Guidelines [integral]

A. LABOUR AND SOCIAL STANDARDS

The most important and indispensable basis for labour and social standards are the

Universal Declaration of Human Rights
Covenant on civil and political rights
Covenant on economic, social and cultural rights
Relevant core ILO Labour Conventions:

- Right to freedom of association and collective bargaining (Nos 87 + 98 + 135)
- Anti-discrimination and equal remuneration (Nos 100 + 111)
- Against forced labour and child labour (Nos 29 + 105 + 138)
- Labour and working conditions (Nos 110 + 155 + 170)

1. Labour and Working Standards

1.1 The rights of all employees to form and join trade unions and to bargain collectively shall be recognised (ILO Conventions 87 and 98). Workers' Representatives[1] shall not be subject to discrimination and shall have access to all workplaces necessary to enable them to carry out their representation functions. (ILO Convention 135).

1.2 Employees shall have access to jobs and training on equal terms, irrespective of gender, age, ethnic origin, colour, marital status, sexual orientation, political opinion, religion or social origin (ILO Conventions 100 and 111). In cooperation with the Workers' Representatives, the Management is required to establish and implement a coherent policy with regard to labour and social issues.

1.3 All employees must have a legally valid written contract of employment signed by employees and employers, which safeguards them from loss of pay in the case of illness, disability and accident. In case of dissolution of the contract, the period of notice must be identical for employer and employee. The employee must be provided with a copy of the contract. For recruitment, pregnancy and genetic tests are not allowed.

1.4 These provisions also apply to temporary, part-time, casual and subcontracted workers, for whom ILO Conventions 110 and 170 must also be observed. Time-limited contracts and sub contraction are permitted only during peak periods and in the case of special tasks. Permanent employees and temporary workers must also be included in a provident or pension fund.

1.5 Complaints regarding labour and working conditions should be forwarded to the Workers' Representatives or to an external independent body accepted by all parties involved.

1.6 Wages and benefits paid for a standard working week shall meet at least legal or industry minimum and always be sufficient to meet basic needs of workers and their families and to provide some discretionary income. ILO conventions, in particular No 110 art. 24, 26, 27, shall be observed.

1.7 The wage must be paid in cash to the employees, at the agreed time and in full. The associated information must be supplied to the employees in detail and in a readily understandable form.

1.8 Working hours, overtime and paid leave must comply with applicable law and industry standards.
In any event, workers shall not be required to work in excess of 48 hours per week on a regular basis. Overtime shall be voluntary, not exceed 12 hours per week, not be demanded on a regular basis and always be compensated at a premium rate. Agreed and legally stipulated midday and work breaks must be observed. Workers should have at least 24 consecutive hours of rest per week and at least 3 weeks of paid leave per year.

1.9 There shall be no use of child labour. No worker under the age of 15 years or under the compulsory school-leaving age, whichever is higher, shall be engaged. Children under 18 shall not work at night and in hazardous conditions (ILO convention 138). Adequate transitional economic assistance and appropriate educational opportunities shall be provided to any replaced child worker.

1.10 There shall be no forced labour, included bonded or involuntary prison labour (ILO Conventions 29 and 105), nor shall workers be required to lodge "deposits" or their identity papers with their employer.

1.11 Employees must be protected from strain due to excessive and permanent work stress. Harassment at the workplace and mental and physical repression, particularly of female workers, must be strictly prevented.

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[1] Throughout this text, when the term "Workers' Representatives" is used, it refers to Article 3 of the ILO Workers' Representatives Convention, 1971 (No 135).

2. Occupational Safety and Health

2.1 Together with the Workers' Representatives, the Management shall establish a coherent policy for Occupational Safety, Health and Working Environment, which conforms to ILO Convention No 155 art. 4 and 11 and the international accepted health and safety standards, which cover, also, the handling of pesticides and chemicals.

2.2 Employees and their organisations must be consulted, informed and trained on health and safety matters. Information and training courses must be held periodically. New employees, including temporary and subcontracted workers, must be specially informed and instructed on the risks at the workplace.

