Ecolabelling Certification Criteria for

Plant-Based Products

CC-EL-13

National Cleaner Production Centre, Sri Lanka

1. Introduction

1.1 The Certification Scheme for Eco Labelling of Products/Services of the National Cleaner Production Centre, Sri Lanka (NCPC-SL) is based on the requirements laid down in the **ISO 14024:2018 Environmental Labels and Declarations - Type 1 environmental labelling – Principles and Procedures.**

1.2 ISO 14024 specifies the requirements for eco-labeling certification. The Eco Labelling criteria /s of NCPC SL satisfy the ISO 14024 requirements as required by the eco-labelling certification schemes. Here are the key requirements fulfilled accordingly.

- **Scope:** The eco-labeling certification scheme covers specific product categories/services with a significant impact on the environment.
- **Product Criteria:** Clear and transparent environmental criteria have been established for products/ services to be eligible for the eco-label. These criteria have been based on scientific evidence and consider the entire product life cycle.
- **Independent Third-Party Verification:** NCPC SL conduct independent third-party verification of compliance with the eco-labeling criteria.
- **Impartiality:** The certification process is impartial and free from any conflicts of interest that could undermine its credibility.
- **Transparency:** The eco-labeling scheme has provided transparent information about the certification process, criteria, and verification procedures.
- **Continuous Improvement:** The scheme encourages continuous improvement in the environmental performance of certified products /services.
- **Stakeholder Involvement:** Stakeholders, including businesses, NGOs, consumers, and government representatives, has been involved in the development and revision of the eco-labeling criteria.
- **Non-Discrimination:** The certification scheme has not discriminated against products or services from different sources based on factors unrelated to environmental performance.
- **Compliance Monitoring:** Regular monitoring and surveillance of certified products or services has been conducted to ensure ongoing compliance with eco-labeling criteria.
- **Public Access to Information:** Information about the eco-labeling scheme, certified products, and their environmental criteria shall be accessible to the public.
- **Environmental Labeling and Advertising:** The use of the eco-label in advertising or labeling has been controlled and subject to the certification scheme's rules.
- **Review and Revision:** The certification scheme should undergo periodic review and revision to ensure its relevance and effectiveness.

1.3 This document outlines specific managerial and technical criteria for the manufacturing, production, and dispatching of food products for sale or export. It also incorporates terminologies and aspects related to sustainability management throughout these processes. The sustainability aspects covered in this document may include environmental impact, energy and water security, socio-economic development, or a combination of these factors.

1.4 The certification of Eco Labelling of food Products is implemented through a set programme operated over a specified period as agreed upon with relevant parties. The NCPC-SL functions as the scheme owner of this certification scheme. This document includes environmental criteria, food product safety, quality and functional characteristics, and legal requirements related to Confectionery products.

1.5 This specific product environmental criteria document has been prepared by the Expert Committee on Eco Labelling appointed by the NCPC-SL and authorized for adoption by the Board of Directors of NCPC-SL. The food products manufacturers who are seeking eco-labeling certification are required to meet the following requirements.
The product and processing conditions shall comply with the requirements given in the below.

I. NCPC-SL guidelines; and
II. The product and processing shall comply with relevant regulations mentioned in this document and enforced in the country, as applicable; and
III. The product should conform to the relevant national, regional, and internationally recognized standards

1.6 This document supplements the below guidelines and provides guidance for the certification of food products for both Assessors and Producers who are preparing for certification. Each criterion mentioned herein is categorized depending on the significance of its impact on the product environmental criterion or product function characteristic being discussed, e.g. energy, water, environment, or socio-development, as follows.
Mandatory requirements (M) – Related to the legal requirements and product safety, functional characteristics
Critical requirements (C) – Significant to product environmental criteria
Non-critical requirements (NC) - Not so significant to product environmental criteria when compared to critical requirements

1.7 This document should also be read in conjunction with the Rules and Procedures of NCPC-SL as applicable to the Eco Labelling Certification scheme.

1.8 This document will be periodically reviewed and updated based on the experience gained and the developments that have taken place in technology and the use of energy, water, material, and the environment. The term '**shall**' is used in this document to indicate those provisions which are mandatory. The term '**must**' is used to indicate the guidance which, although not mandatory, is provided by NCPC-SL as a recognized means of meeting the requirements of the standard. The term '**should**' is used to indicate recommendations for implementation.

1.9 The client should submit the relevant pieces of evidence for conformity verification for the last calendar year.

2. References

In the preparation of this criteria document, the following documents were referred.

