

# 7 tips on how to become more socially responsible in the fresh fruit and vegetables sector

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Sustainability is the new norm for business in Europe. Social responsibility is one of the key pillars of sustainability. It is good for people and the economic performance of your company. It is also a rule to comply with the new due diligence legislation.

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## 1. Turn social sustainability into a Unique Selling Point (USP)

Social responsibility is one of the main factors that affect trade in the fresh fruit and vegetables market. It is shifting from being a trend to becoming a norm. You can either wait and react to requirements, or you can include social responsibility in your business strategy from the beginning. This will enable you to stay ahead of developments and anticipate upcoming changes. If you want to stand out, focus on key issues like living wages, decent labour conditions and gender equality.

[The Sustainable Initiative Fruit and Vegetables \(SIFAV\)](#) is a pan-European initiative that aims to promote sustainability in the global supply chain. The [partners of SIFAV](#) are frontrunners of the sector, responsible for a large share of trade.

The percentage of sustainably sourced fresh produce by SIFAV members for the European market [increased from 50% in 2015 to 85% in 2020](#). 'Sustainable' means compliance with at least one social and one environmental standard. By 2025, at least 90% of the volume sourced from high and medium-risk countries should be verified by one of their accepted social standards.

There are countries and market segments where social sustainability is a must. Germany, Austria, Scandinavia and Switzerland are examples of this. This creates an opportunity for exporters that turn social responsibility into a unique selling point (USP). However, social sustainability is becoming a legal requirement across Europe. Accordingly, your company's USP will need to go further.

Social responsibility can bring higher productivity and product quality. Workers are a fundamental part of companies' success. They execute key activities, such as harvesting, sorting, packaging, selling and much more. Happy workers are more productive and have a greater sense of belonging to the company. What can

you do to keep your employees happy? Check these basic actions to start:

- Offer formal employment contracts;
- Provide benefits and training opportunities; and
- Maintain safe working conditions.

Social responsibility can [attract impact investment and funding](#) to your company. Banks and investors are increasingly including social measures to provide financing. [Rabobank](#), for example, provided a loan to the Chilean company Hortifrut to support an acquisition in Peru. As part of the loan, Hortifrut committed to various environmental and social conditions. DiMuto is another example. The company offers trade financing solutions to agrifood companies. For them, it is important that [partners share their commitment to sustainability](#). Ignoring social responsibility also poses a risk to your business. Think about reputational risks, for example, if child labour or slavery is discovered in your packhouse or the fields. Reputational risks are particularly important if your company supplies leading supermarket chains.

Figure 1: Benefits of becoming a more socially responsible exporter



Source: adapted from ITC course – Introduction to Corporate Social Responsibility

SGA Farms is a company from Ghana that exports papaya to the European market. They turned [their social responsibility actions](#) into a clear USP:

We are committed to meeting our customers' needs in a sustainable manner that does not compromise the lives of the current generation and the generations for years to come.

SGA Farms receives support from international cooperation and European government programmes. Support ranges from training activities to co-financing for promotional export activities. Their commitment to sustainability has been key to opening these partnership opportunities!

[Fresh Approach](#) is an exporter of fresh fruit and vegetables from Kenya. They work with small-scale farmers, women and young people to help them improve their livelihood and earnings. Fresh Approach translated its actions on diversity and social inclusion into a USP. This is how they describe their value in their company profile at [Online Fruit Logistica 2023](#):

By working with Fresh Approach you are not only guaranteed quality produce, but you can also be confident that you are receiving a safe product, working with a reliable partner and supporting the livelihoods of over 2,000 rural households.

[Mavuno Organics](#) is an exporter of avocados from Kenya. They sell '[the first Living Wage avocados in the world](#)'. This USP is a result of their actions and alliances with European buyers and retailers. They have partnered to provide fair prices and wages and to ensure a 'living income' for their producers (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Living wage avocados: a clear USP for Mavuno Organics

Source: Nature and More YouTube Channel, 2023

A good way to set and communicate your sustainability agenda is to follow the [United Nations Sustainable Goals \(SDGs\)](#). The SDGs are 17 goals and 169 targets that aim to make the world a better place by 2030. Different actors in the fresh produce value chain use the SDGs to report on their activities, define their focus and rank their actions. The websites of the exotic fruit importer [Nature's Pride](#) and the Ghanaian exporter [SGA Farms](#) show examples of how you can communicate sustainability actions in alignment with the SDGs.

