



Processor Criteria

Note: Any gaps in the numbering of this document are intentional. This document represents the pieces of the ROC Framework that are solely applicable to processors.

II. Leveraging & Advancing Existing Standards

Baseline Requirement: USDA Organic & International Equivalents

To achieve Regenerative Organic Certified™ (ROC™), an entity must first hold USDA organic certification or an international equivalent formally recognized by the National Organic Program (NOP).¹ ROC adds criteria and builds off the NOP and equivalent standards in the areas of soil health and land management, animal welfare, and farmer and worker fairness. Operations will not be eligible for ROC at any level until they achieve USDA Organic certification. Engagement in transitional programs is encouraged but not required for ROC.

To earn ROC, all requirements listed in this document must be met; and all products sold, labeled, or represented as regenerative organic must also comply with USDA organic regulations at 7 CFR Part 205, National Organic Program. International operators applying for ROC must be certified to an authorized international standard.

ROC is a living document and thus will be continuously reviewed and revised by a committee of experts as new best practices emerge. At the same time, ROC will always be tied, at a minimum, to all requirements, policies, interpretations and determinations of NOP and authorized third-party certifiers operating on NOP's behalf. Any ambiguity or issue that arises as to application of the ROC program shall always be resolved in favor of consistency with NOP requirements when the issue falls within the purview of NOP.

¹Criteria for [international equivalent](#) includes only those with which the USDA currently has a trade arrangement.

Other Applicable Certifications

Regenerative Organic Certified was created to leverage and bring together existing high-bar certifications in order to avoid duplicative audits or burdensome paperwork. ROC recognizes the strong work already conducted by existing standard bodies.

Producers can demonstrate compliance with ROC criteria by leveraging certifications they've already earned, such as Animal Welfare Approved or Fairtrade International, among others. A full list of ROC criteria met by existing certifications can be found in the Equivalency Analysis. Third-party verification is required for any required ROC standards *not* met by an operation's existing certification.

III. Scope & Structure

Scope

ROC covers requirements for farming and ranching operations, transportation, slaughter, and certain processing facilities. Operations may be of any size. ROC seeks to create change across a wide variety of farms & ranches in order to scale best practices to the widest audience possible.

Structure

ROC is built on three pillars: Soil & Land Management, Animal Welfare, and Social Fairness, with required criteria for each. There are three levels of ROC: Bronze, Silver, and Gold. Bronze represents the beginning level, and Gold represents the highest achievable level in regenerative organic production. This tiered approach enables producers to adjust and adapt their practices over time and allows for continuous improvement. Annual recertification audits are required at all levels.

Levels of ROC

- **Bronze Level:** Product labeling is permitted. To claim ROC at the Bronze level, at least 25% of fiber-or-food-producing land within an operation must be certified at initial certification and must reach at least 50% by year five. The certified portion must represent at least 25% of the operation's revenue derived from food or fiber production. Claims about organic and regenerative organic can only be made about products specifically grown on land that is already certified organic. Any organic and regenerative organic labeling must also abide by USDA organic labeling regulations.
- **Silver Level:** Product labeling is permitted. To claim ROC at the Silver level, at least 50% of fiber-or-food-producing land within an operation must be certified at initial certification and must reach at least 75% by year five. The certified portion must represent at least 50% of the operation's revenue derived from food or fiber production. Claims about organic and regenerative organic can only be made about products produced from land that is already certified organic. Any organic and regenerative organic labeling must also abide by USDA organic labeling regulations.
- **Gold Level:** Product labeling is permitted. To claim ROC at the Gold level, 100% of fiber-or-food-producing land of an operation must be certified, representing 100% of revenue derived from food or fiber production. Any organic and regenerative organic labeling must also abide by USDA organic labeling regulations. Processor requirements are outlined in this document.

Labeling guidelines for manufacturing and final products are described in detail in the ROC Labeling and Supply Chain Guidelines.

The Soil Health and Land Management, Animal Welfare, and Farmer and Worker Fairness modules contain “Guidelines” for each level of certification, which provide guidance that operations should meet, depending on the level of certification sought. Guidelines include practices that are:

- **Required Practices (R):** Practices that operations must meet for an operation to be eligible for ROC at the desired level.
- **Optional Practices (O):** Practices that are encouraged for all, but not required, at a particular level. Optional Practices (O) shift to Required Practices (R) as a producer advances from Bronze to Silver to Gold levels.
- **Critical Tolerances (CT):** Practices that require action on the part of producers and must be reported immediately and remediated within 30 days. If the Critical Tolerance (CT) is not resolved within 30 days, a producer cannot claim ROC.