1. ISO 14020 – Environmental labels and declarations - General principles
2. ISO 14024 – Environmental labels and declarations- Type 1 environmental labeling– Principles and procedures
3. Guidelines for Providing Product Sustainability Information, UN Environment Programme,2017
4. Sri Lanka Standard 1551: 2016, Principal Criteria and Indicator for Sustainably Produced Fuelwood
5. Sri Lankan Food Act, No. 26 of 1980, Food (Amendment) Act – 2011
6. ISO 22000: 2018, HACCP, GAP, GMP, Codex Alimentarius
7. Sri Lankan Government Gazettes
8. National Environmental Act
9. National Policy on Protection and Conservation of Water Sources, their Catchments and Reservations in Sri Lanka
10. Control of Pesticides Act, No. 33 of 1980

3. Terms and Definitions

For this document, the terms and definitions given in the referred standards and the following shall apply.

- **Conformity:** Fulfillment of a requirement
- **Note:** Conformance and compliance are synonymously used for conformity but deprecated.
- **Codex Alimentarius:** The Codex Alimentarius, or "Food Code" is a collection of standards, guidelines and codes of practice adopted by the Codex Alimentarius Commission. The Commission, also known as CAC, is the central part of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme and was established by FAO and WHO to protect consumer health and promote fair practices in food trade.
- **Codex Standards:** Codex standards ensure that food is safe and can be traded. The 188 Codex members have negotiated science-based recommendations in all areas related to food safety and quality. Codex food safety texts are a reference in WTO trade disputes.
- **Verification:** Confirmation through the provision of objective evidence that specified requirements have been fulfilled.
- **Organization:** The Applicant organization is hereinafter referred to as an organization.
- **Food Additives:** Any substance not normally consumed as a food by itself and not normally used as a typical ingredient of the food, whether or not it has nutritive value, the intentional addition of which to food for a technological (including organoleptic) purpose in the manufacture, processing, preparation, treatment, packing, packaging, transport or holding of such food results, or may be reasonably expected to result (directly or indirectly), in it or its by-products becoming a component of or otherwise affecting the characteristics of such foods. The term does not include contaminants or substances added to food for maintaining or improving nutritional qualities (CODEX)
- **Food Value Chain:** The full range of farms and firms and their successive coordinated value-adding activities that produce raw agricultural materials and transform them into food products that are sold to final consumers and disposed of after use, in a manner that is profitable throughout, has broad-based benefits for society, and does not permanently deplete natural resources (FAO)
- **Pesticide:** Any substance or mixture of substances intended for preventing, destroying, or controlling pests in food crop production, including weeds, insects, fungi, or other harmful organisms that interfere with the growth, yield, or quality of crops. This includes substances used as plant growth regulators, defoliants, desiccants, or agents applied before or after harvest to protect crops or agricultural commodities from deterioration during storage, transport, or marketing.
- **Plant-based food products:** A collective term for food derived from cultivated plants.
- **Major Food Crop Categories based on FAO definitions:**

  Cereals

  Cereals are annual plants, generally of the gramineous family, yielding grains used for food, feed, seed, and industrial purposes. This category includes crops harvested for dry grain only, such as wheat, rice, maize, barley, millet, and sorghum. It excludes legumes like pulses and crops harvested green for forage or silage.

  Pulses

  Pulses are annual leguminous crops yielding grains or seeds used for food, feed, and sowing purposes. This group is limited to crops harvested for dry grain only, excluding those harvested green for food (e.g., green beans, green peas), which are considered vegetables. It also excludes leguminous crops used mainly for oil extraction, such as soybeans.

  Oil crops

  Oil crops are crops primarily cultivated for the extraction of oil from their seeds or fruits. This category includes crops like soybean, groundnut (peanut), sunflower, rapeseed, and oil palm. These oils are used for food, industrial applications, and biofuel production.

Roots and Tubers

Roots and tubers are plants yielding starchy roots, tubers, rhizomes, corms, and stems used for human consumption or animal feed. This category includes crops like potatoes, cassava, sweet potatoes, and yams. They are significant sources of carbohydrates in many diets.

Vegetables

Vegetables encompass a wide range of edible plant parts, including leaves, stems, roots, flowers, and immature seeds. This category includes crops like leafy greens, tomatoes, onions, and cabbages. Vegetables are vital sources of vitamins, minerals, and dietary fiber.

Fruits

Fruits are the edible reproductive bodies of seed plants. This category includes crops like bananas, citrus fruits, apples, grapes, and mangoes. Fruits are important sources of vitamins, particularly vitamin C, and dietary fiber.

Sugar Crops

Sugar crops are plants cultivated primarily for the extraction of sugar. This category includes sugarcane and sugar beet. The extracted sugar is used for human consumption and in various industrial applications.

Fiber Crops

Fiber crops are plants grown for the fibers they produce, which are used in the manufacture of textiles, ropes, and other products. This category includes crops like cotton, jute, flax, and hemp.

