



Traceability System Guidelines of  
the 'Products of Quality' National  
Scheme (PQNS)





## **Traceability System Guidelines** *"Products of Quality" National Scheme*

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## 1. Scope

This Guideline defines the minimum requirements for a traceability system for the Value Chains of the products adhering to the Quality Regime.

The 'Products of Quality' National Quality Scheme, established in SL 427.90 targets agriculture value chains involved in the processing, packaging, storage, transport and distribution of agricultural and agro food products of animal and, or plant origin, the production of which consist of production and, or farming methods which are significantly higher than the minimum legal requirements with regards public, animal or plant health, animal welfare or environment protection and which final characteristics are also significantly higher than the minimum legal requirements.

The products adhering to the 'Products of Quality' National Quality Scheme will be identified with the common Logo as identified below:





## 2. Traceability Procedure

### 2.1 Approval of the Traceability system of the Agriculture Value Chain

Every Entity adhering to the PQNS shall be in possession of a traceability procedure.

The traceability system has to be in line with the principles laid down in ISO 22005/2007.

The traceability system needs to be submitted with the application form to the Competent Authority prior to adhering to the PQNS. Any changes or revisions to the traceability procedure needs to be communicated to the Competent Authority. Controls will be conducted according to the latest traceability system available at the Competent Authority.

### 2.2 Objectives of the Traceability Procedure of the Value Chain

The objective of the traceability system shall be that of documenting the story of the product, the origin of the material and the story of the process and flux of the materials, particularly:

- a) Ensure that, in case of a single product, the product originates from the parcel of the entity, or in case of an animal rearing entity from animal grown in an entity as indicated in the request for participation to the PQNS.
- b) Ensure that, in case of a collective application, the primary product/reared animals originate from an entity that have entered into a written agreement with the value chain and that they are in conformity with the PQNS standards;
- c) Ensure that, the PQNS product is processed/packed exclusively at entities adherent to the PQNS.
- d) Ensure that there is no mix up between products adhering to the PQNS and conventional products.





- e) Ensure that the final PQNS product is correctly identified with the registration number allocated for the use of the logo and the lot number.
- f) Allow the calculation of the balance between the primary product and the final identified with the lot number.

## 2.3 Applicability

The traceability procedure adopted by the single entity or collective entities adhering to the PQNS shall clearly define:

- a) The final product that the traceability system will be applied to
- b) The identification system and labelling of the product that will be commercialized.

## 2.4 The Value Chain

The Value Chain Traceability Procedure shall:

- a) Clearly define the depth of the value chain for which the traceability system will be applied to including the operators to whom the traceability system will be applied to.
- b) Define the list of entities that will be included in the PQNS.
- c) Describe the traceability system within the entity as from the first phase, that of planting or that of the birth of the animal till the sale of the PQNS finished product to the final consume.
- d) Register and manage the traceable elements of the value chain (eg. Agricultural entity, type of product, quantity, lots, outcomes, analysis etc).





## 2.5 Contractual Agreements

In the case of a collective application for a PQNS the agreement between the value chain shall include the commitment of every entity involved in the production of the PQNS product to respect the traceability system by making available all the necessary information.

## 2.6 Traceable Elements in the Value Chain

The traceability system adopted shall be computerised and shall allow the following information to be traced:

1. The agricultural entity producer of the primary product.
2. Total surface cultivated and/or no. of reared animals.
3. Production Capacity;
4. Quantity of the product eligible for packaging.
5. Quantity of finished product conforming to the PQNS.

The traceable elements shall be constituted by the activities/information that are identified and registered along the production process. Such information shall be identified and registered by activities/information that are identified and registered along the production process. This information shall be available at the entity adhering to the PQNS.





## **SINGLE ENTITY**

### **Production Phase – Traceable Elements**

- Type of Agricultural Production
- Details of Agriculture Production (VAT No, Address)
- Total area cultivated with products that will be certified
- Number and type of animals grown for the production of quality product
- Total quantity of Agricultural Product estimated to be produced according to the quality mark
- Production dates for the production of the crop/animals (register booklets for the production of Quality Products/Quality Herd Book)
- Transporter
- Lot number of the product and quantity (for sale or transferred for the second processing step)

### **Processing - Packing**

- Acceptance of the quality product
- Date of processing quantity of primary product processed.
- Lot number for the quantity processed
- Lot number for the finished product
- Packing date and packaging lot number
- Lot number and quantity of stocked product lots and quantity of the stored product
- Site of stocked product.
- Sale of finished product that is conform to the quality regime with a lot number and concession number.





