

SIZA MOVING TOWARDS ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

August 27, 2018

The Sustainability Initiative of South Africa (SIZA) is well known for its comprehensive social standard which ensures fair and ethical trade from all South African member farms.

Most recently, as part of its long-term vision, SIZA developed its own environmental standard, focussing on assisting the South African fruit industry with an approach to measuring and reporting against sustainability criteria, specifically those that are relevant for on farm activities within the South African context.

SIZA is now moving forward and introducing a process to verify farms against its environmental standard. Verification is being offered in two different but complementary ways:

- A 2nd party verification where a statistically significant sample of farms will be visited to have their Environmental Self-Assessment Questionnaires (SAQ's) verified by SIZA's in-house environmental specialists.
- A 3rd party verification where selected farms will be visited to have their environmental SAQ verified by an independent 3rd party auditor which are recognised and accepted by SIZA.

Second-party verification will be based on a 25% random sample size which will be generated from the annual approved Environmental SAQ's. This will ensure that each site will be visited at least once during a 3-4-year cycle. SIZA's in-house specialist(s), will visit each farm to undertake an on-site review of SAQ data and evidence. They will also assist the farm with technical environmental support and advice to improve on their environmental practices and to drive continuous improvement. The output for the second-party verification is a long-term environmental improvement plan and a SAQ Confirmation Letter. This process will be of no direct cost to the producer, as it is built into the annual membership fees.

Third-party verification will be conducted by a SIZA recognised audit company, on either member or market demand. This assessment will be a combined audit, where the Environmental audit will take place concurrently with another standard being audited, for example Global G.A.P food safety. It will then avoid duplication and save time and money. The outputs of this combined audit then generate two separate audit reports, each with its own Corrective Actions Plan Report that will outline the necessary actions required in a specific timeframe. For SIZA Environmental, corrective actions will then be submitted online and once approved, a SIZA Environmental Audit certificate will be issued. The frequency of this third-party audit will be based on the risk rating and level achieved (e.g. Bronze audited every year, Silver audited every 2nd year, Gold & Platinum audited every 3-4 years respectively).

SIZA's CEO, Retha Louw commented that "We are grateful to the many experts who have freely given up their time and expertise to help us put our environmental programme together. We now look forward to seeing the first farms being verified and their Audit Completion Letters being published on our platform in March 2019".

WWF South Africa's, Shelly Fuller stated: "We are delighted with this programme. It is already changing on-farm behaviour. Verification will incentivise good environmental behaviour and will deliver meaningful long-term benefits to the entire food supply chain. Well done SIZA!"

Nigel Mudge, farmer and chair of the SIZA Board says "We are very proud that we can now offer our stakeholders a full supply chain sustainability standard equivalent to the best in the world."

If you have any further questions or would like to know more, please contact any of the following SIZA personnel: Henko Vlok henko@siza.co.za (Environmental specialist); Retha Louw retha@siza.co.za (CEO); Tom McLaughlin tom@siza.co.za (UK liaison).

