=not comprehensive at all)*
38. Which specific information are missing that would increase the relevance of the ITC Standards Map in this area?
39. How and why would the inclusion of this information about sustainability standards improve the quality of the ITC Standards Map?

CASE STUDIES REPORT

Three standards were fully reviewed in all the relevant aspects, 1. Amfori BSCI, 2. Food Alliance, 3. UNCTAD BioTrade Principles & Criteria - Terrestrial Food Sectors.

CASE STUDY 1. AMFORI BSCI

This standard was being currently reviewed by SSO, would be interesting to observe if SSO identify this or other issues when going through their review.

Timeliness

The first finding relates to timeliness. The last data collection reported in the provided database by ICT was April 2023, in the website the date of last data collection is December 2022. Based on the report from ICT this standard is still under revision. This shows two different delays. The first one is between the internal database and what is published, and the second one is six months between the reported date in the database of the last data collection and the still ongoing revision of SSO. This point is critical, as updated data is vital to keep alive the map and its reliability.

Accuracy/reliability

During the revision of the database a series of inaccuracies were found. Some of them more relevant than others. Case one. The “*criteria A0. Mai Title*” is listed as Stakeholder Engagement Senior Manager, but the title of the same person in the Amfori BSCI website is different: Social Programmes Expert (Evidence 1)

Elif KALAN

Social Programmes Expert

📍 Belgium
👤 Services
✉ elif.kalan@amfori.org

Figure 1A. Evidence 1

Day accessed: 26/09/23

Moving forward to the “*criteria A1. Short description*” the referenced link is https://www.amfori.org/sites/default/files/amfori%20BSCI%20Code%20of%20Conduct%20-%20English%20-%20December%202021_v2.pdf. But when trying to open directly the link it is not possible to open (Evidence 2).

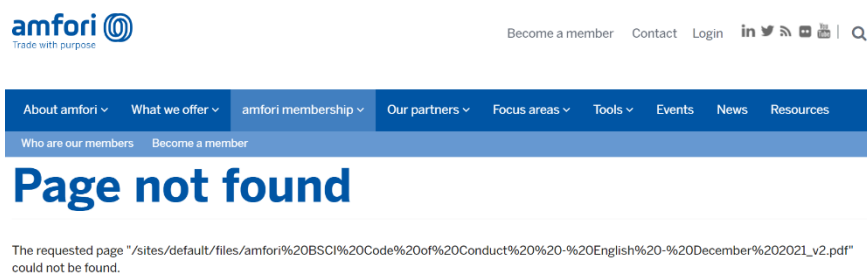


Figure 2A. Evidence 2

Date accessed: 26/09/2023

This link is used multiple times for the certification as reference to prove compliance. For example, for the criteria *B. Requirements and indicators B.2 Environment "SOIL" "Soil: general principle"* the cited text is: *"The signatories commit to: [...] • Identify the environmental impacts of their operations, and implement adequate measures to prevent, mitigate and remediate adverse impacts on the surrounding communities, natural resources, climate, and the overall environment"*. This text can be found on page 7/10 once the correct link is used. But the cited text does not explicitly reference soil protection, but to the environment in general.

Amfori BSCI does have criteria for soil protection, and an example of this can be found in the document Farm Audit. This document also makes specific reference to soil erosion. This is an example of the certification actually complying with the criteria, but using weak reference as evidence to support their claim.

Furthermore, the text *" The signatories commit to: [...] • Identify the environmental impacts of their operations, and implement adequate measures to prevent, mitigate and remediate adverse impacts on the surrounding communities, natural resources, climate, and the overall environment."* is used multiple times to justify the different criteria compliance. The criteria included are:

- Soil: General principle
- Criteria on verification of mandatory certificates and permits related to water use
- Criteria on water management plan
- Criteria on water resources monitoring, use and consumption
- Criteria on water reuse, recycling and harvesting
- Criteria on wastewater quality management and treatment
- Other criteria relating to water
- Criteria on impact assessment policy for new production
- Waste management: general principle
- Criteria on waste disposal (incl. solid waste, non-solid waste, excl. hazardous waste)
- Criteria on waste segregation
- Criteria on principles and practices on avoidance of uncontrolled waste landfilling
- Criteria on principles and practices on the use of fire to eliminate waste (prevention uncontrolled on-site waste burning)
- Criteria on handling / disposal of waste by third parties
- Criteria related to treatment and use of solid waste
- Criteria on treatment and use of non-solid waste
- Criteria on disposal of hazardous waste
- GHG policies: general principle
- Criteria on assessment of environmental risks and impacts
- Criteria on environment and social risks mitigation and performance improvement

The cited document to complement this text is the "systems manual" but the suggested link <https://www.amfori.org/sites/default/files/amfori-2022-11-29-BSCI%20System%20Manual-Part%203-A4-02.pdf> is also broken (Evidence 3). The correct link for the system manual is: <https://www.amfori.org/en/knowledge-centre/resources> : Search System manual

Page not found

The requested page "/sites/default/files/amfori-2022-11-29-BSCI%20System%20Manual-Part%203-A4-02.pdf" could not be found.

Figure 3A. Evidence 3

Retrieved: 28/09/2023

The information is correct and can be found, but adding page numbers to the extracts is highly recommended to facilitate the analysis process.

To evaluate reliability those criteria reported as immediate degree of obligation were selected. For this standard 39 criteria are reported as immediate. Once the correct links are located for each one of these criteria, the information is accurate.

Moving forward, to the information available in the Standards Map website. One can observe that some links to the database are broken or incomplete (or not translated) . This problem was found in the Spanish version of the website. It was found in the Governance and in the How to comply sections (Evidence 4). This is an issue of the Standards Map, not an issue of the data provided by the Standard.

Transparencia y credibilidad

Haga clic aquí para saber si se comunican las políticas, los procesos y los documentos de la norma

<p>factsheet.governance.detail.2.c10.label</p> <p>factsheet.governance.detail.2.c10.tooltip</p>	<p>+32 (2) 762 05 51</p>
<p>factsheet.governance.detail.2.c11.label</p> <p>factsheet.governance.detail.2.c11.tooltip</p>	<p>info@amfori.org</p>

Transparencia y credibilidad

Haga clic aquí para saber si se comunican las políticas, los procesos y los documentos de la norma

<p>Contact information - Telephone</p>	<p>+32 (2) 762 05 51</p>
<p>Contact information - Mail</p>	<p>info@amfori.org</p>

Documentos y políticas

¿Los documentos y las políticas de la norma están a disposición del público?

Figure 4A. Evidence 4

<https://www.standardsmap.org/es/factsheet/5/governance?name=amfori%20BSCI>

Consulted 27/09/2023 06/10/2023

Completeness/comprehensiveness

In section “C.1.2 Monitoring and evaluation C. Operational requirements C.1 Scheme C.1.2 Monitoring and evaluation Source” depends on the previous criteria, consequently it is left blank (marked in the red square) (Evidence 5). The next Standard is left as reference of a complete database.

To improve completeness it is recommended to include a code such as Not Applicable instead of leaving it blank, in order to avoid confusion. In section C.2 Standard setting one can also observe blank spaces for those questions dependent on previous criteria.

C.1.2 Monitoring and evaluation						
Boolean	C. Oper. C.1 Sch. C.1.2	Long term social, environmental and economic	DESCRIPTION: Do	GUIDANCE: Sustainability	No	Y
Text	C. Oper. C.1 Sch. C.1.2	Description	DESCRIPTION: Proc	GUIDANCE: Provide evidence	NA	T
Single No;Yes	C. Oper. C.1 Sch. C.1.2	Strategy to achieve scheme sustainability	DESCRIPTION: Do	GUIDANCE: Refers to	Yes publicly	Y
Text	C. Oper. C.1 Sch. C.1.2	Source	DESCRIPTION: Proc	GUIDANCE: Provide evidence	http://www.	T
Boolean	C. Oper. C.1 Sch. C.1.2	Explicit written procedure for Monitoring	DESCRIPTION: Is t	GUIDANCE: The stand	No	N
Text	C. Oper. C.1 Sch. C.1.2	Name of M&E procedure	DESCRIPTION: Ind	GUIDANCE: Provide the	NA	N
Single No;Yes	C. Oper. C.1 Sch. C.1.2	Existence of sustainability impact measur	DESCRIPTION: Do	GUIDANCE: A system th	No	Y
Boolean	C. Oper. C.1 Sch. C.1.2	Sustainability M&E indicators	DESCRIPTION: Do	GUIDANCE: Provide evid	No	N
Text	C. Oper. C.1 Sch. C.1.2	Source	DESCRIPTION: Proc	GUIDANCE: Provide evid	NA	N
Single Externa	C. Oper. C.1 Sch. C.1.2	Main purpose of M&E activities	DESCRIPTION: Ind	GUIDANCE: Provide evid	NA	Other N
Boolean	C. Oper. C.1 Sch. C.1.2	M&E used for Learning and Improving the	DESCRIPTION: Do	GUIDANCE: The scheme	No	N
Text	C. Oper. C.1 Sch. C.1.2	Source	DESCRIPTION: Proc	GUIDANCE: If M&E resul	NA	N
Single No;Yes	C. Oper. C.1 Sch. C.1.2	Reporting monitoring results	DESCRIPTION: Do	GUIDANCE: Refers to	No	N
Text	C. Oper. C.1 Sch. C.1.2	Source	DESCRIPTION: Proc	GUIDANCE: Provide evid	NA	N
Text	C. Oper. C.1 Sch. C.1.2	Reporting with standardized indicators	DESCRIPTION: Ind	GUIDANCE: Refers to	NA	N
Boolean	C. Oper. C.1 Sch. C.1.2	Are multi-stakeholders engaged in M&E a	DESCRIPTION: Ind	GUIDANCE: Provide evid	No	N
Text	C. Oper. C.1 Sch. C.1.2	Description	DESCRIPTION: Proc	GUIDANCE: Provide a	NA	N
Single Full;In p	C. Oper. C.1 Sch. C.1.2	Compliance with ISEAL Impacts Code	DESCRIPTION: Ind	GUIDANCE: Refers to	No	N

Figure 5A. Evidence 5

Also related to completeness, in the section process for getting verified/certified for the first time it is not clear if there are no steps after step 4, as only step 10 has NA. There is need to improve the consistency (Evidence 6).

