

**VIETNAM RURAL INDUSTRIES RESEARCH
AND DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE (VIRI)**

CODE OF CONDUCT ON ECO-FAIR

**(Code of conduct on production and processing of
eco-fair products in agriculture)**

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The Vietnam Rural Industries Research and Development Institute (VIRI)

I. INTRODUCTION

Objective:

The Code of conduct on Eco-fair (Code of conduct on production and processing of eco-fair products in agriculture) is an independent and voluntary set of standards that aims to establish appropriate standards on environmentally responsible practices in production and processing for enterprises, cooperatives, and farmer households in the agriculture industry in Vietnam. The objective of the CoC is to promote sustainable development of the agriculture sector through the promotion of supply and demand of Eco-Fair Agri-food processing products, promoting sustainable production and markets for Eco-Fair Agri-food processing products, contributing to

prosperity, reduce poverty, enhance livelihoods, move towards circular economy and green growth in Vietnam.

Simultaneously, the CoC also aims to help businesses prepare for the first step towards achieving international certifications.

Subjects of application:

The CoC is recommended to be applied to enterprises, cooperatives, agricultural production and processing households in Vietnam.

Participant benefits:

The voluntary compliance of the Code of Conduct assists the businesses, cooperatives, farm households in achieving sustainable development through the following benefits:

- Produce high-quality products with increase in product value.
- Reduce production costs by promoting sustainable production practices.
- Develop a circular economy, ensure sustainable use of natural resources.
- Create and strengthen the image, reputation, and other brand values to stakeholders, including customers, suppliers, and potential investors.
- Get access to diversified domestic and international consumer market segments.
- Create sustainable livelihoods for employees and sustainable development for businesses.
- Initially meet international standards and technical requirements of new-generation free trade agreements, joining the global supply chain for export and/or expansion of export markets.

Methodology of the CoC

The set of Eco-fair standards is built based on the characteristics of Vietnamese agriculture, and at the same time references the international system of ecological and fair standards in the Sustainability Map of the International Trade Center (ITC) and legal documents, standards on Vietnam sustainable agriculture. The eco-fair standard group is consistent with the international standard system and has a suitable application to Vietnam's conditions on eco-fair.

The CoC on Eco-fair is built and managed by The Vietnam Rural Industries Research and Development Institute with the support of the Project: “Promotion of supply and demand of Eco-Fair Agri-food processing products in Vietnam” sponsored by the European Union - Switch Asia Program.

The CoC includes ecological criteria and fairness criteria group

1. Ecological criteria group: including 7 criteria

Criterion 1. Landscape and biodiversity conservation

Criterion 2. Water use and management

Criterion 3. Land use and management

Criterion 4. Input use, chemical use management, disease management

Criterion 5. Energy Use

Criterion 6. Waste management

Criterion 7. Climate and carbon

2. Fairness criteria group: including 6 criteria

Criterion 1. Human rights and local communities

Criterion 2. Working conditions and social protection

Criterion 3. Labor - employment

Criterion 4. Labor practice - Human development and social dialogue

Criterion 5. Ethics in business, anti-corruption and bribery

Criterion 6. Compliance with national, regional and international laws

II. ECOLOGICAL CRITERIA GROUP

Criterion 1. Landscape and biodiversity conservation

- Policies to protect biodiversity.
- There are sustainable management practices for the exploitation and use of natural resources.
- Measures to regenerate and restore natural habitats or ecosystems, create and maintain buffer zones in order to protect biodiversity.
- Measures are taken to assess the impact of production activities on biodiversity, identify potential risks affecting the ecosystem.
- Protect areas of high conservation value, nationally and internationally recognized areas of biodiversity.
- Measures after production or after harvest are taken to protect and conserve biodiversity.
- Measures are taken to conserve natural wetlands.
- Measures are taken to avoid cross-infection of plant diseases.
- There is a policy on the use of biotechnology such as fermentation, cell or tissue culture, genetic modification, protein engineering, etc.
- Measures are taken to protect ecosystems, especially native species, against invasive alien species.
- Measures are taken to maintain and protect rare, threatened or endangered ecosystems
- Having policies to protect rare, threatened or endangered wildlife, and to minimize and prevent negative impacts on wildlife due to production and business activities.
- Fire or explosives must not be used in the manufacture or clearing of land areas.

