

ZNU-Standard^{Food}

Doing business in a more sustainable way

Who we are

As an initiative from economy and science the ZNU – Centre for Sustainable Business and Leadership (Zentrum für Nachhaltige Unternehmensführung) is an institute within the Faculty of Management and Economics at Witten/Herdecke University. The ZNU owns long profound experience in the applied evaluation of sustainability – particularly in the food sector. The ZNU is active in teaching, research and professional training and organises the annual “future conference food”. A high-ranking advisory board from industry and science gives technical and practice-oriented impulses. The institute is financed by public research support and by a wide range of partner companies from the food industry (www.uni-wh.de/znu).

What is the ZNU-Standard?

The ZNU-Standard demands and promotes the development of an integrated management system aiming for more sustainable management, explicitly for producers in the food sector. The ZNU-Standard links sustainability requirements on company level with critical sustainability issues on product level. The ZNU-Standard is a B2B-standard that intends to foster an efficient exchange of information between different stakeholders, in particular at the interface of industry and retail.

Why another standard?

There is a multitude of sustainability requirements and various food standards, but a standard which concentrates all relevant sustainability requirements from global to local level for the food sector is missing at the moment. The ZNU-Standard fills this gap and also leads the way for small and medium-sized companies to tackle sustainability issues. It makes sustainability measurable, realizable and externally verifiable. In this way it makes it easier for producers to communicate their sustainability activities towards their retail partners and other stakeholders in a credible way. At the same time the ZNU-Standard allows for an efficient sustainability screening of suppliers. With freedom for flexible business solutions, the ZNU-Standard firmly opposes the arbitrary use of the concept of sustainability. Companies that use this sustainability standard are thus able to credibly position and differentiate themselves in the market. Not least the standard wants to contribute higher appreciation and value creation to food produced in a more sustainable way.

What does the ZNU Standard contain?

The ZNU-Standard considers sustainability standards of highly diverse initiatives (among others ISO 26000, ISO 14001, BSCI, SMETA, GRI, UN Global Compact, FAO/SAFA, GSCP, ISEAL) and has extracted the central action fields out of these. Seven action fields form the first part of sustainable leadership and nine action fields stand for central sustainability challenges of the sector (three central sustainability topics for each of the three pillars “environmental”, “economic” and “social”).

I. Sustainable Leadership

- I.1 Prognosis
- I.2 Mission Statement
- I.3 Goals/ Objectives
- I.4 Institutional Capacity
- I.5 Learning and Education Process
- I.6 Diagnosis
- I.7 Internal and external Stakeholder Dialogue

II. Sustainability Topics

- II.1 Climate/Energy
- II.2 Resources
- II.3 Biodiversity/Animal Welfare
- II.4 Sustainable Value Creation/Fair Payment
- II.5 Quality/Consumer Protection
- II.6 Influence on Society/Anticorruption
- II.7 Human Rights
- II.8 Health
- II.9 Diversity/Demography

What is special about the ZNU-Standard?

With its integrative nature in regard to existing systems, its scientifically well-founded methodology and its definitions, the ZNU-Standard offers a clear guideline for a more sustainable business which is also practicable for small and medium-sized companies. Besides, the sector-specific ZNU-Standard puts special emphasis on learning processes and thus promotes the development of more sustainable processes and products. In addition, the integration of producing companies (from SME up to international groups) and retailers accounts for the practicability of the standard. Furthermore, the ZNU has a scientific expert's committee and is in contact with other standard-setting bodies.

Who is the standard-setting body?

Standard-setting body is the Centre for Sustainable Business and Leadership (ZNU) at Witten/Herdecke University.

How does the certification system work?

All companies of the sector can carry out the certification now. An audit cycle lasts three years. During the first two subsequent years a surveillance audit takes place each year. In the third year the recertification audit is done. Then the audit cycle starts all over again.

Who can certify?

As developing partner of the standard TÜV Rheinland Cert is a certification partner. Since spring 2014 all interested certification bodies can be approved by ZNU. All interested auditors have to complete a ZNU-Training to the standard which ends in a qualifying examination.

How long does an audit last?

As with other standards, this depends on the size of the company. Overall the audit duration is less than an audit in accordance with ISO 9001 or ISO 14001.

Where can I get the standard?

A list of requirements of the ZNU-Standard (free of charge) and the final document of the ZNU-Standard (with costs) are available on the homepage of ZNU (www.uni-wh.de/znu) since autumn 2013.



If you are interested or have further questions please contact us

Do you need support with your management system
or with the qualification of your employees?

Feel free to contact us. We look forward to hearing from you!

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