



CARICOM REGIONAL STANDARD

**Voluntary sustainability standard for
coconut and coconut products**

CDCRS 88 : 202X

Public Comments - Deadline August 07, 2026

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Committee representation

This CARICOM Regional Standard was developed by the Regional Technical Committee – Agricultural Produce (RTC # 7) which is hosted by the CARICOM Member State, Dominica, which at the time comprised the following members:

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Foreword

This standard sets out the requirements for the production of sustainable Coconut and Coconut Products. It guides economic, social and environmental requirements to be met by an entity desirous of meeting the standard. It is divided into three parts, the achievement of the core areas of each part allows for progress onto the next and finally to achieve the use of a Caribbean Sustainability Product Mark, if so desired by the participating entity. The three sections are as follows:

- Section 1: Addressing Best Production Practices
- Section 2: Sustainability requirements (Economic, Environmental and Social)
- Section 3: Guidelines for the use of a CARIBBEAN Sustainability Product Mark

A producer of Coconut and Coconut Products conforming to the core requirements of these three parts can declare their product sustainable and seek to benefit from the growing desire for sustainable products in various markets of the world, particularly the European Union and the UK. Production and sale of sustainable products are in keeping with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This standard is expected to meet a number of the UN SDGs, including:

SDG 1 - No Poverty
 SDG 2 - Zero Hunger
 SDG 3- Good Health and Well-being
 SDG 5- Gender Equality
 SDG 7 – Affordable and Clean Energy
 SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth
 SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities
 SDG 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production
 SDG 13 – Climate Action
 SDG 15 – Life on Land

In formulating this Code of Practice considerable assistance was derived from the following publications which were still current when this standard was being developed:

International Organization for Standardization (ISO)

- ISO 14001:2026., Environmental management systems - Requirements with guidance for use
- ISO 26000:2010, Guidance on social responsibility
- ISO/TS 26030:2019, Social responsibility and sustainable development — Guidance on using ISO 26000:2010 in the food chain.
- ISO 37000:2021, Governance of organizations - Guidance

Fairtrade

- Fairtrade Standard for Small Scale Producer Organizations, 03.04.2019_v2.4. Fairtrade International.

Rain Forest Alliance

- Rain Forest Alliance Sustainable Agricultural Standard. Farm Requirements 2025, Ver.1.4. Rainforest Alliance and UTZ.

Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO)

- RSPO Principles and Criteria. 2024. 2024 RSPO Principles and Criteria for the sustainable cultivation of oil palms and the production of sustainable palm oil and oil palm products. 2.1.2 Scope. Version 4.0.

1 Scope

This standard will define the requirements for best production practices, sustainability measures and use of the CARIBBEAN Sustainability Product Mark for Coconuts and Coconut Products in CARICOM Member States for the production of fresh and dry coconuts, water coconuts, coconut oil and products of processed coconut, such as desiccated coconut.

This standard does not apply to:

- a) coconut plants
- b) other products, food or non-food where the coconut is used only as a flavouring.

2 Normative references

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

CROQS Standards

- CRCP 5:2010, *Code of Practice – General principles of food hygiene.*

3 Definitions

For the purpose of this document the following terms and definitions apply.

3.1 audit

systematic, independent and documented process for obtaining audit evidence and evaluating it objectively to determine the extent to which the audit criteria are fulfilled

Note 1 to entry: An internal audit is conducted by the organisation itself, or by an external party on its behalf.

[SOURCE: ISO 14001:2015, *Environmental Management Systems. Requirements with guidance for use*]

3.2 corrective action

action to eliminate the cause of a nonconformity and to prevent recurrence

[SOURCE: ISO 14001:2015, *Environmental Management Systems. Requirements with guidance for use*]

3.3 employee

individual in a relationship recognised as an “employment relationship” in national law or practice

[SOURCE: ISO 26000:2018, *Guidance on Social Responsibility*]

3.4 energy efficiency

when less energy than before is used to perform similar tasks

[SOURCE: GLOBALGAP, *Integrated Farm Assurance, Glossary. English Version 6.0_Apr22. PUBLISHED ON: 26 November 2024*]

3.5 environment

surroundings in which an organisation operates, including air, water, land, natural resources, flora, fauna, humans and their interrelationships.

Note 1 to entry: Surroundings can extend from within an organisation to the local, regional and global system.

