



**Sustainability**  
Standard™

# **SUSTAINABLE FOOD GROUP SUSTAINABILITY STANDARD**

**Trainer Handbook for Approved Training Centers**

*Version 2.0*

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Sust Stnd Trainer Handbook for Approved Training Centers, v2.0	January 01, 2025	Valid until further notice
<b>To be used in conjunction with</b>		
Sust Stnd Training Center General Requirements, v2.0		
<b>Replaces</b>		<b>Applicable to</b>
TC-SFG-23 Trainer Handbook for Approved Training Centers, v1.0		Approved Sustainability Standard Training Centers

**Scheme owner**

Sustainable Food Group (SFG) is a part of the IPM Institute of North America, a non-profit with over 25 years of experience in implementing sustainability best practices in agriculture and communities. As experts in agricultural supply chain sustainability, SFG has developed high-impact, science-based programs for food industry leaders.



SFG envisions a world where food is grown in sync with natural processes and where agriculture and food companies are a force for good, directly benefiting workers, consumers, water, air, climate, biodiversity and soil. Read more at <https://ipminstitute.org/branch/sfg/>.

**Data partner**

Azzule Systems is a leading global data management solution provider, helping companies maintain visibility over their supply chains.



**More information**

For more information about the Sustainability Standard certification, visit the Sustainability Standard webpage, <https://ipminstitute.org/services/sustainability-standard/>, or contact Sustainable Food Group at [certification@sustainablefoodgroup.org](mailto:certification@sustainablefoodgroup.org).

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## 1.0 Introduction to the Sustainability Standard

The Sustainability Standard is a third-party audited sustainable agriculture certification that aims to balance the needs of growers, food companies and the environment. The standard is owned and operated by Sustainable Food Group (SFG). SFG is a branch of the IPM Institute of North America, a non-profit with over 25 years of experience in implementing sustainability best practices in agriculture and communities.

The Sustainability Standard is applicable to both farm and facility operations. The objective of the program is to assess and communicate performance on sustainability practices and metrics and inspire and document continuous improvement. The Sustainability Standard covers a comprehensive set of environmental and social best practices, with a focus on advanced Integrated Pest Management (IPM). In addition to IPM, it addresses environmental protection, soil health, nutrient and irrigation management, air quality, waste and recycling, water and energy conservation, worker welfare and emergency management. For more information, visit the [Sustainability Standard webpage](#).

### 1.1 Training Center Program

For proper execution of the Sustainability Standard scheme, certain parties, such as third-party auditors, second-party auditors and clients, must receive training on the scheme operation and auditing procedures. To increase the availability of such training events, SFG is offering a Training Center model, in which organizations with the necessary resources and expertise may be approved to conduct Sustainability Standard trainings.

Approved Training Centers may offer two types of training:

1. Sustainability Standard Auditor Training: For third-party auditors of approved Certification Bodies who will be conducting on-site and desk audits of organizations seeking or maintaining Sustainability Standard certification. This training is also suitable for personnel who will be conducting internal Group assessments (i.e., internal audits) as part of the requirements for Group certification.
2. Sustainability Standard Client Training: For clients interested in gaining a greater understanding of the Sustainability Standard requirements, normative documents and audit procedures.

Training Centers may also be Certification Bodies for the Sustainability Standard scheme, but do not need to be. Detailed expectations for training events, including record keeping, promotion, Training Center conduct and Trainer Requirements can be found in the Training Center General Requirements (available on the [Sustainability Standard webpage](#)).

### 1.2 Training Center Oversight

To ensure quality and consistency across all Training Centers, SFG will operate a Training Center Integrity Program. The Integrity Program will include (but is not limited to) attending training events to observe content delivery and trainer conduct and reviewing trainee feedback submitted via the Training Evaluation Participant Survey (Exhibit A). See the Training Center General Requirements for details.

