



EU BEET SUGAR
SUSTAINABILITY
PARTNERSHIP



SUSTAINABILITY REVIEW

CHALLENGES & ACHIEVEMENTS



OUR IMPACTS AS A SECTOR

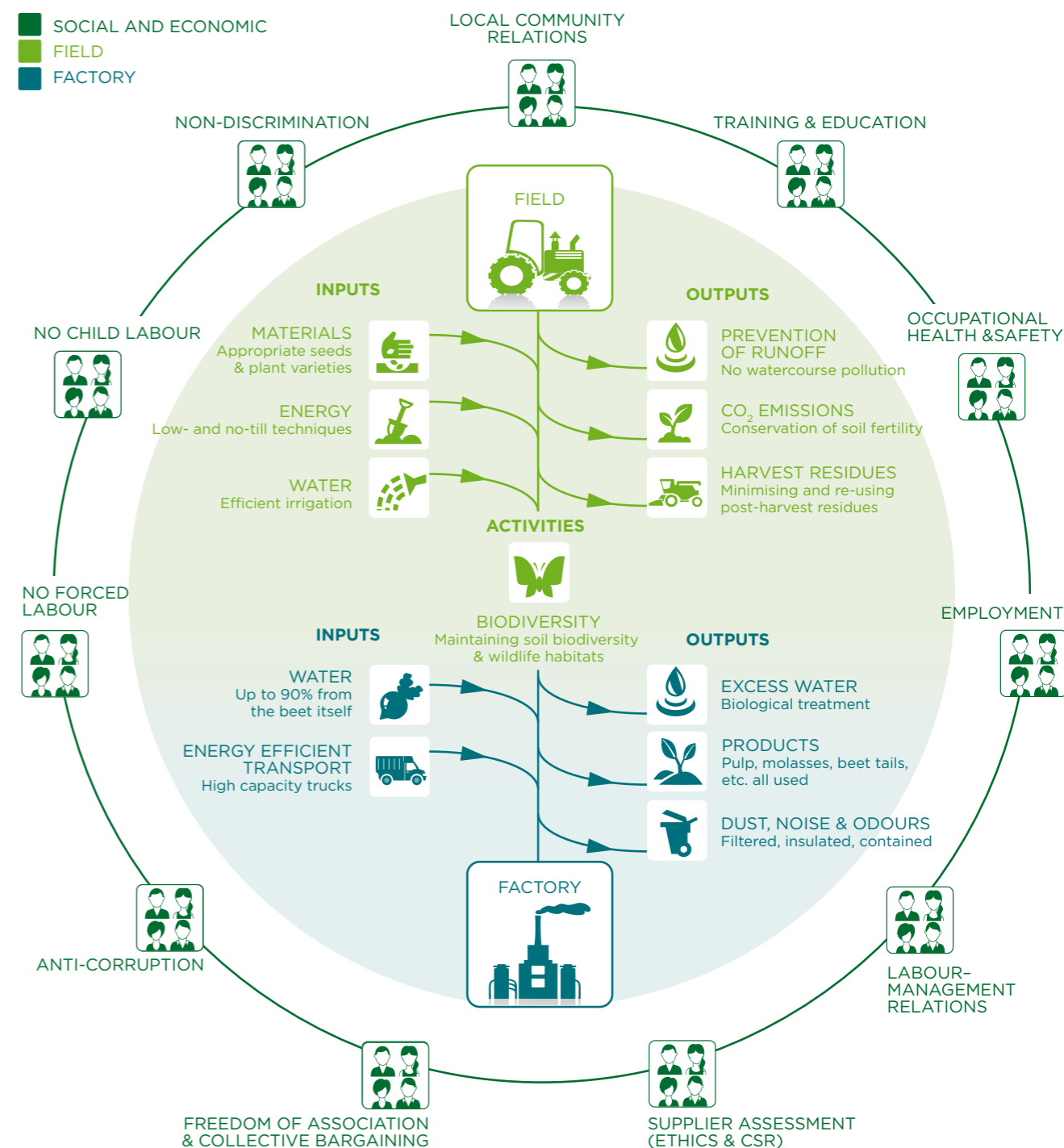
Meeting society’s demands for products and livelihoods with improved sustainability performance requires a careful and honest description and evaluation of the environmental and social impacts they create. What goes into making products, what processes are carried out, and what comes out at all stages along the way together show what is most important – both challenges and achievements – and where efforts must be made to improve.

In this document we explore how we understand our sector’s most important sustainability issues, and how our sector, from farmers to factories, prioritises our efforts to improve our impacts and respond to our stakeholders’ concerns.

Like other sectors, we create impacts across the economic, social and environmental spheres. Our impacts occur across our value chain, from field to shop.

