SIFAV BASKETS OF SOCIAL STANDARDS

The SIFAV Baskets of Social Standards are developed by the Sustainability Initiative Fruit and Vegetables (SIFAV) to promote and mainstream the verification of good labour conditions on farms in high- and medium-risk countries.

Ensuring decent labour conditions for workers in producing countries is one of the focus areas of the SIFAV 2025 social program.

The implementation of social standards through third party verification is a way to check, report and further improve labour conditions at a producer.

SIFAV Commitment

The SIFAV partners have committed to jointly implement approved social standards to at least 90% of volumes coming from high and medium risk countries by 2025. To achieve this ambition, SIFAV has developed Baskets of Social Standards as well as a list of high-and medium-risk countries.

Benchmarks

By setting up baskets of approved social standards, SIFAV is aiming to drive harmonization, to support alignment of market requirements to best practices and to promote transparency and comparability. The baskets provide choice for supply chain actors ultimately resulting in higher efficiency, lower costs, and less audit duplications.

Social standards that have gone through an independent benchmarking process and that are found to be equivalent are included in the SIFAV baskets. Benchmarking ensures that all standards accepted meet a minimum level of assurance and quality set by these benchmarks.

SIFAV follows two benchmarks when it comes to social compliance. These are the Sustainable Supply Chain Initiative (SSCI) and the Farm Sustainability Assessment (FSA) benchmark, developed by the Sustainable Agriculture Initiative (SAI) platform.

For high-risk countries, equivalency to the SSCI benchmark is required[1]. Equivalency to FSA bronze on social chapter or to the SSCI benchmark is required for standards applied in medium-risk countries and for verification on smallholder farms. Adopting both benchmarks for these countries and farmers opens the possibility to accept standards that are more common in these countries and/or more accessible to smallholders.

1. Starting 2024. Up until then the GSCP benchmark (the predecessor of SSCI) is still being used and accepted in parallel.

Different baskets for different contexts

SIFAV has defined three Baskets of Social Standards to cover different requirements according to the area of application: one for high-risk countries, one for medium-risk countries and one for smallholders.

Smallholders

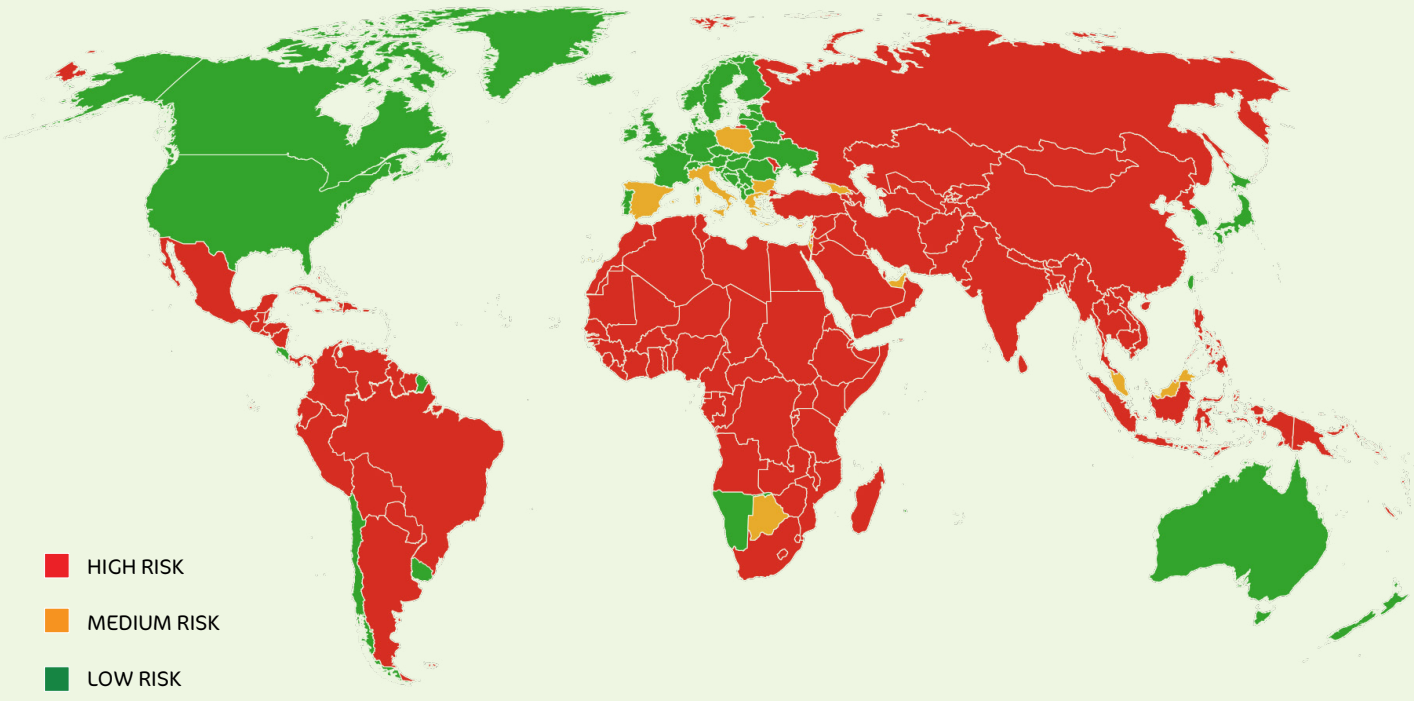
Decent working conditions should be ensured on all farms, independent of their size. However, large farms and smallholders differ in terms of resources and reality. Under SIFAV, smallholders are defined as family farmers or small single farmers that employ less than 10 FTE on a yearly basis (permanent or temporary). Farmer organizations of which two third of the farmers comply to the above definition are also considered as smallholders.