Criterion 2. Water use and management

- Have a water management plan.
- There is a regulation on water use and monitoring.
- Measures are taken to ensure that business operations do not affect local water demand in the event of water scarcity or the risk of water shortage.
- Measures are taken to reduce water use, reuse, and increase water recycling.
- Measures are taken to avoid water pollution, reduce the impact of water pollution between regions.
- Measures are applied to maintain and improve water quality.
- Measures are taken to analyze water quality in aquaculture farms.

- Specific measures are taken to treat gray water and gray water flow.
- Monitor water sources on and around the production site (e.g. irrigation records, water sources, water exploitation permits).
- There are rules or guidelines related to the containment of natural wetlands in undrained conditions.
- Measures are taken to ensure water usage records are kept.
- Build and manage waste storage areas that may pollute water sources (wastewater, fertilizers, pesticides, bottles, etc.) in compliance with environmental laws.
- Do not use untreated sewage for watering plants. Only use treated wastewater if the quality meets regulatory requirements for agricultural irrigation use.

Criterion 3. Land use and management

- A plan to implement a land management plan (such as developing a planned land use and management plan; analyzing the current status of soil types; identifying areas prone to erosion, runoff, and subsidence;)
- Have a long-term farming plan appropriate to the operation of the farm, including the land, livestock (if applicable) and local climate.
- Measures are taken to maintain and conserve land.
- Measures are taken to ensure soil quality (such as distributed and integrated crop management practices, monoculture and polyculture).
- Measures are taken to maintain and enhance soil nutrients.
- Measures are taken to prepare the type of soil suitable for each plant variety.
- Perform crop rotation to maintain and improve the soil.
- Use cover crops to maintain and improve the soil.
- Measures are taken to avoid soil pollution.
- Measures are taken to minimize soil erosion.
- Measures are taken to prevent soil compaction.

Criterion 4. Input use, chemical use management, disease management

- There is a policy to use organic natural inputs such as raw materials, animal feed, seedlings, breeding animals, etc.
- There is a policy to use organic fertilizers.
- There is a policy to encourage the use of local seeds in production.

- Implement written rules and guidelines on the use of agrochemicals such as fertilizers, pesticides, soil disinfectants, etc. (inventory storage, handle areas, manage waste and residue, label containers, etc.)
- Implement specific written rules or guidelines regarding the use of chemicals in food or non-food manufacturing processes (use of specific food additives, cleaners, disinfectants, hazardous substances, etc.)
- Use plant protection drugs on the principle of the right drug, at the right time, in the right dose and concentration, in the right way.
- When using pesticides, measures must be taken to prevent spreading to neighboring areas, and there should be warning signs in the newly sprayed area.
- Do not use plant protection chemicals for production, listed in “List of prohibited plant protection chemicals in Vietnam”.
- Implement a policy that prohibits the use of any chemicals that are harmful to human health.
- There is a policy to clearly record the use of chemicals or measures that use natural organic inputs.
- Policy should be in place to limit the use of surfactants, cleaners and foam inhibitors.
- Specific measures are taken to preserve and clean the ecological environment and agrochemical containers.
- Specific measures are taken to preserve and label agrochemicals.
- Monitor and record the use of pesticides in production (type, quantity, field/lot, usage time).
- Measures are taken to use chemical equipment to ensure selective and targeted application of chemicals, and regularly calibrate agrochemical application equipment.
- Measures are taken to protect non-targeted areas from the use of agrochemicals.
- Organize training sessions for workers on proper handling and disposal of chemicals, as well as on post-exposure practices.
- Implement "Integrated Pest Management" or "Integrated Crop Management" program.
- Measures are taken to manage genetically modified materials (GMOs). Measures are in place to prevent the risk of GMOs materials affecting or contaminating the non-GMO production process at the production unit or the surrounding area.
- Measures are taken for traceability and labeling of genetically modified products and crops.
- There are special regulations and guidelines to ensure procedures to prevent the spread of disease in animals.
- There are regulations or guidelines related to the origin and quality of animal feed.