Note 2 to entry: Surroundings can be described in terms of biodiversity, ecosystems, climate or other characteristics.

[SOURCE: ISO 14001:2015, *Environmental Management Systems. Requirements with guidance for use*]

3.6. ethical behaviour:

organisation should behave ethically, basing its behaviour on the values of honesty, equity and integrity and showing concern for people, animals and the environment and a commitment to address the impact of its activities and decisions on stakeholders' interests

[SOURCE: ISO/TS 26030:2019, *Social responsibility and sustainable development — Guidance on using ISO 26000:2010 in the food chain*]

3.7. food defence

security of food and drink and their supply chains from all forms of malicious attack, including ideologically motivated attack leading to contamination or supply failure

[SOURCE: GLOBALGAP, *Integrated Farm Assurance, Glossary*. (Source: PAS 96:2010). English Version 6.0_Apr22. PUBLISHED ON: 26 November 2024]

3.8. food fraud

collective term encompassing the deliberate and intentional substitution, addition, tampering with, or misinterpretation of food, food packaging, or labelling or product information, or false or misleading statements made about a product for economic gain that may impact consumer health

[SOURCE: GLOBALGAP, *Integrated Farm Assurance, Glossary*. (Source: GFSI 2020.1). English Version 6.0_Apr22. PUBLISHED ON: 26 November 2024]

3.9. nonconformity

non-fulfilment of a requirement

[SOURCE: ISO 14001:2015, *Environmental Management Systems. Requirements with guidance for use*]

3.10. organisation

entity or group of people and facilities with an arrangement of responsibilities, authorities and relationships and identifiable objectives

[SOURCE: ISO 26000:2018, *Guidance on Social Responsibility*]

3.11. organisational governance

system by which an organisation makes and implements decisions in pursuit of its objectives

[SOURCE: ISO/TS 26030:2019, *Social responsibility and sustainable development — Guidance on using ISO 26000:2010 in the food chain*]

3.12.

personnel

organisation's directors, officers, employees, temporary staff or workers, and volunteers

[SOURCE: ISO 37001:2016, 3.25, modified — Notes 1 and 2 to entry have been deleted.]

3.13.

requirement

need or expectation that is stated, generally implied or obligatory

[SOURCE: ISO 14001:2015, *Environmental Management Systems. Requirements with guidance for use*]

3.14.

specifications

a document prescribing the requirements with which the product, process or service must conform

[SOURCE: ISO Standards Terms and Glossary]

3.15.

stakeholders

individual or group that has an interest in any decision or activity of an organisation

[SOURCE: ISO 26000:2018, *Guidance on Social Responsibility*]

3.16.

sustainability

state of the global system, including environmental, social and economic aspects, in which the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs

Note 1 to entry: The environmental, social and economic aspects interact, are interdependent and are often referred to as the three dimensions of sustainability.

Note 2 to entry: Sustainability is the goal of sustainable development.

[SOURCE: ISO 82:2019, *Guidelines for addressing sustainability in standards*]

3.17.

traceability

ability to follow the history, application, movement and location of an object through specified stage(s) of production, processing and distribution

Note 1 to entry: Movement can relate to the origin of the materials, processing history or distribution of the food.

[SOURCE: CAC/GL 60-2006, modified — Notes to entry have been added.]

3.18.

transparency

openness about decisions and activities that affect society, the economy and the environment, and willingness to communicate these in a clear, accurate, timely, honest and complete manner

[SOURCE: ISO/TS 26030:2019, *Social responsibility and sustainable development — Guidance on using ISO 26000:2010 in the food chain*]

3.19.

workers

person who performs work, whether an employee or someone who is self-employed

[SOURCE: ISO 26000:2018, *Guidance on Social Responsibility*]

4 General requirements

4.1 Addressing Best Production Practices

4.1.1 Producers of Coconuts shall:

4.1.1.1 Ensure planting sites are selected with due consideration of its history and any potential food safety, human health, community and environmental risk.

4.1.1.2 Ensure the use of irrigation does not pose any threats to product safety, human health, the community and the environment.

4.1.1.3 Ensure the use of fertilisers are appropriately recorded and do not pose any threats to product safety, human health, the community and the environment.

4.1.1.4 Ensure the use and storage of Plant Protection Products are appropriately recorded and do not pose any threats to product safety, human health, the community and the environment.