Stimulant Crops

Stimulant crops are plants cultivated for substances that have stimulating effects on the human body. This category includes crops like coffee, tea, and cocoa. These products are widely consumed beverages with significant cultural and economic importance.

Spices and Condiments

Spices and condiments are plant products used to flavor, season, or preserve food. This category includes crops like pepper, ginger, cloves, and vanilla. They are valued for their aromatic properties and play a crucial role in culinary traditions worldwide.

4. Abbreviations

EMS: Environmental Management System
EPL: Environmental Protection License
FVC: Food Value Chain
GAP: Good Agricultural Practices
GMP: Good Manufacturing Practices
HACCP: Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points
IPM: Integrated Pest Management
MRL: Maximum Residue Levels

Table 01: Eco Label Certification Requirements

Certification Criteria Requirements	Weighting Factor
Phase 05: Primary Production	
5.1 Soil Conservation and Management	
a) Appropriate practices (such as ground covers, mulches, contour planting, Shade trees, terracing, filter strips) must be implemented to reduce soil erosion by water and wind, in the plantation where applicable.	C
b) Appropriate practices (such as planting of nitrogen-fixing crops- Gliricidia, manure, supplying Nutrient Boosters – wood ash) must be implemented to enrich and maintain soil health and nutrition Promoting organic matter enriches	C
c) Organic fertilizers must be used in accordance with national guidelines. Nutrient management practices for nitrogen, potassium, phosphorus, calcium, and magnesium must be implemented based on the assessment of crop needs, regular monitoring of soil fertility, and crop nutrient status. These practices must follow the recommendations of local agronomic experts, as outlined in the national guidelines.	C
d) Inorganic fertilizers must be applied according to the guidelines, using appropriate amounts and only the acceptable fertilizers specified under the Fertilizer Regulation Act No. 68 of 1988.	M
e) Good agricultural practices (GAP) must be implemented in crops cultivation areas.	C
5.2 Water Conservation and Water Quality	
a) Plantation shall comply with the applicable law of withdrawal of surface or groundwater for agricultural purposes.	M
b) Natural water sources must be protected and maintained with adequate reservation (Rainwater Harvesting, Water Conservation).	M
c) Existing/New irrigation and water distribution systems should be managed and maintained to optimize crop productivity and minimize water waste and erosion.	NC
d) Appropriate measures must be taken to avoid contamination of water resources from chemical applications and other farming activities (Adhering to Good Agricultural Practices (SL-GAP) guidelines).	C
5.3 Pest Management	
a) Integrated Pest Management (IPM) plan must be prepared and implemented covering the plantation / estates. (Use of eco-friendly agrochemicals to minimize environmental impact)	C
b) Weed control using agricultural appliances (Keep the field free from weeds by inter-culture and manual weeding) must be implemented where possible.	C

c) Pheromone traps and sticky traps must be installed and maintained to monitor and control pest populations naturally.	C
5.4 Disease Management	
a) Proactive measures must be implemented to prevent and control crop diseases while minimizing environmental impact and ensuring long-term sustainability.	C
b) For disease treatment, traditional methods must be prioritized (Eg: Manually remove the affected plants).	C
5.5 Chemical Management	
a) Only chemicals (including pesticides, herbicides, fungicides, fertilizers, and growth regulators etc.) that are registered and approved by the relevant Sri Lankan authorities must be used. Compliance with the Pesticides, Fertilizer and Hazardous Chemicals Control Act No. 33 of 1980, the Control of Pesticides (Amendment) Act No. 06 of 1994, and any subsequent regulations is mandatory. The use of banned or restricted chemicals, including those listed under WHO categories 1a and 1b, shall be strictly prohibited to safeguard human health, biodiversity, and the environment. Agrochemicals listed in the Stockholm and Rotterdam Conventions shall not be used.	M
b) The correct dosage and dilution of chemicals must be calculated and applied using well-maintained and calibrated equipment. This includes adherence to the Maximum Residue Levels (MRLs) defined by Sri Lankan authorities to protect food safety and the environment.	M
c) The plantation must ensure environmentally sound chemical management by: I. Disposing of empty chemical containers responsibly (e.g., triple rinsing plastic containers, puncturing to prevent reuse, ensuring no leftover chemicals, and establishing agreements with suppliers for collection); II. Storing all chemicals securely in locked facilities under sound chemical management practices; and III. Use of optimal chemical application equipment and techniques suited to the crop and to minimize environmental impact. IV. Provide proper training	C
5.6 Waste Management	
a) A waste management plan, including the following measures, must be developed, and implemented: I. Documentation of the origin, approximate volume, and current means of disposal for all waste streams; and II. Source segregation of different waste types and directing to facilitate reuse, recycling, or composting	C
b) Proper cultivation must have a reliable water supply, an efficient sewage disposal system that meets environmental standards, and a well-designed drainage system to manage waste and prevent efficient sewage disposal flooding.	C
c) The environmental impact must be minimized through the waste management plan by segregation, recycling, and proper disposal of plant debris, grass, wastewater, and litter.	C

