

Voluntary Sustainability Standards and BioTrade: Is there a connection?

Exploring the links between selected VSS and UNCTAD BioTrade Principles and Criteria

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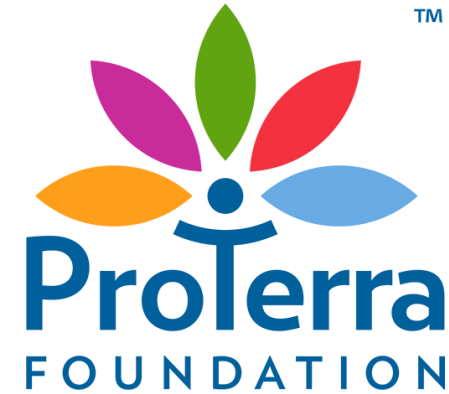
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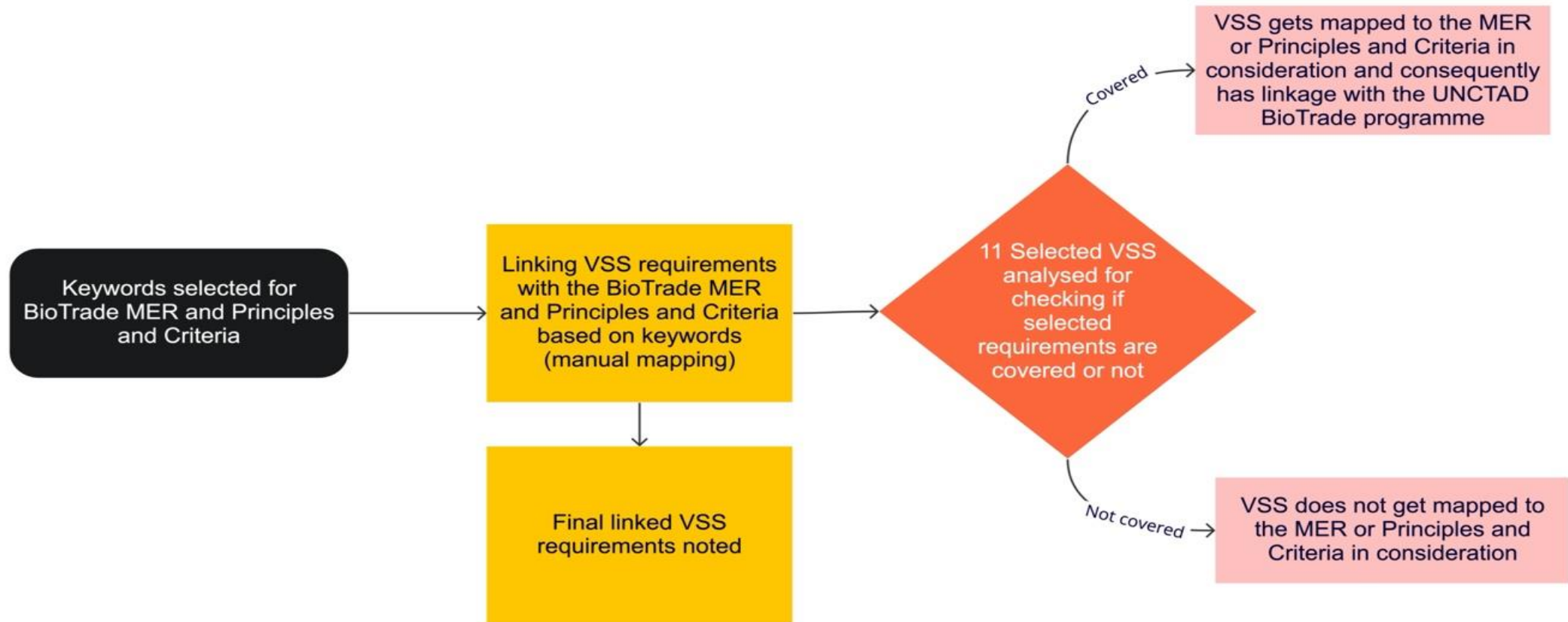


