

Progressive Entry Level (PEL) for the RTRS Standard for Responsible Soy Production

Version 4.0

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The next review is scheduled within the next 5 years at the latest. Earlier reviews might be scheduled upon decision by the Executive Board or as required by ISEAL membership requirements.

The RTRS official languages are English, Spanish and Portuguese, however in case of any inconsistency between different versions of the same document, please refer to the English version as the official one.

Weighting the RTRS Standard for Responsible Soy Production: Progressive entry level for the RTRS Standard for Responsible Soy Production

A. Changes from previous version

A.1 Re-categorization indicator 1.3.2 from short term compliance indicator to immediate term compliance indicator

A.2 Adaption to the Version 3.0 of the Standard

A.3 Adoption to the Version 4.0 of the Standard and re-categorization of several indicators.

1. Introduction

In order to involve a broader range of producers into the RTRS Standard for Responsible Soy Production, RTRS developed a progressive entry level that includes a continuous improvement approach.

All the indicators of the P&C were weighted to categorize them by their relevance, having into account: the opinion of the three constituencies of RTRS, other sustainability certification schemes approach to similar issues, analysis of evidence gathered during the field tests period, small farmers inclusion, international legislation, to determine a realistic, credible and pragmatic approach of the RTRS scheme.

2. Classification of the indicators within each criteria

The RTRS has classified the indicators in 3 different categories: See content of table below point 6

Category
Immediate Compliance Indicators
Short – Term Compliance Indicators
Mid- Term Compliance Indicators

3. Progressive approach

The first year (initial certification assessment): the producer shall comply with 100% of the indicators classified in this document or by the national interpretation as “immediate compliance indicators” and additionally 10% of the total short-term compliance indicators or mid-term compliance indicators. This represents approximately a compliance with approximately the 56 % of the RTRS standard.

The second year (first annual surveillance assessment): the producer shall comply with 100% of the indicators classified in this document or by the national interpretation as “immediate + short term compliance indicators”. This represents approximately a compliance with approximately the 80 % of the RTRS standard.

The third year (second annual surveillance assessment): the producer shall comply with 100% of the indicators classified in this document or by the national interpretation as “immediate + short + mid-term compliance indicators”. This represents a compliance with the 100 % of the RTRS standard.

The compliance of all the indicators will be assessed against the classification of majors and minors stated in “RTRS Accreditation and Certification Procedure for Responsible Soy” .

4. National Legislation versus Classification.

4.1 The current approach was considered based on the “RTRS Standard for Responsible Soy Production” and it is important to note that if national legislation requires the compliance with one indicator that under this approach is considered a short or mid-term compliance indicator, this indicator will be categorized as an immediate compliance indicator in the country or region that applies.

4.2 In countries that due the compliance with national legislation the number of immediate compliance indicators increases the CB shall:

4.2.1 Identify what indicators will be categorized additionally as immediate compliance indicators for the country and keep records of this analysis.

4.2.2 Inform the applicant company about any additional immediate compliance indicators that have been identified and the applicant company needs to consider in the initial certification audit.

4.2.3 If the number of the immediate compliance indicators increases, the CB may decrease the 10% of the additional short and mid-term indicators (only for the initial assessment audit) in the same proportion the immediate indicators are increased.

5. Replacement by an approved National Interpretation of the Progressive Entry Level system of the RTRS

5.1 If the RTRS endorses a National Interpretation or different weighting of the indicators for any particular country, then this shall replace the Generic RTRS Principles and Criteria, as well as, any locally adapted system previously used by the Certification Body in the country or area to which it applies.

5.2 If apply the certification body shall evaluate certificate holders against the requirements of the endorsed system at the next scheduled surveillance evaluation, in other words, the approved National Interpretation shall be used at the next audit after its publication.

6. Categorization and Reference table

57 Indicators	Immediate Compliance Indicators (1 st year)
29 Indicators	Short-term Compliance Indicators (2 nd year)
22 Indicators	Mid-term Compliance Indicators (3 rd year)
	Not applicable