### **Tips:**

Start by analysing what your company already does in terms of social sustainability. You may already be doing a lot, but you might not have realised and turned it into a USP yet.

Take the [Introduction to Corporate Social Responsibility \(CSR\)](#) e-course offered by ITC. It will give you a more general impression of CSR and the economic and environmental pillars.

Check the CBI's Tips to go green. Holistic and systemic approaches are increasingly being applied to achieve social goals. For example, by implementing regenerative agricultural practices with multiple crops that have different seasons and are produced for different markets and segments, you can provide stable work to your employees throughout the year instead of only seasonal work.

## **2. Provide healthy and safe working conditions**

Having a health and safety policy at work is very important, but making sure that your workers understand the importance of it is equally important. The policy design must include continuing education for your employees. You must be patient because employees often underestimate the risks of not adhering to health and safety protocols.

Be prepared to reply to statements like: “Don’t worry, I am always careful, I don’t need to wear gloves when applying fertiliser.” Be patient and remind your workers of the importance of protective clothing and health and safety measures. Make them participants in the process and ask for their opinions to improve. Taking care of your people also means higher productivity and product quality, fewer work accidents and less sick leave.

To get an idea of the main issues in the fresh fruit and vegetables sector, you can study [the health and safety criteria of the GLOBALG.A.P certification](#). This certification is a minimum requirement for most fresh produce importers. Not being able to meet health and safety standards will affect your certification process and, consequently, your access to the European market.

The main health and safety aspects that you need to be aware of are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: Health and safety aspects in agriculture

Aspect	Actions you should take	Examples in fresh produce
Risk assessment and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify the main risks for your workers’ health and safety.</li> <li>• Document them and review them often to keep them up to date.</li> <li>• Implement procedures to address the identified risks.</li> <li>• Train your workers and make sure they understand why this is important to avoid accidents.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some of the main hazards in fresh fruit and vegetables farms and packing facilities are exposure to fertilisers, pesticides, agrochemicals and the use of dangerous equipment and machinery.</li> <li>• Consider developing gender-responsive health and safety guidelines, as the hazards may differ between men and women. As an example, check these <a href="#">guidelines on healthy and safe employment of women in the Ghanaian banana industry</a>.</li> </ul>

<p>Hazards and first aid</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Display and communicate accident and emergency procedures on the farm. Make them visible to workers, visitors and subcontractors.</li> <li>• Use warning signs to indicate potential hazards. Use pictograms, pictures, or local language understandable to everybody.</li> <li>• Make safety advice for hazardous substances available and accessible to workers. This information is key in case of accidents as it will allow emergency services to take the right actions.</li> <li>• Complete and maintain first aid kits in accordance with regulations. Train employees in first aid and ensure that at least 1 trained employee is present at the location when production and handling activities take place.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include information like emergency contact numbers of the police, ambulance, hospitals and fire brigade. List emergency evacuation procedures where applicable.</li> <li>• Sign the location of fertilisers and agrochemicals.</li> </ul>
<p>Personal protective equipment (PPE)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equip workers, visitors and subcontractors with suitable personal protective equipment.</li> <li>• Make sure that this equipment is clean and stored appropriately. Also ensure that your workers use it as intended.</li> <li>• Provide your workers with a place to change.</li> </ul>	<p>The most common PPE in the sector includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full-body suits, boots, gloves, facemasks and protective goggles for activities where there is exposure to agrochemicals.</li> <li>• Boots and raincoats for farmworkers.</li> </ul> <p>For more details about personal protective equipment you can read Chapter 6 (PPE) of the <a href="#">ILO Code of practice on safety and health in agriculture</a>.</p>

<p>Workers' welfare</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make sure that your workers have access to clean drinking water, food storage and areas to eat and rest.</li> <li>• If there are on-site living quarters at the farm, these must be habitable and equipped with basic services and facilities, as stipulated by local regulations.</li> <li>• If you provide transportation to your workers, ensure it is safe.</li> <li>• In general, maintaining good communication between the management and the workers about pressing issues around health and safety is safe for your company. You should make sure this is done without fear of intimidation or retaliation.</li> </ul>	<p>Workers' welfare might differ depending on your specific context. Examples include creating nice resting areas for your workers' breaks or communicating well with your team via periodic committees to discuss health and safety issues.</p>
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Source: Information adapted from GLOBALG.A.P. IFA SMART checklist 10 November 2022

In addition to the criteria imposed by third-party certifiers, you can also implement your own initiatives and go beyond compliance. For example, [Jordan River Herbs PLC, a fresh herbs grower from Ethiopia, cares for its employees' health and wellbeing](#). They provide daily free balanced meals, clean drinking water, soap and shampoo for personal use, and shower and laundry facilities. Other ideas include nutrition talks or hygienic breastfeeding areas for working mothers, depending on your context and employees' needs.