Methodology

VSS selected for this study



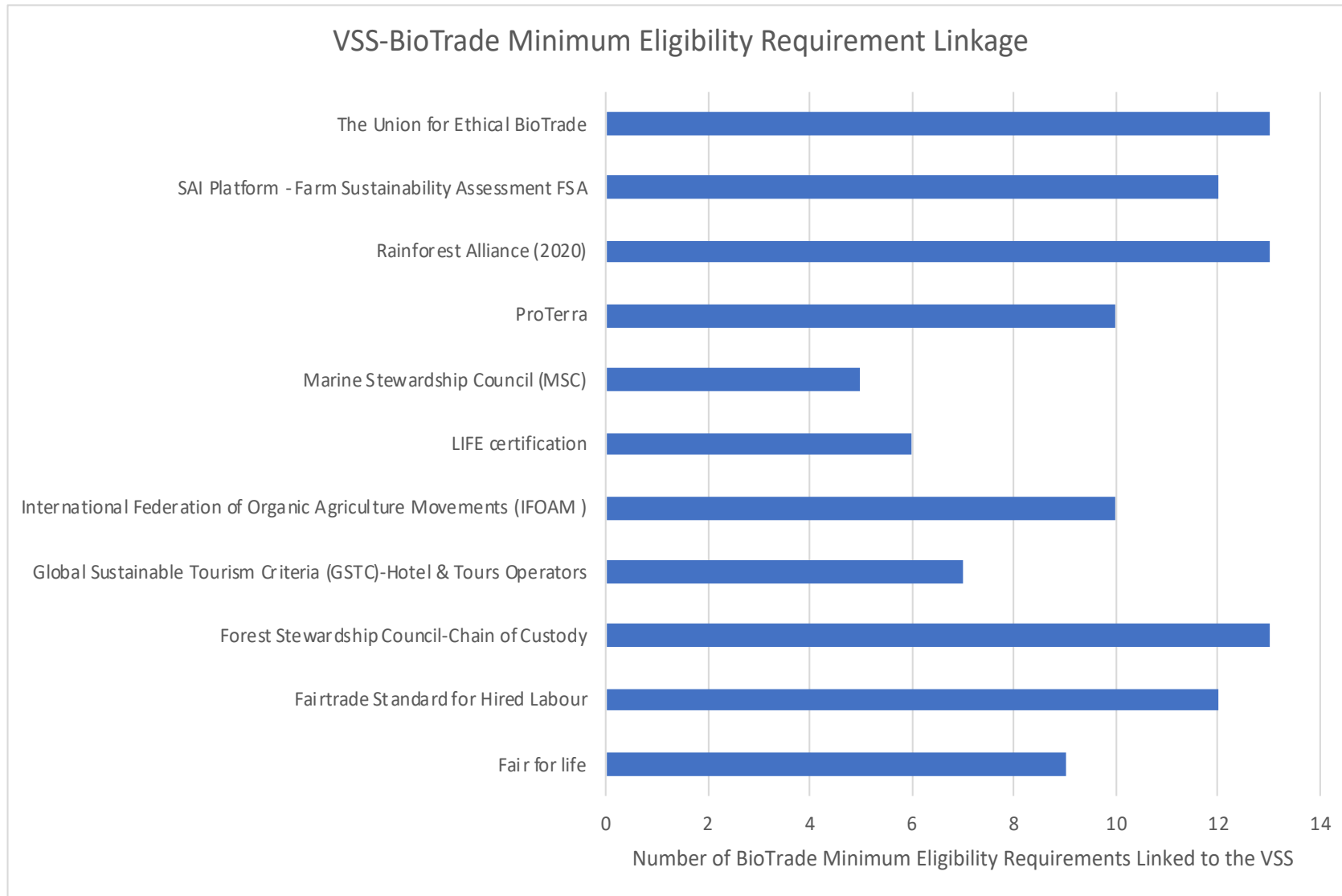
Understanding links



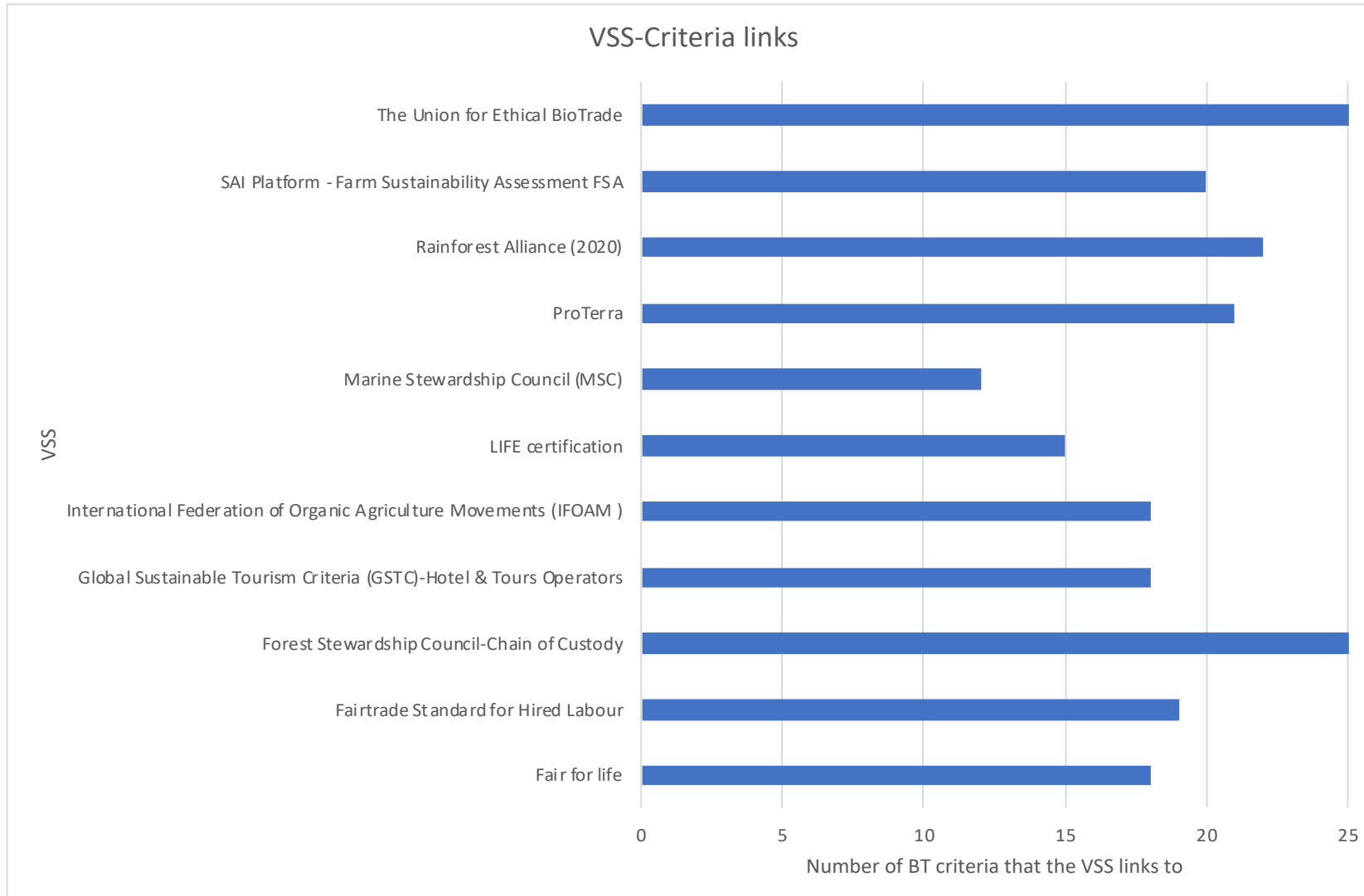