To achieve the desired level of ROC, an operation must meet 100% of the Required Practices (R) for that level. Participation at any level of ROC requires that the entity is properly certified as organic by a NOP-accredited certifier and complies with all NOP requirements.

IV. Demonstration of Compliance

All levels of ROC require producers to be in compliance with local, provincial/state and national laws for animal welfare, labor rights, and land management. In addition, USDA organic requirements (or their international equivalents) are a baseline for ROC; therefore, producers must comply with all geographically-appropriate organic certification requirements. No provision of this Framework or any element of the ROC program shall be read or applied in a manner that is inconsistent with NOP requirements or policies. The highest requirement, whether local law or ROC, applies for each of the sections in the standard.

Compliance is further demonstrated by successfully receiving certification from existing standards listed in the Equivalency Analysis, as well as by undergoing third-party audits for additional criteria required under ROC. In order to avoid redundant work and to conduct efficient audits, third-party auditors will only audit for additional requirements not found in existing certifications.

V. Processor Criteria for Facilities

The Soil Health and Land Management module of ROC seeks to facilitate the adoption of agricultural practices that build, rather than degrade, soils by increasing soil organic matter, biodiversity, and fertility. Processors must demonstrate that they do not contribute to pollution of waterways or air nor use any substances prohibited by ROC.

Standards for Soil Health & Land Management

1. Base Requirements	Practice Description	Bronze	Silver	Gold
1.1 Existing Certifications	Operation has proof of existing USDA Organic certification or recognized equivalent.	R	R	R
4. Facilities	Practice Description	Bronze	Silver	Gold
4.1 Wastewater	<p>Operation does not directly discharge untreated wastewater generated on farm into natural waterways or soil. Operation does not divert wastewater to bypass treatment. Industrial wastewater goes through primary and secondary treatment (onsite or offsite).</p> <p>Facilities producing more than 50 cubic meters of wastewater per day shall have evidence of compliance to the prevailing authority.</p> <p><i>CT: Leaking wastewater pipes; wastewater is not prevented from overflowing outside the proper effluent streams in the case of rain.</i></p> <p><i>CT: Lack of description and schematic diagram of onsite</i></p>	R	R	R

	wastewater treatment system.			
4.2 Waste	<p>The goal of ROC is to minimize waste whenever possible.</p> <p>Operation does not illegally dump, bury or burn waste. Operation documents that any hazardous waste is identified, isolated and properly disposed.</p> <p><i>CT: Non-disclosure of any and all onsite sources of air emissions.</i></p> <p><i>CT: No Restricted Substances List and/or lack of a program to ensure compliance with it.</i></p>	R	R	R
5. Use of Prohibited Substances	Practice Description	Bronze	Silver	Gold
5.1 Synthetic Chemicals	If used, organically approved pesticides that are highly toxic to pollinators, as defined by Xerces Society's "Toxicity of Common Organic-Approved Pesticides to Bees" shall not be applied within 50-100 feet of a waterbody or applied when pollinators are in flight. They shall be applied at the lowest efficacious rate and all effort shall be taken to find alternative controls.	R	R	R
5.3 Genetically Modified Inputs & Cloning	Operation does not use any genetically modified additives or processing aids such as fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, seeds, or crops derived from genetically modified sources, including emerging technologies that edit or regulate genes such as RNAi, CRISPR, and TALEN. Cloned animals are not eligible for ROC.	R	R	R

VI. Animal Welfare

The Animal Welfare module within ROC seeks to ensure humane practices in the raising and/or handling of animals that intend to be sold or marketed using ROC claims. This section only applies to livestock processors.

The below standards are intended to incorporate the [five freedoms](#) of animal welfare, along with any additional species-specific requirements. As stated in Section II, to receive ROC, all requirements listed in this section must be met, and all products sold, labeled, or represented as regenerative organic must also comply with USDA organic regulations at 7 CFR Part 205, National Organic Program. Additionally, any livestock or livestock products with organic and regenerative organic claims must comply with the USDA organic regulations, and operations must comply with all federal humane handling, transportation, and slaughter requirements, as outlined by the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service and the Humane Methods of Livestock Slaughter Act of 1978.

