



Protocol on audits for FFP acceptance

This protocol, including ANNEX I and ANNEX II, should be signed between all recognized certification bodies and the FFP Foundation. This protocol is binding for all parties. Changes in the protocol can only be made by the board of FFP or on request by the certification body involved or a member of the Social and Environmental Team (SET).

An agreement between Fair Flowers Fair Plants (FFP) and on the audit protocol for carrying out audits for FFP.

Fair Flowers Fair Plants and do agree on the audit protocol, including ANNEX I 'on payment of observers' and ANNEX II 'on the confidentiality of observers'.

Date:

Venue:

On behalf of FFP

On behalf of

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Protocol

The International Code of Conduct for cut flowers (ICC) requires a participatory, multi-stakeholder audit and an independent certification, hence, local stakeholders from IUF affiliated unions and NGOs recognized by the Social and Environmental Team (SET) are entitled to designate one representative each as an observer to the audit.

Applying for an audit:

- Producers interested in getting their farm FFP accepted will contact the FFP office. The FFP office will explain the proper procedure and the global principle of the audit and presence of observers and will inform the producers about FFP approved certification bodies.
- The producer will then select an FFP approved certification body and will contact them to fix the auditing day and confirm financial arrangements, ie the agreed compensation fee and travel costs for the two SET designated observers.
- The certification body will inform any interested producer on the procedure, principles and required documents needed for a proper audit to be accepted by FFP. FFP procedures require certification bodies to inform the producer about the multi stakeholder audit.

Announcement of audit to the SET

- The certification body must inform the SET about the interest of a new producer to be audited for the FFP standard at least six weeks before the actual audit will take place.
- In case the audit concerns a yearly regular audit by an already FFP accepted producer, the SET will be informed by the certification body at least four weeks before the actual audit will take place.
- Information from the certification body towards the SET will contain.
 - * Date of audit
 - * Venue and address of the company
 - * Number of locations
 - * Contact person on the farm, name and telephone number
 - * Name of auditor and his/her telephone number
 - * Number of people working on the farm/location
 - * Time the audit starts
 - * Status of the audit (new producer or regular yearly audit)

- After the announcement of the audit date, the SET will try to find local observers of the participating civil society organizations.
- A maximum of one local observer of an IUF affiliated trade union and one local observer of a locally participating NGO have the right to participate in an audit.
- The SET will appoint the observers participating in the audit. The SET will inform the certification body two weeks before the audit will take place of the names and telephone numbers of the appointed observers.
- The certification body will inform the producer who on behalf of the civil society organizations will accompany the auditor as observers.
- The SET will take care that observers have no interest in or had/has any connection with the farm to be audited.

The SET has the right to send a maximum of two observers to an audit. In exceptional cases the SET might ask to send an extra observer eg as part of observer training. No extra allowance has to be paid for the extra person. This should be agreed with the certification body and be accepted by the producer. Both, or one of the two, might turn down the request without any negative consequences.

It is not compulsory to send observers. The SET can decide to send just one local observer or none at all. In case the SET can not send any observers this can never be a reason to cancel the audit, provided the certification body has respected the set time frames.

In case of an objection from the certification body or producer towards an observer, this objection has to be sent as soon as possible to the SET, at least one week before the audit will take place. The objection should be in writing containing motives and reasons why a certain observer is not acceptable for the certification body or the producer. The SET will value the complaint and make the final decision on replacement of the observer. In case of a prolonged dispute on an observer the FFP Board has the final say on the objection. When an objection has been launched against an observer, the intended audit cannot be carried out before the objection has been dealt with.

Failing to comply with the above mentioned time frames can be a valid reason for the SET to cancel the audit. In that case the audit will not be recognized. In case an audit took place without mentioning it to the secretariat, this audit will not be recognized. Any problems with regard to organizing audits will be dealt with in a mutual positive and cooperative attitude.

Audit

One week before an audit will take place, the agreed time or day of an audit cannot be changed anymore, unless there is a fair reason, sickness of auditor or producer or any other calamity. In case of sickness or calamity no charges for the compensation fees of the observers will be made. In other cases of last minute canceling of audits, the SET has the right to invoice for the compensation fees and travel costs made by the observers. Either the certification company or the producer has to pay the allowance for the observers. In case of a dispute whether or not we deal with a calamity will ultimately be decided by the board of FFP.

