

# AFRICAN BLUE S.A. MODERN SLAVERY STATEMENT FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2023



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This statement is published in accordance with section 54(1) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 (UK) and constitutes a slavery and human trafficking statement for the financial year ending 31 December 2023 (the “**Reporting Period**”). Our statement outlines the steps that African Blue has taken during 2023 to reduce the risk of modern slavery in its supply chain.

## **Organisational Structure and Supply Chains**

African Blue SA is a joint venture between the Australian company Costa Group Holdings Pty Limited (“**Costa Group**”) and Total Produce Limited, who is today part of Dole plc, and this statement covers African Blue SA and its subsidiaries, including Sweet Berry SA and African Blue (UK) Limited (together “**African Blue**”).

African Blue is a Moroccan farming, marketing and distribution company selling blueberries globally. African Blue owns and operates farms in Morocco and sources fruit from third party growers in Morocco and elsewhere in Africa. As at 1 January 2023, African Blue had planted 349 hectares of planted farmland to meet the demands of production in the market.

Across Morocco in 2023, African Blue worked with 56 direct suppliers of goods and services not for resale, including two labour hire providers in the south of Morocco to help source labour. There are currently a total of thirteen produce supply partners in Morocco. African Blue also has three produce supply partners in South Africa and eight in Zimbabwe who supply fruit to African Blue using our proprietary genetics.

African Blue SA recognises there is potential across the international fresh produce supply chain for slavery and human trafficking to occur.

African Blue is committed to working in conjunction with a range of stakeholders to help develop sustainable solutions to address this important issue.

## **Policies on Modern Slavery**

African Blue and its shareholders respect and are committed to protecting human rights within the African Blue business and supply chain. The following policies have been rolled out across the African Blue business:

- Human Rights Policy;
- Whistleblower Policy;
- Recruitment and Selection Policy;
- Code of Conduct;
- Supplier Code of Conduct;
- Complaints Procedure; and
- Anti-Bribery and Anti-corruption Policy.

Prior to the Reporting Period, the above policies were rolled out and translated to French and Arabic to enable workers, customers, suppliers and other stakeholders in the African Blue business to familiarise themselves with these policies. These policies are communicated to staff by making copies available at each site in a prominent position, such as staff noticeboards located at the entrance to our farms, and are communicated through our inductions and toolbox talk sessions.

In 2023, African Blue increased training on grievance mechanisms and maintained the appointment of a Whistleblower Officer in relation to African Blue's operations. The Whistleblower Officer's main objective was to facilitate receipt of, and handle reports made under the Whistleblower Policy and afford whistleblowers adequate protection and support. To facilitate anonymous reporting African Blue has made available a Whistleblowing Service facilitated by an independent third-party service provider. This service is available in the key languages spoken by workers including French, Arabic and English. The Whistleblower Policy has been communicated to enable workers, customers, suppliers and other stakeholders in the African Blue business to report suspected unethical, corrupt or illegal behavior, including modern slavery in our business.

### **Commitment to Health, Safety and Welfare**

African Blue prides itself on its commitment to the health, safety and welfare of workers on its farms and produce supply partner farms. African Blue continues to use Sedex to assess risk in our business which informs due diligence monitoring and the basis of our remediation activities. Each of African Blue's farms in Morocco have been listed as a site on Sedex and have completed self-assessment questionnaires. All workers employed within African Blue's operations and supply chain are employed fairly, treated with dignity and their human rights are respected.

To allow independent assessments of the treatment of workers and other social practices on our farms, African Blue engages in regular ethical assessments conducted by independent 3<sup>rd</sup> party auditors. The audit standards include the Global Gap Risk Assessment in Social Practices (GRASP) and the Sedex Members Ethical Trade Audits (SMETA). The findings' reports for these audits are shared with our UK and European retail customers.

African Blue also expects our produce supply partners to submit to ethical audits, as our commitment to the ethical treatment of workers extends beyond the boundaries of our own farms. Through the Sedex data platform, we can assess management practices employed by our produce supply partners and work together with them to identify opportunities for improvement, provide support to mitigate risk and to take action where necessary.

### **Processes and Systems**

African Blue will not knowingly tolerate the use of forced, debt bonded or indentured labour, involuntary prison labour, slavery or human trafficking in our supply chain. African Blue also remains committed to reviewing, and where necessary improving, our systems and procedures to avoid inadvertent complicity in human rights violations related to our own operations, our supply chain and our produce/products.

In 2023, African Blue continued its efforts to map its supply chain of goods and services not for resale and improve the processes for gathering information about our suppliers.

In Morocco, all eight of our own sites have completed SAQs in Sedex in 2023 and all of these sites have also been audited to SMETA in 2023.

In our African Blue operation, 83% of our produce supply partners are registered on Sedex and have completed SAQs. All of these sites have also undertaken a SMETA conducted by an independent third-party auditor. We are continuing to look for ways to further engage and support partner growers with information and guidance on the use of labour hire.

In 2024, African Blue will continue to focus on rolling out a supplier risk rating system which includes assessing risk on geographic location, industry and type of goods acquired. This system focuses efforts into the future towards those suppliers and categories that are inherently at a higher risk of containing modern slavery within their supply chain. This risk-based approach will enable African Blue to better target the available resources to providers that have an inherently higher risk.

Work is being done by African Blue in 2024 to further bolster its commitment to ensuring human rights are protected in its supply chain and the expectations are communicated through the roll out of the Supplier Code of Conduct to African Blue's suppliers. The Supplier Code of Conduct covers areas including human rights and modern slavery; health and safety, including safe working conditions; fair wages/ compensation; immigration law compliance; and diversity and inclusion.

### **Reviewing progress**

African Blue understands that mitigating the risk of modern slavery in our own business and supply chains is a continuous and evolving task. Accordingly, African Blue intends to continue to monitor, review and refine its controls throughout 2024 and report on progress in next year's statement.

**Approved by the Board on 14 June 2024**



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Leon Van Biljon

Chairperson

Date: 14 June 2024