



SIZA, the South African sustainability standard for social and environmental assurance, is the first to reach FULL (100%) equivalence when benchmarked against SAI Platform's Farm Sustainability Assessment (FSA).

February 16, 2018 – The Sustainable Agriculture Initiative Platform (SAI Platform) and SIZA announce the results of an equivalency project aiming to understand the gaps between SIZA and the FSA. The [SIZA](#) platform offers two separate standards for South African producers, one covering relevant Social criteria and the other covering relevant Environmental criteria. Both standards were thoroughly reviewed against SAI Platform's Farm Sustainability Assessment 2.0 (FSA) and result was a maximum GOLD level of equivalence (100% essential, 100% basic and 100% advanced).

“This level of equivalence is a first as no scheme has ever included the full scope of the FSA before”, said Joe Rushton, FSA Manager. “It’s great that SIZA sees the value of the FSA equivalence, and has aligned so comprehensively. Having this result furthers our progress in driving transparency and adds value to the FSA programme as the industry reference for sustainable agriculture. It means any raw material certified in accordance to the SIZA standard can now also be counted as FSA Gold level volume” he added.

“The benchmark with the FSA was a strategic exercise for us as SIZA’s goal is to provide a locally relevant yet internationally recognized sustainability standard for South African producers”, explains Retha Louw, SIZA’s General Manager. **“The Gold rating of equivalence will give the market confidence that the SIZA standards are credible and this will support their adoption throughout the supply chain.”**

SIZA is a membership based programme designed to assist growers with ethical labour and environmental practice standards whilst minimizing costs by reducing the number of audits required for market assurance. To date there are nearly 1800 registered members on the SIZA Platform.

“Our standards compliment the FSA as they bring in more detail on local legislation requirements and expand on specific priority risk areas that are particularly important in South Africa, such as water management. The end product is a comprehensive standard that is relevant for local conditions and will ensure the highest level of assurance for the various markets that our producers supply to” added Retha. “At the same time, it is also important to provide a standard that all industry members can adopt, whether they are a small operation or part of a larger international business.”

In 2016, as part of the longer term SIZA vision to include environmental stewardship as an integral offering within sustainability, SIZA partnered with WWF-SA (the World Wide Fund for Nature, South Africa) to develop a comprehensive Environmental Standard, and appropriate tools to support improvement of environmental risk management. WWF’s role was to ensure the relevance and credibility of the environmental criteria within the standard, and they remain involved both at a technical advisory role in the implementation of the environmental module, as well as within the governance structure of SIZA.

“Developing the criteria that are relevant within South African context is one thing, but what is most important to us at WWF SA is that the method of reporting against the standard is based on tracking improvement and empowering the users to manage their key environmental risks in the short, medium and long term.” says Shelly Fuller, the project lead for the SIZA Environmental module from WWF SA. “It is great to see that the retailers are also now encouraging a more transparent and flexible form of reporting sustainability practices, over and above minimum legal compliance. This acknowledges that measuring and managing environmental risks is a long term commitment and this cannot be judged on a static report with a percentage pass/fail mark as was the conventional way of reporting.”

The results of this benchmark exercise be viewed on line from the following link: www.fsatool.com: ‘benchmark results and planning’.

About SIZA

SIZA, the Sustainability Initiative of South Africa, provides a platform for agricultural stakeholders to ensure ethical and environmentally sustainable trade. This platform monitors care for the environment and compliance with labour legislation. Our aim is to encourage continuous improvement in practices over time in excess of the minimum legal requirements. We engage directly with our stakeholders throughout the value chain in order to identify needs and issues. Interventions and support tools are created by measuring member compliance over time.

For more information about SIZA, visit our website: www.siza.co.za

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About WWF SA

WWF is an international and independent conservation organization with national offices in more than 80 countries. We work to look after the earth's natural resources — oceans, land and wildlife — so we can continue to benefit from food, water and a healthy climate. Within the Food Practice of WWF SA, we promote sustainable agriculture by supporting best practice solutions on farms and partner with retailers to encourage transparency and responsible consumption from farm to plate. We believe that the farming practices and consumption patterns must protect the long-term maintenance of healthy landscapes, and the regeneration of our natural resource base such as our soils, water resources and energy options, while also ensuring profitable yields.

For more information about WWF SA, visit our website: www.wwf.org.za

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About the Farm Sustainability Assessment Programme (FSA)

First piloted in 2014, the Farm Sustainability Assessment programme (FSA) offers a simple, highly effective tool to assess, improve and communicate on-farm sustainability. Developed by the Sustainable Agriculture Initiative Platform, the FSA is used in 32 countries and available in 19 languages. Its design and purpose facilitates the understanding of industry-shared better management practices that improve farm performance and sustainability outcomes. Its Bronze, Silver and Gold performance levels are designed to be used at scale in the food supply chain and to mainstream sustainable agricultural practices.

For more information about the Farm Sustainability Assessment (FSA) programme, visit our website: <http://fsatool.com>

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About the Sustainable Agriculture Initiative Platform (SAI Platform)

Founded in 2002, the Sustainable Agriculture Initiative Platform (SAI Platform) provides a pre-competitive environment for the food and drinks industry to address global sustainability challenges facing farms today, and in the years ahead. With a network of over 100 members and partners we are developing the practice of sustainable agricultural tools and principles that create secure and strong agricultural supply chains, to protect the earth's resources. Our focus on beef, dairy, arable and vegetable, and fruit and nuts as well as our pioneering benchmarking tool, the Farm Sustainability Assessment (FSA), lead the field to effective sustainable practices while delivering value to our members, farmers, their communities and consumers.

To find out more about SAI Platform, visit our website: www.saiplatform.org

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