



Food Security Standard

The Food Security Standard (FSS) takes up the Human Right to Adequate Food as a new building block for sustainability standards and certification schemes. It provides practicable and measurable food security criteria for all kind of traded agricultural products. The FSS represents a best-practice set to ensure that the Right to Food is not violated at local level when producing and trading certified biomass.

International demand and trade for agricultural commodities is growing while governments have started to shift from petroleum based to bio-based economies. Hence, the rising demand for biomass for food, feedstuff, energy and material use is leading to a rising competition between the different biomass uses in the context of limited availability of arable land, water and energy. This trend can have adverse impacts on food security at two levels: At the international level through rising food prices and lower supply of food, and at the local level through the direct competition between biomass production for non-food purposes and available land and water resources for food production. It can also have indirect effects on food security e.g. through loss of land and income opportunities.

The Food Security Standard (FSS) provides a set of practicable and measurable criteria ensuring the Right to Food. It is not a stand-alone sustainability standard but is designed as a best-practice set which is to be added as a whole to the existing criteria and indicators of any biomass sustainability standard. The FSS catalogue consists of 45 criteria categorized under 17 themes. It is applicable to all biomass types and uses, farm sizes and business types.

The FSS is based on the Human Right to Adequate Food and the four dimensions of food security, i.e. availability, access, utilization and stability. A fifth dimension covering cross-cutting aspects has been added in view to encompass crucial aspects like women and gender equity, educational aspects, participation, accountability, non-discrimination, transparency, human dignity, empowerment and

the rule of law. The FSS is rooted in the Right to Food Guidelines which were adopted unanimously by the FAO Council of the UN in November 2004. These guidelines are predominately directed at national governments but also refer to companies and international obligations, making other states and the private sector likewise responsible to respect and support the implementation of the Right to Food. In this regard, the FSS is not raising the bar for social sustainability standards, but solely aims to ensure the fulfillment of internationally recognized rights and guidelines. Compliance with the FSS is recommend for all types biomass utilization and production chains that aim to respect local food security.

Starting with standards and certification systems, the elaborated criteria can gradually be adapted and implemented in national legislation and control mechanisms. In the long term, this allows production and trade (incl. export) of certified biomass to contribute to local food security.

Further reading

Mohr, A. et al. (2016). Food security criteria for voluntary biomass sustainability standards and certifications. In: Biomass & Bioenergy. 89: 133-145.
www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S096195341630040X

FSS | PROJECT

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