



Naturland Fair Trade Standards

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1 Preface

Organic agriculture, social responsibility and fair trade

Organic agriculture, social interaction and fair trade are the three pillars of sustainability. Taken together, they form a coherent and consistent whole. A fair environment is a particularly favourable pre-condition for organic agriculture to safeguard in a sustainable fashion the livelihoods and the very existence of farmers and their families worldwide.

Naturland claim to a holistic approach in its standards also includes the social interaction of those living and working on the farms. Social responsibility, both in production and processing, is an integrative component of Naturland standards and also a fundamental principle for fair trade certification.

Background and principles of Naturland fair trade certification

Naturland promotes throughout the world organic production and the social recognition of organic agriculture, thereby contributing to the preservation of the environment, the sustainable use of resources, food security and the improvement of living conditions of the people. In 1986 Naturland commenced its international operations in collaboration with GEPA. In the years following the fair trade organisations dwp and BanaFair became Naturland partners. The ensuing topics and challenges found expression in many areas of Naturland work. The considerably broadened social standards laid down in Naturland standards and, ultimately, the adaptation of “Naturland Criteria on Fair Partnerships” to fit the prevailing circumstances in Germany was a logical consequence of this co-operation. In 2006 the first German processors, procuring locally raw goods, submitted to examination according to “Naturland Criteria on Fair Partnerships“ and were commended for their sustainable company strategy. Naturland continues to co-operate with the fair trade organisations on further developments.

The aims of fair trade are defined by FINE, an international association of the four main fair trade networks, FLO, IFAT, NEWS! and EFTA, as follows: “Fair trade is a trading partnership based on dialogue, transparency and respect, that seeks greater equity in international trade. It contributes to sustainable development by offering better trading conditions to, and securing social rights of, marginalised producers and workers – especially in the South.“ The purpose is to combat poverty through trade, and growers’ organisations which would otherwise have been excluded from these markets will be granted a market access.

Naturland fair trade standards, as now at hand, are a logical consequence of Naturland development and are the inevitable outcome of a long enduring process. They specify and expand the “Naturland Criteria on Fair Partnerships”. On the other hand they are also based on the FINE definition and the core values of the fair trade organisations, such as they are described in “a charter of fair trade principles” (WFTO and FLO 2009).

It is the objective of the Naturland fair trade certification to enable more Naturland members to gain access to the value creation in markets and more efficient channels of trade as well as to vitalise the values organic, social, regional and fair trade. This way they can and should make a contribution towards improving the livelihood and securing the existence of agricultural operations. Where fair trade relationships are concerned, it is not a question of charitable motives, but of establishing co-operative contacts aimed at change and development through trade. Their policy of transparency enables fair trade relationships to make an important contribution to networking the producer with the consumer and keeping the general public informed about developments in the organic food industry, social justice and the opportunities for change. It is only with the consumers’ support that more comprehensive reforms in trading culture can be successful and our living conditions be preserved.

2 General rules governing Naturland fair trade certification

Naturland fair trade certification is a voluntary supplementary option for Naturland certified producers, processors and traders. In each and every case, the basis for fair trade certification is a valid certification by Naturland as organic. The General Rules (Parts A. resp. C) of the respective Naturland standards are likewise applicable to fair trade certification.

The phrase “Naturland fair trade certification” is used as an umbrella term for the certification of whole companies as well as for the certification of individual Naturland products within the context of a fair trade relationship. The “Naturland Fair” logo is used to label the products in both cases. The additional title “Naturland Fair Partnership” is reserved exclusively for those Naturland producers and processors which are certified as a company as a whole.

2.1 Corporate certification: “Naturland Fair Partnership”

Naturland organic standards require conversion of the whole enterprise as a matter of general principle. The objective is therefore to certify the whole enterprise as conforming to Naturland fair trade standards.

An enterprise awarded certification under the “Naturland Fair Partnership” scheme is a “Naturland Fair Partner”. Such processors and producers are permitted to refer to their “Naturland Fair Partnership” certificate in their public relations matters, in addition to bearing the Naturland Fair logo.

2.1.1 Application to Naturland processors

A precondition for the corporate certification „Naturland Fair Partnerships“ of processors or traders is that at least 70% of the products in their range are produced, processed and traded according to Naturland fair trade standards, and that proof be for the remainder that they are not available in fair trade quality on the basis of Naturland fair trade priorities list.

2.1.2 Application to Naturland producers

In the case of groups of producers (producers’ associations, co-operatives etc.) which co-operate in the marketing of their members’ products, firms with subcontracted growers (e.g. smallholders) and farms, plantations and any similar operations with their own employees, it will always be the whole enterprise which is inspected.

