15 Requirements for recognition of equivalent certification systems

The food market is heavily dependent on trade for its functionality. Trade is necessary to provide the market with the right qualities at the right time. This holds true also for climate certified food. At the same time, local conditions vary greatly across the world when it comes to factors such as climate, availability of technology, culture, resources and know-how. This makes it very difficult to implement standards developed for one region in another region. Nevertheless, consumers may expect traded products to meet the standards of their home region.

The credibility of the system requires the provisions (criteria) to be based on sustainability, to be locally adapted, and targeted on best practice climate performance.

The aim of this section is to facilitate trade with products and systems that are similar to the Climate Certification for Food, in terms of values and ambitions. The section outlines the core principles of this system, and describes a process by which other systems may be recognized as equivalent. Systems that are considered equivalent yield products that could be considered certified to the Climate Certification for Food standard.

Overview of the trade system

The Climate Certification for Food standards are developed as an add-on to a system that certifies basic sustainability performance. Section 15.1 describes requirements for other systems to be recognized to be such a basic sustainability certification system.

The Climate Certification for Food standard is developed in a particular context and with a specific ambition. Section 15.2 describes requirements for other climate certification systems to be recognized as equivalent add-ons to basic sustainability systems.

It is recognized that there are many ways to achieve the improvement that is represented by the Climate Certification for Food standard, and that conditions in less developed economies may be very different. Section 15.3 describes ways of recognizing climate certification systems in less developed economies, even if they do not meet 15.2.

In some instances it may be unrealistic to expect the establishment of an entire climate certification system to trade with one or a few products. Section 15.4 describes a method where single products or operators may be verified as equivalent to the Climate Certification for Food, even if they are not certified in their own right.

15.1 Requirements for basic sustainability certification systems

A certification system that meets the following requirements and make relevant contributions for ensuring equivalence, shall be listed as an equivalent certification system in 15.1.8

15.1.1 General sustainability

The standard must target sustainability concerning economics, social conditions and ecological aspects.

15.1.2 Protect the environment

The primary production shall make responsible use of the ecosystem. Fertilisers shall be used responsibly.

The system shall require that:

- Farms have fertilization programs based on the crop requirements and soil characteristics.
- The management of fertilizers shall prevent negative impacts on the environment.
- Farms conduct activities to conserve water and avoid wasting water.
- Farms prevent contamination of surface- and groundwater by treating and monitoring wastewater.
- Farms shall take defined and appropriate measures to prevent erosion.

15.1.3 Reduce toxic substances and GMO

Most chemical compounds released into nature by humanity are not sufficiently tested for their effects in various eco systems. Therefore, great caution in using pesticides and similar chemicals is needed. The system shall require:

- Prohibition of chemical products known internationally, regionally and nationally for their negative impacts on human health and natural resources.
- Farms do not use products prohibited by international agreements.
- Farms only use products that are legally registered for use in their country.
- Farms contribute to the elimination of these products through integrated crop management to reduce the risk of pest infestations.
- Farms do not use GMO.

15.1.4 Protect biodiversity

Biodiversity contributes considerably to resilience in an ecosystem. Resilience in turn is needed for the production system to adapt to climate change.

The system shall be based on the notion that natural ecosystems are integral components of the agricultural and rural countryside.

The system shall require that:

- Farms shall take measures to maintain and improve landscape and enhance biodiversity.

- Farms shall restore degraded ecosystems
- Clearing of primary ecosystems is prohibited.

15.1.5 Ensure social accountability

A system based on sustainability will include basic legal and social rights. Higher levels of education will enable more people to understand the mechanisms that lead to climate change.

The system shall require that:

- Operators shall have a policy on social justice. Operators who hire fewer than ten (10) persons for labour and those who operate under a state system that enforces social laws may be exempt from this requirement.
- Operators not use forced or involuntary labour.
- Employees and contractors of certified operations have the freedom to associate, the right to organize and the right to bargain collectively.
- Certified operators provide their employees and contractors equal opportunity and treatment. Certified operators shall not act in a discriminatory way.
- Operators shall not hire child labor. However, children are allowed to experience work on their family's farm or a neighboring farm provided that:
  - such work is not dangerous or hazardous to their health and safety;
  - such work does not jeopardize the children's educational, moral, social, and physical development;
  - children are supervised by adults or have authorization from a legal guardian.