OUR IMPACTS

SUSTAINABILITY FROM FIELD TO FACTORY



MATERIALITY IN ACTION

How do the material impacts occur in sugar beet cultivation and sugar production, and what is their significance? An overview of what we manage and how we manage it:

MATERIALS	
TOPIC	SIGNIFICANCE
Plant protection	Plant protection products play a vital role in ensuring the health and viability of crops. But they must be used carefully, by properly trained staff under controlled and regulated circumstances, together with non-chemical controls wherever possible. Using the right varieties and seeds for the prevailing conditions means our farmers can optimise chemical protection in practice, limiting it to an essential minimum.
Fuels, chemicals and lubricants	Some of the materials we use in agricultural machinery and in the factory are hazardous, but essential to the performance and maintenance of our operations. There are strict requirements in place to document the materials we have and keep in storage, and their associated hazards, and to protect substances in storage. Staff in charge of handling these substances receive training on how to load, unload, store and transport such products.

ENERGY	
TOPIC	SIGNIFICANCE
Variety & seed selection	Choosing the most suitable variety and seed material provides a degree of resistance to certain pests and diseases, thus helping reduce dependency on plant protection products. It also ensures the beet variety is suited to the local conditions and thus likely to thrive with fewer inputs throughout its life cycle.
Fertilizers and plant protection products	We work to optimise the use of chemical inputs on crops in order to reduce their negative impacts. Fertilisers and plant protection products require significant energy to produce, and thus contain 'embodied carbon', which contributes to sugar beet's carbon footprint.
Reducing energy consumption	We limit energy use by reducing tillage where possible, maintaining soil organic matter content, use of combined heat and power systems in factories, heat recovery and proper use of machinery and equipment. Some factories use renewable biogas fuel from on-site wastewater treatment or fermentation to power operations. Better pressing techniques improve the energy efficiency of sugar production by cutting down on the heat required for evaporation.

WATER	
TOPIC	SIGNIFICANCE
Preventing contamination	Runoff from fields – of topsoil, silt, fertiliser or plant protection chemicals – can contaminate local water courses. We have improved how chemicals are applied, and are working to prevent erosion to help limit runoff.
Efficient use of water	Sugar beet may, in certain circumstances and countries, require irrigation, depending on the growing conditions throughout the season. Efficient use of irrigation – done responsibly and in compliance with the law – is key to ensuring the best crop performance with the minimum use of water. In the factory, we recycle process water, capture condensates and reuse water from pulp pressing back into our processes.

BIODIVERSITY	
TOPIC	SIGNIFICANCE
Soil fertility	Keeping the soil in good condition is vital to ensure crops can continue to be grown into the future. Sugar beet is grown in rotation with other crops, thus mitigating the depletion of nutrients and the accumulation of crop-specific pests and diseases. We advocate wherever possible the use of mulch, reduced tilling, use of intermediate cover crops and green manure, which can all help promote soil biodiversity and fertility.
Maintaining organic matter	We boost soil fertility by returning crop residues (such as beet foliage) to the soil, application of farmyard manure and compost, and planting of intermediate beneficial crops.
Field biodiversity	The local environment in which crops are grown is essential for wildlife and biodiversity. Good practices in sugar beet cultivation such as sowing into mulch, the maintenance of hedges, ponds, ditches and trees, as well as using field margins, provide much-needed habitat for many species.



EMISSIONS	
TOPIC	SIGNIFICANCE
Prevention of runoff to water courses	Plant nutrients are vital for healthy growth of the crop, but can cause contamination of nearby water courses. We manage this through the establishment of buffer strips around fields and/or water courses, and appropriate application of manure, mineral fertiliser or other plant nutrients.
Prevention of nitrate leaching	Leaching of nitrates – found in both natural and mineral fertilisers – can cause contamination of drinking water. It can also starve water bodies of oxygen through eutrophication. We minimise leaching through careful management of the right plant nutrition products to the soil’s structure and nutrient makeup, growing intermediate crops to ‘fix’ nitrogen in the soil, and carefully monitoring nutrient levels in the soil.
CO ₂ Emissions	Reducing energy consumption – through a wide variety of efficient methods – helps us limit direct CO ₂ emissions from beet cultivation and processing. In addition, soil provides essential carbon sinks, in which atmospheric CO ₂ is locked away. We work to protect these by carefully assessing and managing soil nutrient levels, and keeping soil loss during harvesting to a minimum.
Water treatment	In the factory, we use biological water treatment methods to purify excess water so it can be returned to the environment without causing harm. We also monitor water quality, sewerage pipes and flood risks on-site to prevent accidental releases to the environment.



WASTE	
TOPIC	SIGNIFICANCE
Limiting crop losses	The best harvesting and storage methods help us minimise losses of sugar beet crops, and maximise yields from the soil, water and other inputs.
Using outputs as valuable products	A range of valuable co-products arises from sugar beet harvesting and processing. All of these are used to either improve soil structure and fertility, as livestock feed, to produce biofuels or for other useful applications. For example, soil can be returned directly to fields; beet pulp is prized as high-quality animal feed; and the products of juice purification yield useful, mineral-rich soil amendments.




NOISE, ODOUR & DUST	
TOPIC	SIGNIFICANCE
Dust in flue gases	We use cloth filters and other systems to retain dust particles inside boiler houses and pulp dryers. We thus prevent dust particles from being released into the air, where they can lead to respiratory problems.
Prevention of odours	We prevent odour emissions by managing the beet washing system and keeping plant matter out of the wash water. We also monitor the quality of process water and use vents and chimneys to prevent bad odours from being released.
Noise	Where factories are located near housing, we take steps to reduce excessive noise, such as improving insulation, and installing noise barriers around the outside of factories.