## 2.0 Trainer Resource List

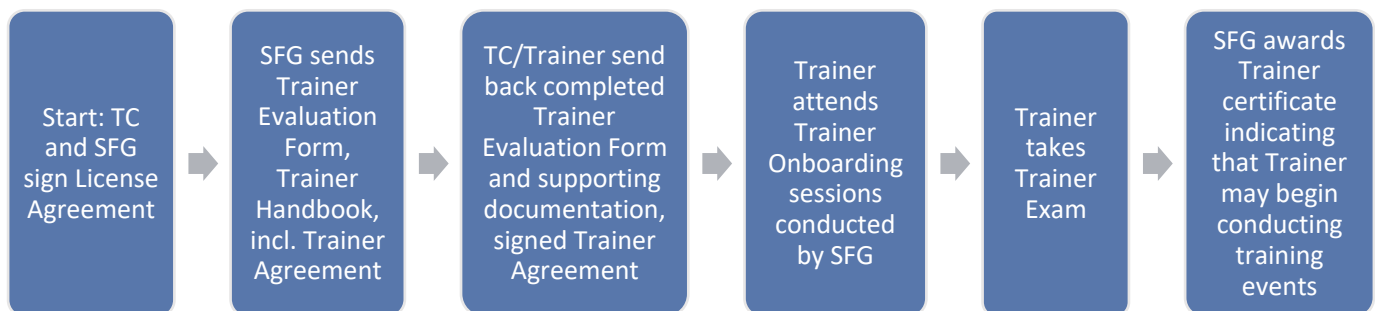
During and after the approval process, Trainers and other Training Center personnel may find the following resources valuable. The Folder of Training Center Resources is shared with organizations upon approval as a Training Center.

Resource name	Description	Location
<b>Trainer Handbook</b>	A document compiling various resources as well as background on the Sustainability Standard scheme and Training Center model.	Current document, folder of Training Center Resources
<b>Training Center General Requirements</b>	A normative document outlining the rules and expectations around Training Center operation, including Trainer conduct and qualifications.	Sustainability Standard website, folder of Training Center Resources
<b>Trainer Evaluation Form</b>	A fillable form of Trainer requirements outlined in the Training Center General Requirements to assist SFG and the Trainer in gathering and reviewing documentation of qualifications.	Folder of Training Center Resources
<b>Trainer Agreement</b>	The contract each Trainer signs agreeing to the expectations outlined in the Training Center General Requirements.	Exhibit B in this document, Folder of Training Center Resources
<b>Sustainability Standard Auditor Training PowerPoint</b>	A PowerPoint file of the slides to be used in all Auditor Training events. Any modifications must be approved by SFG prior to use.	Folder of Training Center Resources
<b>Sustainability Standard Client Training PowerPoint</b>	A PowerPoint file of the slides to be used in all Client Training events. Any modifications must be approved by SFG prior to use.	Folder of Training Center Resources
<b>Sustainability Standard Trainer Onboarding PowerPoint</b>	A PowerPoint file of the slides used in the Trainer Onboarding sessions. For reference only, not to be used in any training activities.	Folder of Training Center Resources
<b>Training Center Attendance Sheet</b>	An Excel file that shall be used for taking attendance at all training events, and which is required to be shared with SFG within five (5) business days following the event. Any modifications must be approved to SFG prior to use.	Folder of Training Center Resources

<b>Sustainability Standard Checklist v2.0</b>	A scheme normative document detailing all questions in the Sustainability Standard scheme, including the points associated with each question. To be used in conjunction with the Sustainability Standard Audit Guidelines v2.0 when assessing conformance to questions.	Zipped folder of Trainer Resources, Sustainability Standard website. Refer to the website for the current versions of all normative documents.
<b>Sustainability Standard Audit Guidelines v2.0</b>	A scheme normative document detailing scoring guidance for all questions in the Sustainability Standard Checklist, as well as other guidelines around the audit process.	Zipped folder of Trainer Resources, Sustainability Standard website. Refer to the website for the current versions of all normative documents.
<b>Sustainability Standard General Regulations v2.0</b>	A scheme normative document outlining all requirements and expectations around the Sustainability Standard scheme, including those for Certification Bodies and clients.	Zipped folder of Trainer Resources, Sustainability Standard website. Refer to the website for the current versions of all normative documents.