The system shall have mechanisms to identify production based on violation of basic human rights and clear cases of social injustice. There shall be clear procedures for de-certifying such production

15.1.6 Good animal husbandry

This paragraph applies only to systems that include any kind of animal production in their scope for climate certification.

From a climate perspective, animal husbandry affects the climate by emissions of greenhouse gases. Animals of good health produce more products and products of higher quality. This leads to lower relative emissions of greenhouse gases. Grazing animals also contribute to the mitigation of climate change by greater biodiversity and by grazing areas storing carbon.

The system shall require that:

- The farms that keep animals shall use a systematic and effective preventive animal health care scheme.
- The feeding must focus on animal welfare

- The animals must be able to express their physiological and behavioural needs
- Mutilations are prohibited. The following exceptions may be used if animal suffering is minimized and anaesthetics are used where appropriate:
    - Castrations;
    - Tail docking of lambs
    - Dehorning
    - Ringing

15.1.7 Third party certified

Credibility is crucial for a certification system. A single operator can, by intent or neglect, ruin the price premium for hundreds or thousands of operators. The price premium is needed to promote more operators to join the system. The price premium is paid by the consumer because they are convinced the product represent a more climate friendly certification system.

The system shall be based on a third party certification scheme. The third party nature of the scheme shall be internationally recognized.

The certification system shall include requirements that the operation meets local legislation that is relevant to the scope of the certification.

15.1.8 Approval of a certification system

The approval is based on a technical evaluation. As long as the Climate Certification for Food is fairly immature, competence issues make it necessary to focus these processes to a small number of decision makers.

A standard or system owner may apply for technical evaluation with the International Organic Accreditation Service, IOAS. Contact details can be found at www.ioas.org. The IOAS will deliver a report that indicates to what extent the system meets the requirements above. The IOAS may charge an evaluation fee to cover their costs for the report.

The standard or system owner may then submit the technical report to Sigill Kvalitetssystem AB, together with a request to be recognized as an equivalent basic certification system. Sigill Kvalitetssystem shall consider the report and the request and make a draft decision. This draft decision shall be sent to the applicant and be posted publicly. After a 30 day comment period, Sigill Kvalitetssystem will make a decision on approval or not.

A system that is found to meet all the requirements in the technical report will normally be approved. A denial must be based on the principles and criteria above.

A system that is found not to meet all the requirements above may still be approved, if it can be justified based on the principles and criteria above.

Sigill Kvalitetssystem may charge a fee to cover their costs for approval.

15.1.9 Approved basic certification systems

The systems below have been found to be in compliance with the criteria above:

15.1.10 Approved basic certification systems

The systems below have been found to be in compliance with the criteria above:

System name and/or specifcation	System owner	Contact
Svenskt Sigill	Sigill Kvalitetssystem AB	www.sigill.se
KRAV	KRAV ek för	www.krav.se
Systems which are accredited under IFOAM Accreditation or the Global Organic System Accreditation	International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements, IFOAM.	www.ifoam.org
Organic as defined in the legislation in • The EU and the EEC • The USA and Canada • Australia and New Zealand • Japan Note: This option is available only to products produced within the territories listed	Organic – see respective governmental structure Social responsibility – see relevant governmental structure	EU and EEC: www.ec.europa.eu/agriculture/organic USA: www.ams.usda.gov/nop/ Japan: www. maff.go.jp
Organic as defined by in organic standard or regulation approved in the IFOAM Family of Standards , in combination with any of the following: • Fairtrade International • IMO Fair for life • More social responsibility schemes TBA	Organic – see IFOAM family of standards Fairtrade International IMO	www.ifoam. org www.fairtrade.net www.imo.ch
MSC Note: This option is available only for fisheries and products consisting only of fish from these fisheries.	Marine Stewardship Council	www.msc.org
Rainforest Alliance	Rainforest Alliance	www.rainforest-alliance.org

15.2 Approval of climate certification standards

The Climate Certification for Food standard was developed in Sweden, and is applicable in Scandinavia and most of Northern Europe. This section of the standard aims to create an opportunity for systems developed in other regions to be compatible with the climate

certification for food standard. The concept of compatibility implies that the systems have similar ambitions, but may be different in technical solutions: the relative magnitude of the various climate issues may differ, as well as the availability of technology and the financial strength.