Process for getting verified/certified for the first time		DESCRIPTION: Shc	GUIDANCE: Indicate here (reference
Text	C. Oper. C.3 Asst C.3.2 (Step by step	DESCRIPTION: Shc	GUIDANCE: Indicate here
Text	C. Oper. C.3 Asst C.3.2 (Title		STEP 1: Ensu
Text	C. Oper. C.3 Asst C.3.2 (Step 1		Initiating am
Text	C. Oper. C.3 Asst C.3.2 (Step 2		STEP 1: Ensu
Text	C. Oper. C.3 Asst C.3.2 (Step 3		STEP 2: Take
Text	C. Oper. C.3 Asst C.3.2 (Step 4		STEP 3: Requ
Text	C. Oper. C.3 Asst C.3.2 (Step 5		STEP 4: Conf
Text	C. Oper. C.3 Asst C.3.2 (Step 6		
Text	C. Oper. C.3 Asst C.3.2 (Step 7		
Text	C. Oper. C.3 Asst C.3.2 (Step 8		
Text	C. Oper. C.3 Asst C.3.2 (Step 9		
Text	C. Oper. C.3 Asst C.3.2 (Step 10		NA

Figure 6A. Evidence 6

CASE STUDY 2. FOOD ALLIANCE

Timeliness

Last updated reported in the website April 2020, same update is reported in the database.

Completeness/comprehensiveness

Reviewing the standards map website, the category How to comply was incomplete for some indicators. 23 out of 39 indicators have no reference, and those with answer have no source to verify the information: <https://www.standardstmap.org/en/factsheet/24/how-to-comply?name=Food%20Alliance> (Retrieved 29/09/23)

For Food Alliance (last column), there is also inconsistency on how the Not covered are reported, sometimes they are reported as Not covered, and others as #N/A, furthermore, the data is incomplete for the Biodiversity criteria showed in Evidence 7.

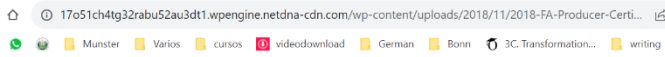
Biodiversity: overarching DESCRIPTION	GUIDANCE Are there	Recommendation	Recommendation	Not covered	Immediate	Not covered
Reference document		OECD Guidelines for	WFTO Fair Trade S	#N/A	VietFarm Standard	Not covered
Explicit reference	yes	yes		#N/A	yes	no
Degree of criticality	Optional	Optional		#N/A	Deal-breaker	#N/A
Degree of intensity	#N/A	#N/A		#N/A	#N/A	#N/A
Compliance assessed against a metric	no	no		#N/A	#N/A	no
Compliance assessed based on legislation	yes	no		#N/A	#N/A	#N/A
Localisation of details in the reference document	VI. Environment	10.3		#N/A	PS 5.2	
Web link	http://www.oecd.org	http://wfto.com/v		#N/A	https://vietfarm.org	
Extract from standard document	6. Continually seek	Conservation, biod		#N/A	PS 5.2 Member org	There is no specific
Additional information on guidelines and indicators	#N/A	#N/A		#N/A	#N/A	#N/A
Criteria to ensure adherence	DESCRIPTION	GUIDANCE	Are there	Not covered	Not covered	Not covered
Reference document				#N/A	#N/A	#N/A
Explicit reference	no			#N/A	#N/A	#N/A
Degree of criticality	#N/A	#N/A		#N/A	#N/A	#N/A
Degree of intensity	#N/A	#N/A		#N/A	#N/A	#N/A
Compliance assessed against a metric	#N/A	#N/A		#N/A	#N/A	#N/A
Compliance assessed based on legislation	#N/A	#N/A		#N/A	#N/A	#N/A
Localisation of details in the reference document	#N/A	#N/A		#N/A	#N/A	#N/A
Web link	#N/A	#N/A		#N/A	#N/A	#N/A
Extract from standard document	#N/A	#N/A		#N/A	#N/A	#N/A
Additional information on guidelines and indicators	#N/A	#N/A		#N/A	#N/A	#N/A

Figure 7A. Evidence 7, completeness of the data

Accuracy/reliability

For the criteria Soil nutrient and 51 other criteria the reference document: link is broken (Evidence 8): <http://17o51ch4tg32rabu52au3dt1.wengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/2018-FA-Producer-Certification-Program-Standards-and-Procedures-Manual.docx>

Correct link: <https://foodalliance.org/s/2018-FA-Producer-Certification-Program-Standards-and-Procedures-Manual.docx> . Once the correct link is found, the extracts are correct.



This site can't be reached

Check if there is a typo in 17o51ch4tg32rabu52au3dt1.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com.

If spelling is correct, [try running Windows Network Diagnostics](#).

DNS_PROBE_FINISHED_NXDOMAIN



Figure 8A. Evidence 8

Retrieved: 29/09/2023

For the section “A.2 Organization details, A.3 Geographical scope / Product & service scope”, and “A.4 Documents and policies” the two most relevant source of information have broken links: <http://foodalliance.org/about-us/>, <http://foodalliance.org/operations/> (Evidence 9)

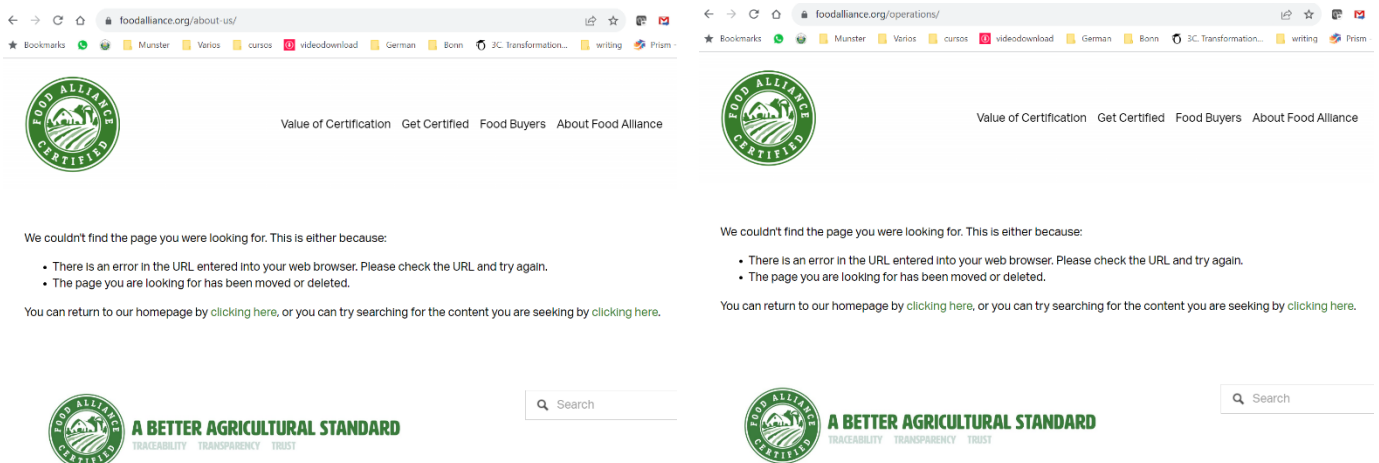


Figure 9. Evidence 9

Retrieved 29/09/23

For section “C. Operational requirements” the link for Independence of scheme owner from certificate holder is also broken: <http://fadocsstyle.wpengine.com/how-to-get-the-most-out-of-certification-2/> (Evidence 10)

404

The site you were looking for couldn't be found.

This domain is successfully pointed at WP Engine, but is not configured for an account on our platform.

- If you just signed up, we're still likely creating your account.
- Did you [add this domain to your install?](#)
- Did you point DNS to the correct [IP address](#) or [CNAME?](#)

If you've completed the steps above, or need more help, please [contact us](#) and we can help get your site up and running in no time.

Figure 10A. Evidence 10

For the criteria *“TemplateC1400 C. Operational requirements C.1 Scheme C.1.1 Governance b. Transparency”Annual report”* the link is broken: <https://foodalliance.org/about/annual-report>. This report is used as evidence for 2 criteria, the other criteria is *“Financial statements”*, both closely related to transparency. (Evidence 11). When trying to retrieve the document in the website, it was not possible to find it (Evidence 12). A search through Google did not return positive results either. So we can conclude the Annual report criteria and the financial statements criteria are not met, even when reported otherwise.



Value of Certification Get Certified Food Buyers About Food Alliance

We couldn't find the page you were looking for. This is either because:

- There is an error in the URL entered into your web browser. Please check the URL and try again.
- The page you are looking for has been moved or deleted.

You can return to our homepage by [clicking here](#), or you can try searching for the content you are seeking by [clicking here](#).

Figure 11A. Evidence 11



Value of Certification Get Certified

annual report

Your search did not match any documents.

Figure 12A. Evidence 12

Retrieved: 29/09/2023

Regarding the point “C.1.1 Governance b. Transparency” *List of management board / steering committee members*” the link provided is incorrect : <http://foodalliance.org/about/our-board-and-stewardship-council> . The correct link is: <https://foodalliance.org/our-team>

For the criteria “C. Operational requirements C.2 Standard-setting Standard-setting process” it is stated that they comply with the criteria and that the document is available publicly, but no link is provided as evidence to support the claim.