Principle	Criteria	Indicator	Weight
Principle 1: Legal Compliance and Good Business Practice	1.1 There is awareness of, and compliance with, all applicable local National legislation.	1.1.1 Awareness of responsibilities, according to applicable laws can be demonstrated.	
		1.1.2 Applicable laws are being complied with.	
		1.1.3 Producers must not be involved in any act of corruption, extortion, or embezzlement, nor in any form of bribery, including - but not limited to - promising, offering, giving, or accepting any improper incentives, monetary or otherwise.	
	1.2 Legal use rights to the land are clearly defined and demonstrable.	1.2.1 There is documented evidence of rights to use the land (e.g. ownership document, rental agreement, court order, etc.)	
	1.3 There is continual improvement with respect to the requirements of this standard.	1.3.1 From the assessment required in 4.1.1, those social, environmental and agricultural aspects of the operation (on and off farm) where improvement is desirable are identified	
		1.3.2 From these aspects identified in 1.3.1, a number of indicators are selected and a baseline is established to be able to monitor continual improvement on those aspects where desired improvements have been identified	
		1.3.3 The results of monitoring are reviewed and appropriate action is planned and taken when necessary to ensure continual improvement.	

Principle 2: Responsible Labour Conditions	2.1 Child labour, forced labour, discrimination and harassment are not engaged in or supported.	2.1.1 No forced, compulsory, bonded, trafficked or otherwise involuntary labour is used at any stage of production.	
		2.1.2 No workers of any type are required to lodge their identity papers with anyone and no part of their salary, benefits or property is retained, by the owner or any 3rd party, unless required by law.	
		2.1.3 Spouses and children of contracted workers are not obliged to work on the farm.	
		2.1.4 Children below the age of 18) must not do hazardous work or any work that is likely to jeopardize their physical, mental or moral well-being.	
		2.1.5 Children under the age of 15 (or a higher age, if established in national law) must not carry out productive work.	
		2.1.6 All children of direct employees living on the farm must have access to school education.	
		2.1.7 There is a policy in place that shows the farm's commitment to not engage in, support or tolerate any form of discrimination	
		2.1.8 All workers receive equal remuneration for work of equal value, equal access to training and benefits and equal opportunities for promotion and for filling all available positions.	
		2.1.9 Workers are not subject to corporal punishment, mental or physical oppression or coercion, verbal or physical abuse, sexual harassment or any other kind of intimidation.	

		2.1.10 Workers have a safe and effective channel to report abuses and guarantee their rights are upheld.	
	2.2 Workers, directly and indirectly employed on the farm, and sharecroppers, are adequately informed and trained for their tasks and are aware of their rights and duties.	2.2.1 Workers (including temporary workers), sharecroppers, contractors and subcontractors have a written agreement, in a language that they can understand and in compliance with local laws.	
		2.2.2 Labour laws, union agreements or direct contracts of employment detailing payments and conditions of employment (e.g. working hours, deductions, overtime, sickness, holiday entitlement, maternity leave, reasons for dismissal, period of notice, etc.) are available in the languages understood by the workers or explained carefully to them by a manager or supervisor.	
		2.2.3 Adequate and appropriate training and comprehensible instructions on fundamental rights at work, health and safety, and any necessary guidance or supervision are provided to all workers.	

2.3 A safe and healthy workplace is provided for all workers	2.3.1 Producers and their employees demonstrate awareness and understanding of health and safety matters.	
	2.3.2 Relevant health and safety risks are identified, procedures are developed to address these risks by employers, and these are monitored.	
	2.3.3 Potentially hazardous tasks are only carried out by capable and competent people who do not face specific health risks.	
	2.3.4 Adequate and appropriate protective equipment and clothing is provided and used in all potentially hazardous operations such as pesticide handling and application and mechanized or manual operations	
	2.3.5 There are mechanisms in place that make sure that workers follow the safety requirements.	
	2.3.6 Accident and emergency procedures exist and instructions are clearly understood by all workers.	
	2.3.7 In case of accidents or illness, access to first aid and medical assistance is provided without delay.	
	2.3.8 Producers ensure the regular maintenance of machinery and equipment to make sure these devices can be operated safely.	

	2.4 There is freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining for all workers	2.4.1 There is the right for all workers and share croppers to establish and/or join an organization of their choice.	
		2.4.2 The effective functioning of such organizations is not impeded. Representatives are not subject to discrimination and have access to their members in the workplace on request.	
		2.4.3 All workers have the right to perform collective bargaining.	
		2.4.4 Workers are not hindered from interacting with external parties outside working hours (e.g. NGOs, trade unions, labour inspectors, agricultural extension workers, certification bodies).	
	2.5 Remuneration at least equal to national legislation and sector agreements is received by all workers directly or indirectly employed on the farm.	2.5.1 Gross wages that comply with national legislation and sector agreements are paid at least monthly to workers.	
		2.5.2 Deductions from wages for disciplinary purposes are not made, unless legally permitted. Wages and benefits are detailed and clear to workers, and workers are paid in a manner convenient to them. Wages paid are recorded by the employer.	
		2.5.3 Normal weekly working hours do not exceed 48 hours. Weekly overtime hours do not exceed 12 hours.	
		2.5.4 If additional overtime hours are necessary the following conditions are met:	