TRANSPORT	
TOPIC	SIGNIFICANCE
Energy efficient beet transport	We use trucks with a high loading capacity and a precise schedule that optimises the distances travelled and keeps factories supplied efficiently. In addition, new EU lorry weight and load regulations mean our trucks can carry more material with fewer journeys, greatly reducing the carbon emissions associated with transport.
Vehicles and traffic management	As part of our efforts to improve the efficiency of road transport, we encourage the use of larger vehicles and transport of cleaner beet. We work to reduce the local impacts of our vehicles on the roads through the use of vehicle washing installations at factories, and the creation of special access routes that divert traffic from local roads.




SUPPLIER ASSESSMENT	
TOPIC	SIGNIFICANCE
CSR and business ethics	We support the inclusion of codes of conduct and similar provisions in contracts with major suppliers and contractors, as well as the selection of suppliers on the basis of their sustainability performance.




EMPLOYMENT	
TOPIC	SIGNIFICANCE
Contracts	Workers' rights are protected through the use of formal written documents that make their rights official. Contracts provide for equal protection of seasonal workers as compared with permanent staff.
Apprenticeships	We provide opportunities for young people to join the beet sugar industry through on-the-job training and facilitating their entry into the workforce. This helps strengthen our industry by providing a continuous pool of well-qualified candidates.
Living wage	Pay levels in the sugar industry meet or exceed local minimum wages. We make sure wages are enough to ensure that workers and their families have a decent standard of living as defined by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 23) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Tripartite Declaration.




LABOUR MANAGEMENT RELATIONS	
TOPIC	SIGNIFICANCE
Freedom of association and collective bargaining	These are core workforce rights enshrined in international law, and our industry is fully committed to protecting and upholding them in practice. We collaborate with workers and their representatives to set minimum standards for employment and working practices, support representation through legitimate unions, and prevent all forms of discrimination and retaliation. We also work to improve diversity and gender balance, and provide equal pay for equal work.
Freedom from retaliation	
Freedom from discrimination	
No forced labour and no child labour	Our farms and factories use no forced labour and no child labour, as provided for under the ILO core conventions and EU law.
Effective dialogue	We make sure there are open lines of communication between employers and employees, enabling workers to make their voices heard in practice. We also support an EU-wide social dialogue committee to enable joint projects such as the CSR Code of Conduct for the sugar industry. Farmers are part of a long-established partnership between representative organizations for both workers and employers in the EU farming sector




OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY	
TOPIC	SIGNIFICANCE
Investing in workplace health and safety measures	We continually work to improve safety methodologies, safety-related communication and the physical workspace to prevent accidents and reduce hazards.
Creating a culture of health and safety	Through training, management systems, open communications and target-setting, we work to increase and maintain a constant awareness of safety and health, and to empower people to take action in their jobs.
Training programmes	We make sure employees have the skills and knowledge to stay safe, reduce their personal exposure to hazards on the job, and manage stress.




TRAINING & EDUCATION	
TOPIC	SIGNIFICANCE
Job-related training	We provide ongoing training in the technical aspects of our workers' responsibilities, enabling them to do their jobs well. We also support vocational agricultural training for agricultural workers. Education and training serves a vital role in the social dialogue between employers and employees in the sector.



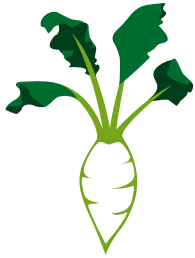
LOCAL COMMUNITY RELATIONS	
TOPIC	SIGNIFICANCE
Protecting communities' rights	We make sure grievance mechanisms are in place to give local communities affected by the company's operations the chance to raise their concerns and, once a problem is identified, to have those problems addressed.



ANTI-CORRUPTION	
TOPIC	SIGNIFICANCE
Countering fraud and corruption	We work to ensure our codes, guidelines and instructions to employees are used effectively to prevent involvement in fraudulent business activities or corruption of public officials.



PRODUCT RESPONSIBILITY	
TOPIC	SIGNIFICANCE
Transparency and communications	We are committed to providing full and transparent information to consumers and other stakeholders on our products and their impacts on people and the planet. We provide objective information, and invite dialogue and scrutiny about our products and practices.



EU BEET SUGAR SUSTAINABILITY PARTNERSHIP

-  SUGAR BEET AREA
-  BEET SUGAR FACTORY
-  BEET ETHANOL FACTORY
-  COMBINED BEET FACTORY AND CANE SUGAR REFINERY



CIBE, founded in 1927, represents 300,000 sugar beet growers from 16 EU countries (Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Sweden, the United Kingdom) plus Switzerland and Turkey.

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Founded in 1953, **CEFS** represents all European beet sugar manufacturers and cane sugar refiners, covering sugar production in 21 EU countries plus Switzerland.

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EFFAT results from the merger of two European federations IECF-IUF and EFAI in 2000. It represents 120 national trade unions from 35 countries, defending the interests of more than 2.6 million members in the food, agriculture and tourism sectors.

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