High- and medium-risk countries

The probability of human and labour rights violations is closely linked to the capacity of local governments to set stringent labour laws and ensure their implementation and enforcement. The difference in the level of assurance provided by the countries themselves requires different levels of additional assurance. When there is a risk of lack of governance, the adoption of social standards and third-party verification is an additional assurance method for decent working conditions.

SIFAV partners have decided to implement additional assurance methods at farms and packing houses in high-risk and medium-risk countries. Following the Amfori Risk Classification, high-risk countries are defined as countries with a World Governance Index (WGI) average rating below 60 or 3 or more individual dimensions with as rating below 60. Medium risk countries are countries with a WGI average rating between 60 and 80. Additional indicators related to migrant labour, forced labour and fundamental labour rights are taken into consideration for the classification of medium-risk countries.

SIFAV MAP OF RISK COUNTRIES



Baskets of social standards

	SMALL-HOLDERS	MEDIUM-RISK COUNTRIES	HIGH-RISK COUNTRIES
Fairtrade	●	●	●
ETI/SMETA	●	●	●
Imo Fair for Life and For Life	●	●	●
SA8000	●	●	●
BSCI	●	●	●
SCS- sustainably grown	●	●	●
SAN/ Rainforest Alliance	●	●	●
SIZA	●	●	●
FSA*	●	●	
Global Gap- GRASP	●	●	
Global Gap – FSA add on	●	●	

* FSA 3.0 is required for verification performed after October 2022

How to use the baskets?

As a retailer or trader, you ask your suppliers to source fruits and vegetables from producers that are audited / certified with one of the standards accepted under the respective SIFAV Baskets of Social Standards when located in high or medium risk countries. If the producer is a smallholder, the basket for smallholders can be applied. The farm as well as the packing facility needs to be certified / audited.

As a producer located in a high or medium risk country, your farm(s) and packing facility need to comply with at least one of the standards included in the respective SIFAV Baskets of Social Standards to be considered as a sustainable source. If you are a smallholder, you need to comply with one of the standards in the basket for smallholders to be considered a sustainable source.

SIFAV 2025

The Sustainability Initiative Fruit and Vegetables (SIFAV) aims to actively contribute to more sustainable global fresh fruit and vegetable supply chains. Its purpose is to create impact at scale by aligning policies, targets, and collaborative action. SIFAV is coordinated by IDH, the Sustainable Trade Initiative. SIFAV is a pan-European initiative representing more than 40 partners, among them retailers, brands, traders, civil society organizations and other supporting parties. In 2021, SIFAV launched its new 2025 strategy, with a clear focus on reducing the environmental footprint across the supply chain, improving working conditions, wages and incomes, and strengthening due diligence reporting and transparency.

Get in touch!

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