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SIZA ENVIRONMENTAL

This additional self-assessment questionnaire (SAQ) based on the SIZA Environmental Standard is completed and available on the SIZA Platform. Further development is currently taking place and the full SIZA environmental module will be ready early 2018 on the SIZA Platform. Thank you to the growers who already completed their Environmental SAQs. Over the last month SIZA reviewed more than 70 completed Environmental SAQs.

Although SIZA members can complete this additional Environmental SAQ, it is not yet a requirement for all. Only members asked by their market (retailers, exporters or importers) must complete the additional SIZA Environmental SAQ, **as well as all members who need to obtain visibility through the SIZA AB account on Sedex.**

Please note: The Environmental SAQ allows members to copy overlapping information from their current Social SAQ to the Environmental SAQ, preventing them from having to duplicate information. However, the Environmental SAQ is not automatically populated with the Social SAQ info – the user (grower) must actively select this function.

Frequently Asked Questions about the SIZA Environmental SAQ: the Environmental Pillar of Sustainability

In support of the longer term SIZA vision to include environmental stewardship as an integral offering within sustainability, SIZA has partnered with WWF-SA (the World Wide Fund for Nature) to develop an environmental standard and associated supporting tools.

The SIZA Environmental Self-Assessment Questionnaire (SAQ) has been available on the SIZA Platform since mid-August. The positive response to date has confirmed the need for this module. We therefore wish to cover some of the frequently asked questions that have been coming through to the SIZA office to help raise awareness of the Standard and cover some of the basics.

WHAT IS CURRENTLY AVAILABLE?

The SIZA Environmental Standard & SAQ have been designed to help growers evaluate their current compliance level and environmental risks, both at a farm/pack house and regional level. The self-assessment questionnaire is available for SIZA members on the Platform and the Standard is also available on the SIZA website for download as additional reference material.

WHICH TOPICS ARE COVERED?

The SAQ deals with a range of issues from minimum legal requirements to leading best practice across four main topics: (1) water, (2) soil (3), energy, materials and waste, and (4) farm ecosystems and biodiversity. In addition, there are over-arching sections that address policy, risk assessment and management processes. There will soon be a selection function that will allow pack house and farm questions to be separated, so that only the relevant questions will be asked at the different levels.

HOW DOES THE SIZA ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARD COMPARE TO OTHERS?

The SIZA Environmental Standard is a comprehensive standard that has been benchmarked against several prominent international environmental standards to ensure a compatible level of assurance, while taking into consideration relevant local environmental factors.

WHY SHOULD I DO IT?

The SIZA Environmental SAQ can help you identify what environmental risks might be a greater priority within your business and your region. In the current climate of water insecurity and increasing input costs, understanding these risks and taking the necessary proactive steps by measuring indicators that can help drive improvements and efficiencies, will help ensure the resilience of your business into the future. In addition, many markets are asking their suppliers to start measuring and reporting on their sustainability risks and this SIZA environmental module is the starting point for this process.

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO COMPLETE?

There are 180 questions in the SAQ and it usually takes 1–2 hours to complete if all the necessary supporting documents are close at hand.

IS A “PASS” MARK REQUIRED?

Being a self-assessment, there is no pass or fail mark that SIZA requires its members to meet. What is important is to complete the assessment with honesty – not in order to get a good rating, but to get a realistic result that is a reflection of the true risks of the business. This will assist in developing a meaningful sustainability strategy. At the moment, the market is also not setting a certain rating as a requirement, but is only interested in viewing a completed SAQ and a detailed improvement plan that can track performance over time against the top identified risks.

HOW CAN I GET TECHNICAL SUPPORT TO HELP ME ANSWER THE QUESTIONS?

The SIZA office is available to answer any of your questions about the Environmental SAQ. In addition, the WWF team is supporting SIZA in developing some supporting documents and templates that will be available in the Library soon. Should you require additional assistance to complete the SAQ or interpret the results, please contact SIZA to make an appointment?

WHAT HAPPENS TO THE ANSWERS THAT I SUBMIT?

The process is the same as the SIZA Social SAQ – once the answers are complete, the user submits them for technical review. The SIZA Environmental reviewer then checks the answers for completeness and content and either approves the SAQ or reverts back with some comments or questions. Once the SAQ is approved, a notification will be sent to the member. If SEDEX visibility was selected by the member, then the data will be transferred on to the SEDEX platform and visibility granted to linked members.

IS THERE A REPORT I CAN SHOW TO THE MARKET TO PROVE I HAVE COMPLETED IT?

Yes, you can get a PDF version of the completed SAQ as a record of completion. The data analysis and reporting functionality is currently under development by the IT service provider. This functionality will be available early in 2018. Should you require a report to be generated for you before then, please contact SIZA and we will try to find a solution for you.

HOW CAN I FIND OUT MORE ABOUT IT?

A range of information sessions are being planned for 2018 and will be announced in the SIZA Newsletter. So look out for a session near you in the various production regions and contact the organizers to make sure you don't miss out on this opportunity.

For more information contact SIZA at Tel 086 1111 568 or email to info@siza.co.za.

SIZA MEMBERSHIP

New Membership Level for Smallholder Producers - Level 1C

In order to support smallholder producers to benchmark themselves against the South African labour law and to become compliant with local and international market requirements, SIZA developed a new membership level (Level 1C) on the SIZA Platform. This will allow SIZA to monitor emerging producers over a three-year period in order to allow them the time to increase their production capacity and prepare them for assurance in order to expand their market access in a step-up approach towards sustainable businesses.

