

EU CODE OF CONDUCT ON RESPONSIBLE FOOD BUSINESS AND MARKETING PRACTICES

*A common aspirational path
towards achieving sustainable food systems*

- Annual Report – Check list for EU associations -

When signing the code, one of the commitments of EU associations is to provide “*on an annual basis, a report of their activities in support of this Code, which will be published on an open dedicated website*”.

In order to help EU associations to provide their annual report of activities, this document aims at providing a check list to guide associations.

- **General information**

Name in full + acronym	Assomela – The Italian Association of Apple producers
Contact person with contact details	Anna Eriksson: anna.eriksson@assomela.it
N° in the transparency register*	572089747088-13
Date of signature of the Code	24/02/2022
Step of the food chain represented (ex: primary production, production, processing, trade, retail, ...)	Primary production, processing, trade
Who do you represent? (e.g. number of members, companies, SMEs)	15 members, mostly Producer Organizations (PO), representing 75% of the Italian apple producers

* if available

European Associations pledge to:

- *endorse the aspirational objectives set out in this Code (where applicable)*

Yes, Assomela; the Italian Association of Apple Producers, confirms to endorse the aspirational objectives set out in this Code.

- *promote and disseminate this Code with(in) their constituency/ies;*

Assomela has promoted and disseminated the Code through:

- Internal member meetings, e.g., Sustainability working groups, monthly market meetings and board of director meetings,
- *encourage their members to align their sustainability actions and/or business practices to the aspirational objectives and targets of the Code and invite them, on a voluntary basis, to adhere to this Code, as appropriate;*

Assomela encouraged its' members to align their sustainability actions to the aspirational objectives and targets of the Code.

- *explore the possibility of developing sector-specific tools and resources in support of this Code;*
- Assomela is actively contributing to the work of the Freshfel Environmental Footprint Initiative, specific for the fresh produce sector, a project which highly supports the objectives of the Code. The Initiative aims to develop an objective and standardized methodology for the European fresh fruit and vegetables sector, based on the Product Environmental Footprint Category Rules (PEFCR).
- Together with the fresh produce sector, Assomela is since February 2024, under the coordination of Freshfel Europe, developing a Double Materiality Assessment (DMA) which will serve as a basis for the reporting under the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD). By analysing the impacts and opportunities in the fresh produce value chain together, the project creates a broad and robust foundation for the understanding and substantiation of sustainability performance of fresh fruits and vegetables operators.
- Moreover, Assomela renewed the environmental product declaration (EPD) for the thirteenth consecutive year in representation of the Italian apple sector. The declaration qualifies the environmental impact in terms of energy, water and soil consumption in the production of one kilogram of Italian apples.
- *continue to engage in dialogue with other food chain/systems actors and EU and international policy-makers to forge (new) relationships, exchange good practices and discuss challenges encountered, learn from each other (studies, projects) and create better mutual understanding, and identify opportunities for collaboration and potential partnership.*

Assomela participates actively in dialogue with other stakeholders within the sector, both at national and European level, especially in collaboration with associations such as Freshfel Europe and AREFLH to reach decision-makers at international level.

Moreover, Assomela coordinates visits for foreign delegations that want to learn from the organizational system distinguishing the cooperative members of the Italian apple producers within Assomela. The following best practices performed by the members in 2023/24 are aligned with the 7 targets of the Code, and continuously exchanged with international and national colleagues:

- **Target 1 - Healthy, balanced and sustainable diets for all European consumers:**
All members of Assomela contribute to Target 1 by promoting consumption of apples as part of a healthy sustainable diet based on fruits and vegetables.
- **Target 2 - Prevention and reduction of food loss and waste:**
The aim is to provide a destination to all the apples coming out from the orchard. Our members process tons of apples every year that would otherwise be difficult to sell on the fresh fruit market and those apples damaged by weather events and which are not suitable in terms of quality for i.e. juice production are transformed into organic fertilizers and biogas.
- **Target 3 - A climate neutral food chain in Europe by 2050:**
Apart from the above-mentioned activities for this target regarding reporting and measuring of ESG impacts, our members continue to develop e.g. the photovoltaic systems with photovoltaic panels installed on the roofs of conservation facilities.
- **Target 4 - An optimized circular and resource-efficient food chain in Europe:**
The apple sector continues to strive for sustainable solutions regarding packaging. The Italian apple sector was one of the first to use the 4-6 fruit carton pack and investments for new packing machineries for these carton packs are significant. For instance, our members use trays made of recycled plastic (e.g. CPR), a system in use in the fruit and vegetable sector that allows space to be saved and containers to be reused.
- **Target 5 - Sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all:**
For all members of Assomela, special care is being taken to provide home for the seasonal workers that work in the orchards, especially during harvest. In addition, when it comes to training and skilled workforce, the Assomela members provide on annual basis courses in collaboration with the expertise from the local technological transfer centers to assure quality work by the employees. The local population also benefits from the induced activities of the companies in the area, which provide stable employment for many citizens.
- **Target 6 - Sustainable value creation in the European food supply chain through partnership:**
The Assomela members collaborate both internally for their sustainability performances and with external partners in collaboration with other companies of the sector.
- **Target 7 - Sustainable sourcing in food supply chains:**
Traceability is particularly important in the agri-food sector, not the least in the apple sector and we are proud to have several varieties protected by PGI and PDO among our members.