## **ASSOCIATED FARMS/COMPANIES**

### **Production Phase – Traceable Elements**

- Detail of the farm adhering (VAT No., Address, etc) – a single file for all the farms adhering to the scheme
- Total area destined for the production of a quality product in accordance to the agreement.
- Number and Type of animals grown for the production of Quality Product
- List of Farmers and eventual processors/stockers/packers included into the agreement adherent to the quality scheme.
- Total quantity of Agricultural Product estimated to be produced according to the quality mark (quantitatively) in accordance to the agreement.
- Production dates for the production of the crop/animals (register booklets for the production of Quality Products/Quality Herd Book)
- Transport
- Quantity of product produced by different producers in accordance to the agreement.
- Lot number given.

### **Processing – Packing Phase**

- Transport Document (Fiscal Receipt/Proof)
- Date of when the Quality Product has been accepted by the processor
- Date and Lot processed and quantity
- Product lot number and quantity
- Packing date
- Lot packaging number and quantity
- Quantity and lot number of stocked product
- Identify storage site
- Sale of finished product conforming to the Quality Scheme with lot number and concession number
- N.B Transportation document of the finished quality product should tally with the production lot number and the concession number







### **3. Computerised Information Management System**

All the information deriving from the application of the traceability procedure shall be stored for at least 3 years and filed systematically in the IT system of the PQNS at the frequency which can vary according to the product in a way that it can guarantee traceability operation, control and surveillance by the competent authority.

The computerised traceability system that will be made available to the entities adhering to the PQNS shall manage all the data requested and will be supported by a manual for use and all the information to insert will be according to the type of the value chain.





#### **4. Proof of Traceability and Mass Balance**

Every entity or associated entity adhering to the PQNS must foresee periodical proof of traceability and relevant Mass Balance for products adhering to the PQNS.





## 5. Management of Non-Conformity and Returns

All the situations where traceability is not guaranteed in accordance to the terms and procedures established in the present guidelines shall represent a non-conformity.

The traceability system shall foresee procedures for the management of non-conformity and that of returns as to define:

1. The identification of the Product that is not in conformity to the requirements of the traceability system and to the requirements of the relevant Standard of Production;
2. The materials that are not in conformity with the set requirements;
3. The responsibility in accordance to the type of non-conformity and the examination of the situation of non-conformity and the decision to be taken.

The Traceability is an instrument that allows to support, trace and show the defined requirements defined in the relevant product specification.

The management of the product that does not conform shall undergo the following phases:

- Description of the non- conformity
- Responsibility of the decision of the non-conformity
- Treatment of the product that is not- conformant
- Destination of the N/C product
- Eventual corrective actions to eliminate the cause of non-conformity.

In the case where the traceability system compromises the entire traceability system, the Chief Supply Chain will be responsible for the collection of any information about the non-compliance which may occur at the level of each actor of the supply chain.





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One of the purposes of the chain traceability system is the ability to manage non-compliance:

- Tracing back the life of the product in order to identify the time when it is generated;
- If necessary, by performing the recall of similar products (eg. The entire lot) from the market in order to prevent the consumption.

As for the registration of individual non-compliance, it will use a simple management module where you can describe the non-compliance and corrective actions taken.





## 6. Internal Verification Inspections

The Traceability System shall undergo periodical verification inspections (audits) aiming at guaranteeing guarantees on the efficiency of the system itself.

The verification inspections should be, at least, conducted annually for every area/process/subject of the value chain. Verification can be more frequent according to the risks and importance of the sector and the results of previous inspections.

In the light of the verification inspections, the following activities shall be foreseen:

1. Ensure that the corrective actions and preventive actions have coherent conclusions and are effectively a stimulus for improvement;
2. Proof that traceability of the value chain is documented: starting from the final product the system shall trace through the traceability system, the primary product used to produce the final product and show the origin of the entity/processors adhering to the PQNS.
3. Simulation of a documented recall of products from the market. The simulation will have to show that starting from the finished product, it is possible to know all the clients that received the product including contact number or e-mail of the client and in the case that it is deemed a serious matter and the product will have to be recalled.
4. Mass Balance: in a documented manner, the weight of the final product should tally with the totals of the products that entered the value chain taking in account any waste.