4.1.1.5 Ensure harvest and post-harvest activities are reviewed and do not pose any threats to product safety, human health, the community and the environment.

4.1.2 Producers of Coconut and Coconut Products shall:

4.1.2.1 Ensure that farm sites and production facilities comply with the requirements outlined in CRCP 5, Code of Practice – General principles of food hygiene, Clauses 4, 5, and 6.

4.1.3 Producers of Coconut and Coconut products shall:

4.1.3.1 Consider potential risks of deliberate product contamination or tampering on product safety, human health, the business, the community and develop food defence plans for mitigating against the identified risks.

4.1.3.2 Consider potential risks of handling, receiving or trading products or raw materials that have been intentionally adulterated for financial benefits and develop a plan to mitigate against such food fraud risks.

4.1.3.3 Ensure that purchased raw materials are obtained from approved suppliers. Producers shall implement due diligence measures to verify the origin, quality, and safety of the materials. Related risks should be addressed and should not pose any threat to product safety, human health, the community and the environment.

4.1.3.4 Ensure that any reworked product is appropriately recorded and does not pose any threats to product safety, human health, the community and the environment.

5 Sustainability requirements

5.1 Governance

5.1.1 Producers of Coconut and Coconut Products shall:

5.1.1.1 Document the name and purpose of the organisation and maintain documentation which indicates it is a legal entity, if registered or has the legal right to cultivate the land with coconuts and produce coconut products. No protected lands should be used.

5.1.1.2 Document the management structure of the entity, indicating clear accountability for the responsibilities in each role.

5.1.1.3 Develop job descriptions for all employees, ensuring they all have access to a copy for their role.

5.1.2 Establish business plans with clear objectives, ensuring long-term viability of the entity and meeting stakeholder expectations. These should include strategies for succession planning.

5.1.2.1 Operate legally, with a designated person ensuring national legal requirements are upheld and relevant international laws are complied with.

5.1.2.2 Ensure ethical behaviour when dealing with customers and suppliers, in transactions and negotiations.

5.1.3 Document all relevant stakeholders and update the list annually.

5.1.3.1 Engage stakeholders at least annually to establish and review their expectations.

5.1.3.2 Maintain stakeholder oversight of the business with annual reviews and open communication.

5.1.4 Manage staff and workers of Coconut and Coconut Products businesses.

5.1.4.1 Ensure adequate and sufficient technical and operational personnel are available to operate the business.

5.1.4.2 Document competency requirements for personnel that should be met.

5.1.5 Confirm that the management of the coconut or coconut products business is accountable for the safety of its products, its impact on the environment and its social and economic impact on the community, other businesses and general stakeholders, by management commitment

5.2 Economic (operations)

5.2.1 Producers of Coconut and Coconut products shall:

5.2.1.1 Ensure the production of safe, good quality coconut and coconut products for consumers or users by following:

5.2.1.2 Product Specifications to meet customer requirements.

5.2.1.3 Farming practices and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), developed to produce required products using best production practices.

5.2.1.4 Simple verbal or written Work Instructions, delivered in a language workers understand.

5.2.2 Optimise productivity during production and processing by:

- a) Effective planning and supervision of operations.
- b) The use of suitable equipment for production and processing. Implementing and monitoring the use of best practices and SOPs. Producers should use relevant recording forms for each production operation and process to document operations.
- c) Utilising trained employees.

- d) Providing training to workers for their jobs, which should include training to attract young people and women into the production of coconut and coconut products. Hold records on employee training and development activities.

5.2.3 Ensure transparency in relevant interactions with suppliers and consumers and follow fair operating practices by:

5.2.3.1 Having signed contracts and agreements stipulating the safety and legality of the product, terms and conditions of supply, fair pricing and any other requirement that is deemed necessary for trade between the parties. Pricing should allow for a living income for coconut producers.

5.2.3.2 Avoiding conflicts of interest.

5.2.3.3 Having an agreed method to resolve conflict or disagreement.

5.2.3.4 Ensure traceability of raw materials in production of sustainable coconut and coconut products, which will enable the final product to be declared sustainably produced. If any other coconut raw material is used in the processing operation, ensure that product separation is maintained in:

- a) processing
- b) labelling and
- c) storage.