- Comply with regulations regarding the use of drugs on animals or livestock.
- There are specific rules or guidelines regarding the handling and use of rice husks and manure.

Criterion 5. Energy Use

- There is a policy to use and manage energy.
- Apply cleaner production principles or best practices to production, business and service activities to increase overall efficiency and reduce damage and risks to people and the environment.
- Measures are taken to reduce energy use such as saving energy, conserving energy resources.
- Measures related to energy storage, such as fuel or electricity
- Prioritize the use of renewable, sustainable energy sources such as: wind energy, solar energy (e.g. sun exposure where and when possible), hydroelectric energy, bioenergy, energy biomass, energy recovered from waste, wastewater treatment plant gas, biogas.
- Take measures related to the use of firewood as an energy source.

Criterion 6. Waste management

- There is a policy on waste management.
- There is a waste management plan, including measures to reduce at source, reuse, recycle waste according to the principles of circular economy, and dispose of waste in accordance with regulations.
- There are specific regulations or guidelines related to the handling of solid waste, non-solid waste or hazardous waste.
- Take measures related to hazardous waste.
- Measures are taken to reduce, recycle and reuse solid waste.
- Measures are taken to minimize air pollution emitted from production and business activities and their impacts
- Measures are taken to reduce noise, odors and other types of pollution emitted from production and business activities.
- Measures are taken to prevent the release of chemical, mineral and organic wastes.
- Measures are taken to collect, treat and destroy solid waste.
- Measures are taken to collect, treat, use or destroy non-solid waste.
- There are rules or guidelines for risk monitoring and record keeping of contamination incidents.

- There are specific rules or guidelines regarding hazardous waste handling.
- Apply a policy regarding segregation of different waste streams.
- There are specific rules or guidelines regarding the use of fire to dispose of waste.
- There are specific regulations or guidelines for avoiding uncontrolled landfilling of waste.

Criterion 7. Climate and carbon

- There is a policy related to carbon emissions.
- Measures are taken to monitor greenhouse gas emissions and carbon emissions.
- There are alternative solutions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and carbon emissions.
- There are measures related to the absorption of greenhouse gases.
- Measures are taken to monitor and manage areas with high carbon stocks.
- There are measures related to climate adaptation activities.
- Measures are taken to achieve "carbon neutrality" of business operations.
- Destroy or degrade primary forests are banned.
- Diversify crops and use appropriate farming methods to adapt to climate change such as crop rotation, intercropping, and overlapping crops.

III. FAIRNESS CRITERIA GROUP

Criterion 1. Human rights and local communities

- Have a policy related to the protection of human rights, ensuring the participation of the local community.
- Measures are taken to ensure the rights of minorities and disadvantaged groups.
- Measures are taken to ensure that business practices do not negatively affect the convenience and prices of food in nearby local communities.
- There is a policy to support the economic development of local communities.
- Measures are taken to encourage the purchase of local ingredients.
- Measures are taken to develop services and benefits for the local community.
- Hold consultations with representatives of the local community about the possible impacts of the business on local resources and communities.
- Consider cultural and traditional production practices in production and business activities.
- Take action to promote and enhance educational opportunities in nearby local communities.
- Take action to promote and increase access to health in local communities.
- Measures are taken to protect historical, cultural, archaeological relics and local properties.
- Raise awareness and promote eco-fair agriculture for local communities and partners.
- Co-create and share knowledge for stakeholders.