2.3 All work in the flower farm must be organised in such a way as not to endanger the safety and health of the employees. High-risk jobs and areas (e.g. spraying and handling pesticides, construction and maintenance work) must be specially indicated and supervised. Increased risk and danger areas and operations must be recorded in a Risk Register.

2.4 An appointed or nominated Safety Officer in cooperation with the Workers' Representatives shall keep a check on the observance of the labour and safety regulations and evaluate suggestions for improvements and complaints.

2.5 Medical Care and Prevention

2.5.1 Employees are to be provided free of charge with regular medical care and advice within the place of work at fixed times during working hours. The regular examinations and check-ups shall be carried out by a physician.

2.5.2. Complete, continuously updated documentation and statistics are to be kept with regard to sickness, accidents and absences from work.

2.5.3. First aid facilities should be available at all operating sites where at least two persons trained in first aid procedure should be present.

2.5.4. For emergencies and accidents, rapid medical attention and an appropriate first aid organisation on site must be assured. The company has to arrange transport to the nearest hospital when necessary.

2.6 Sanitary Infrastructure

2.6.1. The flower farm must have a suitable, clean, social and sanitary infrastructure which conforms to the requirements of its employees and is adequate to their numbers.

2.6.2. Suitable rest rooms and canteen with cooking, eating and storage facilities for food and drinks strictly separated from the working area have to be provided by the company.

2.6.3. Clean drinking water must be available also during working hours, within a reachable distance from the working place.

2.6.4. Changing rooms with sufficient washing facilities, showers and clean toilets must be available.

2.6.5. The company must supply its employees, free of charge, with suitable clean working clothes which are to be washed by the company in order to avoid contamination.

3. Social Issues

3.1 Companies shall ensure that workers are included in an appropriate state or private social security scheme, covering especially invalidity, injury, maternity and old-age benefit.

3.2 The company shall promote the development of its employees with educational programmes in the social and cultural field.

3.3 Special measures must be taken to avoid reproductive health risks. In particular, pregnant women may only perform work which is appropriate to their physical capacity and which excludes contact with pesticides and chemicals.

3.4 A special clean rest room must be provided for pregnant women and nursing mothers, unless no other possibility exists near by the flower farm.

3.5 Female employees shall be entitled to maternity leave of at least 3 months on full pay. The employee will not incur any loss of privilege on account of such a leave.

3.6 If the company provides the workers with housing, this must comply with ILO convention No 110, art. 85 - 88. The structural standard and the infrastructure must be such as to provide healthy and restful

living conditions. The company should motivate and support the workers to have their own vegetable gardens.

3.7 The company shall pay special attention to sufficient and healthy nutrition of the workers and its families. Special subsidies for the food supply of the workers are encouraged in the programme to fulfil the human right to food. Where food is served in a canteen, the diet should be nutritious and varied. When workers are living on the farm free vegetable gardens with sufficient irrigation should be offered to the workers families.

3.8 The company should assume responsibility for the education of the children of the workers. Support of creche facilities inside or outside the compound is highly recommended. In case that the workers and their families are living on the farm either schooling in the farm or transport to the next school has to be provided.

3.9 Transport if required to and from the farm has to be provided by the company, alternatively an allowance has to be paid.

3.10 The company shall support and encourage social and cultural projects in cooperation with the surrounding communities.

B. USE OF PESTICIDES AND CHEMICALS

4. Pesticides

4.1 Recording and documentation of all pesticide applications must be done, indicating date and time, crop and pest/disease and information on the pesticide used, active ingredient, quantity and dosage rate. At the end of every month, the total consumption of pesticides used per crop has to be compiled and calculated as kg active material per hectare (see Annexe V).

4.2 The most appropriate combination of organic, cultural, mechanical and chemical methods shall be used. Organic methods should replace pesticide treatment wherever possible. Pesticides have to be applied only in a selective manner in accordance with the crop damage threshold. Pest or disease incidence and pressure shall be kept low.