SIZA, in conjunction with independent and SIZA recognized training companies, started in 2016 with fifty farmers, selected from 118 developing citrus growers in Limpopo, Mpumalanga, Eastern Cape, North West and KwaZulu-Natal, as well as 23 smallholder farmers in the Western Cape.

Basic ethical trade facilitator training commenced over the last two years and the programme comprises the following:

- Ethical trade training
- Pre-audit assessment
- Registration on the SIZA Platform
- Pre-audit assessment assistance to ensure that gaps identified to comply with the SIZA standard has been addressed
- Completion of the self-assessment questionnaire (SAQ)
- Social/ethical auditing where requested and when ready

The SIZA third-party social audit programme is not a pass/fail exercise. The purpose of the audit is to identify areas on the site that are non-compliant and require corrective actions and improvement. The SIZA programme uses the SIZA Audit Frequency Matrix to support this position. It creates four categories of risk, i.e. Platinum, Gold, Silver and Bronze, where the Platinum category has the most stringent qualifying criteria. This will allow a SIZA member to be rated according to these risk categories and earn the right to move to a higher category (where there are less frequent audits). However, it also builds into the system a range of tools beyond the audit that, if used in combination rather than isolation, will provide more extensive cover and management of risk between audits making the programme more robust. The SIZA programme has identified various activities and actions that will be in place in order to mitigate and manage risk. While the third-party audit is an important component of this, it is the activities between audits that support and maintain sustainable improvement.

The training companies work with farmers to improve their compliance up to a level where they will be ready for the third-party audit. With improved compliance, smallholder producers can increase their production capacity and prepare to expand their market access in a step-up approach towards sustainable businesses. The training companies will therefore provide ongoing and continuous support and training to the smallholder/emerging growers until they are at a satisfactory level of compliance as indicated by local and international market requirements.

SIZA would like to invite all smallholder producers to register as a Level 1C member on the Platform so that we can assist you in becoming compliant with requirements. Level 1 C membership for smallholders is being subsidized by SIZA.

If you need any help with the registration process, please contact Lynn Taute at the SIZA office (info@siza.co.za).

SIZA AUDIT FREQUENCY

The SIZA ethical programme subscribes to being improvement-led rather than audit-led and uses the SIZA Audit Frequency Matrix to support this position. Agriculture is a rapidly changing environment and therefore it was decided that, as of the 1st of May 2017, the audit frequency categories will change to Platinum, Gold, Silver and Bronze, where Platinum will no longer be a five-year audit period, but a three-year audit period. The SIZA Audit Frequency Matrix is available on the SIZA website for review:

<https://siza.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/SIZA-Audit-Frequency-Matrix-May-2017-final.pdf>

Although SIZA changed the five-year audit period of the past to a maximum of three years, we acknowledge that all markets are not comfortable with the five-year audit period already allocated. We can also re-iterate that SIZA changed its structures, policies and processes over the last two years with stricter audit oversight practices. It is therefore necessary for growers to update their support documentation and consider re-audits in order to comply with the upgraded standards and procedures.

Please note: We urge members who are still in possession of an initial five-year audit confirmation letter and who were not audited over the last two years since the online platform was completed, to verify with their buyers that their audit frequency requirements and the audit confirmation letter from SIZA is still acceptable and valid.

Retailers who are uncomfortable with accepting the initial allocated five-year frequency period, should also please indicate to their suppliers that they would like their supply base to be audited more frequently.

SIZA has various activities and actions in place to mitigate and manage risk, but being part of a fast changing environment, we acknowledge that a lot can change over five years. While a third-party audit is an important component of SIZA, we also support the underlying principal of continuous improvement and going beyond audits.

5 **to** **3** *years*



FAIR LABOUR PRACTICES (FORCED AND BONDED LABOUR)

Stronger Together has launched a new global supply chain project to promote responsible employment in the wine and fruit growing industries in South Africa. Funded by the United Kingdom Home Office Modern Slavery Innovation Fund, the project will be delivered in partnership with the Wine and Agricultural Ethical Trade Association (WIETA) and the Sustainability Initiative of SA (SIZA). The project aims to encourage and facilitate engagement and collaboration between businesses across global supply chains. It will support businesses in South Africa to act responsibly by equipping them with the knowledge, skills and tools they need to promote a positive working environment, and to detect and deal with forced labour within their operations and supply chain. The project will take an inclusive multi-stakeholder approach to understand the issue of forced labour in value chains and to identify mechanisms through which the issue can be proactively addressed.

The process that is required by Stronger Together and the funders will be:

- An initial research phase to inform the programme, providing insight into the scale and nature of the issue of responsible recruitment and forced labour in the wine and fruit growing industries in South Africa
- A comprehensive, integrated programme of face-to-face training workshops and online learning and sharing opportunities
- Development of pragmatic and specific guidance toolkits and resources to assist businesses to promote responsible employment
- Development of a remediation tool to help any business to identify employees or potential employees who may be subjected to forced labour, to access the services and support they need

WIETA, in conjunction with Stronger Together appointed Caroline Poole to drive this project in South Africa in both the fruit and wine industries. Modern slavery compliance is not only a requirement of the UK market, but it is legislation too. Training for both the wine and fruit industry will be sponsored and free of charge.

A range of training sessions are being planned for 2018 and dates will be announced soon. So look out for a session near you in the various production regions and contact the organizers to make sure you don't miss out on this opportunity.

For help and assistance on the SIZA Platform:

SIZA helpline: Logan Terhoeven, 086 1111 568

Email: info@siza.co.za