Criterion 2. Working conditions and social protection

- There is a policy to ensure good working conditions.
- Measures are taken to ensure safety at work, including safety for electrical equipments.
- There are training activities to ensure safety and prepare employees to respond to accidents.
- Measures are taken to ensure occupational health and safety.
- There is a policy to protect employee privacy.
- Apply measures to prevent the exploitation and sexual harassment of women.
- Policies are in place to prevent harassment or abuse in the workplace.
- Prepare for a fire emergency; Ensure emergency exits are maintained; Have evacuation procedures and notify workers and visitors;
- Equip personal protective equipment and emergency first aid tools for employees.
- Measures are taken to ensure the safety of dangerous machines and equipment.

- Ensure clean water for drinking, personal hygiene and sanitation works for employees.
- Measures are taken to ensure that workplace conditions (such as air quality, lighting, noise, etc.) are controlled and safe.
- Ensure safe and adequate accommodation for workers and canteens (enough space, gender separation, etc.)
- Allow workers the right to take breaks, such as lunch breaks.
- Ensure the safety of employee at work.
- Comply with laws related to child labor.
- Keep and monitor accident records, employee discipline records.

Criterion 3. Labor - employment

- There is a policy on working conditions.
- Enterprises pay insurance for employees in accordance with the law.
- There is a transparent process for hiring and firing workers.
- There are specific policies regarding hiring seasonal workers.
- Comply with child labor regulation.
- Ensure the right of employees to terminate employment in accordance with the law.
- Policies are taken to ensure that vulnerable workers are not discriminated against and benefit from equal opportunities.
- Have a policy on employee leave, including public holidays and annual leave, special leave (such as sick leave, marriage, funeral, etc.)
- Set the maximum number of working hours per week.
- A specific policy is taken to ensure that working hours and overtime are properly tracked and compensated.
- Maintain and record employees' payroll and pay slips.
- There is a policy on equal remuneration (work of equal value between men and women).
- Ensure that workers receive the legal minimum wage.
- Ensure living wages are paid, based on industry, national or regional realities.
- There is a formal written contract for all employees as required by law.
- Make sure there is no forced labor.
- Respect the right of workers to join unions and the right to collective bargaining freely and democratically.

- There is a policy that prohibits keeping personal property or financial security for employees.
- Ensure that the employee's identity papers are not kept against their will (such as identity card, passport, etc.)
- There are policies and procedures in place to deal with employee queries and complaints.

Criterion 4. Labor practice - Human development and social dialogue

- Have policies and procedures in place to address human rights and human development.
- Take measures to maintain freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining.
- Ensure there is no discrimination due to race, religion, society, culture, age, gender or other factors in the workplace.
- There is a program in place to ensure that workers receive proper training.
- Have a policy to address gender issues, ensuring that there is no gender discrimination in the workplace.
- Protect the rights of women in the workplace.
- There are policies in place regarding maternity and parental leave for employees who are leaving work.
- Ensure the participation of women and ethnic minority workers in management.
- There are development support policies to promote the economic role of women.
- Encourage women to develop their careers.
- Create market access opportunities for women.
- Have a policy and monitor the sustainability of business activities.
- Ensure delivery time and handling measures, compensation (if any) for late delivery to suppliers.

Criterion 5. Ethics in business, anti-corruption and bribery

- Implement policies on ethics and transparency in business, ensure that members benefit fairly and benefit the community.
- Transparent in the supply chain, transparent product information.
- Use original and certified labels, advertise and market honestly, and protect customer information.
- Apply intellectual property.
- Implement policies to prevent corruption and bribery.
- Implement internal controls at the entity to minimize the possibility of corruption or bribery.

Criterion 6. Compliance with national, regional and international laws

- Comply with national environmental and social laws and regulations
- Actively check compliance with national and international regulations and standards.
- Proactively check for compliance with environmental and social regulations, standards and laws.
- There is a policy to respect the culture and religion of employees.
- Policies are taken to protect local cultural heritage areas.
- Have a business license and other required certificates as prescribed by law.

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