Standards for Animal Welfare

6. Slaughter/ Killing	Practice Description	Bronze	Silver	Gold
6.1 General	All slaughter/killing systems need to be designed and managed to ensure animals are not caused unnecessary or intentional distress or discomfort before slaughter. If slaughter does not occur on farm, approved ROC third-party animal welfare audit records of the slaughter facility must be provided.	R	R	R
6.2 Pre-slaughter	Operations work to minimize the pre-slaughter handling of animals. This includes but is not limited to handling animals without abuse, ensuring animals have good traction on flooring and do not slip or fall during unloading and movement around the farm or plant, and have their view of the	R	R	R

	slaughter floor obscured as to avoid any unnecessary stress or discomfort. If slaughter does not occur on farm, approved ROC third-party animal welfare audit records of the slaughter facility must be provided.			
6.3 Slaughter Methods	Slaughter is performed using stunning methods that result in immediate insensitivity, such as a shot to brain or penetrative bolt stunning followed by bleeding. Pre-shackle, multi-step controlled-atmosphere stunning may be used in poultry. If slaughter does not occur on farm, approved ROC third-party animal welfare audit records of the slaughter facility must be provided.	R	R	R
6.4 Euthanasia	Animals experiencing pain or suffering from which they are unlikely to recover must be promptly euthanized in a manner that renders the animal immediately insensible to pain. Prohibited euthanasia practices include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Suffocation – Manual blow to head by blunt instrument or any manual blunt force trauma – Use of equipment that crushes the neck (incl. killing pliers or Burdizzo clamps) <i>CT: Euthanizing in a way that causes unnecessary pain or suffering.</i>	R	R	R
8. Training & Personnel	Practice Description	Bronze	Silver	Gold
8.1 Personnel	Operations ensure that all employees working with animals are trained on basic measures of animal welfare and have the relevant and necessary skills to perform their duties. Personnel are thoroughly trained, skilled, and competent in animal	R	R	R

	husbandry, animal transport, slaughter, and have a good working knowledge of their system and animals under their care.			
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VII. Farmer & Worker Fairness

The scope of the Farmer & Worker Fairness module within ROC includes guidelines for farmers and workers at the farm level. These requirements apply to all workers on a ROC farm operation, regardless if only a portion of the operation is in scope for the Soil Health and Animal Welfare pillars.

Supply Chain Actors and Processors exempt from certification, as outlined in the ROC Supply Chain Guidelines in ROA’s Certification Resources, must submit the Social Fairness Affidavit with an application for ROC registration. **Brands must complete a ROC worker fairness audit at one or more major stages of manufacturing or processing in order to be eligible for a Gold ROC label claim.**

Monitoring and enforcement should benefit and prioritize workers. Violations should not be ongoing indefinitely, and progress and plans must be documented. Emphasis should be on capacity building and continuous improvement to better the social and economic position of farmers and workers.

Standards for Farmer and Worker Fairness

1. Law and Code Compliance	Practice Description	Bronze	Silver	Gold
1.1 Existing Certifications	Operation has proof of existing social fairness certification recognized under ROC, as applicable to the operation being certified; see exceptions at right. *For Bronze and Silver operations in the Global North, requirement for proof of existing certification is waived. All criteria within the ROC social pillar must be met by undergoing a complete social audit with an approved ROC certifier.	R*	R*	R

1.2 Business License	Operations have a valid business license and/or building permit where required by law to operate.	R	R	R
1.3 Labor Laws, Legal and International Conventions Compliance	<p>Operations have researched all applicable laws related to labor conditions, working conditions, health and safety, and terms of employee and are in compliance with all local, provincial/state and national laws. Operation is in compliance with all Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining laws, as outlined by the International Labor Organization.</p> <p>Workers understand and are trained on their rights. Employment contracts are negotiated and executed in good faith and the operator honors any commitments made in a contract.</p> <p>The operator recognizes the right of all employees to negotiate their terms of employment, whether individually, as a group or through democratically appointed representatives.</p> <p>Auditors are granted access to the entirety of requested audits. Operation shall not offer bribes to auditors.</p> <p><i>CT: Lack of proper, valid, up-to-date licenses and/or permits as required by law;</i></p>	R	R	R
1.4 Supply Chain Requirements	A ROC-approved social certification must be attained at one or more major stages of manufacturing and processing.	O	O	R
2. Child Labor	Practice Description	Bronze	Silver	Gold
2.1 Child Labor	With the exception of the operator's family members, no children below the lowest of 15, legal age, or age of compulsory schooling are employed. Children under 18 do not perform work that jeopardizes health, safety, education, and emotional or physical development.	R	R	R