“C. Operational requirements C.2 Standard-setting “Standards consultation transparency””. The standard affirms that this documentation is made publicly available, but does not provide any link to the document, also, all documents published in the website relate to the certification, procedures, and audits, but no accountability or reporting documents are published.

Regarding the indicator “C. Operational requirements C.3 Assurance C.3.1 Assurance system “Assurance methodology”” the link provided is broken (<https://foodalliance.org/operations/>), but one can find the information in the following link: <https://foodalliance.org/certification-process>

For the criteria “C. Operational requirements C.3 Assurance C.3.1 Assurance system “Complaints and appeals on compliance” “The link provided is broken <http://foodalliance.org/handling-operations/> (Evidence 13)

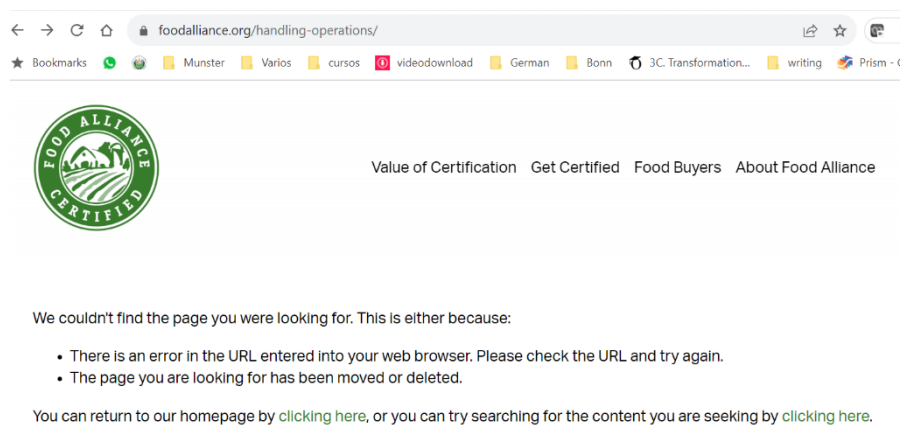


Figure 13A. Evidence 13

Retrieved 29/09/2023

They provide an email to contact the organization, not specifically for complaints. The Standards and Procedures Manual have no content regarding how to address complaints. Based on the evidence, one cannot confirm that the standard comply with the criteria.

For the criteria “C. Operational requirements C.3 Assurance C.3.2 Conformity assessment Documentation review” the guidance indicates that that the reference (text and link) should be provided, Food Alliance provides only a text, but no link is provided as reference to confirm the validity of the text.

For the criteria “C. Operational requirements C.3 Assurance C.3.3 Certification and verification “Certification body must meet specific quality requirements (e.g. ISO 65/17065)”

“DESCRIPTION: The standard setting organization requires that the certification body meet specific quality requirements. Does the scheme owner require CABs to be compliant with ISO/IEC 17065, ISO/IEC 17021, ISO/IEC 17020 or equivalent?” Food Alliance specifies that they comply, but the

link provided is broken, <https://foodalliance.org/handling-operations/> and no evidence can be found in the website.

For the criteria “C. Operational requirements C.3 Assurance C.3.2 Accreditation Oversight methodology” no source of verification is provided, even when the certification affirms the documentation is “publicly available”.

For the criteria “C. Operational requirements C.3 Assurance C.3.2 Accreditation Accreditation complaints and appeals” the link provided is broken: <https://foodalliance.org/handling-operations/>. A paragraph in the in the Standards and Procedures Manual specifies “Grievance Policy: If applicants feel that the certification decision or inspector’s findings are unfair or inaccurate, they may submit a request for re-evaluation to Food Alliance. A request must be made in writing within 30 days of receiving the official site report, detailing the perceived inaccuracies of the site inspection. Applicants should also state whether they would like to be inspected by a different site inspector. Re-inspections of this nature will be provided at no cost to the applicant. No further appeals will be accepted. However, an applicant may reapply after they have made changes to their operation as suggested in their site report.” One can conclude that the standard complies, but it is difficult to retrieve the evidence.

CASE STUDY 3. UNCTAD BIOTRADE PRINCIPLES & CRITERIA – TERRESTRIAL FOOD SECTOR

Accuracy/reliability

To analyze the reliability and accuracy of this Standard, the team took as a sample the criteria marked as Immediate – deal-breaker criteria. For this principle the immediate – deal-breaker criteria are summarized in the minimum criteria (p. 4) the rest are either recommendations or not covered. From the 15 immediate obligation criteria three had no explicit reference in the minimum requirements:

- Criteria on natural wetlands maintained in undrained conditions. It is marked as Degree of Obligation Immediate and as deal-breaker. In the cited document it is mandatory for Marine or Blue BioTrade activities (p.4) “ The activity does not contribute to the degradation or transformation of marine and coastal ecosystems, such as the draining of wetlands or the deforestation of coastal areas” but not for “Terrestrial BioTrade activities“. The fact that they are in the same document makes the differentiation difficult.
- Criteria on internationally recognized / legally protected sites and cultural heritage (e.g. UNESCO Convention). In the minimum requirements is not explicitly cited, the most similar citation is “If the activities are done in protected areas or similar, these comply with the requirements defined in the regulations, plans strategies or programmes applicable to these areas” (p. 4)
- Criteria Ethics: anti-corruption and bribery principles and criteria in the minimum requirements is not explicitly mentioned, it is open to interpretation in the statement “ The organization ensures the respect for human rights and avoids immoral and illegal transactions in business operations” (p.4)

560 criteria are not covered by this certification. For this certification it was found that the same extract from the standard was used to validate the conformity with different criteria. For example, the extract “1.1 Activities contribute to maintaining, restoring or enhancing biodiversity, including ecosystems, ecological processes, natural habitats, and species, particularly threatened or endangered species.” Was used to justify 15 different criteria:

- Soil: general principle
- Criteria on soil conservation
- Biodiversity: overarching principle
- Criteria on impact mitigation prior to production / harvesting operations
- Criteria on spatial management criteria (creating / maintaining / protecting set asides, buffer zones or conservation areas)
- Criteria on safeguards against fragmentation of ecosystems/habitats
- Criteria on habitat/eco-system restoration/ rehabilitation
- Criteria on maintaining or protecting rare, threatened or endangered ecosystems
- Criteria on protection of rare, endangered or threatened species and their habitats
- Criteria on the protection of ecosystems against invasive species
- Criteria on maintaining, restoring, prioritizing native species
- Criteria on wildlife - general principle
- Criteria for the monitoring and protection of High Conservation Value Areas
- Criteria to prevent deforestation
- Criteria on Environment and Social (E&S) Management Systems: general principles

Similarly, other 83 criteria share extracts with at least other 9 criteria, making difficult understanding the actual degree of compliance of the Standard.

OTHER ISSUES FROM THE WHOLE DATASET AND THE SAMPLE AND COMPLEMENTARY TABLES

Completeness/comprehensiveness

Table 2A. Percentage of empty fields by standard

Standard	Section A-C (Total fields= 532)	% of empty fields	Section B (Total fields= 8392)	% of empty fields	Total
BSCI	34	6.4%	240	2.9%	3.1%
Seychelles	1	0.2%	1	0.0%	0.0%
Xertifix	21	3.9%	55	0.7%	0.9%
UN Global Compact	2	0.4%	135	1.6%	1.5%
ZNU	1	0.2%	8	0.1%	0.1%
Bioknospe	4	0.8%	28	0.3%	0.4%
Certified Wildlife Friendly	2	0.4%	8	0.1%	0.1%
Bluesign	0	0.0%	7	0.1%	0.1%
VCS	15	2.8%	62	0.7%	0.9%
ETI	7	1.3%	84	1.0%	1.0%
IFOAM	35	6.6%	62	0.7%	1.1%
AWS	21	3.9%	14	0.2%	0.4%
UEBT	29	5.5%	105	1.3%	1.5%
CHINCA	3	0.6%	0	0.0%	0.0%
regio.garantie	3	0.6%	5	0.1%	0.1%
OECD	3	0.6%	40	0.5%	0.5%
WFTO	18	3.4%	102	1.2%	1.3%

Standard	Section A-C (Total fields= 532)	% of empty fields	Section B (Total fields= 8392)	% of empty fields	Total
SLCP	2	0.4%	27	0.3%	0.3%
VietFarm	1	0.2%	7	0.1%	0.1%
Food Alliance	3	0.6%	58	0.7%	0.7%
CCB	7	1.3%	116	1.4%	1.4%
Step	8	1.5%	1	0.0%	0.1%
SAFA	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%
Blue Angel leather	22	4.1%	0	0.0%	0.2%
IP-Suisse	3	0.6%	58	0.7%	0.7%
UNCTAD	0	0.0%	108	1.3%	1.2%
CNOPCC	10	1.9%	113	1.3%	1.4%
GlobalGAP	13	2.4%	278	3.3%	3.3%
OFDC	10	1.9%	295	3.5%	3.4%
Coffee Code	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%
GRI	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%
Predator	2	0.4%	4	0.0%	0.1%
ProTerra Europe	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%
SGLS	11	2.1%	0	0.0%	0.1%
ARSO	4	0.8%	15	0.2%	0.2%

