

Version 04

## Requirements for Group Certifications

Purpose	Specify the requirements for group certifications for agricultural processors, agricultural and primary collectors as well as soya bean farmers (producers).
Outline	1 Group certification for agricultural processors .....1 2 Group certification for agricultural collectors and primary collectors ....2 3 Group certification for soya bean farmers (producers) .....3
Status	Version 04: released by the Board on 29 November 2023

### 1 Group certification for agricultural processors (as defined in R 06a)

Project operators may apply for a group certification at the Donau Soja Organisation provided that the following conditions are met:

- project companies/participants and their suppliers are clearly defined, and the system is closed to the greatest possible extent;
- the contract system between the certification holder and the companies participating in the certification (suppliers) is outlined;
- the group operates its own sound quality management (QM) system, and the suppliers also perform self-monitoring (for detailed criteria, refer to the German VLOG<sup>1</sup>/Austrian Food Codex<sup>2</sup>/Non-GM Danube Region Standard<sup>3</sup>);
- all project companies/participants are subject to a first inspection;
- the frequency of inspections is determined on a risk basis and is compatible with the German VLOG/Austrian Food Codex/Non-GM Danube Region Standard;
- all companies participating in the certification (suppliers) are either listed in the annex to the certificate belonging to the project operator or receive their own certificate indicating the project operator and issued by the directly commissioned certification body.

Group certifications shall be approved on a case-by-case basis on application and following examination by Donau Soja Organisation.

<sup>1</sup> German „Verband Lebensmittel ohne Gentechnik“ (VLOG, <http://www.ohnegentechnik.org>)

<sup>2</sup> Reference for the *Richtlinie zur Definition der „Gentechnikfreien Produktion“ von Lebensmitteln und deren Kennzeichnung* (Guideline on the Definition of GMO-Free Production of Food and its Labelling) in the Austrian Food Codex, IV edition: [http://www.verbrauchergesundheits.at/lebensmittel/buch/codex/beschluesse/Gentechnikfrei\\_RL\\_15\\_1\\_2018.pdf?6fdsmn](http://www.verbrauchergesundheits.at/lebensmittel/buch/codex/beschluesse/Gentechnikfrei_RL_15_1_2018.pdf?6fdsmn)

Reference for the *Leitfaden zur risikobasierten Kontrolle auf Gentechnikfreiheit* (Guideline on the Risk-Based Monitoring of GMO-Free Production): [www.bmwfw.gv.at/TechnikUndVermessung/Akkreditierung/Documents/Leitfaden%20L25\\_Risikobasierte%20Kontrolle%20Gentechnikfreiheit\\_V03\\_20150304.pdf](http://www.bmwfw.gv.at/TechnikUndVermessung/Akkreditierung/Documents/Leitfaden%20L25_Risikobasierte%20Kontrolle%20Gentechnikfreiheit_V03_20150304.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Reference for the Non-GM Danube Region Standard and Inspection Standard: [www.donausoja.org/en/downloads](http://www.donausoja.org/en/downloads)

## 2 Group certification for agricultural collectors and primary collectors (as defined in R 02)

Agricultural and primary collectors may apply for a group certification at the Donau Soja Organisation provided that the following conditions are met:

- one of the companies is mainly responsible for the group certification and acts as the group manager; this company is responsible for the collectors (for its own collector as well as for other collectors participating in the group certification) and has a complete list of all collectors participating in the group certification at its disposal;
- external inspections of the company mainly responsible for the group certification/group manager (involving, but not limited to, the flow of produce, the internal QM system, and internal audits) are conducted at least once a year;
- a detailed project description is presented, which includes at least the following elements:
  - project companies/participants and their suppliers are clearly defined, and the system is closed to the greatest possible extent,
  - the contract system between the certification holder and the companies participating in the certification (suppliers) is outlined,
  - the company operates a functional internal quality management (QM) system (description), and an overall inspection framework is available,
  - each collector (the group manager's own collector as well as other collectors participating in the group certification) is audited and evaluated once a year in accordance with the internal QM rules,
  - harvest declarations for each collector (the group manager's own collector as well as other collectors participating in the group certification) are collected by the group manager and submitted to Donau Soja Organisation,
  - Declarations of Self-Commitment – Farmers (Soya Bean Producers) are available;
- the aforementioned collectors are subject to a 100% first audit by an external certification body;
- risk classification is based on the first inspection by the external certification body;
- the follow-up audits by an external certification body have an inspection rate of at least 30 % of collectors per year, depending on the risk assessment;
- the audit results (internal and external audits) are submitted to Donau Soja Organisation anytime on request;
- all companies participating in the certification (suppliers) are either listed in the annex to the certificate belonging to the company mainly responsible for the group certification/group manager or receive their own certificate indicating the company mainly responsible for the group certification/group manager and issued by the directly commissioned certification body.