2.2 Family Members	<p>If an operator’s children or children of any employee, farmer, or worker work onsite, the operator must ensure that a child's employment does not interfere with his or her schooling, safety or physical development. Work performed should be light work, under the supervision of an adult, and never at night. Children of operators involved in more than just light work, or involved in light work that: is dangerous and harmful to health or development; prejudices attendance at school or during holidays; is inappropriate to the child’s age and physical condition and jeopardizes the child’s social, moral, or physical development; is conducted without parental supervision and/or guidance.</p>	R	R	R
2.3 Work Restrictions for Children and Young Workers	<p>Children (including those residing and those of migrant workers) should not engage in hazardous work, such as heavy lifting, exposure to dangerous agriculture production activities, including exposure to chemicals/pesticides.</p>	R	R	R
3. Forced Labor & Hiring	Practice Description	Bronze	Silver	Gold
3.1 Human Trafficking and Forced Labor	<p>People are not forced to work or remain on premises against their will.</p>	R	R	R
3.2 Hiring Practices & Brokerage Fees	<p>Hiring practices are not deceptive and do not result in forced labor. Operator must not facilitate human trafficking.</p>	R	R	R
3.3 Contractors <i>This criteria not applicable to</i>	<p>If recruited or contracted labor is used, the employer must pay any fees associated with recruitment and employees must have same rights and benefits as direct employees. The Operator must formally recognize the “Employer Pays” principle. All standards apply to all employees whether hired</p>	R	R	R

<i>smallholders</i>	directly or through a contractor, including access to a grievance process for any complaints, the right to be free of forced labor, and no unfair deductions from paycheck. The use of recruiters and subcontractors is allowed only when employer can document need. See Guidance document for more details regarding use of labor contractors.			
4. Harassment, Abuse, & Disciplinary Practices	Practice Description	Bronze	Silver	Gold
4.1 No Harassment or Abuse	No harassment or abuse including, but not limited to: physical, verbal or psychological abuse such as threats, foul language towards workers, or intimidation; demoralizing or overly harsh treatment or disciplinary action; monetary fines; or opposite sex pat-down. No cases of sexual harassment experienced before, during, or after end of employment relationship. Management must take action to discipline personnel who engage in any such instances of harassment or abuse.	R	R	R
4.2 Disciplinary Procedure	All operators must have a documented disciplinary procedure, with an escalation process before dismissal is considered. No worker should be subject to the procedure without due cause. Where contextually appropriate, workers are allowed to have a representative with them at disciplinary meetings.	R	R	R
5. Discrimination	Practice Description	Bronze	Silver	Gold
5.1 Discrimination	Operations do not discriminate in any aspect of the employment relationship. This can include but is not limited to recruitment, hiring, compensation, benefits, work assignments, access to training, advancement,	R	R	R

	discipline, termination, or retirement.			
5.2 Equal Pay	Operators must have a documented commitment to the principle of equal pay for equal work for all workers. Section 5.2 criteria may or may not apply to immediate family members as defined in Key Terms, depending on local legislation.	R	R	R
6. Freedom of Association & Collective Bargaining	Practice Description	Bronze	Silver	Gold
6.1 Protection Against Retaliation <i>This criteria not applicable to smallholders</i>	<p>Operation does not interfere with and is seen to welcome free association and collective bargaining. Operators do not interfere with worker efforts to assemble, strike, or hold elections in an independent manner. This includes interference or prevention of strikes; employer proposed or initiated worker elections; worker elections conducted or facilitated by management; mandatory worker participation in elections; prevention of worker organizations from presenting to workers; prevention of trade union representatives from regular and reasonably free access to workers during workers' free time.</p> <p>Operation does not threaten or intimidate workers directly or indirectly with termination, pay cuts, loss of benefits, or plant closure, and does not coerce workers with promises to keep them from freely participating in union or other activities.</p>	R	R	R
6.2 Employer Instituted Unions <i>This criteria not applicable to</i>	<p>Employers do not institute unions or alternative associations used by employers to hinder union organization.</p> <p>Employers do not utilize protection contracts.</p>	R	R	R