Results and Conclusions

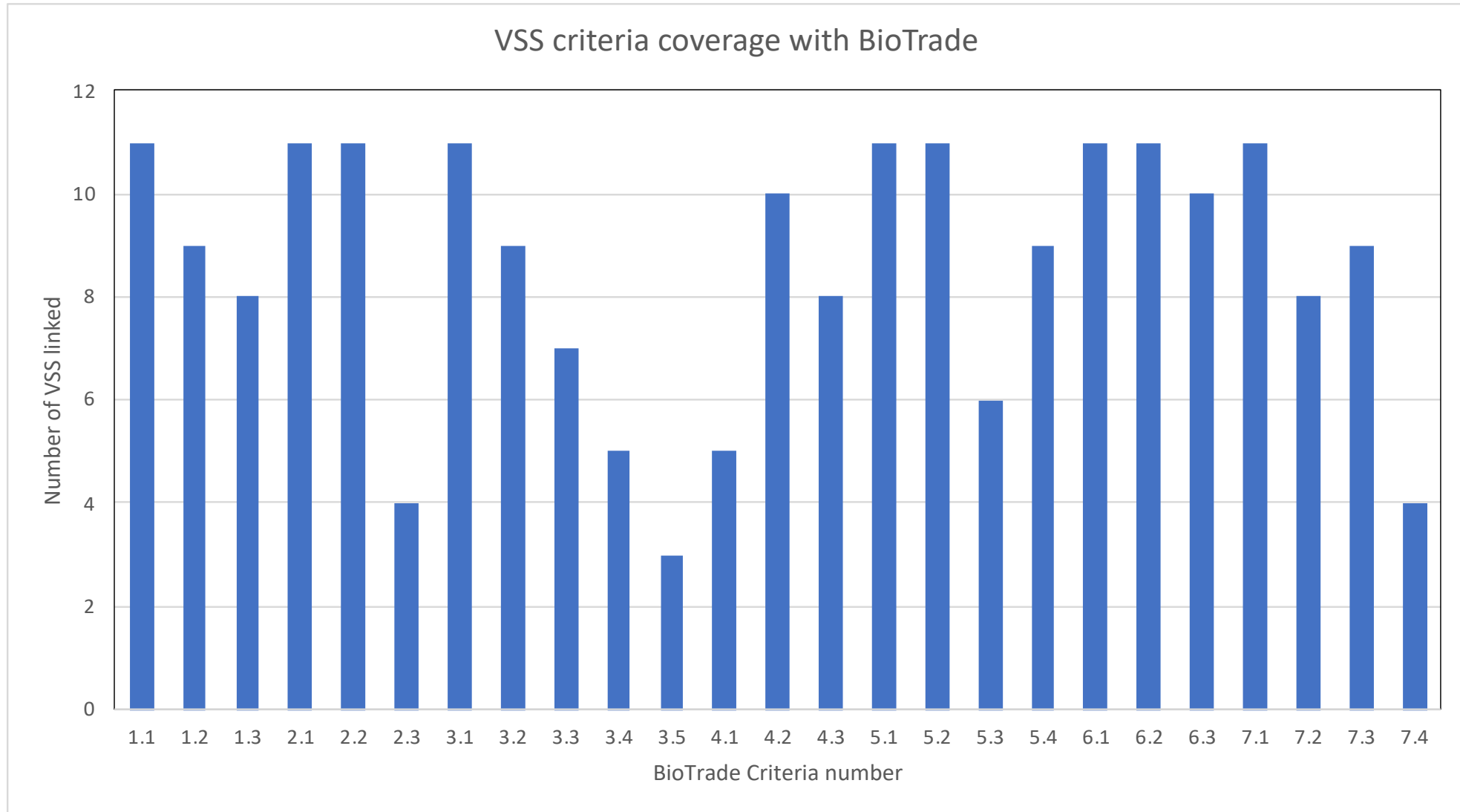
Linkage of selected set of VSS with BioTrade Minimum Eligibility Requirements



