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SAI Platform Bylaws



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The present bylaws form the basis of SAI Platform governance together with the statutes.

CHAPTER I – Name, seat, and purpose

Art. 1. Name

An international association named "Sustainable Agriculture Initiative (SAI) Platform" is constituted in Geneva. It is governed by the Swiss Law. SAI Platform is a not for profit organisation to promote and to communicate on sustainable agriculture.

Art. 2. Seat

Its legal seat is in the Canton of Geneva, Switzerland. Offices may be located in various regions or countries in order to facilitate the promotion of sustainable agriculture worldwide.

Art. 3. Objective

SAI Platform is a platform created by the food industry to actively support the development and communication worldwide about sustainable agriculture involving different stakeholders. SAI Platform supports agricultural practices and agricultural production systems that preserve the future availability of current resources and enhance their efficiency. SAI Platform's task is to make practical knowledge, experiences, and scientific research in the field of sustainable agriculture available to the members of the platform and to actively communicate about all relevant aspects of sustainable agriculture to different stakeholders. SAI Platform offers a common framework that can provide answers to the basic questions: what does sustainable agriculture mean for the food industry and how can the food industry support the development of sustainable agricultural practices?

CHAPTER II – Membership

Art. 4.1. Eligibility

The Association is composed of **active members** (food and beverage industry) and **affiliate members** (others). All food and beverage companies can apply to become active members of SAI Platform. The definition of food and beverage company is taken in a broad sense, including companies manufacturing and marketing food & beverages, food service companies and trading companies. Members may have different shareholder status, including that of private company or cooperative.

In addition, non-food and drink companies who source agricultural products (for example, for cosmetics, leather, cotton etc.) may be considered for membership. The motivation and reason for joining along with the company's sustainability credentials must be clear. Such companies may be granted affiliate membership initially.



Assurance schemes and standard organisations may become affiliate members of SAI Platform. The motivation and reason for joining along with the organisation's sustainability credentials must be clear.

Agricultural and farm support organisations and farm input and service providers may also be considered for affiliate membership.

Art. 4.2. Admission procedure

Organisations wishing to become active or affiliate members of SAI Platform should submit a completed application form to the Platform. Their approval as a new member of SAI Platform will be effective after examination and approval of their application by the Executive Committee. SAI Platform membership is for a minimum two-year period.

Art. 4.3. Expected contribution from the members

Active members are expected to:

- a. Be committed to support sustainable agriculture practices within their field of business.
- b. Agree with the principles of sustainable agriculture as set out by SAI Platform.
- c. Contribute to the knowledge and expertise of SAI Platform by sharing with SAI Platform their relevant pre-competitive information related to SA (providing SAI Platform with case studies on good agricultural practices for instance).
- d. Participate in extra activities such as thematic Working Groups if they wish.
- e. Support SAI Platform financially.

Art. 4.4. Rights of members

Art 4.4.1. Active members

Active members will have the right to vote at each meeting of the General Assembly, as provided in article 5 below. Active members can have access to all the material produced by SAI Platform for its members, through SAI Platform website and newsletter as well as at SAI Platform headquarters for specific documentation. Active members or their representatives are eligible to the Executive Committee. They can participate in any of the meetings of the General Assembly and thematic Working Groups.

Art. 4.4.2. Affiliate members

Affiliate members can attend and participate in any of the meetings of the General Assembly, without a voting right. They have limited access to SAI Platform information. The rights of each Affiliate member are to be determined in more detail by the Executive Committee based on its potential contribution to SAI Platform.



CHAPTER III - General Assembly meetings

Art. 5.1. Ordinary and Extraordinary General Assembly meetings

An Ordinary General Assembly meeting is held annually. The meeting hears the report of the Executive Committee and the report of the auditor entrusted with the control of the accounts, approves the accounts of the previous fiscal year, and discharges to the Directors and the auditor. By decision of the Executive Committee or on request as set out below, any other item can be brought to the agenda.

The Extraordinary General Assembly meeting, for whatever reasons unless stated otherwise in the present bylaws or in any other regulations is called:

- a. by the President of the Executive Committee.
- b. by the President of the Executive Committee at the request of at least one fifth of the active members of the association; this request must contain the items of discussion for the proposed meeting.