<i>smallholders</i>				
6.3 Precarious Employment <i>This criteria not applicable to smallholders</i>	Operation does not utilize atypical employment contracts in order to avoid workers' full or partial enjoyment of social benefits and statutory entitlements, or as a way of limiting workers' ability to freely associate and collectively bargain. Section 6.3 criteria may or may not apply to immediate family members as defined in Key Terms, depending on local legislation.	R	R	R
7. Employment Relationship	Practice Description	Bronze	Silver	Gold
7.1 Worker Voice	All farm operations have processes to listen and address worker complaints in a transparent way. In large operations workers are trained in worker rights and a grievance procedure is provided in a culturally appropriate way (i.e. language-accessible as well as using interactive materials and not only posted). An external workers' association or workers' right group and/or an internal independently- elected workers committee is present for and is involved in all or part the training. An independently-elected workers committee must also be involved in grievance investigation and resolution.	R	R	R
7.2 Worker Independence & Empowerment <i>This criteria not applicable to smallholders</i>	If workers would like to form an association, they are free to do so. If desired, workers hold independent, democratic elections to form worker associations for contract negotiations involving pay and conditions on farm/ranch and to create committees to address relevant ongoing challenges and opportunities, for example premium fund administration and health & safety.	R	R	R
	Employment contracts are negotiated and executed in	R	R	R

<p>7.3 Employment Contracts & Terms <i>This criteria not applicable to smallholders</i></p>	<p>good faith and the operator honors any commitments made in a contract. The operator recognizes the right of all employees to negotiate their terms of employment, whether individually, as a group or through democratically appointed representatives. The operator takes sole responsibility for fees associated with employment of workers. The use of agency supplied labor is permitted but the increased risks around this must be recognized by the operator and reasonable steps must be taken to seek assurance, including collaboration within the area/sector.</p>			
<p>7.4 Interns and Apprentices <i>This criteria not applicable to smallholders</i></p>	<p>Operators may use internships and apprenticeships in the spirit in which these have been established i.e. to educate, to develop and to create opportunity but avoiding any possibility of the arrangement being exploitative. All interns and apprentices must have clear and comprehensive contracts agreement, their rights explained to them clearly in writing and a fair stipend paid to cover living expenses.</p>	R	R	R
<p>8. Wages & Benefits</p>	<p>Practice Description</p>	Bronze	Silver	Gold
<p>8.1 Wages</p>	<p>Operations pay wages and benefits in accordance with the law with any deductions also being in accordance with the law and formally agreed in advance with the worker concerned. Operators must not pay wages to anyone other than the</p>	R	R	R

	<p>employed individual.</p> <p><i>CT: Illegal or excessive legal deductions (including charges/deposits for tools, equipment, uniforms, etc.).</i></p> <p><i>CT: Pay below minimum wage.</i></p>			
<p>8.2 Commitment to a Living Wage</p>	<p>All operations must demonstrate a commitment to pay a living wage and an intent to progress towards paying a living wage as defined in the Appendix*.</p> <p>If an operator cannot pay a living wage, the operation must:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Assess wage gaps against the target living wage estimate; and 2) Communicate transparently with workers about why a living wage cannot be paid. <p>If piecework is paid, the combination of worker’s wages and benefits shall not be below a living wage unless the other elements of this standard are met. Salaries and benefits for workers are set according to relevant national laws, or at regional average wages, or at official minimum wages for similar occupations whichever is the highest. Wages are specified for all employee functions and employment terms, such as piecework.</p> <p><i>Medium and large-scale operations only:</i></p> <p>If present, operations pay wages according to a negotiated collective bargaining agreement (CBA), whichever is higher. If higher than the regional average or national minimum wage. By year three of certification, operations must demonstrate that wages paid to all workers are equal to or above a living wage. This can be inclusive of social benefits, in-kind benefits and bonuses.</p>	<p>R</p>	<p>R</p>	<p>Operations must demonstrate that a living wage is paid to workers without exception.</p>