Figure 3 shows examples of health and safety measures. Each row shows examples for each aspect as follows:

1. Hazards and first aid: use of warning signs in rooms with agrochemicals, first aid kits and emergency equipment.
2. PPE: workers with adequate clothing to enter cooling rooms, handle and apply agrochemicals.
3. Workers' welfare: guided active pauses, reading corners for employees and scenic dining area.

Figure 3: Examples of health and safety measures



Source: Image created by Dana Chahin with pictures taken at [Goldenberry Farms](#) and [Agrifresh](#) and pictures provided by [Montana Fruits](#)

## Tips:

Download a customisable checklist from the [GLOBALG.A.P. document generator](#) to conduct a self-assessment on all topics covered by the certification, including health and safety at work.

Read this [e-course provided by GLOBALG.A.P.](#) to understand the main issues of health and safety and test your knowledge with examples.

Read the website of [The Health and Safety Executive of the United Kingdom](#). It offers information and guidance on health and safety in agriculture.

## 3. Contribute to closing the gender gap: from the fields to the offices

Being socially responsible also means providing equal rights and opportunities to everybody. One of the most relevant issues in the sector is gender equality and women's empowerment. [There are about 1.7 billion women and girls living in rural areas of developing countries](#), and almost half of them work in agriculture. In South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, this number rises to 60%. Despite this, women [have often less access to resources and services than men](#).

Major players in the European fresh fruit and vegetables sector care about gender equality in the supply chain. For example, Lidl Great Britain has a [gender equality buying policy](#) and is implementing projects and programmes in key priority supply chains. Watch the video in Figure 4 to understand why gender equality matters in this sector and to get inspired by women leaders, from both the supply and the demand side.

Figure 4: Gender equality in the fresh fruit and vegetables sector

There are a large number of actions that you can take to contribute to closing the gender gap in the fresh produce sector. You can start by setting the target to have an equally diverse work environment. [Companies with a 50/50 gender representation are associated with an amazing 41% revenue increase](#). To achieve this target, design career plans and education programmes for your female employees in lower levels.

Other actions you can think about to close the gender gap at your company are:

1. Offer flexible working times for single working mums.
2. Train your male and female employees in gender equality issues.
3. Challenge gender stereotypes in your community. Are you looking for a new truck driver? Encourage women to apply even though this job is often culturally thought to be only for men.

To define the best actions for your context, it is best to design and set up a strategy. This is not an easy task, and it requires above all management commitment. Once you have this, you can follow the next steps:

Identify the women that are part of your community and value chain.

Carry out an assessment to understand and analyse their situation and their needs; identify what the obstacles are and what is obstructing their success. To do this, you can survey your employees and organise focus groups.

Organise the information of the assessment and think about what actions you can take. Talk to your buyers. They have valuable information and might give you ideas. Many of them are implementing gender equality projects with their suppliers.

### Tips:

Connect with [Global Women Fresh](#), a non-for-profit organisation founded in 2019. They aim to close the gender gap in the fresh produce industry worldwide, from the fields to the management.

Read the [Ethical Trading Initiative Base Code Guidance on Gender](#) to help you set up a strategy. Figure 3 on page 7 of the guide offers a useful roadmap.

Check examples of gender equality projects that large European players are implementing. Take a look at the [Fyffes gender equality programme](#), for example.

## 4. Implement digital systems to monitor your supply chain

Transparency and traceability are 2 often-heard words in the fresh produce industry. Buyers expect that you are able to trace what is happening in every step of your operation. For example, are you an exporter working with producers' associations and small farmers? Then you need to have a clear overview of what is happening with your suppliers. You must ensure that the fruit you are exporting complies with the same standards, even if it comes from different producers.

More and more supermarkets are making the [GLOBALG.A.P. Chain of Custody \(CoC\)](#) certification mandatory.



This certification ensures that certified products are not mixed or substituted with non-certified products in the value chain. Producers that export directly and have GLOBALG.A.P. certification that includes product handling facilities (Figure 5) are not required to provide CoC certification. Otherwise, CoC certification is increasingly required to ensure traceability.