Art. 5.2. Notice for the meetings

A written notice for the Ordinary and Extraordinary General Assembly meetings stating the place, day and time of the meeting as well as the agenda, shall be mailed by the President to each member, with adequate documentation, not less than fifteen days but no more than fifty days prior to the date of the meeting. The agenda should leave some time for any other issue to be raised and discussed by the members. The competence of the Extraordinary General Assembly meetings is restricted to the items stated in the agenda of the written notice.

Art. 5.3. Participation

The General Assembly meeting is composed of all Active and Affiliate members or their representatives. Each member shall designate in writing a representative or proxy, preferably among its managerial staff, who will have power to represent that member in all matters treated by the meeting of SAI Platform. The mandate of representative of a member shall be terminated automatically as soon as the representative ceases to be an employee of the member, or if his/her association with the member ceases to exist or if their relations are terminated in any way, or if the membership with SAI Platform itself is terminated. If no representative of a member can be present at a meeting, a proxy can be given to another member in writing. Such a proxy is valid only for a specific meeting date.

Art. 5.4. Quorum, majority

The majority of the Active members with voting rights in the SAI Platform organisation constitute the quorum. Except stated otherwise in the present bylaws, the decisions are taken by a simple majority vote of the Active members present or



represented. The President has a casting vote. Members of the Advisory Council shall attend the General Assembly meetings with only a consultative vote. The General Assembly meeting has the power to take all necessary or useful actions to accomplish the purpose of SAI Platform. But without any limitation, it has the power to:

- a. Elect the members of the Executive Committee.
- b. Appoints members of the Advisory Council.
- c. Elect the auditor of SAI Platform.
- d. Establish the principle guidelines for the general policy of SAI Platform.
- e. Take into consideration and decide on all matters, as well as on proposals of the Executive Committee or of any Working Group.
- f. Approve the programs proposed by the Executive Committee.
- g. Make all recommendation to the Executive Committee in view of the establishment of a useful Working Group.
- h. Approve SAI Platform accounts and budgets.

Art. 5.5. Minutes

The deliberations of the General Assembly meetings shall be recorded in minutes prepared and signed by the President of the meeting and approved by the General Assembly. All members shall receive a copy of the minutes. All minutes are kept in a register at the seat of SAI Platform, which all members may consult and take copies thereof.

CHAPTER IV – Administration

Art. 6.1. Executive Committee

Art. 6.1.1. Composition

The Active members of SAI Platform, attending or being represented at the General Assembly, shall elect, and/or revoke the members of the Executive Committee. These must be representatives of the Active members. The number of members of the Executive Committee shall not be less than three and shall be determined by a decision of the General Assembly. An Active member may not provide more than one member for the Executive Committee at the same time. The Executive Committee is composed of at least a President, one or several vice-President(s) and a Treasurer. They are designated for a period of two years.

The **President** of the Executive Committee is proposed by the Executive Committee and elected by the General Assembly. He chairs all meetings of SAI Platform Executive Committee and General Assembly. He ensures the execution of all orders and all resolutions of the General Assembly and Executive Committee.

The **Vice-President(s)** is/are elected among the Executive Committee members. He/she/they execute(s) the duties vested upon him/her/them by the Executive



Committee and assist(s) the President of the Committee at his/her/their request. In case of incapacity, refusal or resignation of the President of the Executive Committee, the vice-President(s) of the Executive Committee fulfil(s) all his/her duties.

The **Treasurer** is elected among the Executive Committee members. He/she is charged with the collection of the funds of SAI Platform, unless the Executive Committee decides differently. He/she is responsible thereof and deposits the funds with the bank or in a deposit or investment with the prior approval of the Executive Committee. He/she makes all payments decided by the Executive Committee. He/she has to account for all transactions in his quality of treasurer to the Executive Committee at ordinary meetings or at the request of the Executive Committee. He/she reports to the Executive Committee members, which are late for more than sixty days, in paying their membership fee or any other due.

Art. 6.1.2. Powers

The general management of SAI Platform shall be the responsibility of SAI Platform Executive Committee in collaboration with SAI Platform Manager, who it appoints. The Executive Committee will work together with the operational platform staff to discuss the activities of the platform and to guard the quality of work and financial viability. The Executive Committee shall act by a majority vote of those members present in person or by proxy. In the event of a tied vote, the President shall have a casting vote.