Table 3A. List of empty criteria for sections A and C

No	Section	Sub-sections	Name of the criteria		
1	C. Operational requirements	C.1 Scheme	C.1.1 Governance	b. Transparency	Schemes and national adaptations' full documents and policies
2	C. Operational requirements	C.1 Scheme	C.1.1 Governance	b. Transparency	Certification/verification operations (names, sizes and locations of all certified units, including expiry dates, etc)
3	C. Operational requirements	C.1 Scheme	C.1.1 Governance	b. Transparency	Certification/verification decisions (e.g. pass/fail/corrective actions plan)
4	C. Operational requirements	C.1 Scheme	C.1.1 Governance	b. Transparency	Complaints and dispute resolution policies
5	C. Operational requirements	C.1 Scheme	C.1.1 Governance	b. Transparency	Complaints and dispute resolution decisions
6	C. Operational requirements	C.1 Scheme	C.1.1 Governance	b. Transparency	Annual report
7	C. Operational requirements	C.1 Scheme	C.1.1 Governance	b. Transparency	Financial statements
8	C. Operational requirements	C.1 Scheme	C.1.1 Governance	b. Transparency	List of management board / steering committee members
9	C. Operational requirements	C.1 Scheme	C.1.1 Governance	d. Stakeholders engagement	Civil society & NGOs (except trade unions and workers' associations)
10	C. Operational requirements	C.1 Scheme	C.1.1 Governance	d. Stakeholders engagement	Trade Unions and workers' associations
11	C. Operational requirements	C.1 Scheme	C.1.1 Governance	d. Stakeholders engagement	Industry - producers and producers' associations
12	C. Operational requirements	C.1 Scheme	C.1.1 Governance	d. Stakeholders engagement	Industry - supply chain actors (e.g. traders)
13	C. Operational requirements	C.1 Scheme	C.1.1 Governance	d. Stakeholders engagement	Industry - market partners (e.g. buyers, retailers)

No	Section	Sub-sections		Name of the criteria	
14	C. Operational requirements	C.1 Scheme	C.1.1 Governance	d. Stakeholders engagement	Research institutes and universities
15	C. Operational requirements	C.1 Scheme	C.1.1 Governance	d. Stakeholders engagement	Public sector (except research institutes and universities)
16	C. Operational requirements	C.1 Scheme	C.1.1 Governance	f. Compliance to international conventions, norms, standards, best practices	ISO 59 (Code of good practice for standardization)
17	C. Operational requirements	C.1 Scheme	C.1.1 Governance	f. Compliance to international conventions, norms, standards, best practices	ISO 8000 (Data quality)
18	C. Operational requirements	C.1 Scheme	C.1.1 Governance	f. Compliance to international conventions, norms, standards, best practices	ISO 14000 (Environmental labels and declarations)
19	C. Operational requirements	C.1 Scheme	C.1.1 Governance	f. Compliance to international conventions, norms, standards, best practices	ISO 19000 (Guidelines for quality and/or environmental management systems auditing)
20	C. Operational requirements	C.1 Scheme	C.1.1 Governance	f. Compliance to international conventions, norms, standards, best practices	ISO 26000 (CSR guidance)
21	C. Operational requirements	C.1 Scheme	C.1.1 Governance	f. Compliance to international conventions, norms, standards, best practices	WHO - Codex Alimentarius
22	C. Operational requirements	C.1 Scheme	C.1.1 Governance	f. Compliance to international conventions, norms, standards, best practices	WHO recommended classification of pesticides by Hazard Pesticide Action Network
23	C. Operational requirements	C.1 Scheme	C.1.1 Governance	f. Compliance to international conventions, norms, standards, best practices	WTO - Agreement on TBT
24	C. Operational requirements	C.1 Scheme	C.1.1 Governance	f. Compliance to international conventions, norms, standards, best practices	ISO/IEC 60:2004 (Conformity assessment -- Code of good practice)
25	C. Operational requirements	C.1 Scheme	C.1.1 Governance	f. Compliance to international conventions, norms, standards, best practices	ISO/IEC 17011 (Conformity assessment) -- General requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies
26	C. Operational requirements	C.1 Scheme	C.1.1 Governance	f. Compliance to international conventions, norms, standards, best practices	ISO/IEC 17021: 2006 Conformity assessment -- Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems
27	C. Operational requirements	C.1 Scheme	C.1.1 Governance	f. Compliance to international conventions, norms, standards, best practices	ISO/IEC 65:1999 (17065) (General requirements for bodies operating product certification systems)
28	C. Operational requirements	C.1 Scheme	C.1.1 Governance	f. Compliance to international conventions, norms, standards, best practices	ISO/IEC 67: 2004 (Conformity assessment -- Fundamentals of product certification)
29	C. Operational requirements	C.1 Scheme	C.1.1 Governance	f. Compliance to international conventions, norms, standards, best practices	ISO/IEC 68:2002 (Arrangements for the recognition and acceptance of conformity assessment results)

No	Section	Sub-sections		Name of the criteria	
30	C. Operational requirements	C.1 Scheme	C.1.1 Governance	f. Compliance to international conventions, norms, standards, best practices	Core - 87 - Freedom of association and protection of the right to organize (1948)
31	C. Operational requirements	C.1 Scheme	C.1.1 Governance	f. Compliance to international conventions, norms, standards, best practices	Core - 98 - Right to organize and collective bargaining (1949)
32	C. Operational requirements	C.1 Scheme	C.1.1 Governance	f. Compliance to international conventions, norms, standards, best practices	Core - 29 - Forced Labor (1930)
33	C. Operational requirements	C.1 Scheme	C.1.1 Governance	f. Compliance to international conventions, norms, standards, best practices	Core - 105 - Abolition of forced labor (1959)
34	C. Operational requirements	C.1 Scheme	C.1.1 Governance	f. Compliance to international conventions, norms, standards, best practices	Core - 138 - Minimum age (1973)
35	C. Operational requirements	C.1 Scheme	C.1.1 Governance	f. Compliance to international conventions, norms, standards, best practices	Core - 182 - Worst forms of child labor (1999)
36	C. Operational requirements	C.1 Scheme	C.1.1 Governance	f. Compliance to international conventions, norms, standards, best practices	Core - 100 - Equal remuneration (1951)
37	C. Operational requirements	C.1 Scheme	C.1.1 Governance	f. Compliance to international conventions, norms, standards, best practices	Core - 111 - Discrimination (1958)
38	C. Operational requirements	C.1 Scheme	C.1.1 Governance	f. Compliance to international conventions, norms, standards, best practices	129 - Labor inspection (agriculture) (1969)
39	C. Operational requirements	C.1 Scheme	C.1.1 Governance	f. Compliance to international conventions, norms, standards, best practices	155 - Accidents and injury to health arising out of, linked with or occurring in the course of work.
40	C. Operational requirements	C.1 Scheme	C.1.1 Governance	f. Compliance to international conventions, norms, standards, best practices	169 - Indigenous & tribal peoples (1989)
41	C. Operational requirements	C.1 Scheme	C.1.1 Governance	f. Compliance to international conventions, norms, standards, best practices	ILO Code of Safe Work
42	C. Operational requirements	C.1 Scheme	C.1.1 Governance	f. Compliance to international conventions, norms, standards, best practices	Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal
43	C. Operational requirements	C.1 Scheme	C.1.1 Governance	f. Compliance to international conventions, norms, standards, best practices	Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
44	C. Operational requirements	C.1 Scheme	C.1.1 Governance	f. Compliance to international conventions, norms, standards, best practices	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)

No	Section	Sub-sections		Name of the criteria	
45	C. Operational requirements	C.1 Scheme	C.1.1 Governance	f. Compliance to international conventions, norms, standards, best practices	International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species
46	C. Operational requirements	C.1 Scheme	C.1.1 Governance	f. Compliance to international conventions, norms, standards, best practices	Kimberley Process
47	C. Operational requirements	C.1 Scheme	C.1.1 Governance	f. Compliance to international conventions, norms, standards, best practices	UN Global Compact
48	C. Operational requirements	C.1 Scheme	C.1.1 Governance	f. Compliance to international conventions, norms, standards, best practices	United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and core human rights conventions
49	C. Operational requirements	C.1 Scheme	C.1.1 Governance	f. Compliance to international conventions, norms, standards, best practices	World Heritage Convention
50	C. Operational requirements	C.1 Scheme	C.1.1 Governance	f. Compliance to international conventions, norms, standards, best practices	International Tropical Timber Agreement 2006 (ITTA)
51	C. Operational requirements	C.1 Scheme	C.1.1 Governance	f. Compliance to international conventions, norms, standards, best practices	OECD Guidelines for MNEs
52	C. Operational requirements	C.1 Scheme	C.1.1 Governance	f. Compliance to international conventions, norms, standards, best practices	UNESCO International Guidelines on Sustainable Tourism
53	C. Operational requirements	C.1 Scheme	C.1.1 Governance	f. Compliance to international conventions, norms, standards, best practices	U.N. Guiding principles on business and human rights
54	C. Operational requirements	C.1 Scheme	C.1.1 Governance	f. Compliance to international conventions, norms, standards, best practices	AA1000 Stakeholder Engagement Standard

From the sample the Standard Climate or Community & Biodiversity Standards could not be found. This might be the reason only 317 standards showed the date of the last update in the data availability section (Evidence 14).

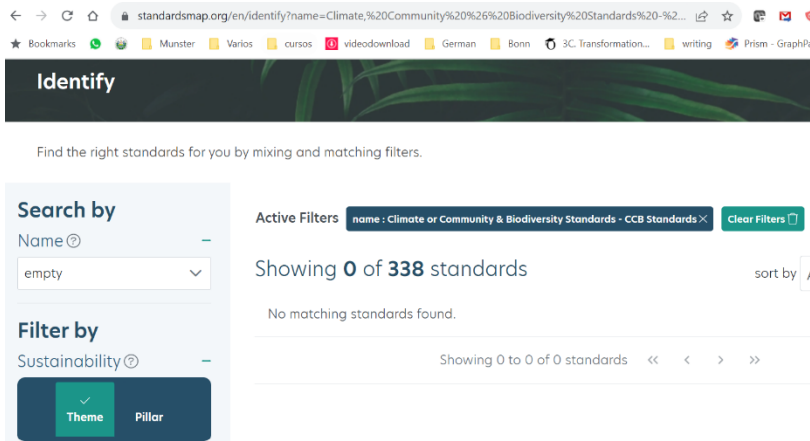


Figure 14. Evidence 14

Retrieved: 02/10/2023

Consistency

Consistency was analyzed in two ways, one through comparing the database coding, second, through reporting how standards reported their criteria.