d) On-farm waste management must include composting of organic residues, mulching with eco-friendly disposal of agrochemical containers to enhance soil health and minimize environmental impacts.	C
5.7 Energy Management	
a) Appropriate measures should be taken to minimize oil/fuel consumption and air emissions during plantation management activities (Eg: water pumps)	NC
b) Energy-efficient technologies and practices (e.g., efficient irrigation systems, low-energy lighting, renewable energy sources) must be adopted to reduce the environmental footprint.	C
c) Organic farming or regenerative agriculture practices must be implemented to reduce energy use by maintaining soil fertility naturally.	C
5.8 Harvesting	
a) Harvesting must be conducted at the optimal maturity stage to ensure product quality, minimize waste, and meet eco-labelling quality standards.	C
b) Use of eco-friendly harvesting methods and equipment (manual or mechanical) to minimize environmental damage, including soil compaction, damage to non-target plants, and excessive fuel use.	C
c) Minimize post-harvest losses through proper handling, immediate transport to storage, and reduction of physical damage or contamination.	C
5.9 Biodiversity Conservation	
a) Sustainability requirements aligned with Sri Lankan environmental legislation and international best practices shall be met. Specifically, agricultural land intended for cultivation shall not be classified under the following categories as of January 2008: • Areas of High Biodiversity Value: This includes designated areas such as national parks, wildlife reserves, and environmentally sensitive areas recognized by the Department of Wildlife Conservation, the Forest Department, or under the Fauna and Flora Protection Ordinance and the National Environmental Act. • Areas with High Carbon Stock: This covers wetlands, mangroves, primary forests, and any lands classified under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands or identified as critical carbon sinks by the Central Environmental Authority (CEA). • Peatlands/Bogs: Land identified as peatlands or marshes under Sri Lanka's Wetland Management Strategy or designated as environmentally sensitive under national wetland inventories.	M
b) Rare, threatened, or endangered wildlife species present on agricultural lands shall be protected in accordance with Sri Lanka's biodiversity protection laws. • Farms with an area less than or equal to 1 hectare shall be exempted from this requirement. • Protection measures shall be aligned with the Fauna and Flora Protection Ordinance and other regulations issued by the Department of Wildlife Conservation. • Consideration shall be given to the National Red List of Threatened Species and relevant provisions under the Forest Ordinance and Coast Conservation Act. • Compliance with Sri Lanka's obligations under international agreements, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, shall also be ensured.	M

Phase 06: Selection and receiving of raw material	
6.1 Verified Supplier and Quality Assurance Criteria	
a) Raw materials/ ingredients/ additives shall be sourced from sustainable sources, preferably from certified suppliers who has followed best practices that prevent deforestation, protect biodiversity, and promote soil health (Such certifications include Eco-label Sri Lanka, Organic, Fair Trade, FSC-certified, Rainforest Alliance, etc.).	M
b) Raw materials/ ingredients/ additives supplied shall be tracked to verify country of origin, quality control, safety compliance, and rapid contamination response.	C
c) Sourcing should be made with minimum GHG emissions (low-carbon footprint).	NC
d) Raw materials/ ingredients/ additives must be free from harmful microorganisms to prevent foodborne illnesses and spoilage.	C
e) Raw materials/ ingredients/ additives shall comply with minimal levels of harmful chemicals, including pesticides, heavy metals, and mycotoxins, to ensure safety in compliance with national and international standards (Sri Lankan Food Act, Sri Lanka Standards Institute (SLS), Codex Alimentarius, and European Union (EU) regulations).	M
f) All raw materials/ ingredients/ additives shall be compatible to maintain product integrity and quality.	M
g) Permissible radiation limits shall not be exceeded for irradiated raw materials/ ingredients/ additives. They shall be labeled to indicate irradiation treatment in compliance with Sri Lankan and international standards (Sri Lanka: Food (Irradiation) Regulations No. 01 of 2013; International: Codex Alimentarius - Guidelines for the Use of Irradiation in the Processing of Food).	M
h) Raw materials/ ingredients/ additives shall be transported in sealed, clean, well-maintained containers. Refrigerated vehicles shall be used for temperature-sensitive goods to maintain quality and prevent contamination. This shall help prevent ingredient wastage while adhering to Food (Hygiene) Regulations 2011.	M
i) Proper documentation, batch tracking, and segregation shall be implemented to prevent contamination and maintain traceability.	M
j) All imported raw materials/ ingredients/ additives shall comply with the Food (Labelling and Advertising) Regulations 2022 and Food (Shelf Life for Imported Food Items) Regulations 2014, along with any product-specific regulations, Food Adoption of standards regulations, and all other applicable regulations under the Food Act No. 26 of 1980.	M
k) Raw materials/ ingredients/ additives should be stored in facilities that use proper storage conditions such include Controlled Atmosphere Packaging (CAP) or Modified Atmosphere Packaging (MAP) to extend shelf life and preserve quality.	NC
Phase 07: Processing and Manufacturing	
7.1 Legal Requirement	