Figure 5: Example of GLOBALG.A.P certification with product handling facility



Source: Undisclosed exporter courtesy

Implementing a system to record your activities and those of your suppliers is vital to organise your exports and manage risks in your supply chain. This can be an Excel file, but keep in mind this can mean you need several days or months to analyse the information or extract relevant data. Some companies develop their own software. However, it is recommended to research the market to avoid reinventing the wheel. Some examples of supply chain management software are [eProd](#), [Farmforce](#) and [Auxfin](#).

Introducing technology and digitalising your company is good to improve your internal processes and achieve a better overview of your supply chain. Anecdotal evidence confirms that women are often the ones keeping records on farms. Thus, exposing them to technology is a way to empower them with new tools. On the other hand, the agricultural sector has a generalised crisis of generational change. Young people are not incentivised to work in agriculture so often migrate to other industries. Introducing technology is a way to create incentives to stay.

### Tips:

Check the [CBI's Tips to go digital](#), especially Tip 5: Start by digitalising your internal processes. Here, you can find examples and tips to decide on the best software for your company.

Check these [5 steps to prepare for GLOBALG.A.P. Chain of Custody](#) certification.

## 5. Be prepared for the human rights due diligence legislation

'Human rights due diligence' refers to the ongoing process of identifying, preventing, mitigating and managing risks surrounding human rights violations throughout the supply chain (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Human rights due diligence

Source: [UNDP India](#)

Human rights due diligence in supply chains is evolving into a legal requirement in Europe. Figure 7 shows the state of corporate due diligence legislation in EU member states. France was the first country to implement human rights due diligence legislation in 2017. The most recent law is [the German Act on Due Diligence in Supply Chains](#) (LkSG for its German acronym), also known as the new Supply Chain Act, which entered into force on January 1, 2023.

Figure 7: Human rights due diligence legislation across European countries



Source: [Unpacking the upcoming EU law to stop corporate abuse](#). Press kit, joint NGOs, November 2021

The different national legal frameworks developed throughout Europe are often based on similar international voluntary standards. However, they do differ. As such, [the creation of a legislative act at the EU level](#) to ensure a level playing field for companies across the EU was requested by several stakeholders.

In February 2022, the EU adopted the proposal for a [Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive \(CSDDD\)](#). The legislation is expected to enter into force in 2024, showing that human rights and environmental due diligence is no longer a voluntary decision for companies, but it also has legal implications.

The agricultural sector is considered a high-impact sector in the EU CSDDD. Although due diligence legislation only applies directly to large companies (see box below), it has implications for companies from developing countries like yours too. Why? Because large companies (like supermarkets across Europe) will pass their requirements onto their suppliers (importers and distributors of fresh fruit and vegetables). Importers will then transfer these requirements to their suppliers abroad: you!

In day-to-day business, these requirements will translate into new obligations. For example, additional supporting information, further social certifications and more frequent audit visits.

## The German and the European due diligence legislation

The German LkSG requires companies with workforces of at least 3,000 people and later companies with workforces of at least 1,000 to ensure compliance with human rights throughout their supply chains. Although the duty of care only applies to the company's business areas and to their direct suppliers, companies must act if they have knowledge of human rights violations amongst their indirect suppliers. Since large companies want to avoid this risk, stricter monitoring measures are expected.

The European CSDDD is expected to be even stricter than the German LkSG. This has meant that there are expectations that the LkSG will also become even stronger in the coming years. New EU rules will apply to companies with more than 500 employees and, after 2 years, to companies with more than 250 employees. It will require due diligence throughout the value chain, and not only if 1 of the parties is aware of human rights violations amongst their indirect suppliers. Significant civil consequences for the companies that do not adhere to the rules are also envisioned.

Figure 8 shows the main observed social risks when conducting human rights due diligence in the fresh fruit and vegetables sector.

Figure 8: Main human rights risk in the fresh fruit and vegetables supply chain



Source: Image created by Dana Chahin/CBI

Typical questions that you can ask yourself to prepare for audits or questionnaires from buyers doing their human rights due diligence are:

- What is your wage policy?
- Has your company defined working hours?
- Is there a way to report extra hours?
- How are resting times regulated?
- What are you doing to ensure that no children work at your company?
- What are you doing to prevent gender-based violence or harassment in the workplace?
- What is your health and safety policy at work?
- Do you maintain a dialogue with your community or indigenous groups of your region to ensure that your operations do not compromise their human rights and access to basic resources?