	<p>a) It only occurs for limited periods of time (e.g.. peak harvest, planting).</p>	
	<p>b) Where there is a trade union or representative organization the overtime conditions are negotiated and agreed with that organization.</p>	
	<p>c) Where there is no trade union or representative organization agreement the average working hours in the two-month period after the start of the exceptional period still do not exceed 60 hours per week.</p>	
	<p>2.5.5 The working hours of direct employees are recorded by the employer. In case of indirect workers, working hours will be recorded when possible.</p>	
	<p>2.5.6 Overtime work at all times is voluntary and paid according to legal or sector standards. In case overtime work is needed, workers receive timely notification. Workers are entitled to at least one day off following every six consecutive days of work.</p>	
	<p>2.5.7 Salaried workers have all entitlements and protection in national law and practice with respect to maternity. Workers taking maternity leave are entitled to return to their employment on the same terms and conditions that applied to them prior to taking leave and they are not subject to any discrimination, loss of seniority or deductions of wages.</p>	
	<p>2.5.8 If workers are paid per result, a normal 8 hour working day allows workers, (men and women), to earn at least the national or sector established minimum wage.</p>	

		2.5.9 Potable water is supplied to all employees inside the farm. If employees live on the farm, they additionally have access to toilets and handwashing facilities and affordable and adequate housing and food. If charges are made for these, such charges are in accordance with market conditions. The living quarters are safe and have at least basic sanitation.	
Principle3: Responsible Community Relations	3.1 Channels are available for communication and dialogue with the local community (including indigenous peoples) on topics related to the activities of the soy farming operation and its impacts.	3.1.1 Documented evidence of communication channels and dialogue is available. The channels adequately enable communication between the producer and the community.	
		3.1.2 The communication channels have been made known to the local communities and they allow anonymous communication, if so wished.	
	3.2 In areas with traditional land users (including indigenous peoples), conflicting land uses are avoided or resolved.	3.2.1 In the case of disputed use rights; a comprehensive, participatory and documented community rights assessment is carried out.	
		3.2.2 Where rights have been relinquished by traditional land users there is documented evidence that the affected communities are compensated subject to their free, prior, informed and documented consent.	
		3.2.3 Producers are required to respect the rights, customs and culture of indigenous peoples as defined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007) and ILO Convention 169 (1989).	

		3.2.4 Sites of special cultural, ecological, economic or religious significance and resources fundamental for satisfying the basic necessities of all traditional communities, local communities and indigenous people (for livelihoods, health, nutrition, water, etc.) shall be clearly identified in cooperation with such people, and recognized and protected by farm managers.	
3.3 An effective mechanism for resolving complaints and grievances is implemented and available to local communities (including indigenous peoples), employees, other workers and traditional land users.	3.3.1 Documented evidence of complaints and grievances received is maintained.		
	3.3.2 Any complaints and grievances received are adequately dealt with in a timely manner.		
3.4 Fair opportunities for employment and provision of goods and services are given to the local population, irrespective of gender and race.	3.4.1 Employment opportunities are made known locally.		
	3.4.2 Whenever possible, there is collaboration with training programs for the local population (including e.g. indigenous peoples)		
	3.4.3 Opportunities for supply of goods and services are offered to the local communities.		

Principle 4: Environmental Responsibility	4.1 On and off site social and environmental impacts have been assessed and appropriate measures taken to minimize and mitigate any negative impacts.	4.1.1 An initial social and environmental assessment is carried out prior to the first certification audit ¹ (see also Indicator 1.3.1). This assessment needs to be redone before any expansion of the operations takes place.	
		4.1.2 The assessment is carried out by someone who is adequately trained and experienced for this task.	
		4.1.3 The assessment is carried out in a comprehensive and transparent manner.	
		4.1.4 Measures to minimize or mitigate the impacts identified by the assessment are being documented, implemented and monitored.	
		4.1.5 A summary of the social and environmental assessment report shall be made available upon request.	
	4.2 Pollution is minimized and production waste is managed responsibly	4.2.1 There is no intentional burning on any part of the property of crop residues, waste, or as part of vegetation clearance.	
		4.2.2 All waste is adequately stored and disposed of (e.g. fuel, batteries, tires, lubricants, sewage)	
		4.2.3 There are facilities to prevent spills of oil ² and other pollutants.	
		4.2.4 Re-use and recycling are utilized wherever possible.	