When analyzing sections A and C in the comparison Excel sheet, one can observe inconsistencies across the full dataset. Inconsistencies within the Standards and also between the standards. For example:

In section C, sections *a. Scheme management*, *c. Boards and committees*, *d. Stakeholder engagement*, *e. Complaint and appeal* use the same coding for **yes, no, and not applicable**. In section a. Scheme management and c. Boards and committees **Yes and No** use capital letters and not applicable is reported as **NA**, in section b. Transparency **yes and no** are in lower case and NA is written as **#NA**. This level of inconsistency can create extra work of standardization when analyzing the data.

Section f. Compliance to international conventions, norms, standards, best practices mixes upper and lower cases for **yes and no**, and uses **#NA** to report not applicable. In the section Audit Scope one can also notice the presence of the two formats to report not applicable (**NA and #NA**). Not applicable is also found as another way of coding in section C.5.4 Premiums, costs and fees. In section B one can also notice a different coding, including the use of final point after Not applicable (Evidence 15).

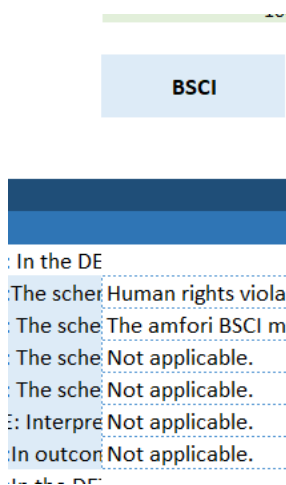


Figure 15. Evidence 15

One can notice the lack of consistency in the coding, for example in Explicit reference it is coded as *no*, or *#NA* under the same previous conditional criteria. Similarly Extract from standard document is coded as *None*, *#N/A*, and *"None."*. (Evidence 15)

Compliance assessed based on legislation	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A
Localisation of details in the reference document	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A
Web link	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A
Extract from standard document	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A
Additional information on guidelines and indicators	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A
WATER	Other criteria relating to DESCRIPTION: GUIDANCE Check if th	Not covered	Not covered	Not covered	#N/A	Not covered	Not covered
Reference document	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A
Explicit reference	no	no	no	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A
Degree of criticality	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A
Degree of intensity	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A
Compliance assessed against a metric	#N/A	no	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A
Compliance assessed based on legislation	#N/A	no	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A
Localisation of details in the reference document	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A
Web link	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A
Extract from standard document	None.	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	None.	None	S
Additional information on guidelines and indicators	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A

Figure 16. Evidence 16

For section c. Boards and committees, the reporting is also not standard, there is one zero (probably an error in the formula, and three ways to code Not applicable, NA, N/A, and N.A. (Evidence 17).

c. Boards and committees		DESCRIPTION	NA	N/A	N.A	NA	N/A	N.A
Text	C. Oper C.1 Sch C.1.1 (c. Boards and c) General assembly	DESCRIPTION: Prc GUIDANCE NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Text	C. Oper C.1 Sch C.1.1 (c. Boards and c) Management board / co	DESCRIPTION: Prc GUIDANCE CouncilThe CWFTO BoardThe SLCP Co NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Text	C. Oper C.1 Sch C.1.1 (c. Boards and c) Standard setting/review	DESCRIPTION: Prc GUIDANCE SecretariatT Standard anThe Secretar NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Text	C. Oper C.1 Sch C.1.1 (c. Boards and c) National or regional stan	DESCRIPTION: Prc GUIDANCE NA	NA	N/A	NA	NA	NA	NA
Text	C. Oper C.1 Sch C.1.1 (c. Boards and c) Dispute committee	DESCRIPTION: Prc GUIDANCE OECD Recon Fair Trade Ac Formal Com NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Text	C. Oper C.1 Sch C.1.1 (c. Boards and c) Stakeholders council / fo	DESCRIPTION: Prc GUIDANCE POLICY MAK none	NA	N/A	NA	NA	NA	NA
Boolean	C. Oper C.1 Sch C.1.1 (c. Boards and c) Existence of clear and pu	DESCRIPTION: Do GUIDANCE Yes	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	No
Text	C. Oper C.1 Sch C.1.1 (c. Boards and c) Description	DESCRIPTION: Prc GUIDANCE COUNCIL O NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Text	C. Oper C.1 Sch C.1.1 (c. Boards and c) Overall percentage balan	DESCRIPTION: Th GUIDANCE NA	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Boolean	C. Oper C.1 Sch C.1.1 (c. Boards and c) Highest decision-making	The scheme GUIDANCE NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Boolean	C. Oper C.1 Sch C.1.1 (c. Boards and c) Procedures require balan	DESCRIPTION: Do GUIDANCE Yes	Yes	Yes	NA	NA	NA	No
Text	C. Oper C.1 Sch C.1.1 (c. Boards and c) Description	DESCRIPTION: Prc GUIDANCE The OECD C The requiren SLCP uses a i NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Boolean	C. Oper C.1 Sch C.1.1 (c. Boards and c) Procedures require that	DESCRIPTION: Do GUIDANCE Yes	Yes	NA	NA	NA	NA	No
Text	C. Oper C.1 Sch C.1.1 (c. Boards and c) Description	DESCRIPTION: Prc GUIDANCE The OECD C In the AGM e NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

Figure 17. Evidence 17

In the Excel document "Standards comparison", for the first 2 sheets comparing Sections A and C, the content was in text, for the third sheet "Section A and C (4)" is in formula, in formula the analysis and reading is more complicated. (Evidence 18)

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=IF(ISBLANK(L\$2),"",IF(INDEX(INDIRECT(""&L\$2&"!"&"E:E"),MATCH(TEXT(\$B8,"0"),INDIRECT(""&L\$2&"!"&"C:C"),0))=0,\$B\$2,INDEX(INDIRECT(""&L\$2&"!"&"E:E"),MATCH(TEXT(\$B8,"0"),INDIRECT(""&L\$2&"!"&"C:C"),0))))

OECD	WFTO	SLCP	VietFarm	Food Alliance	CCB	Step	SAFA	ie Angel leat	IP-Suisse
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Figure 18. Evidence 18

The second method to evaluate the consistency of the database was a comparative analysis across the 35 Standards in the sample was implemented for two different categories: gender (22 criteria), and

living wages (2 criteria). These categories cover indicators in the environmental, social, and economic pillars¹⁶.

Table 4A. Gender and Living wages criteria evaluated

Criteria	Domain
Criteria on gender policies at work - general principles	Gender
Criteria relating to women's rights at work	Gender
Criteria relating to sexual exploitation / harassment	Gender
Criteria on women's access to health and safety services	Gender
Criteria on scope of female workers' rights and benefits applicable equally to all types of female workers (full time, seasonal, part time, migrants, coming from minority groups, etc.)	Gender
Criteria on management systems practices to monitor, evaluate and remediate gender specific issues	Gender
Criteria to reduce the gender wage gap	Gender
Criteria on female workers' entitlement to breaks (e.g. meals/breastfeeding breaks)	Gender
Criteria for assessment of female workers performance (for promotion, trainings)	Gender
Criteria on incentives to women to develop their careers (e.g. specific training)	Gender
Criteria on family-friendly policies to increase the labour force participation of women	Gender
Criteria on integration of women migrants in labour force	Gender
Criteria relating to factoring gender considerations in impacts and risks assessment of production	Gender
Criteria on ensuring participation of women/minorities in management	Gender
Criteria on development assistance policies which promote the economic role of women	Gender
Gender issues: general principle	Gender
Criteria on gender policies and best practices	Gender
Criteria on factoring gender equity considerations in stakeholder engagement process	Gender
Criteria on upgrading the status of and wages for traditional areas of womens work	Gender
Criteria relating on distribution networks and access to markets / buyers for women	Gender
Criteria on access to financial services for women (payment, credit, savings, subsidies)	Gender
Criteria on increased access to finance and support services for women entrepreneurs	Gender
Criteria on principles and practices to secure a Living Wage based on sector or region specificities	Living wages
Criteria on calculating wage gap to reach Living Wages	Living wages

Table 5A. Definition of variables used for the accuracy/consistency analysis

Name of the variable	Definition
Classifications of (fulfillment of criteria) are correct	<p>It takes the value of 1 if the provided information in the database is enough to verify the compliance of the standard with the guidance for all the reported criteria.</p> <p>It takes the value of 0.5 if the information provided partially supports the compliance with the guidance of the criteria reported, or if this information could be verified just for some of the criteria reported by the Standard.</p> <p>It takes the value of 0 if the information provided by the Standard is not enough to comply with the guidance for the criteria, or if this information could not be found (either because the link was not working or because the links provided were incorrect).</p>

¹⁶ Find in the annexes the specific criteria analyzed

Name of the variable	Definition
Classification (degrees of obligation) is correct	<p>It takes the value of 1 if the degree of obligation listed by the standard was correct and could be retrieved.</p> <p>It takes the value of 0.5 if the degree of obligation was correct and could be retrieved by some of the criteria reported by the Standard</p> <p>It takes the value of 0 if the degree of obligation was incorrect or could not be verified for all the criteria reported by the standard.</p>
Web Link is correct and working	<p>It takes the value of 1 if the link provided in the database was correct for all the criteria reported for the Standard.</p> <p>It takes the value of 0.5 if some of the link provided were correct.</p> <p>It takes the value of 0 if all the link provided were incorrect.</p>
The mentioning of reference is correct	<p>It takes the value of 1 if all the document listed to verify the information were correct and could be found for all criteria reported by the Standard</p> <p>It takes the value of 0.5 if some of the document listed to verify the information were correct and could be found.</p> <p>It takes the value of 0 if the documents either could not be found or were not the correct document to find the information for all the criteria reported by the Standard.</p>
Extract exists and can be accessed	<p>It takes the value of 1 if the extract listed by the Standard could be found for all the criteria reported by the Standard.</p> <p>It takes the value of 0.5 if the extract listed by the Standard could be found and was correct for some of the criteria.</p> <p>It takes the value of 0 if the extract could not be found or were incorrect for all the criteria reported by the standard.</p>