5.3 Social

5.3.1 Producers of Coconut and Coconut products shall:

5.3.1.1 Respect national labour regulations, including:

- a) Payment of wages regularly and adhering to any Minimum wage legislation. Provide a record of payments and deductions, if any, to workers (payslips). Payment of National Insurance provisions.
- b) The maximum number of hours of work per day (8hrs/day,40hrs/week) with break periods and overtime hours and rates.
- c) The minimum age of workers (16 years old), the age of youth workers (16-18 years) and the types of work they can engage in (non-hazardous).
- d) Providing workers with a written agreement indicating the terms and conditions of employment in a contract or job letter.

5.3.2 Allow Freedom of Association by:

5.3.2.1 Allowing workers to join unions and other worker organisations, without fear of reprisal or discrimination.

5.3.2.2 Allowing for collective bargaining with employers on behalf of workers.

5.3.3 Guarantee no:

5.3.3.1 Child labour, at the coconut production end of the supply chain, where raw materials are produced, by ensuring no underage persons are employed.

5.3.3.2 Forced labour, or any evidence of such (abusive conditions, overwork, lack of freedom, etc.).

5.3.3.3 Discrimination based on age, race, and sexual orientation. Reporting of any discrimination should be without risk of retaliation. An open but discreet system for reporting should be established.

5.3.3.4 Gender inequality. Ensuring women's right to work, which should be protected when pregnant or breastfeeding, equal pay and opportunity for advancement.

5.3.3.5 Workplace violence. Violence shall not be tolerated, and records of any physical infractions should be kept to monitor in case of escalation.

5.3.3.6 Harassment, sexual or otherwise. An open but discreet system for reporting should be established.

5.3.4 Respect worker health and safety in accordance with the national competent authority, by providing:

- a) Drinking water and a designated eating area.
- b) Adequate clean toilets and hand washing facilities.
- c) First Aid supplies/kit.
- d) Trained First Aider on site for the full day.
- e) Training to do their jobs safely.
- f) Necessary tools to do their jobs.
- g) Safe environment to work in.
- h) Necessary Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) required for their jobs.
- i) Adequate and safe housing, if applicable.
- j) A designated Health and Safety officer or functioning Health and Safety committee, who should develop a relevant Health and Safety plan.

5.3.5 Assess and document risk by:

5.3.5.1 Identifying all areas within the total operation (farm to market) that may be of high risk to the health and safety of the workers and consumers, and develop mitigating actions to be taken, to reduce the health and safety risk.

5.3.5.2 Recording all work-related health and safety incidents which may occur, for follow-up and corrective action.

5.3.6 Be respectful of local communities and following consultation with them, assist in local development through:

5.3.6.1 Mitigating against negative impacts, particularly on vulnerable groups in the community, following an assessment of the potential impact of the operation on the community. This assessment should consider the legal, social, economic and environmental impact as well as any effect on the cultural heritage.

5.3.6.2 Training of local youth and women for jobs in the production of coconut and coconut products and employing locally.

5.3.6.3 Involvement in local civil society groups.

5.3.6.4 Purchase of locally produced goods and services where possible.

5.4 Environmental

5.4.1 Producers of Coconut and coconut products shall:

5.4.1.1 Meet relevant national environmental regulations.

5.4.1.2 Ensure effective waste management of all waste coming from the production and processing of coconut and coconut products by:

- a) Recording all waste produced by the operations, by type and quantity. This should include husks, shells, green husks and shells from freshwater production and consumption and water (from the oil extraction process), among others.
- b) Storing and handling both non-hazardous and hazardous waste (if present) safely in a designated area, until appropriately disposed of.
- c) Disposal of waste that may potentially cause harm due to harbour of pests and diseases, in a manner that minimises hygiene and environmental risks.
- d) Training of workers in the reduction of waste.
- e) Reducing, recycling, re-using or minimising waste where possible.
- f) Developing a waste management plan that incorporates the best use of resources and circularity. This should incorporate the potential use of coconut husks for coir (fibres for rope, mats and brushes), as a planting medium, as biochar (a source of renewable energy) and as a soil amendment (green husks and shells).

5.4.2 Ensure water management throughout the production process, including the management and disposal of wastewater by:

5.4.2.1 Measuring and recording the source, quantity and quality of all water used in the operation, including if used for irrigation, washing or in processing.

5.4.2.2 Assessing the impact of climate change on water availability (abundance and scarcity).

5.4.2.3 Using water harvesting techniques, where possible, on farm or in the processing operation to mitigate against water scarcity.