	4.2.5 There is a residue management plan including all areas of the property.	
4.3 Efforts are made to reduce emissions and increase sequestration of Greenhouse Gases (GHGs) on the farm.	4.3.1 Total direct fossil fuel use over time is recorded, and its volume per hectare and per unit of product for all activities related to soy production is monitored.	
	4.3.2 If there is an increase in the intensity of fossil fuel used, there is a justification for this. If no justification is available there is an action plan to reduce use.	
	4.3.3 Soil organic matter is monitored to quantify change in soil carbon and steps are taken to improve it or, at least, to mitigate negative trends.	
	4.3.4 Opportunities for increasing carbon sequestration through restoration of native vegetation, forest plantations and other means are identified and, when possible, implemented.	
4.4 Expansion of soy cultivation is responsible.	4.4.1 The following areas have not been cleared or converted from May 2009 onwards:	
	4.4.1.a Where RTRS maps are available: All areas included in Category 1 of the maps 4.4.1.b Where RTRS maps are not available the following areas: a) native forests, b) riparian vegetation, c) natural wetlands, d) steep slopes, e) areas designated by law to serve the purpose of native conservation and/or cultural and social protection.	
	4.4.1.c Where there is an unresolved land use claim by traditional land users under litigation, without any agreement from both parties.	

	4.5 On-farm biodiversity is maintained and safeguarded through the preservation of native vegetation.	4.4.2 After 3rd June 2016, no conversion is allowed in any natural land (see Glossary), steep slopes and in areas designated by law to serve the purpose of native conservation and/or cultural and social protection.	Green
		4.5.1 There is a map of the farm, which shows the native vegetation, production areas and water courses (see 5.2.1).	Green
		4.5.2 There is a plan, which is being implemented and monitored to ensure that the native vegetation and wildlife are being maintained.	Orange
		4.5.3 Endemic, rare, threatened or endangered species permanently or temporary present at the property are protected. Hunting or collecting of these species is not allowed.	Green
		4.5.4 For farms that have less than 10% of native vegetation (but in compliance with 4.4 and 5.2 and other related indicators), producers are required to implement and promote conservation activities inside, outside or around the farm, to promote wildlife and the restoration of native vegetation	Orange
Principle 5 - Good Agricultural Practices	5.1 The quality and supply of surface and ground water is maintained or improved.	5.1.1 Good agricultural practices are implemented to minimize diffuse and localized impacts on surface and ground water quality from chemical residues, fertilizers, erosion or other sources, and to promote aquifer recharge.	Orange
		5.1.2 There is a plan that includes monitoring and mitigation measures according to risks that have been identified and it is applicable to the scale.	Blue
		5.1.3 Any direct evidence of localized contamination of ground or surface water is reported to, and monitored in collaboration with local authorities.	Green

		5.1.4 Where irrigation is used, there is a documented procedure in place for applying best practices and acting according to legislation.	
		5.1.5 The different uses of water on the farm shall be identified. For the activities that require the biggest volume of water use, the producer shall find a way to monitor it. Actions shall be implemented to reduce water use wherever possible.	
	5.2 Natural vegetation areas around springs and along natural watercourses are maintained or re-established.	5.2.1 The location of all watercourses has been identified and mapped, including the status of the riparian vegetation.	
		5.2.2 Where natural vegetation in riparian areas has been removed there is a plan with a timetable for restoration which is being implemented.	
		5.2.3 Natural wetlands are not drained and native vegetation is maintained.	
	5.3 Soil quality is maintained or improved and erosion is avoided by good management practices.	5.3.1 Appropriate monitoring of soil quality including taking soil fertility samples is in place.	
		5.3.2 Knowledge of techniques* to maintain soil quality (physical, chemical and biological) is demonstrated and these techniques are implemented.	
		5.3.3 Knowledge of techniques to control soil erosion is demonstrated and these techniques are appropriately implemented.	
		5.3.4 A crop rotation plan shall be implemented to prevent soy from being planted immediately over soy and to	