	<p>Section 8.2 criteria may or may not apply to immediate family members as defined in Key Terms, depending on local legislation.</p> <p><i>*See the Appendix for definitions for small-, medium-, and large-scale operations and additional guidance on calculating living wage</i></p>			
<p>8.3 Manipulated or Manipulative Records <i>This criteria not applicable to smallholders</i></p>	<p>Any type of manipulation of records or other evidence to deceive the auditor and impact audit results is prohibited.</p> <p>Section 8.3 criteria may or may not apply to immediate family members as defined in Key Terms, depending on local legislation.</p>	R	R	R
<p>8.4 Housing</p>	<p>If housing is provided as a voluntary benefit, it does not represent a financial burden. Where workers are provided with housing, housing should meet local rental requirements, with rent values at or below market value, and the conditions and infrastructure of the housing ensure a reasonable level of comfort, including sanitation, safety, ventilation, reasonable protection from heat and cold, privacy, and security. This may include but is not limited to a clean personal bed and space for personal belongings, protection from extreme temperatures, good ventilation and air quality, clean water for cooking, drinking, and bathing, access to functional toilets, and access to recreational areas.</p> <p>Section 8.4 criteria may or may not apply to immediate family members as defined in Key Terms, depending on local legislation.</p>	R	R	R
<p>8.5 Timely</p>	<p>Operators must have systems in place to ensure timely</p>	R	R	R

Payment of Wages	payment of wages to employees no less than every two weeks unless agreed in writing with the employee. Payments must be in accordance with the law and fully itemized pay slips must be provided and records kept. Section 8.5 criteria may or may not apply to immediate family members as defined in Key Terms, depending on local legislation.			
9. Hours of Work	Practice Description	Bronze	Silver	Gold
9.1 Hours of Work	<p>Operators shall not require workers to work more than the regular and overtime hours allowed by the law of the country where the workers are employed. The regular work week shall not exceed 48 hours or the maximum allowed by the law of the country of manufacture, whichever is less.</p> <p>Operators shall allow workers regular resting breaks during the work day and allow at least 24 consecutive hours of rest in every seven-day period. Employers shall not request overtime hours on a regular basis or require that workers work overtime. If total regular and overtime hours exceed 60 hours per week, this does not occur for more than 60 days per year. Exceptions may exist in certain scenarios, such as during harvest (may not exceed 3 consecutive weeks), particularly for perishable crops as long as workers willingly engage in additional hours of labor. In such instances, documentation exists.</p> <p>For salaried positions, hours of work must be included in any employment contract.</p>	R	R	R
10. Health &	Practice Description	Bronze	Silver	Gold

Safety				
<p>10.1 Health, Safety, and Potential Hazards</p>	<p>Operation minimizes number of immediate threats to workers lives. Operations provide the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Personal protective equipment at the employers' expense that is functional and properly maintained, along with training for how to use and store protective equipment. – Protection from excess heat and/or access to shade, particularly in hot climates, and an allowance to take rests/breaks to access shade and/or consume water. – Access to clean drinking water. – Access to toilet and sanitation facilities. – Emergency preparedness training and access to first aid equipment with instructions. – Access to healthcare, at least for cases of workplace accidents and injuries. – Training for proper handling or storage of flammable materials/chemicals. <p>Operators must ensure that health and safety concerns of all employees are listened to and acted upon as appropriate. Operators with 20 or more employees or more must formally establish a Health and Safety Committee with a remit to review Health and Safety performance and any issues arising. Appointments to the Committee must be open and democratic.</p> <p><i>CT: Substandard, unsafe, or unsanitary conditions that pose danger to employees or the environment</i></p>	<p>R</p>	<p>R</p>	<p>R</p>
<p>10.2 Exits</p>	<p>Buildings on an operation have at the higher of two</p>	<p>R</p>	<p>R</p>	<p>R</p>