Linkage of selected set of VSS with BioTrade Principles and Criteria



Linkage of selected set of VSS with BioTrade Principles and Criteria



Potential areas where VSS can aid in BioTrade work

Minimum eligibility requirements

VSS, especially the ones active in the agriculture sector, can enable safeguarding ecosystems by mandating **non-GMO activities, restoration of high-biodiversity ecosystem, protection of endangered species, and protection of human rights.**

BioTrade Principle 1: Conservation of biodiversity

VSS can enable biodiversity conservation and protection by ensuring that **sustainable production practices** are in place, many of these practices are aimed towards various **components of biodiversity protection, restoration and conservation.** Further they allow to mainstream products that are in-line with this objective and are biodiversity-friendly, which also fosters this objective.

BioTrade Principle 2: Sustainable use of biodiversity

VSS have requirements that promote sustainable consumption, which foster sustainable use. Furthermore, through their **labels and other traceability/accountability mechanisms, they can be of use to BioTrade to ensure that there is no cross-contamination and that trade in biobased products is happening in a sustainable manner.**

Potential areas where VSS can aid in BioTrade work

BioTrade Principle 3: Fair and equitable sharing of benefits derived from the use of biodiversity

VSS, through promotion of sustainable production practices, and implementation of practices like **price premiums, create benefits for multiple stakeholders (including farmers) by enabling production efficiency and market access while improving global food security** (consumer and society benefits).

BioTrade Principle 5: Compliance with national and international legislation

Most **VSS requirements are already rooted in the existing laws and regulations** and the same can be observed from the linkages of 11 VSS selected for this report. This can help aid BioTrade and certifiers complying with VSS would also be furthering this BioTrade principle.

BioTrade Principle 6: Respect for the rights of actors involved in BioTrade activities

Many VSS mandate **compliance with fundamental worker rights, equality for all workers and provision of fair working conditions.**

Potential areas where VSS can aid in BioTrade work

BioTrade Principle 7: Clarity on right to use and access to natural resources

Many VSS incorporate requirements that call for **Free, Prior and Informed Consent of local communities**. This aligns with criteria in the BioTrade Principle 7.



Future research

Future research

- While the analysis in this report **captures the breadth of the VSS**, it does not cover the intensity of compliance, insofar as it **does not include the analysis of the degree of obligation of the VSS** requirements. It is important to analyze the linkage based on the degree of obligation in order to gain a better understanding of the linkage of the selected VSS with BioTrade. This is an area of research that can be explored further from the analysis presented in this report.
- Analysis done in this **report is based on the desktop research** on the requirements of the VSS vis-à-vis BioTrade P&C and **not on actual evidence on the ground**. This method has provided a snapshot of the actual and/or potential linkages between VSS do BioTrade. This cannot be and should not be considered a proxy for research done on the actual outcomes of VSS. To further strengthen this analysis going forward, the work being done by VSS must be supplemented by the impact reports available.
- The study focuses on a **selected sample set of VSS**, and more research is needed based on a larger sample set, to assess better the alignment of VSS and BioTrade, and identify mutually reinforcing opportunities.

Thank you!