		<p>promote a time gap on the same field. During this gap, a second crop or pasture should be cultivated or, at least, land shall be left fallow or under cover vegetation for regeneration purposes.</p> <p>This plan shall consider adapting specific climate and agro-ecological regional conditions.</p>	
	<p>5.4 Negative environmental and health impacts of phytosanitary products are reduced through the implementation of systematic, recognized Integrated Crop Management (ICM) techniques.</p>	<p>5.4.1 A plan for ICM is documented and implemented which addresses the use of prevention, and biological and other non-chemical or selective chemical controls.</p>	
		<p>5.4.2 There is an implemented plan that contains targets for reduction of potentially harmful phytosanitary products over time.</p>	
		<p>5.4.3 Only original and genuine agrochemical products, which comply with local registration requirements, must be used to prevent risks for farmers, consumers and the environment.</p>	
		<p>5.4.4 Use of agrochemical products follows legal requirements and professional recommendations (or, if professional recommendations are not available, manufacturer's recommendations) and includes rotation of active ingredients to prevent resistance.</p>	
		<p>5.4.5 Records of monitoring of pests, diseases, weeds and natural predators are maintained.</p>	

	5.5 All application of agrochemicals is documented and all handling, storage, collection and disposal of chemical waste and empty containers, is monitored to ensure compliance with good practice.	5.5.1 There are records of the use of agrochemicals, including:	
		a) products purchased and applied, quantity and dates;	
		b) identification of the area where the application was made;	
		c) names of the persons that carried out the preparation of the products and field application;	
		d) identification of the application equipment used;	
		e) weather conditions during application.	
		5.5.2 Containers are properly stored, washed and disposed of; waste and residual agrochemicals are disposed in an environmentally appropriate way.	
		5.5.3 Transportation and storage of agrochemicals is safe and all applicable health, environmental and safety precautions are implemented.	
		5.5.4 The necessary precautions are taken to avoid people entering into recently sprayed areas.	
		5.5.5 Fertilizers are used in accordance with professional recommendations (provided by manufacturers where other professional recommendations are not available).	

	5.6 Responsible Use of Agrochemicals	5.6.1 There is no use of agrochemicals listed in the Stockholm and Rotterdam Conventions.	
		5.6.2 Agrochemicals shall be applied using methods that minimize harm to human health, wildlife, plant biodiversity, and water and air quality.	
	5.7 The use of biological control agents is documented, monitored and controlled in accordance with national laws and internationally accepted scientific protocols.	5.7.1 There is information about requirements for use of biological control agents.	
		5.7.2 Records are kept of all use of biological control agents that demonstrate compliance with national laws.	

	<p>5.8 Producers are not allowed to introduce or use invasive species in the management unit. Systematic measures are planned and implemented to monitor, control and minimize the spread development of new pests.</p>	<p>5.8.1 Where there are institutional systems in place to identify and monitor invasive introduced species and new pests, or major outbreaks of existing pests, producers follow the requirements of these systems, to minimize their spread.</p>	
		<p>5.8.2 Where such systems do not exist, incidences of new pests or invasive species and major outbreaks of existing pests are communicated to the proper authorities and relevant producer organizations or research organizations.</p>	
	<p>5.9 Appropriate measures are implemented to prevent the drift of agrochemicals to neighbouring areas</p>	<p>5.9.1 There are documented procedures in place that specify good agricultural practices, including minimization of drift, in applying agrochemicals and these procedures are being implemented.</p>	
		<p>5.9.2 Records of weather conditions (wind speed and direction, temperature and relative humidity) during spraying operations are maintained.</p>	
		<p>5.9.3 Aerial application of pesticides is carried out in such a way that it does not have an impact on populated areas. All aerial application is preceded by advance notification to residents within 500m of the planned application.</p>	
		<p>Note: 'Populated areas' means any occupied house, office or other building</p>	
		<p>5.9.4 There is no aerial application of pesticides in WHO Class Ia, Ib and II within 500m of populated areas or water bodies.</p>	

		5.9.5 There is no application of pesticides within 30m of any populated areas or water bodies.	
	5.10 Appropriate measures are implemented to allow for coexistence of different production systems	5.10.1 Measures are taken to prevent interference in production systems of neighbouring areas	
	5.11 Origin of seeds is controlled to improve production and prevent introduction of new diseases.	5.11.1 All purchased seed must come from known legally approved sources.	
		5.11.2 Self-propagated seeds may be used, provided appropriate seed production norms are followed and legal requirements regarding intellectual property rights are met.	



ROUND TABLE
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