Most European supermarkets and buyers already conduct their human rights due diligence. They are motivated by the legal and reputational risk of not doing so or the commercial need to achieve sustainable supply chains. Many buyers use [a tool to identify fruit and vegetable supply chain risks](#) that was developed by [Agriplace in partnership with SIFAV](#). Buyers can enter the product and the origin, and the tool displays a list of social and environmental risks to consider.

To avoid and mitigate identified risks, buyers require their suppliers to adhere to codes of conduct or sign sustainability agreements as part of their sourcing contracts. Adherence to these Codes of Conduct is usually measured and monitored through in-company audits or by third-party, independent audits. In this sense, third-party certifications are and will remain a useful way for buyers to verify due diligence processes.

What happens if you do not comply? Generally, if buyers identify irregularities, suppliers will be given the chance to correct and implement improvements. However, this only applies if the issue identified is not classified with a high degree of seriousness. [ICA Gruppen](#) – a leading food and health retailer from Sweden –

describes the risk analysis and levels of seriousness.

### Tips:

Identify if your country is classified as a high or medium-risk country, using the [SIFAV list](#).

Visit the [amfori BSCI](#) (Business Social Compliance Initiative) countries' risk classification to understand why your country is classified as medium or high-risk. You can check your country's performance in key issues such as voice and accountability; political stability and absence of violence; government effectiveness; regulatory quality; rule of law; and control of corruption.

Consult the [MVO - CSR Risk Checker](#), for a more detailed analysis at a country and sectoral level. Select your product and country to find out the risks you are exposed to and the solutions to manage them.

Compare the external situation with an internal analysis of your company to define the topics you should focus on.

Keep your documentation up to date and organised. This will help you save time and respond on time to your clients' requests.

## 6. Assess your living wage gap

[Living wages are the first social issue on the agenda of the global fresh fruit and vegetables sector](#). A living wage is defined as the wage needed to cover basic needs such as housing, food, clothing and education. The [UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) refers to living wages, by stating that everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity.

The living wage concept has also been present at [key moments in the history of the International Labour Organisation \(ILO\)](#). First, at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference and more recently in 2022 at the 110th session of the International Labour Conference (ILC). The latter considered that ILO must play a global leadership role in [contributing to a better understanding of living wages](#).

Many workers in the agricultural sector earn the so-called minimum wage. However, this wage is often too low to cover the essential needs. This is why companies in the fresh produce sector have started to realise that they play a crucial role in closing the living wage gap.

The Netherlands-based importer and supplier of organic fresh fruit and vegetables Eosta is a pioneer in the topic of living wages. They offer living wage fruits, such as [mangos from Burkina Faso](#) and [avocados from Kenya](#). Eosta calculated that an additional price of 2 eurocents per kilo of avocados and 10 eurocents per kilo of mangos would provide a living wage. Large retailers from Scandinavia, Austria and Germany backed up the initiative and sold the fruits with this premium. The Swiss retailer Coop provides another example of a Living Wage project for bananas (Figure 9).

Figure 9: Living Wage case study – Coop

Source: [IDH Transforming Markets](#)

The fresh produce market in Europe is still highly price driven. There is a need for further education and awareness among consumers. There are methods to raise consumer awareness to include the social and environmental impact in the price of a product. Calculations for bananas and other fruit and vegetables have been done using methods like [True Price](#) and [True Cost Accounting](#). [Albert Heijn](#) started a true price pilot with [coffee](#). An expansion to fruit and vegetables in the future is likely.

You can use the free IDH Salary Matrix tool to assess your living wages gaps yourself. Retailers like [REWE](#) from Germany already require their banana suppliers to conduct this self-assessment and return their results. Using these results, the retailer wants to analyse and understand the wages in the banana supply chain and, if there are gaps, evaluate how they can be closed in the long term. Although there is no certification for a living wage, assessing your gaps will help you prepare for upcoming audits and standards in this topic.

REWE Group is part of the [German Retailers Working Group on Living Income and Living Wages](#). The other members are [ALDI Nord](#), [ALDI Süd](#), [Kaufland](#), [Lidl](#), [dm-drogerie markt](#) and [tegut](#). The group started by focusing on supply chains. The target is for 50% of the product range to be living wage bananas by 2025. They and other buyers may soon set targets for other products. For example, SIFAV also requires its members to make a living wage commitment on at least 1 product or execute a project on the living wage by 2025.