Table 6A summarizes the number of criteria by category covered by each one of the 35 standards in the sample

Table 6A. Accuracy/consistency analysis for selected criteria

Table 6.1A. Accuracy/consistency analysis for selected criteria (living wages)

No	Certification	Living wages (2)	Results living wages	Reference document	Link	Extract	Compliance	Total
1	ARSO	0	No living wage criteria reported	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
2	AWS	0	No living wage criteria reported	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
3	Bioknospe	1	The link for the provided information is correct. The extract is correct.	1	1	1	1	4
4	Blue Angel leather	1	The link https://produktinfo.blauer-engel.de/uploads/criteriafile/en/DE-UZ%20148-201503-en%20criteria-2019-01-23.pdf was not found retrieved: 10/10/23. The document was found in another link and has the extract mentioned regarding living wages.	1	0	1	1	3
5	Bluesign	0	No living wage criteria reported	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
6	BSCI	2	They use the same extract to justify the compliance with the two standards related to living wage : "The signatories commit to: • Assess the pay gap accurately, and work progressively towards the payment of a living wage that is sufficient to afford a decent standard of living for the workers and their families". The document System manual has the level of detail required	0	0.5	0.5	1	2
7	CCB	0	No living wage criteria reported	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
8	Certified Wildlife Friendly	0	No living wage criteria reported	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
9	CHINCA	0	No living wage criteria reported	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
10	CNOPCC	0	No living wage criteria reported	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
11	Coffee Code	2	The link for the provided information is correct. The extract is correct. Some instructions for the calculation of living income are indicated just for producers and do not include the full methodology.	1	1	1	0.5	3.5
12	ETI	1	The link for the provided information is correct. The extract is correct.	1	1	1	1	4
13	Food Alliance	0	No living wage criteria reported	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
14	GlobalGAP	0	No living wage criteria reported	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
15	GRI	1	The link for the provided information is correct. The extract is correct.	1	1	1	1	4
16	IFOAM	0	No living wage criteria reported	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
17	IP-Suisse	1	The link for the provided information is correct only for the extract of the Art 26. For the extract :5.9.1.2 Löhne the correct link is https://oberwalliser-bauern.ch/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Richtlinien-	0.5	0.5	0	0	1

			Gesamtbetrieb-inkl.-Label-GA-2022-01-01-D-Clean.pdf but both extracts do not make reference to living wage. This data is not accurate or reliable					
18	OECD	1	The link for the provided information is correct. The extract is correct.	1	1	1	1	4
19	OFDC	0	No living wage criteria reported	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
20	Predator	0	No living wage criteria reported	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
21	ProTerra Europe	0	No living wage criteria reported	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
22	regio.garantie	0	No living wage criteria reported	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
23	SAFA	1	The link for the provided information is correct. The extract is correct. The indicator related to the methodology of calculation is marked as no, even when some information is provided. This is an example of a standard following strict criteria to report their compliance.	1	1	1	1	4
24	Seychelles	0	No living wage criteria reported	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
25	SGLS	0	No living wage criteria reported	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
26	SLCP	1	The link for the provided information is correct. The extract is correct.	1	1	1	1	4
27	Step	1	The link for the provided information is correct. The extract is correct.	1	1	1	1	4
28	UEBT	2	The link for the provided information is correct. The extract is correct. The text just list some elements related to what should be included in the living wage, but it cannot be considered a methodology to calculate living wage.	1	1	1	0.5	3.5
29	UN Global Compact	1	The link provided could not be accessed (retrieved 10/10/2023), and the information could not be verified, as the extract could not be retrieved in internet.	0	0	0	0	0
30	UNCTAD	0	No living wage criteria reported	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
31	VCS	0	No living wage criteria reported	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
32	VietFarm	0	No living wage criteria reported	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
33	WFTO	1	The link provided could not be accessed (retrieved 11/10/2023). The self-assessment formulaire was found in an alternative website, not in the WFTO website. Once the document was found, the cited extract could be verified as correct.	1	0	1	1	3
34	Xertifix	2	The link provided for the indicator related to living wage is correct and the extractis correct. In the case of the second indicator related with the methodology, the Standard lists a series of questions to measure living wage, but gives no reference to find the source of these questions.	0.5	1	1	0.5	3
35	ZNU	1	The link for the provided information is correct. The extract is correct.	1	1	1	1	4

Table 6.2A. Accuracy/consistency analysis for selected criteria (gender)

No	Certification	Gender (22)	Results gender	Reference document	Link	Extract	Compliance	Total
1	ARSO	3	The link provided is the general link to the ARSO website, not to the specific document. No document related to the mentioned extracts for the three indicators could be found in the website or in the internet in general. If the extracts were found, they are still not totally covering the selected indicators. For example the extract justifying the criteria "Does the standard include explicit criteria to protect women rights at work?" is "6.5.7.8 Workers engaged in the operation(s) of the operator confirm that for piecework, the pay rate allows male and female workers to earn at least the legal minimum wage (or comparable regional wage) for the specific work, based on an eight-hour workday under average conditions. 6.5.10.4 Male and female workers engaged in the operation(s) of the operator confirm that they have equal access to career development programs (not applicable to family farms or small-scale operators and outgrowers)." this is not enough to cover the full range of the indicator. This criteria might be too broad.	0	0.5	0	0	0.5
2	AWS	0	No gender criteria reported	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
3	Bioknospe	3	The link for the provided information is not correct in English, only the version in German is correct. For the indicators Gender issues: general principle and Criteria on gender policies at work - general principles the extract provided is the same, probably because the criteria's name looks too similar. The descriptions differ, but they might be too similar for the evaluators to differentiate.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	2
4	Blue Angel leather	0	No gender criteria reported	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
5	Bluesign	3	The link for the provided information is correct. The extracts are correct.	1	1	1	1	4
6	BSCI	13	The link for the provided information is correct. The extracts are correct.	1	1	1	1	4

7	CCB	8	The link for the provided information is correct. The extracts are correct. Only three out of the eight reported indicators show relevant extracts to support compliance with the criteria. Some indicators share the same extract to support their validity. For example the text "9. Describe measures needed and taken to provide orientation and training for the project's workers and relevant people from the communities with an objective of building locally useful skills and knowledge to increase local participation in project implementation. These capacity building efforts should target a wide range of people in the communities, with special attention to women and vulnerable and/or marginalized people. Identify how training is passed on to new workers when there is staff turnover, so that local capacity will not be lost." is used to support the criteria Criteria on gender policies at work - general principles and the criteria "Gender issues: general principle" but the text just match with the description of the second criteria. Not the first. They look similar in the name, but not in the description.	1	1	1	0	3
8	Certified Wildlife Friendly	0	No gender criteria reported	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
9	CHINCA	1	The link for the provided information is correct. The extract is correct. But it does not make reference to the description of the criteria. Gender issues: general principle. DESCRIPTION: Does the standard include a general principle addressing gender issues when interacting with local communities?. Extract: "4.2.1 Equal and regular employmentHR1 Establish an equal employment system and treat applicants ofdifferent ethnicities, genders, races, nationalities, age, religions,disabilities, marital status and sexual orientation equally. Protectpersonal information and privacy." This extract would relate more with the criteria : Criteria on gender policies at work - general principles.	1	1	1	0	3
10	CNOPCC	0	No gender criteria reported	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
11	Coffee Code	5	The link for the provided information is correct. The extract is correct. Three of the five gender indicators use the same extract as evidence of compliance. Extract: 1.3.1 Gender equity and social inclusion (GESI) analysis is conducted to identify the needs, participation rates, access to resources and development, control of assets, decision-making powers, etc. of women, youth and marginalized groups. The three criteria are: Criteria relating to women's rights at work. Criteria on gender policies and best practices, Gender issues general. This might related only to the description of gender policies and best practices. Two out of the five indicators show relevant extracts to comply with the criteria.	1	1	1	0.5	3.5
12	ETI	1	The link for the provided information is correct. The extract is correct.	1	1	1	1	4

13	Food Alliance	0	No gender criteria reported	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
14	GlobalGAP	0	No gender criteria reported	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
15	GRI	7	The link for the provided information is correct. The extract is correct. For the criteria " Criteria relating to sexual exploitation / harassment" the extract used refers to injuries in the work place or during the commuting. It does mention that incident includes "sexual harassment". But there is nothing related to prohibiting harassment (sometimes it might not be injuries).	1	1	1	0.5	3.5
16	IFOAM	0	No gender criteria reported	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
17	IP-Suisse	1	The link for the provided information is not correct. The extract for the article is correct. It is difficult to retrieve the compliance with the criteria even when page numbers are provided.	1	0	1	1	3
18	OECD	4	The link for the provided information is correct. The extracts are correct. The Criteria on management systems practices to monitor, evaluate and remediate gender specific issues the cited text makes reference to human rights, it does not mention gender "specific" issues. The Criteria on gender policies and best practices includes also the relations with the community, but in the extract used as evidence the community is not mentioned.	1	1	1	0.5	3.5
19	OFDC	1	The link is correct. The extract provided to justify the criteria Gender issues general principle Description: Does the standard include a general principle addressing gender issues when interacting with local communities? is "16.6 Operators shall not interfere with the right of their employees, suppliers, farmers and contractors to organize and to bargain collectively, free from interference, intimidation and retaliation." Which does not address either local communities or gender issues.	1	1	0	0	2
20	Predator	0	No gender criteria reported	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
21	ProTerra Europe	2	The link is not correct for both criteria. The correct link for the extracts is "https://www.proterrafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/ProTerra-Standard-Interpretation-for-Smallholders-V2.0.pdf".	0	0	1	1	2
22	regio.garantie	0	No gender criteria reported	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
23	SAFA	8	The link for the provided information is correct. The extracts are correct.	1	1	1	1	4
24	Seychelles	3	The link for the provided information is correct. For the criteria "Criteria on ensuring participation of women/minorities in management" The extract provided does not provide enough evidence for compliance. "At least 30% of management/supervisory level staff are Seychellois".	1	1	1	0.5	3.5