### 3.0 Trainer Approval Process

Each Training Center must have at least one approved Trainer. The following diagram outlines the process of trainer approval.



If any questions or concerns arise regarding the Training Center process or the Sustainability Standard scheme, please contact Sustainable Food Group at [certification@sustainablefoodgroup.org](mailto:certification@sustainablefoodgroup.org).

## Exhibit A: Training Evaluation Participant Survey

Link to fill out survey: <https://forms.office.com/r/qamEn1xJmm>

This survey shall be used as written by all Training Centers. It shall be made available for attendees to fill out by sharing the above link at the end of each training event. Survey results are sent directly to SFG; a summary of results will be shared with the TC. The objective of this survey is to evaluate the efficacy of the training and trainer and identify potential opportunities or needs for improvement. Revisions may be suggested by contacting Sustainable Food Group, but it is not guaranteed that any or all suggested revisions will be made.

1. Please fill out your name (Last, First)
2. Please fill out your email
3. Which training course did you attend?
  - a. Sustainability Standard Client Training
  - b. Sustainability Standard Auditor Training
4. Which trainer(s) conducted the training you attended? (If you don't know the trainer name(s), the Training Center name is acceptable)
5. How would you rate the clarity of the content on the PowerPoint slides? (1 - very unclear, 5 - very clear)
6. How would you rate the clarity of the content in other resources provided (flowcharts, checklists, supplementary examples)? (1 - very unclear, 5 - very clear)
7. How would you rate the clarity of the trainer's presentation of the slides? (1 - very unclear, 5 - very clear)
8. How would you rate the trainer's ability to answer questions posed during the training? (1 - unable to answer most questions, 5 - able to answer most questions)
9. How would you rate the trainer's overall understanding of the training content? (1 - very weak understanding, 5 - very strong understanding)
10. How well did the trainer keep you engaged throughout the training, for example, by using example scenarios to further clarify points? (1 - very unengaging, 5 - very engaging)
11. How well did the trainer adhere to the schedule outlined in advance of the training? (1 - did not adhere to the schedule well at all, 5 - adhered to the schedule very well)
12. How would you rate the pace of the training?
  - a. Too fast, not enough time to grasp the content
  - b. Too slow, the trainer spent too long on one or more items
  - c. Just right, enough time was given to grasp the content while still moving efficiently
  - d. Other (please specify)
13. What aspect(s) of the training did you find most helpful?
14. What aspect(s) of the training could be improved on?
15. What is the likelihood that you would recommend this training to someone else? (1 - very unlikely, 5 - very likely)
16. Are there any other trainings or resources related to sustainability that you would like to see offered?
17. Is there anything else you would like to add?

## Exhibit B: Sustainability Standard Trainer Agreement

# Sustainable Food Group Sustainability Standard Trainer Agreement for Approved Training Centers

The Undersigned hereby acknowledges they have received and read the Sustainability Standard General Requirements and agrees to abide by all requirements contained therein. This includes agreeing to be subject to evaluation by training attendees via the Training Evaluation Participant Survey.

Violations of the requirements mentioned, or any misconduct issues may result in the suspension or termination of status as an approved trainer, or other disciplinary action as may be determined by Sustainable Food Group (SFG).

Furthermore, Undersigned acknowledges, understands, and agrees that they will be given documents, materials, images, logos and other content which are owned exclusively by SFG and its parent organization, the IPM Institute of North America. Undersigned agrees to not use any of this material for any purpose other than to prepare and deliver presentations at Sustainability Standard training seminars and further agrees to not share the information with any other person or organization outside of the Sustainability Standard training seminars, nor to use it for their own benefit outside of duties to train at the Sustainability Standard seminars.

Undersigned agrees that these covenants and provisions shall extend to Undersigned's agents, employees, successors, legal representatives and permitted assigns.

**“UNDERSIGNED”**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date (mm/dd/yyyy): \_\_\_\_\_

Training Center: \_\_\_\_\_