



SOUTH AFRICAN WINE PRODUCERS LEAD IN HUMAN RIGHTS DUE DILIGENCE, AUDITS, RESPONSIBLE SOURCING AND SOCIAL TRACEABILITY

Despite reports to the contrary, the South African wine industry continues to lead in ethical best practices as compared to many other wine countries across the globe. Perhaps our willingness to engage and open ourselves up to scrutiny, compared to the hidden exploits within the supply chains of some of our international counterparts, is the very reason we still receive the harsh criticism. Whilst the industry may have been born out of slavery, do not let South Africa's dark history distort the present gains that have been made.

South African wine producers have taken significant strides in ensuring the strictest adherence to human rights due diligence processes, as evidenced by over 400 audits conducted annually by highly skilled and internationally recognized auditors and over 76% of all vineyards certified through ongoing cyclic assessments. These audits are conducted against a rigorous standard, that not only meets both local requirements, but is benchmarked against international regulatory requirements. The standard also serves to foster a culture of continuous improvement, which are very closely monitored on a data platform accessible to the value chain for scrutiny and risk assessment and recognised by many EU buyers.

At the forefront of this commitment lies the emphasis on transparency and visibility, a cornerstone of the wine industry's traceability system. Social traceability and responsible sourcing in wine plays a critical role in identifying, assessing, managing and remediating salient risks within the supply chain. All buyers, committed to ensuring transparency and responsible sourcing in their supply chains, and wanting to identify potential risks, should insist that South African wine producers meet the necessary social traceability requirements and provide not only site certification by product assurance through supply chain certification via *the Fair Labour Certification Seal*.

This social traceability requirement reflects the South African wine industry's unwavering dedication ensuring that transparent mapping of suppliers is undertaken and that bias reporting linking non-wine producing regions such as De Doorns, is not erroneously linked to cellars in other sub regions such as Robertson and Worcester. Buyers that do insist on traceability are armed with the necessary risk assessment data to provide key assurances around the real conditions in their specific supply chains.

At the Wine Industry Ethical Trade Association (WIETA), a great emphasis is placed on all producers to have a [Human Rights Due Diligence Policy](#), which focuses on promoting human rights throughout the supply chain. The implementation of this policy is critical in the certification process at WIETA which includes identifying all risks in the supply chain, commitment to racial and gender equality, enabling access for women to grow in the businesses and have access to all work opportunities presented by the company.

It is of paramount importance for all WIETA producers to follow the United Nations Guiding Principles provisions and International Labour Organisations Core Conventions in respect of social and labour standards and upholding the WIETA Code and Standard of Best Practice.

Stakeholder monitoring is highly encouraged, further enhancing the industry's commitment to transparency and accountability. In line with any violations, WIETA has a protocol on this matter and any allegations can be triggered anonymously by our labour desk WhatsApp number (+27 637666548) or can be sent directly to our Standards and Certification Desk.

Many brands have their own internal whistle blower mechanisms, a WIETA standards requirement, and are encouraged to engage with communities in which these producers operate, to report complaints, grievances or even human rights violations. Both mechanisms, a clear requirement of much of the current EU legislation on Human Rights Due Diligence and a requirement that has been set in motion prior to the adoption of the EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive, has been adopted.

Communities, civil society and trade unions are welcomed to and do actively participate in social dialogue, enabling them not only to report any labour and human rights violations, but also to contribute to the collaborative effort of remedying such transgressions.

Remediation efforts extend beyond mere corrective actions; they are sustained through comprehensive training and capacity building initiatives. Through ongoing engagement, skills development and diversity and inclusion programmes, South African wine producers ensure the long-term improvement of working conditions and human rights practices.

WIETA urges EU buyers to become involved in their [education and advocacy campaigns](#), so that together, the wine value chain can foster a shared understanding of the beneficiation opportunities that arise from embracing sustainable practices.

The South African wine industry stands steadfast in its commitment to maintaining the highest standards of social responsibility, in line with international best practices, ensuring labour and human rights for all workers in its supply chains. By integrating robust human rights due diligence processes, regular audits, social traceability measures and a platform for open and honest social dialogue; the wine industry will continue to champion a sustainable approach that promotes the wellbeing and dignity of all individuals involved in the production and supply of South African wines.

Please feel free to view the [Ethical Trade in the South African Wine Industry Q&A](#) document for further information in this regard.



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WIETA strives to ensure fair treatment, respectful relationships and dignified lives toward achieving a transformed agricultural sector. As a multi stakeholder, the organisation is established for the sole purpose of promoting ethical trade through the wine and agricultural value chain towards a transformed sector.

SOUTH AFRICA WINE is a newly created non-profit company that from 1 July 2023 provide critical support services to the wine and brandy industry value chain players. The membership of more than 2500 include producers across all wine regions, wineries and wholesalers.

WINES OF SOUTH AFRICA (WoSA) is a not for profit organization which promotes the export of all South African wine in key international markets. Apart from the head office in Stellenbosch, South Africa, WoSA also has offices in Johannesburg, England, Canada, USA, Sweden, China, The Netherlands and Germany.