25	SGLS	0	No gender criteria reported	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
26	SLCP	8	The link for the provided information is correct. The extracts are correct.	1	1	1	1	4
27	Step	8	The link for the provided information is correct. The extracts are correct. For the criteria "Criteria on women's access to health and safety services" The provided extract does not match the criteria. For the criteria "Criteria on female workers' entitlement to breaks (e.g. meals/breastfeeding breaks)" the provided text does not refer to breaks "Vulnerable individuals including - but not restricted to - juvenile workers, young mothers, pregnant women and people with disabilities receive special protection". For the criteria "Criteria on factoring gender equity considerations in stakeholder engagement process" the provided extract does not make reference to gender issues, it just relate to stakeholders' engagement.	1	1	1	0	3
28	UEBT	5	The link for the provided information is correct. The extracts are correct.	1	1	1	1	4
29	UN Global Compact	6	The link provided could not be accessed (retrieved 10/10/2023), and the information could not be verified, as the extract could not be retrieved in internet.	0	0	0	0	0
30	UNCTAD	3	The link provided is correct. The extracts are correct. For the Criteria on gender policies at work - general principles the extract provided does not support clearly the compliance of this criteria. "6.2 The organization respects worker rights, provide adequate working conditions, and prevent any negative impacts on the health and safety of workers, in accordance with national legislation."	1	1	1	0.5	3.5
31	VCS	3	The link for the provided information is correct. The extracts are correct.	1	1	1	1	4
32	VietFarm	2	The link for the provided information is correct. The extracts are correct. For the criteria "Criteria relating to sexual exploitation / harassment" the provided extract is not enough evidence to report compliance with the criteria, as it does not make specific reference to harassment or sexual exploitation or abuse.	1	1	1	0	3
33	WFTO	9	The link provided could not be accessed (retrieved 17/10/2023). The self-assessment formulaire was found in an alternative website, not in the WFTO website. Once the document was found, the cited extract could be verified as correct.	1	0	1	1	3
34	Xertifix	6	The link for the provided information is correct. The extract is correct.	1	1	1	1	4
35	ZNU	4	The link for the provided information is correct. The extracts are correct.	1	1	1	1	4

Timeliness

Table 7A. Timeliness: Time of the last update in the database vs. time of the last update reported in the knowledge center

No	Certification	Last update database	Last updated in the standards map	Accuracy
1	ARSO	November 2021	November 2021	Accurate
2	AWS	May 2021	May 2021	Accurate
3	Bioknospe	New	Not reported	Not reported in both
4	Blue Angel leather	October 2021	July 2022	Map is more recent
5	Bluesign	March, 2022	April 2022	Database is more recent
6	BSCI	April 2023	January 2020	Database is more recent
7	CCB	February 2019	February 2019	Accurate
8	Certified Wildlife Friendly	January 2022	January 2022	Accurate
9	CHINCA	November, 2020	January 2021	Database is more recent
10	CNOPCC	February, 2021	March 2021	Database is more recent
11	Coffee Code	May 2022	Nov 2021	Database is more recent
12	ETI	March 2023	January 2020	Database is more recent
13	Food Alliance	April 2020	April 2020	Accurate
14	GlobalGAP	May 2022	April 2018	Database is more recent
15	GRI	May 2021	April 2021	Database is more recent
16	IFOAM	January 2022	March 2022	Map is more recent
17	IP-Suisse	March 2023	No date	Not reported in the Standards map
18	OECD	August 2022	December 2019	Database is more recent
19	OFDC	March 2020	March 2020	Accurate
20	Predator	January 2022	January 2022	Accurate
21	ProTerra Europe	April 2021	October 2021	Map is more recent
22	regio.garantie	NA	Not reported	Not reported in both
23	SAFA	June 2017	June 2017	Accurate

No	Certification	Last update database	Last updated in the standards map	Accuracy
24	Seychelles	July 2018	July 2018	Accurate
25	SGLS	November 2020	February 2022	Map is more recent
26	SLCP	March 2023	March 2021	Database is more recent
27	Step	January 2023	August 2019	Database is more recent
28	UEBT	March 2021	March 2021	Accurate
29	UN Global Compact	July 2020	July 2020	Accurate
30	UNCTAD	November 2020	November 2020	Accurate
31	VCS	March 2023	December 2019	Database is more recent
32	VietFarm	January 2022	January 2022	Accurate
33	WFTO	May 2023	September 2020	Database is more recent
34	Xertifix	December 2021	December 2021	Accurate
35	ZNU	February 2022	February 2022	Accurate

Table 8A. Last Standard version reported in the ITC database vs. last Standard update in the VSS website

Certification	ITC data base last update				Standards last update			Updated	Notes
ARSO	African Conformity Assessment Program (ACAP):				ACAP	1-2	2022	No	
	ACAP 1-1:2017, Regulations — Part 1: General requirements for the certification systems				https://members.wto.org/crnattachments/2022/TBT/ZAF/22_7196_03_e.pdf				
	ACAP 1-2:2017, Regulations — Part 2: Special requirements for the certification systems				ACAP	1-2	2022		
	ACAP 1-3:2017, Regulations — Part 3: Requirements for approval of certification bodies				https://members.wto.org/crnattachments/2022/TBT/ZAF/22_7196_04_e.pdf				
ARSO	ACAP 1-4:2017, Regulations — Part 4: Requirements for approval of testing and calibration laboratories				ACAP	1-3	2022		
					https://members.wto.org/crnattachments/2022/TBT/ZAF/22_7196_02_e.pdf				
ARSO					ACAP	1-4	2022		
					https://members.wto.org/crnattachments/2022/TBT/ZAF/22_7196_00_e.pdf				
AWS	THE	AWS	STANDARD	2.0	THE	AWS	STANDARD	2.0	Yes
	https://a4ws.org/the-aws-standard-2-0/				https://a4ws.org/the-aws-standard-2-0/				
Bioknospe	Standards for the production, processing and trade of "Bud" products 2020				Standards for the production, processing and trade of "Bud" products Effective as of 1 January 2023			No	
					https://international.bio-suisse.ch/dam/jcr:47dc9f0b-3dae-4936-aed8-2f844ab88497/Bio%20Suisse%20Standards%202023%20-%20EN%20v2.pdf				
Blue Angel leather	Basic Version	Award 4	Criteria 2015		Basic Version	Award 5	Criteria 2015	Yes	V5 is an extension of V4
	https://produktinfo.blauer-engel.de/uploads/criteriafile/en/DE-UZ%20148-201503-en%20criteria-V5.pdf				https://produktinfo.blauer-engel.de/uploads/criteriafile/en/DE-UZ%20148-201503-en%20criteria-V5.pdf				
Bluesign	bluesign®	SYSTEM	Version 3.0	2020-03	bluesign®	Version 3.0	SYSTEM 2020-03	Yes	For other documents V.5 2023 is available
	https://www.bluesign.com/downloads/criteria-2020/bluesign_system_v3.0_2020-03.pdf				https://www.bluesign.com/downloads/criteria-2020/bluesign_system_v3.0_2020-03.pdf				
BSCI	Amfori BSCI code of conduct V.2021				Amfori BSCI code of conduct V.2021			Yes	
CCB	CCB	Standards	V.2017		CCB	Standards	V.2017	Yes	
	https://verra.org/wp-content/uploads/CCB-Standards-v3.1_ENG.pdf				https://verra.org/wp-content/uploads/				
	Guidance for the use of CCB Standards V.2014								

Certification	ITC data base last update	Standards last update	Updated	Notes
	file:///C:/Users/kvrub/Downloads/Guidance_for_the_Use_of_the_CCB_Standards_May_2013.pdf	CCB-Standards-v3.1_ENG.pdf Guidance for the use of CCB Standards V.2014 file:///C:/Users/kvrub/Downloads/Guidance_for_the_Use_of_the_CCB_Standards_May_2013.pdf		
Certified Wildlife Friendly	Certified Wildlife Friendly™ Production Standards for North America V.2013 https://wildlifefriendly.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/certified-wildlife-friendly-standards-final-2013-v1-0.pdf	Certified Wildlife Friendly™ Production Standards for North America V.2013 https://wildlifefriendly.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/certified-wildlife-friendly-standards-final-2013-v1-0.pdf	Yes	
CHINCA	Guidelines on Social Responsibility of China's Overseas Project Contracting Industry 07/2013 http://www.chinca.org/CICA/info/17111313353911	Guidelines on Social Responsibility of China's Overseas Project Contracting Industry 07/2013 http://www.chinca.org/CICA/info/17111313353911	Yes	
CNOPCC	Organic products - Requirements for production, processing, labeling and management system V2019 http://c.gb688.cn/bzgk/gb/showGb?type=online&hcno=6C7830BA57AF12ACE93AF43B8CA7B315	Organic products - Requirements for production, processing, labeling and management system V2019 http://c.gb688.cn/bzgk/gb/showGb?type=online&hcno=6C7830BA57AF12ACE93AF43B8CA7B315	Yes	
Coffee Code	Coffee Sustainability Reference Code https://www.globalcoffeeplatform.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/CSRC_CoffeeSustainabilityReferenceCode_OCT21.pdf 4C CODE OF CONDUCT Version 4.0 https://www.4c-services.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/200701_4C-Code-of-Conduct-v.4.0.pdf	Coffee Sustainability Reference Code https://www.globalcoffeeplatform.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/CSRC_CoffeeSustainabilityReferenceCode_OCT21.pdf 4C CODE OF CONDUCT Version 4.0 https://www.4c-services.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/200701_4C-Code-of-Conduct-v.4.0.pdf	Yes	
ETI	ETI Base code. April 2016 https://www.ethicaltrade.org/resources/eti-base-code	ETI Base code. April 2016 https://www.ethicaltrade.org/resources/eti-base-code	Yes	
Food Alliance	Food Alliance Offers Five Certification Programs: Crop Producers Livestock Producers Shellfish Farms Nursery and Greenhouse Handling Operations The links were not updated	The following certifications have been added: Beverage producers Field grown hemp and cannabis Packing, processing, and distribution The certification handling operation has been removed https://foodalliance.org/certification-process	No	
GlobalGAP	IFA Smart V6_April 2022. Principles and Criteria for Flowers and Ornamentals https://www.globalgap.org/search/?area=documents&q=	IFA Smart V6_April 2022. Principles and Criteria for Flowers and Ornamentals https://www.globalgap.org/search/?area=documents&q=	Yes	