a) The Environmental Protection License (EPL) shall be obtained and implemented all its requirements.	M
b) Compliance with the Food (Registration of Premises) Regulations - 2019 under the Food Act shall be demonstrated by food establishments. Registration shall be valid and up to date, ensuring adherence to hygiene, safety, and environmental management standards.	M
7.2 General Requirement	
a) Environmental Management System/s, Food Safety Management Systems should be implemented in the organization.	NC
7.3 Eco friendly manufacturing facility	
a) Environmentally non-toxic materials must be used within the production premises.	C
b) Recyclable materials should be used where applicable.	NC
c) Green spaces should be provided, and land disturbance should be minimized to protect local ecosystems and reduce heat islands.	NC
d) An efficient layout must be available that optimizes space utilization for various stages of processing, including receiving, storage, processing, packaging, and dispatch.	C
e) Easy-to-clean surfaces, proper drainage systems, and designated areas for waste management must be provided.	C
f) Temperature and humidity control systems must be available to ensure the quality and safety of products during processing and storage.	C
g) The design must ensure the safety and accessibility of workers, including proper lighting (Lux level), ventilation, emergency exits, and accessibility features for individuals with disabilities.	C
h) All components of machines and equipment that directly contact with food ingredients shall be made of food-grade, non-toxic materials to ensure product safety.	M
7.4 Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP)	
a) Proper sanitation must be implemented to prevent contamination throughout the production process.	C
b) Proper hygienic practices must be established and implemented throughout the production process.	C
c) Standardized procedures must be implemented for all aspects of production to ensure consistent product quality.	C
d) Proper storage practices must be used to maintain the quality and safety of the products.	C

e) Traceability of food products from production to distribution must be ensured to maintain product integrity and accountability.	C
f) Quality and safety must be regularly reviewed and improved.	C
7.5 Chemicals Management	
a) Food additives shall be used as per the Sri Lankan regulations (Regulations under the Food Control Administration Unit, Ministry of Health; The latest Gazette notifications and circulars)	M
b) Environmentally friendly, approved chemicals must be used for cleaning, and proper chemical management practices must be in place to minimize risks.	C
c) Where possible, eco-friendly, biodegradable, or non-toxic chemicals should be prioritized (e.g., green cleaning agents, plant-based lubricants).	NC
7.6 Water Resource Consumption and Conservation	
a) A detailed and up-to-date water supply line diagram must be maintained to ensure efficient water management, identify potential leaks, and support conservation efforts.	C
b) Infrastructure must be maintained to quantify the water usage for the process, and domestic purposes in the factory across all water sources.	C
c) Water usage for all industrial processes and other processes must be measured and monitored.	C
d) Company benchmark/baseline for water consumption should be established (Eg: Water consumption of the previous year) and monitor on a continuous basis (Eg: specific water consumption in m^3/ liters (m^3/Kg, m^3/T, m^3/ PCs) of product manufactured or per employee water consumption.	NC
e) Significant water uses and reduction measures must be identified without compromising any hygiene and sanitary requirements.	C
f) Targets must be set to reduce the water consumption and to improve water efficiency.	C
g) An implementation plan/ programmes for water efficiency improvements and to reduce water consumption must be developed and executed.	C
h) *Progress of the* plan/ programmes must be monitored and analyzed to identify trends, anomalies, and opportunities for water conservation.	C
i) Water conservation techniques and technologies must be implemented, so that water efficiency is maintained (Including such Low-Flow Fixtures, Automated Water Monitoring Systems).	C
j) A portion of the total annual water consumption should be fulfilled through harvested rainwater from roof and non-roof surfaces.	NC