<i>This criteria not applicable to smallholders</i>	exits or whatever is required by law, that ensure safe evacuation for all workers. All exits remain unlocked.			
10.3 Buildings <i>This criteria not applicable to smallholders</i>	Policies in place to minimize environmental impacts with respect to energy, air emissions, water, waste, hazardous materials, and other significant environmental risks. All necessary ventilation, plumbing, electrical, noise and lighting services shall be installed and maintained to conform to applicable laws and to prevent or minimize hazardous conditions to workers in the facility.	R	R	R
10.4 Privacy	Workers living in employer-provided housing have a right to privacy. The employer/owner has a right to inspect and enter the housing for the purposes of routine maintenance and/or repairs, but must, except for an emergency, notify residents. Such work must be done with a minimum of disturbance to any personal belongings. In order to meet additional workers' privacy needs, management agrees with the workers on the privacy needs of the individual worker through a documented discussion.	R	R	R
10.5 Reduction of Accidents	Records must be maintained of all health and safety related incidents and operators must demonstrate a commitment to the reduction and elimination of such incidents over time.	R	R	R
11. Other	Practice Description	Bronze	Silver	Gold
11.1 Grower Groups	Small-scale farmers must be free to organize in some way. In the Global South, to mitigate the risk of exploitation of small-scale producers who are not organized into formal democratic structures should still hold annual meetings and take on some of the responsibilities of a traditional farmer organization (i.e.	R	R	R

		electing representatives to negotiate with buyers).		
12. Buyers & Supply Chain	Practice Description	Bronze	Silver	Gold
<p>12.1 Buyers</p> <p><i>This criteria not applicable to farm or factory workers</i></p>	<p>All contracts between producers and buyers are fair and equitable. This includes fairly negotiated and equitable contracts with producers, fair conflict resolution, openness to long-term commitments, and buyers' right to require up-to-date farmer certification of all applicable products.</p> <p>Buyers make timely payments and provide a sourcing plan to producers with estimates of future purchases. Buyers also respect and work with existing producer groups, rather than to circumvent established groups to contract directly with an individual producer or producer subgroup.</p> <p>Buyers must enter long-term commitments when desired by farmers or be transparent with farmers and the certification body if they do not enter long-term commitments with farmers.</p> <p>Buyers do not break commitments that adversely affect producers. Producers do not break commitments that adversely affect buyers.</p>	R	R	R
<p>12.2 Bargaining</p> <p><i>This criteria not applicable to farm or factory workers</i></p>	<p>All farmers have the right to freedom of association and to organize and engage in collective bargaining, free from retaliation of any kind by the buyer or his/her agents.</p> <p>If farmers so choose, contracts between buyers and farmers are negotiated using a collective bargaining process.</p> <p>If a farmer chooses to select a representative, the buyer recognizes and negotiates with representatives chosen by</p>	R	R	R

	the farmer or democratically chosen by the farmer's association in the case of collective bargaining.			
12.3 Fair Pricing <i>This criteria not applicable to farm or factory workers</i>	<p>Pricing between buyers and producers is mutually agreed by all through dialogue and participation by both to provide fair pay to producers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Where Fair Trade pricing structures exist, these are used as a minimum. – Where Fair Trade pricing structures do not exist, pricing should be based on the socially acceptable remuneration (in the local context) considered by producers themselves to be fair. <p>Fair Pricing and Fair Payments guidelines are not applicable to producers acting as buyers when buying organic or non-organic commodity grains on an open market.</p>	R	R	R
12.4 Fair Payments <i>This criteria not applicable to farm or factory workers</i>	<p>Payments received by farmers should always meet the cost of production which includes paying living wages, as described in ROC requirements. Documented real costs of productions calculated by producers or producer groups or average costs calculated regionally should be prioritized. When real costs are not known, local market prices or established fair trade minimum prices can be used if these can be determined to cover cost of production; if these prices do not cover cost of production, 10% should be added.</p> <p>Fair Pricing and Fair Payments guidelines are not applicable to producers acting as buyers when buying organic or non-organic commodity grains on an open market.</p>	R	R	R
12.5 Transparent Negotiation	<p>Negotiations between producers and buyers include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Transparent communication of pricing and contracting terms 	R	R	R

<p><i>This criteria not applicable to farm or factory workers</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Openness to exploring and negotiating all terms of contracts and clarifying expectations clearly – Providing market information on demand, supply, pricing, and transfer of value in the chain 			
<p>12.6 Capacity Building <i>This criteria not applicable to farm or factory workers</i></p>	<p>The operation works towards an increase in the capacities of its members and the organization. Mechanisms for training are developed to facilitate the process of building capacities in the productive, technical, social, organizational, commercial and public impact areas.</p> <p>For example, buyers can work directly with small producers to develop specific activities to help these producers improve their management skills, production capabilities and access to local / regional / international / Fair Trade and mainstream markets as appropriate.</p>	R	R	R
<p>12.7 Production Obligations</p>	<p>Production contracts obligate the producer to deliver only what is harvested from the acres covered by the contract. Under no circumstances shall farmers be required to purchase crop from outside the farm to fulfill delivery requirements of a production contract. Suffering the loss of crop due to natural-occurring flood, drought, wind, hail or other causes beyond the producer’s control must never place additional burden on the farmer to source replacement crop.</p>	R	R	R