Observers and the auditor are expected to be on time at the audit. In case of arriving late, at least the other party and/or producer should be informed. In case one or two of the observers are late, the auditor is allowed to start the audit. Complaints about observers being late, or an auditor being late, should be directed to the organization responsible for the observer or auditor. These organizations should take appropriate measure to solve the problem. The auditor takes the lead and is responsible for the audit process. The observers are not expected to take initiatives on their own during the audit. They have to ask the auditor's permission to carry out activities. The observers have the right to look into all relevant documentation available for the auditor. Observers, through the auditor, can also request missing documentation. During interviews with workers the observers have the right to ask questions in consultation with the auditor.

Before the audit begins the auditor and the observers meet in order to allow the auditor to explain the program, procedure and methods and to share the results of earlier audits with the observers. During this meeting the auditor will indicate how many workers will be interviewed.

Also which kind of workers, permanent, casual or temporary and which workers with a specific function will be interviewed. During this pre-audit meeting observers can suggest other workers or methods to be used.

Information obtained from the audit will be dealt with confidentially by the observers. To guarantee this, the observers will sign a declaration of confidentiality, see annex 2. In the event that observers encounter occurrences they believe to be in breach of national law they have the right and duty to inform immediately the SET. They will not communicate autonomously to 3rd parties. The SET together with the local organisation will decide how to raise this with the farm owner or through appropriate local/national channels including with the competent authorities if necessary.

In the case of a company that has more than one farm in the same or in different locations, each farm will have to be audited separately. Only flowers/plants from the audited site(s) can be sold under the FFP label.

The maximum number of farms to be audited in one day is two.

After the audit

When the audit is finished the auditor will share his/her conclusions and findings of the audit with the observers before s/he officially registers his/her findings. The auditor will advise the certification body whether a farm can be (provisionally) certified or not. In case one or both of the observers disagree with the findings of the auditor, the auditor will make a note on the checklist who disagrees and what the content/point of discussion is.

In case an observer does not agree with the findings of the auditor on important issues, s/he will report this back to the SET. The SET will ask for a complete and full audit report. On the basis of this information the SET will value the findings of the auditor. SET will inform the designated organization confidentially about this particularly situation. In case of a dispute the FFP board will take a final decision on certification of the farm concerned.

After the audit the SET will receive a short resumé containing name of the farm, venue, day of audit, auditor and names of observers. The main conclusions or points of improvements must be mentioned in the resumé. In case of a re-audit the secretariat provides the observers with this document, so observers are aware of the former results of an audit. The résumés will be kept for five years.

Paying the observers

The SET will play an intermediary role regarding the payment of the agreed compensation fee to the observers. Directly after the observers costs including travel costs are known, the secretariat will send an invoice to the certification body. In case a farm has more than one greenhouse applying for certification, the SET will charge for more than one farm.

In case there is a complaint of the certification body with regard to travel and/or accommodation costs of the observers, the SET and the certification body should try to settle the dispute by making clear appointments who is paying which costs. Immediately after the SET provides the certification body with the names and venue of the observers, indicating whether or not accommodation is needed, the certification body should launch its complaint. In case of a prolonged dispute, the board of FFP will take a final decision on who is expected to bear which costs.

ANNEX I

COMPENSATION COSTS FOR OBSERVERS

In line with the audit protocol each observer will receive compensation for the time and efforts spend during an audit for FFP acceptance. We like to harmonize the audit fee for observers as much as possible, but we have to take regional differences into account.

The costs for observers consist of two aspects:

- a regular fee for the participating within an audit
- coverage of travel and in case necessary accommodation expenses

Regular fee

Every observer is entitled to receive a compensation for his/her time spend during an audit. The certification organization is asked to invoice the fee for both observers to the applicant for certification. The secretariat of the review committee will invoice the certification organization monthly and pay the observers either directly or by asking the sending organization to compensate its observers.

Travel and accommodation costs

Observers are compensated for all travel expenses and in case of an audit which will last longer than one day or starts at a time which reasonably can not be reached in time by observers, for accommodation costs. Observers will be paid per day. Payment does not include lunches or any sort of food, unless the audit will take more than one day. Observers are expected to pay these costs themselves.