Individual producers (e.g. family run farms) which supply to fair trade certified enterprises do not require any additional fair trade certification but are however informed about the contents of Naturland fair trade standards and the objective of the Naturland Fair Partnerships. Should they wish, individual producers can also apply for corporate certification (e.g. for use in direct marketing).

2.2 Product certification: Naturland fair trade certification of products

Processors and traders are offered Naturland fair trade certification for individual products in the process of developments towards corporate certification. A product can be certified “Naturland Fair” as soon as the total sum of raw goods contained and procured from a fair trade relationship exceeds 50% (dry weight) and the remaining raw goods can be proven not to be available in fair trade quality according to Naturland fair trade priorities. Such products are permitted to bear the “Naturland Fair” logo.

Enterprises with only individual products certified after Naturland fair trade standards are not allowed to refer to the term “Naturland Fair Partnership” in their public relations.

2.3 Producers resp. products from economically disadvantaged regions

Some of the subitems in the standards only apply to producers or products from Africa, Asia, Latin America and other marginalised regions of the world. In these standards they are referred to collectively as “disadvantaged regions”. OECD, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, maintains a list of countries (DAC List of ODA Recipients) which determines which countries are given public recognition as being entitled to receive development aid payments. Naturland bases its criteria on this list of countries but, in special cases and upon application by marginalised producers from other countries, these subitems may be considered appropriate to them, too.

All other countries are referred to in these standards as OECD member states. These are countries which have a high pro capita income.

2.4 Labelling of Naturland fair trade certified products

Products must show the proportion of ingredients in a final product which are procured from a Naturland fair trade relationship. Naturland fair trade ingredients in the list of ingredients are marked individually as such and their total ratio is shown as a percentage. The objective is to have a Naturland fair trade content of 100%.

The use of the “Naturland Fair” logo is governed by a sublicense agreement concluded with Naturland Zeichen GmbH.

The only logo permissible is a “Naturland Fair” logo authorised by Naturland Zeichen GmbH.

3 Naturland Fair Trade Standards

3.1 Social responsibility

Naturland standards include social interaction with the people living and working on the farm.

Producers, processors and traders awarded Naturland fair trade certification comply with Naturland standards on social responsibility (ref. Naturland Standards on Production Part A/III. and Naturland Processing Standards Part C/IV.).

3.2 Reliable trading relationships

Commercial relationships conceived with the aim of maintaining long-term co-operation on the basis of dialogue, transparency and respect contribute towards providing producers and processors a greater degree of predictability, security and stability.

The objective is to establish reliable and long-term commercial relationships; this includes the regular exchange of information and the joined planning of the quantities required and an annual planning framework.

3.2.1 Prefunding (“disadvantaged regions”)

Advance financing for their harvests must be granted those producers in disadvantaged regions who are particularly weak financially or who do not have access to acceptable bank loans; if these conditions are met, they can be granted upon request up to 60% of the order volume. The interest rates for advance financing may not be higher than those applying to refinancing of loans taken by the processor or importer. The period specified for payments will be confirmed in writing.

No advance financing must be granted if there is an undue risk that producer organisations cannot meet the repayment terms for advance loans or might not be capable of supplying the quantities agreed upon. Naturland is to be informed of an undue risk by the enterprise granting the loan.

3.3 Fair producer prices

The prices paid for agricultural produce/raw goods are also calculated with a view to maintaining the producers' basis of livelihood and are therefore not geared to those of the cheapest offer for any product. Besides covering the usual average local production costs, the price includes a suitable margin for corresponding investments in the future.

The enterprise may not use an agreement to pay a fair price in order to beat down the prices agreed upon in other contracts or to offset them elsewhere.

3.3.1 Co-operative determination of pricing (“OECD member states”, ref. 2.3)

Fair producer prices are achieved by both producers and enterprises by determining jointly negotiated minimum prices or by agreeing on definite surcharges. As a guideline the buyers observe at least a minimum price equivalent to the upper third of the average market price over the past three years.

3.3.2 Fair trade minimum prices (“disadvantaged regions”)

If FLO-International e.V. in Bonn, Germany (FLO) has already determined a minimum price for products from “disadvantaged regions”, then Naturland fair trade certified enterprises guarantee to pay at least this price to the producers. As soon as the market price rises above the FLO minimum price, then the market price is the relevant point of reference.

If there is no FLO minimum price or if this is evidently insufficient, then production costs plus an appropriate profit (margin) of at least 10% to cover future investment requirements is the pricing basis.

3.3.3 Fair trade premiums (“disadvantaged regions”)

Processors and traders with Naturland fair trade certification pay a fair trade premium to the producer organisations of products from “disadvantaged regions”. This is used solely to finance social, educational, health and environmental projects (e. g. community development projects) or as additional income for smallholders. Ref. also no. 6.