The Executive Committee in collaboration with the Platform Manager, shall have the power to:

- a. Direct and control the management of SAI Platform.
- b. Execute the decisions of the General Assembly meeting and take all measures to reach the established objective.
- c. Establish guidelines for the programmes of the Working Groups and to submit them for the approval of the General Assembly meeting.
- d. Control SAI Platform expenses.
- e. Prepare the budgets and the annual accounts which will be submitted to the General Assembly.
- f. In case of urgency, take all decisions normally assigned to the General Assembly, and submit them subsequently to the ratification of the General Assembly.
- g. Propose members of the Advisory Council.
- h. Appoint the Platform assistant.

The Executive Committee in collaboration with the Platform Manager may adopt all policies and procedures necessary for the management of its activities and may, within the frame of its powers, delegate part of its powers and responsibilities to Working Groups. The Executive Committee will entrust the daily management to individuals (the Platform Manager & staff). It will determine their powers and their



remuneration and might delegate some of its power to them when required (signature for SAI Platform operational account etc.).

Art. 6.1.3. Meetings

An annual meeting of the Executive Committee shall take place immediately before or after the General Assembly meeting. Meetings at regular intervals shall take place, upon the decision of the Committee. The annual meeting of the Executive Committee is called by the President in writing and mailed to each member of the Committee at least fifteen days prior to the date of the meeting. The frequency of the Executive Committee meetings during the year is to be decided by the members of the Executive Committee. Each Committee member might invite one expert of his/her company to the meeting and/or an external expert to discuss specific subjects during the Committee meetings.

Art. 6.1.4. Replacement of Executive Committee member

All Executive Committee members are committed to a two-year term at time of application and election. However, if an Executive Committee member decides to or needs to step down from role, the procedure is as follows:

- a. The company may provide a replacement and they are invited to join the Executive Committee, subject to majority approval by Executive Committee members.
- b. If the company does not have a suitable candidate to offer, the candidate on the election ballot sheet with the highest votes can be appointed with no additional approval from the Executive Committee.
- c. If two candidates have the same votes, then the other Executive Committee members vote to select one of the two. The current SAI Platform Executive Committee President will have the casting vote if required.
- d. Where a vacancy remains, Executive Committee can invite a member at its own discretion for the remainder of the term.
- e. The seat can remain vacant till the next election, but it is preferable to fill it.

Art. 6.1.5. Signature and representation

All acts binding the association shall be signed by the President of the Executive Committee, within the limits of his/her powers and as per the decision of the majority of the Executive Committee. The President may assign in writing the authority to sign on his behalf to any other member of the Executive Committee. The association can be represented by any other person acting within the limits of a proxy by the Executive Committee, namely the Platform Manager.



Art. 6.2. Platform Manager and Staff

Art 6.2.1 Composition

The Platform management of SAI Platform consists of staff running operational business activities and carrying out the activities mentioned in Art. 3.

Art 6.2.2. Appointment of the platform Manager and Staff

The Executive Committee appoints the Platform Manager. The Executive Committee also appoints the Platform staff, in agreement with the Platform Manager.

Art. 6.2.3. Powers

The Platform Manager oversees the operational management of SAI Platform in between meetings of the Executive Committee pursuant to the general policies fixed by the Committee.

A detailed report of all SAI Platform activities is made at each meeting of the Executive Committee. The Platform Manager co-ordinates and contributes to the operational activities of SAI Platform by:

- a. Providing knowledge on sustainable agriculture through a SAI Platform database.
- b. Facilitating the assessment & validation of sustainable agricultural practices.
- c. Communicating about the activities of the platform.
- d. Initiating and contributing to the development of tools and mechanisms to implement sustainable agriculture.

The activities will be carried out partly or completely by specific Working Groups. The platform management, under supervision of the Executive Committee, will collaborate closely with these Working Groups and facilitate their work.

Art. 6.3. Regional or National Chapter(s)

Specific regional or national chapters of the Platform might be created, with separate offices and staff, in order to undertake SAI Platform activities at the local level, thus further promoting sustainable agriculture worldwide. These regional or national chapters are guided by the SAI Platform legal and technical structure, i.e. following the same goals, approach, structure as well as principles and practices as per SAI Platform Statutes, Bylaws, and general technical documents.



Art. 6.4. Working Groups

Specific Working Groups might oversee the carrying out activities in the field of:

- a. General best practices.
- b. Communication on Sustainable Agriculture.
- c. Any other specific issue dealing with Sustainable Agriculture, such as assessment of agricultural practices for a specific crop etc.

The Working Groups are formed by the Active and Affiliate members and possibly other stakeholders to focus on specific tasks. Individual members may participate in different Working Groups at the same time or may not participate in any Working Group.

