

ESWATINI SUGAR ASSOCIATION

Technical services

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AN OVERVIEW OF FSA & BONSUCCRO CERTIFICATIONS

SUSTAINABILITY SHARED VALUE STATEMENT

The industry strives to meet all sustainability requirements by benchmarking itself against global sustainability standards for continuous improvement and alignment with best management practices, to create value for its sugar and by-products

INTRODUCTION

The Eswatini sugar industry Council in a meeting of June 2022 approved the recognition of the Farm Sustainability Assessment (FSA) certification standard for Ubombo Sugar Limited (USL) and the implementation of Bonsucro certification for the Royal Eswatini Sugar (RES) Corporation Simunye Mill. USL is currently certified under the FSA standard and the rollout of the certification to growers is yet to take place. RES is at the planning stages on the implementation of the Bonsucro standard and is expected to take sometime to achieve certification. The main objectives of certification are industry sustainability and future proofing market access in the context of the Eswatini sugar industry.

SAI Platform strives to support farmers and companies in moving towards sustainable production of agricultural products

OBJECTIVES

The objective of this article is to give an overview of these two sustainability certification standards that have been accepted for industry implementation. It further provides information on the importance of these certifications and what members can expect as they are being implemented.

FARM SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT (FSA)

FSA is a tool from the Sustainable Agriculture Initiative (SAI) used to engage, assess and improve sustainability at farm level.

The SAI Platform was created in 2002 by Danone, Nestlé and Unilever



as a pre-competitive collaborative space for the food and drink industry. The goal was to find common solutions to the challenges the entire industry faced and make agriculture more sustainable. Nowadays, SAI Platform has over 90 members across the global food and drink value chain and covers all major commodities such as sugar, grains and livestock. SAI Platform promotes the development and implementation of sustainable agriculture by developing tools and guidance. One of these tools is the FSA. Through the FSA programme, SAI Platform strives to support farmers and companies in moving towards sustainable production of agricultural products.

Implementation options

The FSA checklist has 112 questions covering social, environmental and economic topics. There are three implementation options:

1. **Benchmarking:** a farm or farm management group complies with a benchmarked standard and they can claim a performance (Bronze, Silver or Gold) level accordingly
2. **Self-assessment and verification:** the farm or farm management group conducts self-assessments and these are verified by external auditors.
3. **Hybrid:** combination of options 1 and 2.

To go through the FSA process, three steps can be distinguished:

1. **Engage:** the farm management group should be aware of the FSA sustainability requirements
2. **Assess:** the agricultural practices of the supply base are assessed
3. **Improve:** the focus is on continuous improvement, working towards better agricultural practices.

Third party verification

FSA is a verification programme and third-party verification is obligatory for companies and farms that want to publicly claim a certain FSA performance level of their farm supply base and/or farmers in the FSA programme. Third party verification consists of a farm management system verification and on-site farm assessments.

External auditors work with the FSA programme. They conduct verification audits, farm management system verification, trainings for farmers and suppliers, implementation of improvement plans, and many other services.

Benefits of FSA

FSA helps both companies such as millers and farmers to save time and resources.

For companies such as millers, FSA:

- provides one single, industry-aligned, and widespread tool to meet sustainable sourcing targets
- helps to reduce the burden of having to assess and verify multiple farm practices using different schemes and codes.

For farmers, FSA:

- saves time and resources since only one reference tool is used instead of completing multiple assessments for multiple customers
- helps improve farmer practices and increases opportunities to do business with customers interested in sourcing sustainably produced products.



BONSUCRO

Bonsucro offers a credible, metric certification process to demonstrate commitment to environmental and social sustainability in sugarcane. A Bonsucro certificate is internationally recognised and respected. By attaining a Bonsucro certificate, a grower or miller can improve business image, achieve sustainability procurement goals, build partnerships to tackle sustainability issues.

Types of certification

There are two types of Bonsucro certification— one on the production end of the supply chain and one on the trading side of the supply chain. The two work together to ensure that sugarcane production benefits producer communities, ensures that people are treated fairly and creates long-lasting traceable supply chains.

1. *Production Standard*

The Production Standard helps farmers and millers to measure their productivity alongside key environmental and social impacts. It can be used by all sugarcane mills and farms to demonstrate sustainable production, regardless of size.

Businesses that use the Bonsucro Production Standard:

- Increase operational efficiencies
- Reduce energy use
- Decrease water use
- Reduce resource wastage
- Create a safe working environment
- Increase market access

2. *Chain of Custody Standard*

The Chain of Custody Standard enables brands to trace sugarcane from the origin to the end product. It allows brands to make sustainability claims about their sugarcane sourcing. The Chain of Custody

Standard relates to the supply of a product including all stages, from the feedstock production to consumption. It demonstrates:

- Responsible sourcing
- Ethical trading
- Assurance of compliance
- Increased supply chain visibility

Why should growers and millers get certified?

There are many benefits of becoming certified. For example growers and millers:

- Receive new ways to measure their performances
- Demonstrate to employees that they care about sustainability
 - Prove to customers that they are serious about sustainability
 - Help workers gain knowledge and new skills when implementing the Bonsucro Production Standard
 - Attract and retain talented staff.



Why should traders such as ESA get certified?

Chain of Custody certification helps provide understanding of supply chains and measures of mitigating risks. A certificate also:

- Enhances organisational reputation
- Helps organisations meet sustainable sourcing targets with credibility
- Provides a narrative on sustainability that both the buyer and the seller understand
- Presents the opportunity to be ahead of the global movement - rather than having to catch up with competitors.

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