The basic approach of the climate certification for food is that best practice in a particular region shall be used. The best practice shall represent a significant improvement to the average production in that region. Also, absence of verifiable data is replaced by locally adapted action plans to address the problem.

15.2.1 Option 1 – Certification to the original standard

15.2.1.1

A certification body may use the Climate Certification for Food standard anywhere in the world, as long as the operator is able to demonstrate that conditions at the production site are similar to those in Northern Europe. This requirement applies to all relevant aspects of the production.

15.2.2 Option 2 – Certification to an adapted and approved standard

15.2.2.1

A certification body or a standard owner may develop or adapt a standard to meet the requirements in appendix 1. The appendix 1 is formulated as a standard for standards, and requires that the certification body or standard owner develops their own regional standard. The regional standard shall be intended for use by operators and shall be approvable for use by an ISO Guide 65 accredited certification programme.

15.2.2.2

The regional standard shall be assessed for equivalence with appendix 1 by the IOAS, the International Organic Accreditation Service, www.ioas.org.

15.2.2.3

If the IOAS finds that the regional standard is equivalent with appendix 1, Sigill Kvalitetssystem AB shall immediately include the regional standard in the list of approved standards in 15.2.2.4.

If there are divergences to appendix 1, Sigill Kvalitetssystem AB may still decide to include the regional standard in the list of approved standards in 15.2.2.4. The grounds for such a decision shall be that the divergences can be judged to be minor, or that other parts of the regional standard can be judged to reduce climate impact more than the divergency in question.

15.2.2.4 List of approved standards

Inclusion in the list in Appendix 2 is based on the requirements in 15.2.2.3. Once included in this list, products certified to any of the programs shall be considered equivalent to those certified according to the Climate Certification for Food.

Systems or standards that are currently approved:

- None

15.3 Other production systems accepted as equivalent

Smallholder producers in countries with low HDI use at average only one third of the energy compared to what is used in food production in developed countries. There are many strong arguments to enhance trade with the poorest countries. For these smallholder farmers which fulfils the ambitions in the Climate certification for food requirements but does not fulfil the requirements in 15.1 or 15.2 there is possible to accept their products if they fulfil requirements below.

15.3.1 Low HDI areas and countries

The production must come from areas or countries with HDI under 0,700.

15.3.2 Smallholder producers certified in groups

The smallholder producers have to be certified in a group certification systems. The group have to consist of over 25 producers.

15.3.3 Accepted certification systems

The standards and certification systems accepted are all organic or ISEAL Full Member systems which cover smallholder group certification.

15.3.4 Area of acceptance

The exceptions in this chapter can only be used for products which not are possible to produce on a commercial scale in the country where the product is sold to the final consumer (e.g. honey will not be possible to produce in a low HDI country and export to the Northern European Market).

15.4 Verification of single products or producers as being equivalent of the Climate Certification for Food.

This section is needed since the system is immature and there is a need to introduce producers and products to the scheme in order to gain important experiences. This section aims to open a mechanism for an approved system to collaborate with local third party certification systems and operators.

15.4.1 Who can use this option?

This option can be used when there are less than 25 operators in a region that intends to use the Climate Certification for Food. The region is defined as a geographical area defined by common climate and culture. It may be a country or a state, but it shall be easily identified.

When the number of operators passes 25, a local system that meets the requirements in 15.1 and 15.2 must be developed.

15.4.2 Subcontracted certification

A certification body that is part of an approved system, may subcontract a certification body with appropriate local knowledge. The subcontracting shall be in line with ISO Guide 65 and connected documents

15.4.3 Standard to be used

The operators and the certification body(-ies) shall agree on a document with requirements, that meet relevant criteria in appendix 1. Consideration of local conditions shall be made.