4.3 Pesticides banned or not registered in the country are not allowed to be used. Also, persistent pesticides (e.g. chlorinated hydrocarbons), soil fumigants and herbicides must be strictly avoided. Highly toxic WHO I - products (CBI/COLEACP negative list (Annex II) and/or carcinogenic/mutagenic pesticides (EPA A+B, Annex III) should be replaced wherever possible by lower toxic ones.

4.4 Post-harvest treatment of the flowers is only permitted with non-toxic chemicals. Silver Thiosulfate is not allowed to be used.

4.5 All spray operators must be thoroughly instructed and trained by a recognised institution or by specialists on the safe application and the risks of pesticides and chemicals.

4.6 Spray operators are not allowed to spray for more than 4 hours per day. Due to the high risk and exposure to toxic products, a job rotation scheme has to be implemented. Recommended is 1 week spraying and 2 weeks non-spraying.

4.7 Pesticide application in the greenhouses is strictly forbidden, as long as unprotected workers are inside. Warning signs are required at each entrance of the areas sprayed, indicating the time and date when entry is safe.

After spraying pesticides the following **re-entry intervals** must be strictly observed.

- Highly toxic pesticides (WHO Tox I) and carcinogenics (EPA A+B): 24 hours
- Toxic pesticides (WHO Tox II) : 12 hours
- Less toxic pesticides (WHO Tox III+IV) 6 hours

In any case, the foliage has to be completely dry before harvesting.

4.8 Suitable and properly calibrated spray equipment must be used for the application of pesticides. Equipment must receive regular maintenance and should be cleaned and tested after each application.

4.9 All spray operators must wear suitable and intact personal protective equipment and clothing (see Annex IV) provided by the company. After spraying, the operators have to rinse off all equipment and to wash themselves thoroughly. Respirators with suitable filters have to be controlled and changed regularly. A checklist has to be used for control.

4.10 For the workers in the cultivation, harvesting and finishing sections the company shall provide free of charge suitable protective clothing appropriate for the task (Annex IV). Eating, drinking and smoking in the working areas have to be strictly forbidden.

4.11 Personnel working in the spraying, mixing storing and handling of pesticides must be medically examined **every 3 months** (including cholinesterase-test).
Workers in the cultivation, harvesting and finishing sections should be medically examined **once a year** and at the beginning and end of their employment. The findings must be communicated to the persons in a readily understandable form. A complete documentary record of such examinations must be kept.

4.12 Pesticides and chemicals must be stored in lockable, well-ventilated rooms, which conform to the safety regulations (clean, cool, dry, no drain, fire protection, original containers). A supervisor responsible for the pesticide and chemical store has to be nominated. Only authorised personnel should have access to the store who are instructed in handling pesticides and dealing with spillage.

4.13 All products and packages must be clearly labelled and stored in the original container. Highly toxic and inflammable pesticides and chemicals should be stored separately. The inventory, with a record of all incoming and outgoing pesticides and chemicals, must be documented (stock list, inventory records) and continuously updated.

4.14 Dispensing and mixing pesticides and chemicals has to be done in a separate, well-ventilated room or area with accurate and clean measuring equipment. A spill-containment trough not draining to the sewer must be installed.

4.15 On entering the service of the company and on regular intervals (at least every 6 months), all workers must be informed about the risks and safety measures relating to the pesticides and chemicals used in the farm. This also applies to temporary and subcontracted workers.

4.16 The safety instructions, re-entry intervals and hygiene recommendations should be displayed clearly visible in the workplaces.

5. Chemical Fertilizer and Chemicals

5.1 Recording and documentation of all fertilizer and chemical application must be done, giving date and time, crop, quantity and dosage rate (see Annex V).

5.2 Chemical fertilizers should be applied only selectively on the basis of careful observation of the crop together with soil and (periodical) leaf analysis. The input should be optimally adapted to the needs of the plants.

5.3 Losses and drainage of the fertilizers through leaching into the soil should be kept at a minimum. Nitrogen and water supply should only cover the flowers' need to growth.

5.4 Wherever possible, low toxic and biodegradable chemicals have to be used.
Formaldehyde as a disinfectant is not allowed.