5.4.2.4 Measuring and recording the quantity of wastewater that is produced and the quantity that is recycled.

5.4.2.5 Protecting local water sources from spray drift (where there is pesticide application), effluent or wastewater discharge (such as wastewater from coconut oil production, which is highly organic and must be treated before discharge). Testing and treating of any other wastewater would also be necessary. All testing and treatment of wastewater shall be done in accordance with national regulations, if applicable and shall be documented.

5.4.2.6 Developing a water management plan which would incorporate risk assessments and mitigating actions.

5.4.3 Assess the environmental impact by:

5.4.3.1 Conducting risk assessments to determine the impact of farm and processing operations on the natural resources (land, water, and minerals) and local biodiversity and develop mitigation plans.

5.4.3.2 Conducting risk assessments to determine the impact of changes in the natural environment on farm and processing operations, such as rising temperatures and sea levels and developing mitigation plans.

5.4.3.3 Documenting the potential deforestation issues with any expansion of production and restocking considerations.

5.4.3.4 Following up with mitigating actions to ensure no or limited impact on the physical environment and natural resources due to the processing and production of coconut and coconut products.

5.4.3.5 Following up with actions to mitigate the effects of climate change on the production and processing operations of coconut and coconut products.

5.4.4 Train employees in the use, storage and disposal of agrochemicals (hazardous and non-hazardous) products such as fertilisers and pesticides, where used, in the farm operations or other chemicals that may be used in processing operations. Aim to reduce the use of pesticides, where possible. Records of use, storage and disposal of all chemicals should be available for a minimum of two years.

5.4.5 Achieve energy efficiency and reduction in carbon emissions by:

5.4.5.1 Recording electricity and all fossil fuels used in the production of coconut and coconut products as baseline data. Plan to reduce use.

5.4.5.2 Generating electricity using a renewable energy source at the production site.

Example: solar, wind and biochar (coconut shell and husk waste).

5.4.5.3 Maintaining all equipment properly to ensure efficient fuel use, such as boilers, air conditioners, vehicles, etc.

5.4.5.4 Calculating Greenhouse Gas emissions and plan to reduce.

5.4.5.5 Developing an energy policy with objectives, targets and action plans to address reduction in energy use, clean energy generation and becoming energy efficient. This should also include training all workers in ways to reduce energy use and to lower fuel consumption.

6 Guidelines for the use of a CARIBBEAN Sustainability Product Mark

6.1 This part provides requirements and guidance to obtain and use a CARIBBEAN Sustainability Product Mark.

6.2 Producers and processors of Coconut and Coconut products shall:

6.2.1 Achieve conformance of the requirements under this specification before proceeding to the step of applying for the use of the CARIBBEAN Sustainability Mark.

6.2.2 Conduct an internal audit and obtain a suitable score and resolve any non-conformances.

6.2.3 Apply to use the CARIBBEAN Sustainability Product Mark using the prescribed form. This can be obtained on the CROQS website or on that of the local Bureau of Standards.

6.2.4 Arrange an external audit. This requires registering and agreeing to a date and time for the external audit and being present at the audit.

6.2.5 Complete all corrective actions to secure certification.

6.2.6 Ensure that once obtained, the Caribbean Sustainability Mark shall be used in accordance with the terms stipulated by the certifying body.

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CARICOM REGIONAL ORGANISATION FOR STANDARDS AND QUALITY

The CARICOM Regional Organisation for Standards and Quality (CROSQ) was established as an Inter-Governmental Organisation through an agreement signed by fourteen Member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). CROSQ is the regional centre for promoting efficiency and competitive production in goods and services, through the process of standardisation and the verification of quality. It is the successor to the Caribbean Common Market Standards Council (CCMSC) and supports the CARICOM mandate in the expansion of intra-regional and extra-regional trade in goods and services.

CROSQ is mandated to represent the interests of the region in international and hemispheric standards work, to promote the harmonisation of metrology systems and standards, and to increase the pace of development of regional standards for the sustainable production of goods and services in the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME), and the enhancement of social and economic development.

CROSQ VISION:

Transforming and Empowering Lives Through Standards and Quality

CROSQ MISSION:

Working together to facilitate the growth, resilience and sustainable development of CARICOM through the advancement of an internationally recognised Regional Quality Infrastructure

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