Group certifications shall be approved on a case-by-case basis on application and following examination by Donau Soja Organisation.

### **3 Group certification for soya bean farmers (producers) (as defined in R 01a and R 02)**

Soya bean farmers located in production areas of risk levels 0–2 (F-RL 0, F-RL 1 or F-RL 2) and delivering to a Donau Soja primary collector can participate in a group certification under the direction of this primary collector. The following conditions shall be met for a group certification of soya bean farmers:

- the primary collector is mainly responsible for the group certification and acts as the group manager; this company is responsible for the soya bean farmers (group members) delivering to this collector and has a complete list of all farmers participating in the group certification (group members) at its disposal; in case of group certifications of primary collectors (see paragraph 2), the group manager assumes such responsibility for the entire group;
- the inspection frequency for the primary collector is based on the risk assessment as specified in the Requirements 02, paragraph 1.1, and in Annex 04, paragraph 2;
- the list of farmers is submitted by the primary collector (group manager) to the certification body and to Donau Soja Organisation by 30 November each year;
- the primary collector (group manager) operates a functional internal quality management (QM) system for the group, according to the Requirements R 02, paragraph 7;
- the primary collector (group manager) informs the soya bean farmers (group members) delivering to this collector regularly and proactively about the applicable Donau Soja requirements (see R01a and R01b).

#### **Risk assessment and external inspections**

- The inspection frequency for soya bean farmers (producers) shall be risk-based; the risk classification shall be based on the risk assessment for farmers (see Annex 04, paragraph 1), resulting in the following inspection frequency for farmers (group members) in the scope of group certification:
  - F-RL 0: inspection required every 3 years,
  - F-RL 1: inspection required every 2 years,
  - F-RL 2: annual inspection required;
- the sample size for the inspection of farmers (group members) by an external certification body shall be determined by the total quantity of Donau Soja beans delivered to the primary collector;
  - up to 3,000 tonnes: 1% of the farmers delivering to the primary collector shall be inspected,
  - 3,001 to 9,000 tonnes: 5% of the farmers delivering to the primary collector shall be inspected,
  - 9,001 tonnes and more: the square root of the farmers delivering to the primary collector shall be inspected,
- If the quantity of certified soya beans per farmer is less than 35 tonnes on average (taking into account the total quantity of Donau Soja soya beans delivered to the primary collector divided by the total number of Donau Soja soya bean farmers): the sample size for the inspection of farmers (group members) by an external certification body shall be divided by three.

- If the soya bean farmer (group member) delivers less than 3 tonnes of soya beans to the primary collector in a crop year: these small farmers shall not be included in the sample size calculation for the inspection of farmers (group members). These farmers can be inspected according to the regular inspection frequency.
- in the case of a group certification of primary collectors, the total quantity of Donau Soja beans collected by the entire group can be used as a baseline for determining the sample size;
- a minimum of *one* farmer (group member) per certification period (depending on the F-RL of the farmers) and per primary collector or group of primary collectors shall be inspected;
- the external inspector shall select the farmer(s) (group members) to be inspected in a given year/certification period. In this context, the following aspects shall be taken into account:
  - farmers (group members) who have not been inspected in the previous year(s) shall be given priority for being inspected, unless a significant non-compliance issue was identified during a previous inspection,
  - farmers (group members) selected for inspection, shall be as representative as possible of the farmers in the whole group in terms of size and location;
- the inspection results are submitted to Donau Soja Organisation anytime on request;
- all farmers inspected throughout one year shall be listed in the summary inspection report of the primary collector, including the following information:
  - name and address of the farmer (group member),
  - production area risk level (F-RL),
  - non-compliance issues identified, together with the corresponding remedial measure levels and corrective actions;
- for each farmer inspected who has one or more non-compliance issues greater than or equal to remedial measure level 3, one additional farmer shall be inspected;
- the group certification of farmers shall be an integral part of the inspection contract between the primary collector and a certification body recognised by Donau Soja Organisation; the farmers (group members) themselves shall not be obliged to be listed in this contract or to conclude an inspection contract with a certification body recognised by Donau Soja Organisation;
- the farmers (group members) shall not be listed on the certificate of the primary collector (group manager), nor shall they receive their own certificates.