Certification	ITC data base last update	Standards last update	Updated	Notes
GRI	GRI Full set of standards https://www.globalreporting.org/standards/	GRI Full set of standards https://www.globalreporting.org/how-to-use-the-gri-standards/gri-standards-spanish-translations/	Yes	
IFOAM	IFOAM Norms for organic production and processing V. 2014 https://www.ifoam.bio/sites/default/files/2020-09/IFOAM%20Norms%20July%202014%20Edits%202019.pdf	IFOAM Norms for organic production and processing V. 2014 https://www.ifoam.bio/sites/default/files/2020-09/IFOAM%20Norms%20July%202014%20Edits%202019.pdf	Yes	
IP-Suisse	Richtlinien Grundanforderungen Gesamtbetrieb Änderung vom 09. November 2022 Version 01.3.03 Ersetzt Version vom November 2021 (01.3.02) In Kraft ab 1. Januar 2023 https://www.ipsuisse.ch/richtlinien-grundanforderungen-gesamtbetrieb/	Richtlinien Grundanforderungen Gesamtbetrieb Änderung vom 09. November 2022 Version 01.3.03 Ersetzt Version vom November 2021 (01.3.02) In Kraft ab 1. Januar 2023 https://www.ipsuisse.ch/richtlinien-grundanforderungen-gesamtbetrieb/	Yes	
OECD	OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises on Responsible Business Conduct 2023 for criteria A.4 Document and policies http://mneguidelines.oecd.org/guidelines/ . For section B, the document used is the 2011 version http://www.oecd.org/daf/internationalinvestment/guidelinesformultinationaleenterprises/48004323.pdf	OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises on Responsible Business Conduct 2023 http://mneguidelines.oecd.org/guidelines/	No	
OFDC	OFDC Organic Certification Standards Effective date: Jan. 1, 2019 http://www.ofdc.org.cn/uploadfile/20181121110511372.pdf	OFDC Organic Certification Standards Effective date: Jan. 1, 2019 http://www.ofdc.org.cn/uploadfile/20181121110511372.pdf	Yes	
Predator	Predator Friendly Production Standards for North America 2013 version 1.0 http://wildlifefriendly.org/standards/	Predator Friendly Production Standards for North America 2013 version 1.0 http://wildlifefriendly.org/standards/	Yes	
ProTerra Europe	ProTerra Standard V.4.1 September 2019 https://www.proterrafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/ProTerra-Standard-V4.1_EN-1.pdf ProTerra Certification Protocol V3.0 https://www.proterrafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/2019-10-17-PTF-Certification-Protocol-V3.0.pdf	ProTerra Standard V.4.1 September 2019 https://www.proterrafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/ProTerra-Standard-V4.1_EN-1.pdf ProTerra Certification Protocol V3.0 https://www.proterrafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/2019-10-17-PTF-Certification-Protocol-V3.0.pdf	Yes	
regio.garantie	https://www.schweizerregionalprodukte.ch/neue-seite/gemeinsame-richtlinien/Eigentümer: Verein Schweizer Regionalprodukte Letzte Aktualisierung: 10.12.2021 Gültig ab: 01.01.2022 Version: 12.00	ALLGEMEINGÜLTIGE REGLEMENTE FÜR LIZENZNEHMER (AB 1.1.2023) https://www.schweizerregionalprodukte.ch/neue-seite/gemeinsame-richtlinien/Eigentümer: Verein Schweizer Regionalprodukte Letzte Aktualisierung: 09.12.2022 Gültig ab: 01.01.2023 Version: 13.00	No	
SAFA	SAFA - Sustainability Assessment of Food and Agriculture INDICATORS V.2013 http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/nr/sustainability_pathways/	SAFA - Sustainability Assessment of Food and Agriculture INDICATORS V.2013 http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/nr/sustainability_pathways/	No	The name for one of the documents "Sustainability Assessment of Food

Certification	ITC data base last update	Standards last update	Updated	Notes
	docs/SAFA_Indicators_final_19122013.pdf SAFA - Sustainability Assessment of Food and Agriculture Guidelines - Systems V.3. 2013 http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/nr/sustainability_pathways/docs/SAFA_Guidelines_Final_122013.pdf	docs/SAFA_Indicators_final_19122013.pdf SAFA - Sustainability Assessment of Food and Agriculture Guidelines - Systems V.3. 2014 https://www.fao.org/3/i3957e/i3957e.pdf		and Agriculture Guidelines" and the version is the same, but the publications have one year of difference. The content also varies.
Seychelles	Assessors Manual, Operators Manual, Audit Manual	Audit manual not present in the website, only the assessment form: https://www.sstl.sc/downloads	No	
SGLS	It could not be verified	It could not be verified	No	The website does not have updated information about the standards requirement. The links in the ITC database are not working
SLCP	—Data Collection Tool v1.5: —Introduction to full virtual verification —Verification Protocol v1.5 —Verifier Guidance v1.5 —Facility Protocol for Full Virtual Verification —Facility Self-declaration Form for Full Virtual Verification —Worker Engagement (WE) Question Set —SLCP approved Worker Engagement Technology service providers (WE TSP) https://slcp.zendesk.com/	—Data Collection Tool v1.5: —Introduction to full virtual verification —Verification Protocol v1.5 —Verifier Guidance v1.5 —Facility Protocol for Full Virtual Verification —Facility Self-declaration Form for Full Virtual Verification —Worker Engagement (WE) Question Set —SLCP approved Worker Engagement Technology service providers (WE TSP) https://slcp.zendesk.com/	Yes	
Step	* STeP by OEKO-TEX® - Standard v01.2022 https://www.oeko-tex.com/importedmedia/downloadfiles/STeP_by_OEKO-TEX_R_-_Standard_en_01.2022.pdf	Step by OEKO-TEX Edition 01.2023 https://www.oeko-tex.com/importedmedia/downloadfiles/StepStandard_01.2023_en_de.pdf	No	
UEBT	UEBT Standard V.2020 https://uebt.org/resources#resources-standard	UEBT Standard V.2020 https://uebt.org/resources#resources-standard	Yes	
UN Global Compact	Guide to Corporate sustainability 2015 and complementary documents https://unglobalcompact.org/participation/getting-started/resources	Guide to Corporate sustainability 2015 and complementary documents https://unglobalcompact.org/participation/getting-started/resources	Yes	
UNCTAD	The UNCTAD BioTrade Principles and Criteria (2020) https://unctad.org/system/files/non-official-document/Principles_Draft_6.pdf	The UNCTAD BioTrade Principles and Criteria (2020) https://unctad.org/system/files/non-official-document/Principles_Draft_6.pdf	Yes	
VCS	VCS Standard V 4.3 June 2022 https://verra.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/VCS-Standard_v4.3.pdf	VCS Standard V4.5 October 2023 https://verra.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/VCS-Standard-v4.5-updated-4-Oct-2023.pdf	No	

Certification	ITC data base last update				Standards last update	Updated	Notes
VietFarm	VietFarm Standard	in Vietnamese & English	Operations Manual	Labeling Guidelines	Last update 2018	Yes	The documents "VietFarm Auditing Manual VietFarm Labeling Guidelines" could not be found in the website.
WFTO	Link provided is incorrect. For the Document and policies it makes reference to the "WFTO Fair Trade Standard Updated 1/2023 " which could not be verified. The links were incorrect, the last handbook is 2019				The Guarantee System Handbook 2019 https://wfto.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/WFTO-Guarantee-System-Handbook-updated-August-2019.pdf	No	
Xertifix	Version: Latest	3rd Revision:	edition 2017-2018		https://www.xertifix.de/der-xertifix-standard-2/?lang=en	Yes	To be updated in 2023
ZNU	ZNU standard		2018	ZNU standard	https://www.znu-standard.com/en/the-znu-standard	2018 Yes	To be updated in 2023

BILIOGRAPHY

McGilvray, D. (2021). *Executing data quality projects: Ten steps to quality data and trusted information*

(Second edition). Academic Press.

Sebastian-Coleman, L. (2013). *Measuring data quality for ongoing improvement: A data quality assessment framework*. Morgan Kaufmann.

Vaziri, R. (2012). A Questionnaire-Based Data Quality Methodology. *International Journal of Database Management Systems*, 4(2), 55–68. <https://doi.org/10.5121/ijdms.2012.4204>