VIII. Appendix

A-1 Glossary of Key Terms

Farmer and Worker Fairness

- **Atypical Employment:** The use of labor-only contracting arrangements, consecutive short-term contracts and/or false apprenticeship or other schemes by the organization to avoid meeting its obligations to personnel under applicable laws and regulations pertaining to labor and social security.
- **Capacity Building:** The process of developing and strengthening the skills, instincts, abilities, processes, and resources to improve the social and economic position of farmers and workers.
- **Democratic Organizations (International):** The ability for small-scale farmers to be democratically organized in order to be able to compete globally.
- **Equal Opportunity:** The policy of treating job applicants or employees equally without regard to the person's race, color, gender, pregnancy, sexual orientation, disability, marital status, age, religion, political opinion, national extraction, social origin, or other personal characteristics.
- **Fair Payments:** Payment sufficient to cover cost of production including living wages for any workers and equivalent income to farmers, plus reinvestment in farm.
- **Family Members:** Those relatives who are related in direct line to the producer and live in the same household as the producer. It may include parents, spouses, brothers/sisters and children, but does not include aunts/uncles, cousins or other relatives.
- **Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining:** The method whereby representatives of workers (unions) and producers (farmers/ranchers) negotiate the conditions of employment, often resulting in a written contract setting forth the wages, hours, and other conditions to be observed for a stipulated period. Collective bargaining should be conducted in good faith.
- **Living Wage:** The remuneration received for a standard work week by a worker in a particular place sufficient to afford a decent standard of living for the worker and her or his family. Elements of a decent standard of living include food, water, housing, education, health care, transport, clothing, and other essential needs including provision for unexpected events.
- **Routine Workplace Audits:** Routine third-party audits should assess that producers

minimize exposure to disease, ensure access to safe inputs, provide clean facilities, document identification procedures, record use of treatment products, and properly train workers on the operation's protocols.

- **Smallholder:** Small farming operations where land and labor productivity are comparatively low due to limited resources. Smallholder farmers often rely on farming as a primary means of livelihood and are at greater risk of vulnerability in the supply chain. Smallholders rely primarily on family labor for farm operations. Smallholder size may vary by farm type and commodity; however, some certifications set thresholds so confirm with your certification program, if applicable. Most smallholders are organized by Internal Control System (ICS) for certification purposes. Contact the ROA for additional guidance on determining if your operation is considered a smallholder under the ROC.
- **Trafficked Labor:** Any work performed by a person who has been recruited, transported, harbored or obtained by means of the use of threat, force, coercion or deception for the purpose of exploitation.

A-3. Living Wage Calculation and Definitions

Living Wage Definition

For the purposes of the ROC, a living wage is defined as:

A combination of wages and benefits that can provide for food, water, housing, education, health care, transport, clothing, and other essential needs, plus a 10% allowance for unexpected events and/or savings.

Living Wage Calculation

Living wage must be calculated using one of the following methods or tools:

- Agricultural Justice Project Living Wage Toolkit
- MIT Calculator + 10%, based on one working adult
- Global Living Wages benchmarks per region
- Global Living Wage Coalition calculation manual
- Fair Labor Association benchmarks

A-4. Operation Scale Definitions

For the purposes of the ROC requirement 8.2 *Commitment to a Living Wage* and determining applicability of specific social criteria, the following definitions shall be used to determine scale of operations:

- **Small-scale farms**
 - ≤5 permanent workers and no more than 25 total workers on-site at the management unit at any time (FT-USA, FFL)
- **Small-scale farm organizations**
 - More than 2/3 of member farms meet the criteria for small-scale
 - A maximum of 1/3 of member farms may have up to 2 times the parameters defined
- **Medium-scale farms**
 - 6-25 permanent workers and no more than 100 total workers on-site at the management unit at any time
- **Medium-scale farm organizations**
 - More than 2/3 of member farms meet the criteria for medium-scale
 - A maximum of 1/3 of member farms may have up to 2 times the parameters defined
- **Large-scale farms/farm organizations**
 - All other situations