### **Tips:**

Assess your living wage gap using the [IDH salary matrix tool](#). Before you start, make sure you have all the documentation regarding your employees' wages divided by gender to hand.

Talk to your buyers and explore cooperation possibilities to implement projects to help close the gap.

Read about other living wage projects that are currently being implemented in [Costa Rica and Belize](#) and [Ecuador and Ghana](#).

## 7. Understand the different social certifications

Voluntary social standards are the most important tool to show compliance with the social sustainability aspects discussed so far. Buyers expect certification to become more important in the coming years. The certification landscape may continue changing in light of new regulations. So, being up to date is key! But with so many different certification schemes out there, how can you decide which one is the right one for your company? We will give you some facts and insights to help you decide.

### GRASP is the minimum expected

**GRASP – The GLOBALG.A.P. Risk Assessment on Social Practice** is the most widely accepted social certification in Europe. For certain products, GRASP is often not enough anymore. Most companies are moving towards SMETA (Sedex Members Ethical Trade Audit). Some retail chains even go beyond this and ask for Rainforest Alliance certification. This is the case for avocados and mangos.

GRASP is a voluntary add-on of GLOBALG.A.P. It is probably the easiest standard to meet because it can be audited at the same time as GLOBALG.A.P. certification. Remember that GLOBALG.A.P. is a minimum requirement for most European buyers. European retailers like ALDI, LIDL, EDEKA, COOP and tegut require their suppliers to apply this social standard.

In GRASP, **there is no passing or failing of the assessment**, but there is an overall assessment result at the end. There are 4 options:

1. Fully compliant
2. Some improvements needed
3. Not compliant, but some steps taken
4. Not compliant

With stricter requirements and legislation, many retailers are asking for 'GRASP Fully Compliant'. Figure 10 shows an example of a GRASP certificate with all the criteria assessed as fully compliant.

Figure 10: Fully compliant GRASP certification



Source: Undisclosed exporter courtesy

### Other social standards growing in importance

**SMETA** is very popular in the United Kingdom, Germany and the Netherlands. GRASP is often not enough for buyers from these countries. SMETA is the number one alternative, and it has grown in popularity. One of the advantages of this standard is that buyers can review audit results online on the Sedex platform.

**Fairtrade** is a must for almost every buyer of products like bananas and pineapples. The premium applied to the price of the products supports farmers and workers, so they can use it to improve their lives and their communities.

**Rainforest Alliance** is growing in importance mainly because of environmental concerns. However, as the standard also assesses social criteria, a producer certified under Rainforest Alliance does not necessarily need to get certified with an additional social standard. It is often required for crops like mangos and avocados.

**Naturland** is a certification started by organic producers in Germany and it gradually expanded internationally. It includes social criteria. Some retailers accept it, subject to revision.

**B Corps** are slowly gaining importance in the sector. They are proof of going beyond compliance with traditional

certification. Dutch supermarket chain [Albert Heijn is targeting the B Corp certification for next year](#). The UK importer [SunFresh Produce](#) has been a B Corp since 2019. In Africa, there are no B Corps in the fruit and vegetables sector, but there are frontrunners in the agricultural sector, like [Koa](#) from Ghana. In Latin America, [Cartama from Colombia](#) and [Latbio from Ecuador](#) have recently become B Corps.

Figure 11: The most common social certifications in the fresh produce sector



Source: Image created by Dana Chahin with logos from corresponding certifications

Figure 12: SIFAV baskets of social standards



Source: [SIFAV, 2023](#)

### Tips:

Before getting certified, talk to your buyers and ask them for their requirements and recommendations. Buyers have information about the market and upcoming changes that can help you decide where to focus.

If you supply different markets and have clients that require different social standards, analyse your position and growth opportunities in each market to make the right decision and set your priorities.

Check the [SIFAV basket of social standards](#) (Figure 12), which considers the dynamics of the sector, the differences in risks for various countries and the differences in realities for small and large farms.

Check these lists shared by large retailers that contain [accepted social standards that include GRASP criteria](#).

Read the [CBI's study on social certifications](#) to find out more about the current offer and how it will develop.

[Dana Chahin](#) carried out this study in partnership with [ICI Business](#) and [Globally Cool](#) on behalf of CBI.

Please review our [market information disclaimer](#).