The members will decide on the creation and working programme of the Working Groups through the Executive Committee:

- a. Either at the annual General Assembly meeting.
- b. Or through SAI Platform.

The Executive Committee, through the Platform Manager, will consult the interested parties in order to prepare a proposal for the activities to be carried out, including the timing and costs thereof. The proposal will be made within 30 days from the date of the request and will have to be accepted by all the members involved in the activities of the Working Group. If the proposal is rejected, the members will:

- a. Either provide suggestions that enable the Platform Manager to compile a new, acceptable proposal
- b. Or abandon the Working Group at hand.

Each Working Group is responsible for its own expenses. The funds that are necessary for the coverage of those expenses may involve:

- a. Costs of experts and stakeholders to be invited in assessment and/or research.
- b. Travel, subsistence, and time costs of the employees of companies involved.
- c. Costs of Working Group meetings.
- d. Costs of large-scale stakeholder involvement and communication.

These costs cannot be covered by the regular member fees but will be provided by the interested SAI Platform members involved and/or by external donors. The Executive Committee and/or Platform Manager will propose a repartition of the costs of the Working Groups over the members involved. Each Working Group should elect a Chairman from the member companies. The Chairman of a Working Group is responsible to the Executive Committee for the management of his Working Group. He/she chairs all meetings of that Working Group. He/she supervises the execution of the decisions and resolutions of the General Assembly meeting or of the Executive Committee regarding his Working Group. He/she controls the spreading of information produced by the Working Group in conformity with the policies of the



Executive Committee. A Working Group led by SAI Platform might state internal regulations. In such case, regulations should be ratified by the Executive Committee. A Working Group might appoint a Secretary. Each Working Group shall submit a report on its activities and financial situation to the annual General Assembly meeting.

Art. 6.5. Advisory Council

The Advisory Council consists of 4 to 8 experts in the field of sustainability. They are proposed by the Executive Committee in collaboration with SAI Platform staff. The members of the Advisory Council will:

- a. Meet at least once a year, in a meeting that is held back-to-back with the annual General Assembly meeting.
- b. Serve the Platform with (invited and not invited) advice on the SAI Platform programme.
- c. Be invited to participate in the General Assembly meeting.
- d. Be informed about the development of SAI Platform through the Platform Manager.

The Advisory Council performs its duty under specific terms of reference. It reports to the Executive Committee.

CHAPTER V - Finances

Art. 7. Annual accounts

The fiscal year of SAI Platform association shall be from the first day of January until the thirty first day of December. The annual accounts of SAI Platform are controlled and certified at the end of each fiscal year by one or more certified accountants. The treasurer submits to the Executive Committee the annual accounts for the past year as well as the budget for the following year. The accounts must be approved by the General Assembly meeting.

Art. 8. Membership fees

The Executive Committee determines the amount of the membership fees and all other dues of the members, as well as the method of payment and submits them to the approval of the General Assembly meeting. All modifications to the membership fees or other dues shall be effective after a period of thirty days from the notification of such modification to the members. This notification shall be in writing.



Art. 9. Members interests in the assets of the association

All interests of each member in the funds, investments and other assets belonging to the association shall immediately cease and terminate in the event that the membership of such a member is terminated, for any reason whatsoever. In the event of such a termination, the member and the representatives of the member shall have no claim on other members, or their representatives, regarding the assets of SAI Platform.

CHAPTER VI - Modifications of bylaws, dissolution

Art. 10. Disposal of assets on dissolution

Upon dissolution of SAI Platform, the Executive Committee, after payment or constitution of a deposit for all indebtedness of SAI Platform, shall allocate the net assets to initiatives exclusively compatible with the objectives of SAI Platform or to one or more organisations with similar objectives to SAI Platform or shall distribute assets among its members. The courts of Geneva, Switzerland shall have sole jurisdiction for litigation concerning assets, which are allocated as provided for above.

Art. 11. Modification to the bylaws or of dissolution of SAI Platform

Without prejudice to article 10, each proposal of modification to the bylaws or of dissolution of SAI Platform shall be made by the Executive Committee or made by at least one third of SAI Platform Active members. The General Assembly meeting shall be validly constituted if two thirds of the Active members are present or represented. The resolutions will be taken by a two thirds majority of the Active members present or represented. Modifications to the present bylaws will be effective as from May 31, 2005. The General Assembly meeting shall determine the means of dissolution of SAI Platform.