The producer organisation uses the Naturland fair trade premium to improve their social and economic conditions. In this respect those members of the organisation who are most disadvantaged have top priority.

If FLO has established a minimum fair trade premium, then enterprises with Naturland fair trade certification pay at least this premium to the producer organisation. If no such ruling exists, then the guideline for the payment of the fair trade premium is at least 10% of the price ex works¹.

The producers decide jointly how the fair trade premium is to be used. The employees and workers on plantations are also to be included in decisions on how the premium is to be used.

The decision-making body writes an annual report as proof of every activity and project financed by the fair trade premium fund and informs the members of the organisation and, at their request, its trading partners of the contents.

Different rules apply in the various forms of organisation to the payment of the premium.

- smallholders’ organisations: direct payment to the organisation
- facilities with employees: payment to a special account for the workers/employees
- subcontracted producers: payment to a separate account for which a supporting organisation (NGO) or a representative is responsible

3.4 Acquisition of raw materials from local sources

Well-functioning fair trade relationships focus on local structures which have evolved over time or are currently developing, rather than global interchangeability. Local production to feed the population and marketing on a regional level take priority.

Both the grower and the processor will give preference to local sources when purchasing goods and means of production (feed, seeds, goods for direct marketing etc.).

At least 80% of all the agricultural produce which a processor purchases comes from local sources, inasmuch as they comply with the quantity and quality requirements and are available locally resp. in season.

If it is necessary to acquire raw goods from “disadvantaged regions” or such acquisition serves to assist producers in compliance with recognised fair trade principles, then this aspect takes priority over the acquisition of raw materials from local sources.

¹ ex works: calculation of costs excluding transport, customs and taxes. This is the basis for the fair trade premium.

3.5 Joint quality assurance

The best quality assurance, being for the benefit of both parties, can only be achieved by an intensive exchange of information and co-operation in an atmosphere of trust.

Measures for quality assurance are worked about by the buyer and the grower(s) of the agricultural produce together, in a spirit of partnership. Joint quality assurance makes an important contribution to the continued improvement of the quality of a product. Frank two-way communication and a procedure which has been jointly agreed upon are applied to solve any quality and supply problems.

3.6 Social involvement

Fair trade relationships depend on a global and local level on a properly functioning welfare system and lively co-operation.

Naturland fair trade enterprises show above-average social commitment and/or support projects. They are, for example, involved in practical environmental protection or non-profit organisations or provide assistance to environmental, health or educational projects, social or cultural projects, and/or encouragement/support to rural agriculture.

Wherever possible they create jobs and trainee positions, if need be in greater measure than legally required (e.g. for the handicapped or for people in critical situations).

The cafeteria or canteen provided by the enterprise is also a suitable opportunity to show social commitment by the increased use resp. a wider offering of organic fair trade products.

In addition, the marketing of products is linked to educational projects or to campaigns, in order to provide the consumer with information about the background and various aspects of the Fair Partnerships.

3.6.1 Smallholders take priority (“disadvantaged regions”)

An important task throughout the world is the maintenance of rural structures. In disadvantaged areas of the world, in which agriculture, although being the most important segment, is performed by a large number of poor farmers, it is crucial to focus more strongly on the smallholders, to reduce their poverty, to ensure they have themselves enough to eat and to increase productivity.

Enterprises certified for Naturland fair trade products are aware of this and give preference to produce from smallholders' organisations when buying raw goods from “disadvantaged regions”.

Naturland Fair Partners (both processors and traders) advocate the dismantling of political and economic barriers which impede the development of smallholders. They support producer organisations by providing educational and instructive services and represent their interests in public (advocacy).

3.6.2 Strengthening of the producer organisation (“disadvantaged regions”)

Growers and employees who supply to Naturland fair trade enterprises or work for them are informed about the contents of the Naturland fair trade Standards and the objective of Naturland fair trade certification. With the support of the enterprises with fair trade certification, the producer organisations implement measures to promote their capabilities and strengthen them by further education, staff and organisational development projects (by capacity building) and develop strategies resp. devise measures which help those people reached by the producer organisation to lead a self-determined and independent life (empowerment).

In this way the organisations and their members are put in a position to represent and arrange their own needs (advocacy).

3.7 Corporate strategy and transparency

Naturland fair trade certified enterprises determine in writing how they will implement the Naturland fair trade standards. To be included in this implementation strategy (e.g. in the form of a policy or guidelines) are the concerns of the members, the growers, the workers and/or staff and they shall be made aware of this strategy. Upon request, this implementation strategy shall also be made available to commercial partners.

An enterprise certified as a “Fair Partnership” enterprise establishes a reasonable policy of participation so as to include employees, workers, members and growers in the decision-making process.

Transparency is an essential prerequisite of Naturland fair trade relationships. This applies particularly to the determination of prices, the source of the goods and operational procedures.