

AFRICAN BLUE S.A. MODERN SLAVERY STATEMENT FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2022



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 1 January 2023. Our statement outlines the steps that African Blue has taken during 2022 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 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 2022, 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 a total of seven third-party growers in Morocco. African Blue also has three Third-Party Growers 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, and during 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 2022, African Blue increased training on grievance mechanisms and also appointed 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 Workers' Health, Safety and Welfare

African Blue prides itself on its commitment to the health, safety and welfare of workers on its farms and Third-Party Grower 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 3rd 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 Third-Party Growers 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 Third-Party Growers and work together with them to identify opportunities for improvement, provide support to mitigate risk and to take action where necessary.

CASE STUDY

In 2022, Albert Heijn commissioned ImpactBuying to carry out an impact study on African Blue, one of its long-term fresh fruit suppliers from Morocco.

The research was performed following the UN Principles on Business and Human Rights. The general objective was to identify and assess the potential and current impacts (i.e. risks) caused and contributed to by African Blue's business operations on people (human rights), communities (social issues) and the natural environment. Both positive and negative impacts were included to arrive at a balanced overview of the overall impact. This resulted in recommendations for due action by Albert Heijn and African Blue on reducing the negative impacts and enhancing the positive impacts.

Particular attention was given to women's rights, as women form the main labour force in fruit and vegetables farms and packhouses in the country and women's rights are currently insufficiently covered by Moroccan legislation, which could pose a risk to Albert Heijn and its due diligence.

Comments made in the report include:

“The decent and safe workplace conditions provided by African Blue allow many women to earn an income. African Blue appears to be a gender-sensitive employer, which has enabled women workers to develop and empower themselves and grow into supervisory job and administrative positions. Equal work is equally paid. The company makes specific efforts to reduce possible bottlenecks and strengthening the position of its women workers. For example, the medical services at packhouse premises are run by female doctors and nurses.”

The research was implemented over a period between May and December 2022.

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 2022, 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 2022 and all of these sites have also been audited to SMETA in 2022.

In our African Blue operation, 83% of our third-party growers 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 2023, 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 2023 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.

CASE STUDY

African Blue participated in a Gender-sensitive Auditing Pilot Project, led by Partner Africa, a registered NGO which aims to improve the working conditions and livelihoods of vulnerable workers and producers in Africa. Partners in the project were British grocery retailer Tesco and Co-op, the UK’s largest consumer cooperative.

Through this project the SMETA methodology was adapted to effectively identify and address gender issues in global supply chains. The paper delivered by the project delves into pressing issues around how current social auditing methodologies can be adapted to better recognise and tackle the unique challenges faced by women in global supply chains.

The paper also offers valuable insights into, and practical recommendations for Sedex, suppliers, buyers, auditors, and auditing bodies, to empower the most vulnerable people engaged in African supply chains.

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 2023 and report on progress in next year's statement.

Approved by the Board on 30 June 2023



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Peter McPherson

Chairperson

Date: 30 June 2023