5.5 Organic fertilizer and composted organic waste should be used for the improvement and care of the soil in the plantations in order to reduce chemical fertilizer input.

C. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION STANDARDS

6. Sustainable Practice

6.1 A programme has to be elaborated by the company for conserving the environment and the sustainable use of natural resources (water, soil, air). Pollution of soil, water and air with pesticides, fertilizers, chemicals and waste must be avoided wherever possible.

6.2 A specially appointed and instructed environmental protection officer shall evaluate suggestions for improvements and keep check on compliance with the regulations, in cooperation with the Workers' Representatives.

6.3 Workers are to be informed on the envisaged measures and instructions, in order to motivate them to assisting implementation thereof.

6.4 Special measures have to be taken to protect drinking water sources, ground water, surface water, rivers, dikes and lakes have to be taken.

6.5 Special attention must be given to the protection of the fauna and flora inside the farm and the surrounding areas.

7. Water and Energy

7.1 For the supply of irrigation water the company must implement a water management system which minimizes water consumption and conserves ground and surface water.

7.2 The consumption of water and energy has to be recorded and documented for the various greenhouses and sectors.

7.3 Water irrigation must be done with methods and systems minimizing water consumption as far as possible (e.g. drip irrigation, water application direct to the root zone etc.) and by using adequate measuring methods (tensiometers etc.).

7.4 Where possible rainwater should be collected in water reservoirs of adequate capacity. The lowering of the ground water level or any other negative effect on the availability and quality of drinking and irrigation water for the surrounding communities and farmers must be avoided.

7.5 The consumption of energy (electricity, heating oil, natural gas) must be kept at a minimum. Wherever possible renewable energy should be used.

8. Waste and Pollution Reduction

8.1 Waste and pollution reduction must be given high priority. A proper waste management system for the separation and disposal of waste must be established in the company. Waste deposit must conform to the requirements of the law. Monitoring must be carried out by a properly instructed supervisor.

8.2 Organic waste, particularly flower waste material, should be composted in an appropriate manner and reused on the farm. It is strictly forbidden to feed animals with pesticide-contaminated material (flower foliage etc.)

8.3 Waste of all kinds, especially pesticide, fertilizer and chemical residues, must not be disposed of into the soil, drains and watercourses. Pesticide residues should be diluted (e.g. 1:10) and sprayed under the crops inside the greenhouses.

8.4 Empty pesticide or chemical containers or drums must be triple rinsed at a safe place before returning to the supplier. If returning is not possible, the containers should be disposed off by incineration or burial, taking all precautions and strictly controlled.

8.5 The re-use of pesticide and chemical containers and drums for drinking water or food storage is strictly prohibited.

8.6 Paper, plastic, metal, wood and other waste material are to be separated and wherever possible recycled.

8.7 All wastewater, especially those contaminated with pesticides and/or chemicals have to be specially treated (e.g. setting basins, carbon filters, chemical detoxification with sodium-hypochloride NaOCl) before safe disposal in accordance with the law.

8.8 Air pollution and unpleasant smells due to pesticide or chemical application or incineration in the open air near housings must be strictly avoided.

9. Environment and Residential Areas

9.1 The company should make efforts to protect the environment and the residential areas inside and surrounding the farm together with their inhabitants from harmful effects and nuisance.

9.2 To protect the surroundings and to encourage wildlife, trees and bushes should be planted especially at the farm's boundaries.

9.3 A safety distance of not less than 100 meters from the residential areas and houses to the greenhouses or pesticide application areas must be maintained.

9.4 Expansion of the farm, building alterations, supply of water, waste disposal and other environmentally relevant measures must conform to the law and the existing zoning/building master plan of the regional and/or local authorities.

9.5 Within its capacity the company shall support the environmental and infrastructure projects of the local and regional authorities, which improves the situation of the workers (e.g. drinking water supply, roads, (re)forestation, sewage treatment, transportation, community infrastructure etc.).

These Guidelines will be revised at regular intervals (about every 2 years), according to new scientific research and to practical experiences. Therefore, we would like to invite all interested persons and institutions to send in comments, critical remarks and suggestions on these Guidelines.