k) Organizational/product water footprint should be calculated, recorded, and maintained with *ISO 14046:2021.*	NC
7.7 Energy Resource Consumption and Conservation	
a) Infrastructure must be maintained to quantify the energy usage for industrial processes and other purposes in the organization.	C
b) Effective Energy Management System (EnMS) or policies, procedures, and energy management programmes must be implemented by the organization (ISO 50001).	C
c) Appropriate measures (Eg: Variable Frequency Drives (VFDs), waste heat recovery applications, etc) must be implemented to improve energy efficiency in the organization.	C
d) Nonrenewable energy sources should be substituted with renewable energy renewable energy should be used in supply of energy to the organization (such include biomass, solar power, waste to energy) .	NC
e) Energy consumption data must be regularly monitored and analyzed to identify trends, anomalies, and opportunities for energy conservation. Eg: Electrical energy consumption per unit of production output (kWh / Piece, kWh / kg, kWh / T, kWh / MT).	C
7.8 Solid Waste Management	
a) Effective waste management policies and programmes must be implemented.	C
b) Wastes shall be segregated and quantified at source into different streams for efficient disposal and recycling.	M
c) Procedures must be developed for reworking/ discarding products that do not meet safety and quality standards.	C
d) Wastes must be disposed of in an environmentally friendly manner at designated premises, separate from food manufacturing, in compliance with National Environmental (Municipal Solid Waste) Regulations, No. 1 of 2009, and the National Environmental (Protection & Quality) Regulations No 01 of 2008.	C
7.9 Wastewater Management	
a) Wastewater shall not be directed to the water bodies and lands causing health and environmental problems.	M
b) The best practices (such as Seepage/soil soak pit system) for used water discharge must be implemented.	C
c) A wastewater treatment system should be installed to treat wastewater.	NC
d) Treated water should be reused for cleaning, irrigation, and cooling, ensuring no contamination of food production while monitoring reuse efficiency	NC

e) Critical parameters of the treated wastewater shall be monitored and tested at predefined intervals.	C
7.10 Air Pollution Management	
a) Measures should be taken at the design stage to minimize fugitive releases of gaseous substances by specifying high-quality equipment and materials that prevent leakage. Use high-quality, corrosion-resistant materials to reduce gas leaks at the design stage.	NC
7.11 GHG Emission Management	
a) Organizational GHG emissions /product carbon footprint should be calculated, recorded, and maintained. (ISO 14064-1, ISO 14067)	NC
Phase 08: Sustainable Packaging and Labelling	
8.1 Packing Requirements	
a) Packaging materials should be biodegradable or recyclable, where possible. Reduction of plastic usage and encouragement of sustainable alternatives such as paper-based or compostable materials. (Limit: At least 50% of packaging material should be recyclable or biodegradable.)	NC
b) Above The above packaging criteria shall be in alignment with: The National Policy on Waste Management, 2019, and the Central Environmental Authority (CEA) regulations and guidelines on plastic waste management.	M
c) Primary Packaging shall be made from non-toxic, food-grade materials that do not alter the product's taste, smell, or composition (As per the Food (Packaging Materials and Articles) Regulation, 2010; and Codex Alimentarius Standards).	M
d) In compliance with the plastic ban (2017), single-use plastic items such as plastic straws, plastic forks, and polystyrene containers shall not be used in packaging. Alternative materials such as paper, glass, and reusable containers shall be prioritized.	M
e) Unnecessary (over packaging) must be avoided.	C
f) Packaging size and weight must be optimized to ensure material use is reduced without compromising quality and safety of food.	C
g) Packaging must be designed for easy recycling (e.g., mono-material films, paper-based bags).	C
h) Environment-related information (e.g., recycled content, disposal methods) must be provided on packaging. This includes labeling plastic identification numbers (resin codes) to aid recycling and ensuring compliance with Sri Lankan environmental regulations on waste management, plastic reduction, and the use of recyclable or biodegradable materials referring to Food (Packaging Materials and Articles) Regulation, 2010)	C
i) Clear messages must be mentioned encouraging the buyers to send back the packaging material to the collection centers, and/ or collection points for reusing or recycling purposes.	C

j) Packaging materials should be sourced from sustainable suppliers who adhere to environmentally friendly production processes.	NC
8.2 Labelling Requirements	
a) All labels shall comply with the Food (Labelling and Advertising) Regulation – 2022, and as well as any other regulations enacted under the Food Act No. 26 of 1980 that may impact food labelling.	M
b) Sugar, Salt, and Fat Content Labeling A traffic light labeling system shall be used to inform consumers about the sugar, salt, and fat content in packaged foods, governed by the Food (Colour Coding for Sugar, Salt and Fat) Regulations - 2019. • Sugar Content: Red: More than 22g per 100g, Amber: 8g to 22g per 100g, Green: Less than 8g per 100g • Salt Content: Red: More than 1.25g per 100g, Amber: 0.25g to 1.25g per 100g, Green: Less than 0.25g per 100g • Fat Content: Red: More than 17.5g per 100g, Amber: 3g to 17.5g per 100g, Green: Less than 3g per 100g Note: (Above colour code valid for solid and semi solid foods. Liquid food produces shall adhere to Extraordinary gazette: No. 23/19/42: Food (Colour Coding for sugar levels - liquid) Regulations 2022)	M
c) Non-toxic, water-based inks and dyes must be used for labeling and printing.	C
Phase 09: Quality Control and Testing	
9.1 General Requirements	
a) A well-established Quality Management System (QMS) must be in place, ensuring the implementation of policies, procedures, quality planning, quality control, quality assurance, and continuous improvement initiatives within the organization.	C
b) Microbial safety standards must be adhered to, ensuring minimal waste through proper hygiene, sanitation, and control of contamination risks.	C
c) Only potable water that meets SLS 614 standards must be used to avoid contamination and ensure sustainable water practices.	C
d) All food contact surfaces must be regularly sanitized and monitored for microbial contamination to prevent waste and product loss.	C
e) Non-compliant products must be identified, isolated, in demarcated area and discarded or reworked (where applicable), with root cause analysis conducted, and corrective actions documented and reported.	C
f) Non-destructive testing methods must be prioritized to ensure waste is minimized.	C

9.2 Process Quality Requirements	
a) Food additives shall comply with the criteria set out in the Food (Additives - General) Regulations 2019, which govern the use, safety, and labeling of food additives in Sri Lanka.	M
b) Processing must be optimized to minimize energy use and reduce defects.	C
c) Moisture content must be carefully controlled to reduce spoilage and food waste (as per the relevant SLS standards and Sri Lankan Regulations).	C
d) Forward and Backward traceability must be maintained to trace the finished product back to the invoice.	C
e) For food products, waste should be reduced by at least 5% and packaging waste should be maintained at less than 5% of total production to ensure minimal environmental impact and efficient resource utilization.	NC
f) All packaged products must be 100% sealed to ensure product quality, hygiene, and prevent contamination during transportation and storage.	C
Phase 10: Distribution	
10.1 Local Transportation	
a) Transport costs should be recorded separately, and a monthly ratio of transport cost to kilograms handled should be calculated. Targets should be set using this data to support continuous yearly improvement, in order to improve efficiency and reduce costs.	NC
b) Vehicle load efficiency must be maximized to reduce the number of trips and minimize fuel consumption.	C
c) The shortest and most efficient routes must be used to reduce travel time, emissions, and environmental impact.	C
d) Recyclable pallets and boxes must be used during transportation, and they must be cleaned and sanitized before use.	C
Phase 11: Occupational Health and Safety	
a) There shall be not any public complain noise/ bad odour/ discharges/ emissions etc.	M
b) Indoor air quality: Emissions to air shall not be exceeded the stipulated limits set by the Central Environmental Authority (CEA) or relevant regulatory bodies to ensure a safe factory atmosphere.	M
c) Effective dust and airborne particle control measures shall be implemented to minimize contamination and ensure food safety.	M
d) Noise levels shall be below the threshold limits set by national or international noise regulations, ensuring a safe working environment for employees.	M

e) An Occupational Health and Safety management system such as ISO 45001:2018 or any other relevant safety standards must be implemented. If not, safety audits must be conducted in predetermined intervals.	C
f) A fire safety management plan must be implemented.	C
g) All the employees in organization must be provided with appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to minimize exposure to workplace hazards, including chemical, biological, and physical risks	C
Phase 12: Ethical & Social Responsibility Compliance	
12.1 Ethical Business Practices	
a) Throughout the food value chain, fair labor practices shall be ensured, including compliance with national labor laws, providing decent/ fair wages, and protecting workers' rights. This includes non-discrimination, freedom of association, and the prohibition of forced or child labor.	M
b) Throughout the food value chain, gender equality must be promoted by providing equal employment opportunities and ensuring that women are treated fairly in terms of wages, training, and advancement opportunities.	C
c) Throughout the food value chain, support for community development and contribution to social causes should be ensured through donations, volunteering, or other means of support. Ethical conduct should be promoted beyond the company to foster positive social impacts.	NC
d) Food products should be reformulated with less sugar, added fiber, or natural sweeteners to lower calorie content.	NC
e) The potential impacts of agricultural activities on local human rights—such as health, safety, and security—shall be assessed and minimized in accordance with Sri Lankan laws (e.g., National Environmental Act, Factories Ordinance).	M
f) Documented evidence of rights to use the land (e.g., ownership deeds, lease agreements, or court orders) shall be maintained as required under Sri Lankan land laws.	M
g) Conversion or use of land under traditional or customary tenure shall not be carried out without the agreement of all parties, and any unresolved land use claims under litigation shall be respected until resolved.	M
h) Accessible communication channels (written, telephone, or digital) shall be made available to local communities for submitting inquiries or complaints related to operations.	M
i) Where land has been relinquished by traditional land users, documented evidence of compensation and the free, prior, informed, and documented consent of the affected communities shall be maintained.	M

j) A transparent and inclusive grievance procedure shall be established to handle complaints from all stakeholders, ensuring that complaints are properly recorded and resolved in a timely manner.	M
Phase 13: Planning and Management	
a) Strong leadership must be established to ensure effective decision-making and direction in production processes.	C
b) Regular training must be provided to all employees on the following areas; • Food safety, hygiene practices, and sanitation to ensure a safe and clean environment for food processing • Reduction of workplace injuries and enhance safety standards • The correct use, maintenance, and disposal of PPE to ensure protection from workplace hazards • Allergen management, contamination risks, and prevention techniques to minimize cross-contact of allergens in food products • The environmental impact of processing, focusing on sustainable practices like waste reduction, water conservation, and eco-friendly disposal methods	C
c) Risks related to food safety, environmental impact, and operational efficiency must be identified, assessed, and documented.	C
d) Mitigation plans must be developed and implemented based on risk assessments, including safety protocols, emergency response plans, and waste management strategies.	C
e) The organization must be committed to continuous improvement of its Environmental and Social (E&S) performance through regular monitoring and evaluation processes.	C

Table 02: Sector specific requirements

Phase 14: Coconut and coconut-based food products	
a) Energy consumption in coconut oil extraction and desiccated coconut production must be minimized, particularly during drying, pressing, and refining processes.	C
b) Coconut shells, husks, and leaves must be reused or sold for recycling or repurposing for bioenergy, compost, or other products (e.g., coir).	C
Phase 15: Spices and spices-based food products	
a) Carrier oils or solvents used in the preparation of spice oils must be food-grade. Preference must be given to environmentally benign options with lower environmental impact (e.g., low VOC emissions, low toxicity, and high biodegradability).	C
Phase 16: Coffee and coffee-based food products	
a) Brewing methods that minimize energy and water use (e.g., manual brewers over electric) must be encouraged.	NC
b) Composting of used coffee grounds and eco-friendly disposal of packaging must be promoted.	C
Phase 17: Cereal and Pulses and their products	
a) Waste from processing (husks, broken grains, bran) must be sold for recycling or repurposing (e.g., animal feed, compost).	C
Phase 18: Fruits and Vegetables and their products	
a) By-products (e.g., peels, seeds, pulps, trimmings) must be used for the production of animal feed, compost, or bioenergy etc. in a separate place from the food manufacturing premises.	C
b) Cold chain (for frozen or fresh-cut produce) must be energy-efficient and well-maintained.	C

Table 2: Optional Requirements

01. Export Criteria	
a) A Health Certificate shall be obtained from the relevant food safety authority to ensure that food products meet international standards for hygiene, safety, and ingredient compliance, and any other requirements of the importing country shall also be applicable.	M
b) Packaging materials shall comply with the destination country's regulations to prevent contamination, maintain product integrity, and ensure proper labeling requirements are met.	M
c) Testing parameters must be aligned with the specific requirements of the importing country, as regulations on ingredients, additives, and contaminants may vary.	C
d) The exporting company shall be registered with the appropriate food regulatory authority (e.g., Food Control Administration Unit - FCAU) and the required health certificates shall be obtained batch wise or consignment wise.	M
02. Specific Requirements for Children	
a) Baby food products shall be free from detectable pesticide residues (0.01 mg/kg), in accordance with National and International regulations. The use of highly toxic pesticides in raw material production shall be strictly prohibited.	M
b) Packaging shall be designed to prevent the migration of harmful substances into the product, in compliance with Food (Packaging Materials and Articles) Regulation 2010. The use of bisphenol A (BPA) and phthalates in baby food packaging shall be strictly prohibited.	M
c) Labels shall be specified with the appropriate age for consumption, following FAO/WHO guidelines.	M
d) All ingredients shall be clean, safe, and of high quality, in compliance with Codex CXS 73-1981. Ionizing radiation treatment shall not be permitted.	M
e) Baby food products shall be designed to match infants' evolving chewing abilities. Labels shall clearly indicate the recommended age range for consumption, as per the national regulations.	M
03. Specific Requirements for Patients	
a) Food products for patients shall be following National Regulations, with controlled levels of sugar, sodium, and unhealthy fats.	M
b) Packaging shall be BPA-free and phthalate-free, following EU regulations, with clear labels on storage, expiry, and dietary suitability.	M
c) All medical-purpose food shall be adhered to the regulations of National Medicines Regulatory Authority (NMRA).	M