Travel costs

The sending organization and the observers both have the obligation to look for the most economic way of traveling. In case there are local or regional observers available, it is preferred to make use of these observers in order to reduce costs. Costs for public transportation will be reimbursed after showing the receipt. In case no receipts are available, the observers will on beforehand inform the sending organization on the costs involved. The sending organization will inform the certification organization, which will add these costs on the invoice to the applicant.

Compensation per kilometer for getting at the plantation by private car are agreed on beforehand. Also these costs will be invoiced by the certification organization.

The certification organization should pay the secretariat within a reasonable timeframe. The observers will be paid within a month after participation in an audit, provided they match their obligation. Writing a evaluation report for the secretariat, sending in receipts or the distance they traveled to participate in the audit.

By public transportation is meant: buses, tram, subways, train, taxi and plane. Within the agreement with the certification organization on the audit principles a maximum compensation for travel expensed per observer will be established. In case travel expenses turned out to be higher than the maximum agreed amount, this should be discussed with the certification agent and in case of an agreement both parties involved share the costs. In case of no agreement, the board of FFP will take a final decision who should pay the travel costs.

Accommodation costs

In case an audit will take longer than one day observers have the right to stay in a hotel, the same place as the auditor will stay. These costs, including dinner will be covered by the applicant. An other reason for accommodation costs will be the case that it will be impossible for observers to reach the plantation applying for certification in time. In this case one night of accommodation costs will be asked for.

TARIFF LIST

OBSERVERS FEE

For Europe, USA, Canada, Japan, Australia and New Zealand the fee will be 50 Euro or an equivalent sum of money for each observer.

For Africa the fee will be 25 USD or equivalent sum of money for each observer.

Central America and Latin America, apart from Costa Rica, Mexico, Ecuador, Colombia, Brazil, Uruguay, Chili and Argentina the fee will be 25 US\$ per observer.

For countries like Costa Rica, Mexico, Brazil, Ecuador, Uruguay, Colombia, Argentina and Chili the fee will be 50 US\$ or an equivalent sum of money for each observer.

For Asia the fee will be 25 US\$ or an equivalent sum of money for each observer.

Apart from Israel, Singapore, South Korea, the Gulf State where the fee will be 50 US\$ for each observer.

In case an audit takes place in a country which never had such audits before, the local partners can set an observers fee, which should be approved of the by board of FFP in case it does not comply with the above mentioned scheme. Also the board of FFP can update or set new observers fees in case they consider this necessary. In this case the board of FFP should give notice to certification bodies at least two months before new tariffs will be charged.

TRAVEL EXPENSES

Public transportation costs up to 100 Euro or equivalent per observer in Europe, USA, Canada, Japan, Australia and New Zealand should be covered by the certification body.

Public transportation up to 50 US\$ should be covered in all other countries. In case the amount exceed these limits, the secretariat of the review committee and the certification body have to contact each other and agree on beforehand who has to cover the extra costs. In case of a prolonged dispute, the board of FFP will take a final decision on the costs involved.

In case of the use of a private car a reimbursement to each observer will be paid of 24,4 Euro cents (€0,244) per kilometer (or equivalent) in Europe, USA, Canada, Japan, Australia and New Zealand. In case the costs will exceed 100 Euro or equivalent the secretariat of the review committee and the certification body have to contact each other and agree on beforehand who has to cover the extra costs. In case of a prolonged dispute, the board of FFP will take a final decision on the costs involved.,

In case of southern countries the rate per kilometer should be agreed on beforehand between the secretariat of the review committee and the certification body.

ANNEX II

Declaration of confidence for observers participating in any audit for Fair Flowers Fair Plants

City/date/year

Observers participating in an audit for Fair Flowers Fair Plants have a mandate to represent the sending organization during the auditing process. They agree to the auditing protocol and respect the independence of the appointed auditor.

The undersigned, acting as an observer during an audit for Fair Flowers Fair Plants, promises to treat all obtained information during the audit process for Fair Flowers Fair Plants in a confidential way. Meaning that no information obtained during the audit will be shared with or communicated to third persons or any media.

The observer will only report his or her findings back to the sending organization and/or the secretariat of the review committee. It is up to the sending organization or the secretariat of the review committee to take up any appropriate action when necessary.

Signature and name observer: