



DONAU SOJA

**Contributing to the
UN Sustainable Development Goals**

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Foreword

Dear Donau Soja members, partners and friends,
eight years ago, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted at the high-level United Nations (UN) summit from 25 to 27 September 2015 in New York. There are 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at its heart, which are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership.



The decisive decade

Today, we must admit that we are still far from achieving these goals. In the report “Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals”, the UN Secretary-General finds that many of the Sustainable Development Goals are moderately to severely off track. The 2020s are the decisive decade in terms of meeting the objectives of the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement. Clearly, the time for action is now. We must not let the Sustainable Development Goals disappear in the rear-view mirror, together with the hope and rights of current and future generations. In order to get the goals back on track, actions must be accelerated and supported on every level of society – and Donau Soja sees itself as an important part of this change.

LET'S PARTNER UP AND PROGRESS CHANGE TOGETHER!

It is Donau Soja's mission to support our partners and members in progressing change to address social, environmental and economic challenges in soya and protein production and consumption. Together we work towards a sustainable, safe and European protein supply.

With this report on Donau Soja's contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals we aim to 1) transparently provide insights into our work towards a more sustainable future and 2) demonstrate how our members and certified partners contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals through participating in Donau Soja activities and incorporating Donau Soja / Europe Soya certified soybeans into their supply chains.

Last but not least, with this report we want to foster a sense of hope, optimism, and enthusiasm for the 2030 Agenda and speak out an invitation to join forces. Let's join forces and work together for the much-needed shift towards increased efficiency, fairness and sustainability in European food and feed protein value chains.

Only together we can make a change.

Matthias Krön

President & Chairman

I. INTRODUCTION

This report shows Donau Soja's contribution to the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and its 169 targets. It is based on a detailed materiality assessment conducted by Donau Soja's sustainability department and reviewed by the Swiss consultancy Sustainable Food Systems (SFS).

The assessment and report are important tools to show transparently the contribution of Donau Soja to the SDGs. The report aims to assist decision-makers in both public and private sectors to gain a better understanding of the domains where Donau Soja as an organisation and with its voluntary certification schemes Donau Soja and Europe Soya can make a valuable contribution towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Additionally, the report can be a source of inspiration for businesses who wish to support the sustainable agricultural transition and a tool to support them in reporting on their certified supply chains. Reporting on the SDGs is about increasing transparency and setting a higher degree of accountability for organisations involved in the soya sector.

Guiding notes on the report

This report aims to show the results of a materiality assessment on Donau Soja's contribution to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their 169 targets. On the following pages, the methodology of the assessment is described in detail. In the main part of the report, a summary of Donau Soja's contribution to each of the 17 SDGs is provided.

The overview on the contribution per SDG is divided into two parts:

1. contribution/alignment of Donau Soja / Europe Soya Standards with SDG targets
2. contribution/alignment of Donau Soja Organisation activities with SDG targets

To allow for a better overview, the report highlights the most relevant aspects of Donau Soja activities for each SDG:

- For the whole organisation these are the seven main Donau Soja areas of work (see figure 4).
- For the standard these are the ten Donau Soja / Europe Soya principles of responsible soya cultivation (see figure 5).

For selected SDGs (1, 2, 9, 12, 13 and 17) examples of Donau Soja activities are provided to further illustrate their activities.

In the present report, the findings of the assessment are summarised to the greatest extent at the level of the 17 SDGs and only partly on the level of the 169 targets. More information on the detailed assessment on target levels can be found in Annex 2.

Limitations & Outlook

It should be noted that the overview per SDG is a broad simplification summarizing the Donau Soja contribution to all the targets in scope within the respective SDG. Also, there are many interlinkages and feedback loops between SDGs and their targets as well as between different areas of Donau Soja's work or between different requirements in the Donau Soja / Europe Soya Standard. All of these interdependencies were not discussed in detail. Donau Soja aims to regularly update this report until 2030.

II. CONTEXT INFORMATION

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The UN is an intergovernmental organisation, which was established after World War II and whose stated purpose is to maintain international peace and security, to develop friendly relations among nations, to achieve international cooperation and to be a centre for the harmonisation of the actions of nations.

In 2015, UN member states agreed on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This agenda includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be achieved within 15 years. The goal of the SDGs is to address the environmental, political and economic challenges of our world. The SDG framework by the UN offers a comprehensive approach to addressing the world's most urgent sustainability challenges and formulating and implementing plans.

At the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership. The 17 goals are split into 169 targets, and 244 indicators that are intended to serve as performance indicators. As the SDGs are designed for countries, some performance indicators can only be downscaled to the level of an organisation to a limited extent.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



The Donau Soja Organisation

Donau Soja is a European, multi-stakeholder, non-profit membership organisation supporting the European Protein Transition with a particular emphasis on sustainable European non-GMO soya production.

Vision

A sustainable, safe and European protein supply.

Mission

The mission of Donau Soja is to support partners and members in addressing social, environmental, and economic challenges in soya production and consumption. This will increase efficiency, fairness and sustainability in European food and feed protein value chains.

Towards the protein transition

Due to the nature of the climate and soil, many farmers in Europe are remarkably good at growing cereal crops such as wheat, barley and maize. This supports the production of large volumes of carbohydrate-rich grains which are mostly fed to livestock. The European Union's (EU) productive agricultural system relies on two major inputs: around 11 million tonnes of synthetic nitrogen fertiliser for crops, and high-protein meal, made from around 40 million tonnes of soybeans, as a protein supplement used to feed animals. The increase in European demand for plant protein over the last 60 years is largely due to the increased production and consumption of meat and dairy products.

After China, the European Union is now the second largest importer of soya from South America. While the European Union's agricultural system as a whole is 71 percent self-sufficient in tradable plant protein, 86 percent of the plant protein which is imported to meet the 29 percent deficit is soya. This protein deficit is a fundamental challenge to the resilience, acceptance and performance of our agri-food systems. This is Europe's Protein Challenge.

Donau Soja Protein Strategy for Europe

The development of soya production in Europe is part of a wider change in how we produce and use protein. The far-reaching consequences of protein production and use are now the subject of public debate. Building on the Donau Soja and Europe Soya Declarations, Donau Soja has developed the Donau Soja Protein Strategy for Europe, as a means of contributing to the public debate on behalf of all its members (see Figure 2).

The strategy builds on a holistic and science-based understanding of the role of protein in the sustainable development of agri-food systems. A holistic approach is needed to address the Protein Challenge and deliver the Protein Transition. The system change this requires can be viewed as a set of five pillars:

- Sustainable and responsible imports
- Increased production of grain legumes in Europe
- Improved use of existing and new protein resources
- Increased efficiency of protein use
- Healthier and more sustainable diets

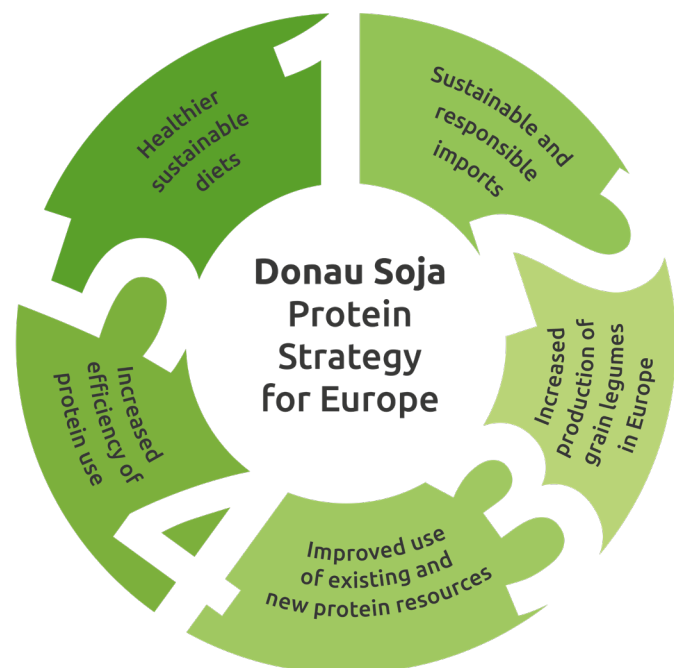


Figure 2: Donau Soja Protein Strategy for Europe

IN A NUTSHELL







Organisation	International Not-for-profit Multistakeholder Independent
Vision	Sustainable, safe & European protein supply
Members	320 members from 29 countries
Goals	Support a sustainable European soya production Established local & safe supply chains
Offices	 Vienna (Austria)  Novi Sad (Serbia)  Kyiv (Ukraine)  Chisinau (Moldova)
Representatives	 Amsterdam (Netherlands)  Bucharest (Romania)

Figure 3: Donau Soja in a nutshell

DONAU SOJA AREAS OF WORK



Credible standard
systems



Market and supply-chain
development



Advocacy & policy



Knowledge transfer for
farmers and businesses



Communication,
marketing & events



Science, innovation,
and analytical tools



Network building with
members and partners

Figure 4: Donau Soja Areas of Work

Donau Soja and Europe Soja Standards

The Donau Soja and Europe Soja quality programmes have been established by the Donau Soja Organisation to promote and propagate the cultivation, processing, and marketing of sustainable, non-GM, origin-controlled quality soya from Europe. The aim is to develop and guarantee a sustainable non-GM protein supply in and from Europe.

The Donau Soja and Europe Soja Standard is based on ten principles of responsible soya bean cultivation (see figure 5). These principles cover two essential characteristics of “European origin” and “GM-free status”, along with additional social, environmental and economic aspects.

In addition to the Donau Soja and Europe Soja Standards, the Donau Soja Organisation also offers the Non-GMO Danube Region Standard, which is the first regional harmonised non-GMO quality standard for food in South-East Europe. It can be considered a first step towards comprehensive sustainability certification according to Donau Soja and Europe Soja Standards.

Traceability throughout the supply chain

The Donau Soja and Europe Soja traceability system guarantees that certified products are segregated from non-certified sources at each stage of the supply chain. The traceability system comprises all certified companies registered in the Donau Soja IT database, as well as our partners who are listed on our website as certified partners. To ensure the traceability of raw soybeans, an IT-based lot certification system is in use. Certificate of traceability may additionally be issued by the primary processor to the marketer.

A risk-based three-staged inspection system assures the compliance of soybeans, soya food and feed with the Donau Soja and Europe Soja Standard along the value chain. This inspection system includes 1) self-monitoring of companies, 2) independent third party certification and 3) integrity checks by the Donau Soja Organisation. Third party certification bodies are accredited to ISO / IEC 17065 and authorised by the Donau Soja Organisation to conduct Donau Soja / Europe Soja / Non-GM Danube Region Standard certification.

DONAU SOJA PRINCIPLES OF RESPONSIBLE SOYA CULTIVATION

Principle 1



European origin of soya

Principle 2



Non-GM production

Principle 3



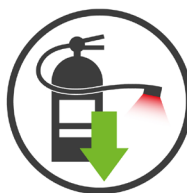
Responsible farm management

Principle 4



Best practices in soil management

Principle 5



Best practices in crop protection

Principle 6



Best practices in water management

Principle 7



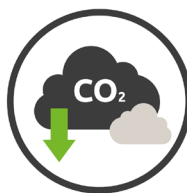
Best practices in waste management

Principle 8



Land use & Biodiversity protection

Principle 9



Reduction of GHG emissions

Principle 10



Human & labour rights

Figure 5: 10 principles of Donau Soja / Europe Soja cultivation

III. METHODOLOGY

The following report is based on the assessment of the Donau Soja Organisation's contribution to the UN SDGs on target level conducted by Donau Soja.

In the assessment the potential contribution of Donau Soja was analysed on two levels:

1. contribution/alignment of Donau Soja / Europe Soya Standards with SDG targets
2. contribution/alignment of Donau Soja Organisation activities with SDG targets

The list of documents, standards, online resources and other sources referred to can be found in Annex 1.

Donau Soja developed the methodology in cooperation with Sustainable Food Systems GmbH (SFS). After Donau Soja had made its own allocation of possible contributions to the SDGs, SFS conducted a critical and independent expert review.

Measurement of contribution

The following methodology was chosen to determine the contribution of Donau Soja to each SDG:

1. Donau Soja's sphere of influence

In a first step, the assessment analysed Donau Soja's sphere of influence and whether a contribution to an SDG and its targets can or cannot be expected.

First, it should be acknowledged that the 17 SDGs and 169 targets aim for a comprehensive approach to Sustainable Development. Donau Soja, as an organisation that is dedicated to a safe and sustainable European protein supply, can cover only parts of this approach. Therefore, certain targets are out of scope and therefore not in Donau Soja's sphere of influence. For example, Donau Soja does not and probably will not in the foreseeable future engage in the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol (SDG 3, Target 3.5.).

Second, it should also be acknowledged that the SDGs and targets are expressed on country level. Therefore, Donau Soja as an individual organisation has only limited influence on the overall achievement of the goals.

The assessment therefore aimed to identify those targets, to which Donau Soja can make a significant contribution, being it directly or indirectly.

2. The extend of contribution to each SDG

In a second step, it was determined to which extent Donau Soja contributes to achieving the targets within its sphere of influence. To assess the contribution, a four-tier scoring system was used: If no contribution had been made to a specific target, no points were allocated. 1 point was awarded, if the contribution was well aligned with the target; 2 points if the contribution was very well aligned with the target. If the contribution was essentially aligned with the target, 3 points were awarded.

Finally, the points for the targets were summed up within each SDG and divided by the amount of achievable points, thus providing the extent of contribution within each SDG.

IV. ASSESSMENT RESULTS OF CONTRIBUTION OF DONAU SOJA ORGANISATION TO UN SDGS

1 NO POVERTY



No Poverty

SDG 1 aims to eradicate extreme poverty and reduce the number of people living in poverty, with a focus on reaching the most vulnerable and marginalized populations. This includes providing access to financial services, promoting inclusive economic growth, support inclusive policy frameworks, and creating decent work for all. The goal also calls for the implementation of social protection systems, such as social safety nets, to protect people from falling into poverty, and for increased investment in education, health, and infrastructure in developing countries.

Donau Soja Organisation

Donau Soja as an organisation contributes to SDG 1 especially through development cooperation. In 2017, Donau Soja and the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) started a Strategic Partnership to build sustainable, inclusive and well-functioning value chains for non-GM and organic soya in Ukraine, Serbia, Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Out of these, Ukraine and Moldova are the countries in continental Europe with the lowest Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This partnership brings benefits for the domestic market, all soya value chain stakeholders, consumers and the environment. Through the activities of the Strategic Partnership, Donau Soja services facilitate users' access to information, knowledge, appropriate new technologies, empowering small-scale farmers and small and medium businesses. Donau Soja supports the creation of sound policy frameworks at national, regional and international levels such as the Europe Soya Declaration, National Action Plan in Moldova, and the regulation on non-GMO in Bosnia & Herzegovina, to support economical and agricultural development. All of this together contributes to improved production results, a stronger market position, greater resilience, and economic growth, thereby reducing poverty.

Donau Soja / Europe Soya Standard

The Donau Soja / Europe Soya Standard aims for a fair, transparent and responsible supply chain. Contributing to sustainability, responsible agriculture and good labour conditions adding to poverty alleviation. The standard contributes to SDG 1 especially through principles 3, 5 and 10.

Principle 3 ensures land use rights are being protected and where applicable fair compensation takes place (free, prior, informed and documented consent, FPIC). This is specifically aimed at farms with traditional land users in order to guard the rights and livelihoods of everyone involved.

Regarding Principle 5, farmers are required to comply with local and EU level plant protection legislations. This includes taking measures to improve resilience of crops and soils, which are the basis for their livelihoods. Therefore, through more integrated crop management plans, decent work and economic growth can be ensured.

The Donau Soja and Europe Soya Standards also require compliance to EU and international human and labour rights (ILO Conventions). For example, payment of gross wages and benefits in compliance with national legislation and specific sector agreements, a ban on engagement in, support for, or tolerance of any form of discrimination (see principle 10).

Main Areas of Work



Credible standard systems



Advocacy & policy



Market and supply-chain development

SDG 1: Example activities

In 2022, the Donau Soja Organisation established the “Ukraine Recovery” project. The project was focused on three activities:

- market development (to rebuild export value chains from Ukraine to the EU, destroyed because of the war in Ukraine).
- non-GM seeds promotion (to partly cover the cost for purchasing of original certified soya seeds and provide strip-tests for prevention of contamination; aiming to recover the technology and demonstrate the advantages of non-GM production).
- humanitarian support (to provide food and essentials packages to internally displaced persons due to war in Ukraine, as many people moved from Eastern and Southern regions into rural areas).

Results of the “Ukraine Recovery” project implementation from March 2022 – August 2023 (include):

- 8 National Ukrainian fair booths were organised in Prague, Warsaw, Vienna, Munich, and Budapest, thereby facilitating the dialogue between EU and Ukrainian companies.

- 30 farmers received a compensation for purchasing original certified non-GM soya seeds. Donau Soja Organisation supported farmers in implementation of the best farming practices, e.g. support on agronomics technology adaptation.
- 5,880 families were supported via the food humanitarian support.

These activities, in combination with activities supported through ADA Strategic Partnership (see SDG 17) jointly contribute to economic growth, access to services and poverty alleviation in Ukraine. As of August 2023, the soya harvest in Ukraine is expected to reach 4.4 Mio tonnes, which is an increase of 18 percent compared to 2022 and plus 26 percent to 2021 (pre-war year). Ukraine keeps self-sufficiency for agricultural and food products and continues to export. The EU became the main partner for Ukraine, accounting for 45.6% of overall soya deliveries from Ukraine.

Background

Prior to the war, Ukraine’s agriculture produced 10 percent of GDP, employed 14 percent of the labour force, and generated 41 percent of total exports. The war started just before the start of the 2022 spring planting campaign, hitting the agriculture sector very hard. The total planting area in 2022 declined by 20 percent compared to 2021 and 15 percent of agricultural capital stock was already damaged after the first three months of the war.

The overall planted area in 2023 declined by 30 percent compared to the pre-war period 2021. Therefore, urgent actions aimed at the whole agricultural ecosystem to keep the industry capable of functioning under war conditions were necessary.





Zero Hunger

The main objective of SDG 2 is to end hunger, achieve food security, improve nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture. This includes targets such as ensuring a safe, nutritious and sufficient food supply, increasing agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, and promoting sustainable agricultural practices that improve soil quality, biodiversity and resilience to climate change.

Donau Soja Organisation

SDG 2 is fundamentally linked to the work of Donau Soja and our vision: A sustainable, safe and European protein supply. Donau Soja has developed a Protein Strategy which addresses the challenges the European agri-food system faces and offers solutions for improving the food security in Europe, diets to become more healthier and improve use of protein resources.

Donau Soja drove the signing of the Donau Soja and Europe Soya Declarations which are a commitment to the sustainable development of efficient, resilient and productive agri-food systems. Including legumes in European cropping systems strengthens local economies, increases local and regional protein self-sufficiency and supports protein partnerships. Protein crop production in Europe not only supports jobs in farming but also in processing, as much of the soya imported from South America is already in the form of processed soya meal. Donau Soja is actively working on capacity building measures that facilitate the implementation of sustainable practices what aim to increase productivity, maintain ecosystems, enhance the capacity to adapt to climate change, extreme weather conditions, as well as progressively improve land and soil quality.

Over the past decade, Donau Soja has successfully facilitated the production of more than 4 million tonnes of soya beans produced in accordance with sustainable practices in Europe. These soya beans were grown in accordance with Donau Soja / Europe Soya sustainability requirements and seamlessly integrated into European sustainable food systems; this has made these food systems more resilient and less dependent on global trade.

Furthermore, over 13,000 farmers from Southeast and Eastern Europe have adopted sustainable production practices on their farms and have become part of the Donau Soja value chains.

Donau Soja / Europe Soya Standard

The Donau Soja / Europe Soya Standard in various aspects contributes to sustainable agriculture, most importantly it contributes to SDG 2 through principles 2, 3, and 4.

Donau Soja is dedicated to maintaining genetic diversity of seeds and cultivated plants and therefore has a strict non-GM requirement (Principle 2).

Principle 3 requires farmers to follow the recommendations contained in the Donau Soja Best Practice Manual for soya bean cultivation, which contains valuable information on topics with great influence on yields like optimal variety selection, inoculation, nutrient management and integrated crop management practices.

Principle 4 requires farmers to adopt adequate measures to safeguard and enhance soil quality while preventing erosion. These measures may include, for example: prohibiting the burning of stubble, employing non-tillage techniques wherever possible, crop rotation, and the use of cover crops. Principles 5-9 include further requirements regarding good agricultural practices, protecting air, soil and water, biodiversity protection and climate change mitigation.

Main Areas of Work



Credible standard systems



Advocacy & policy



Science, innovation, and analytical tools

SDG 2: Example activities

In 2012, more than ten years ago, Donau Soja was founded with the vision of a safe and sustainable European protein supply. This vision enjoys the support of 24 European governments.

- Between 2013 and 2015 the **Donau Soja Declaration**, was signed by 15 European governments. The declaration aimed to promote sustainable soya cultivation as an integral part of crop rotation.
- In 2018, Donau Soja marked significant progress by introducing the **Europe Soya Declaration**. The Europe Soya Declaration, signed by 19 governments, seeks to enhance soya cultivation in Europe, improving global food security and utilising natural resources sustainably, hence bringing it closer to the UN SDG's.

Also in 2018, Donau Soja introduced its **Protein Strategy for Europe** which dives deeper into the path towards a secure and sustainable European protein supply. Five areas were identified, namely:

1. Sustainable imports
2. Increased sustainable European production
3. Improved utilisation of existing and new protein sources
4. Enhanced protein utilisation efficiency
5. Promotion of healthier, sustainable diets

By addressing these five key areas, Donau Soja aims to establish a more secure, resilient and sustainable food supply for Europe. In doing so, we integrate small scale farmers into EU supply chains, e.g. from countries like Serbia, establish a level-playing-field for imports and aim for a more sustainable transformation of food and agricultural production in Europe as a whole. Our work over the last years has resulted in more than one million tonnes of sustainable soya being produced certified to our Donau Soja and Europe Soya Standards for the first time in 2022.

This comprehensive approach thrives on stakeholder collaboration, including policymakers, farmers, researchers, and consumers. Our collective efforts ensure the successful implementation of the strategy, building a resilient food system that enhances the well-being of both people and the environment, in alignment with SDG 2.





Good Health and Well-being

The goal of SDG 3 is to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all people of all ages. This includes reducing illnesses and deaths from hazardous chemicals and pollution, combating non-communicable diseases such as diabetes and cancer, promoting mental health, and strengthening health systems to provide universal access to quality healthcare services. Additionally, the goal aims to address other determinants of health, such as nutrition, water and sanitation, and environmental pollution.

Donau Soja Organisation

Through the Donau Soja Protein Strategy for Europe, challenges of the food sector are tackled and solutions for improving the food security in Europe and diets to become healthier are offered. Human diets that rely more on plant protein, especially pulses and soya, are generally healthier and more sustainable compared to the typical consumer diet in the EU today. Moderation in the consumption of animal products with a corresponding reduction in their production would improve the performance of our agri-food system in terms of human health, the environment, and land use.

Additionally, Donau Soja actively raises awareness for a healthier and sustainable diet, as well as responsible farm management practices. The organisation organises events such as networking events on the topic of plant-based food at the 10 years anniversary event in 2022, or discussions on the topic as part of the World Soybean Research Conference in 2023.

Donau Soja / Europe Soya Standard

The Donau Soja / Europe Soya Standard is contributing to SDG 3 through its principle 5 and 10, consistent with safety and health standards on EU level.

According to principle 5, the standards stand for responsible use of pesticides. For certified cultivation, only pesticides whose active ingredients are approved in the EU are permitted and bans the use of substances listed in the Stockholm Convention, the Rotterdam Convention and substances listed by the WHO. Additionally, aerial spraying, desiccation (i.e. drying down cultivated plants by means of a chemical agent to accelerate ripening before harvesting) are prohibited.

Beyond the aspect of production, also the staff dealing with plant protection products shall be competent and shall envisage the use of non-chemical alternatives to pesticides. Workers must also receive adequate health and safety training and only qualified workers should carry out dangerous and complex tasks. The farm should have restrictions in place related to hazardous activities. Accident and emergency procedures must be established and clearly understood by all workers, as stated by the Donau Soja principle 10.

Main Areas of Work



Credible standard systems



Network building with members and partners



Communication, marketing & events



Quality Education

SDG 4 aims to ensure inclusive quality education and contribute to learning opportunities for all. The goal works towards equitable and quality education for everyone, as well as affordable and quality technical, vocational, and tertiary education. Furthermore, it focuses on increasing the number of adults who have relevant skills for employment and entrepreneurship.

Donau Soja Organisation

Donau Soja supports the knowledge transfer to farmers as intended by SDG 4 through activities, such as trainings, field days, study visits, field visits, farmers manual and a Best Practices Manual to demonstrate agricultural aspects of soya beans. The objective of these activities is to improve and increase efficiency of (non-GM) soya bean production in the Danube region and Europe and share the knowledge that was developed together with agricultural experts. Beside sustainable agriculture practices, Donau Soja is facilitating knowledge dissemination in the fields of quality management and certification as well as market development. Our activities within the Strategic Partnership facilitated access to knowledge to more than 8,000 beneficiaries, who have actively participated in a variety of technical and non-formal knowledge transfer events over the past six years. These engagements have led to the acquisition of valuable skills and expertise.

In addition to these accomplishments, Donau Soja played an integral role in the development of specialized university curricula (European Sustainable Soya Academy) through collaboration with two universities in Ukraine. Furthermore, as part of the DevRAM Project, supported by ADA and the EU, we have actively engaged in capacity development activities in conjunction with vocational schools in Moldova. As part of the DevRAM initiative, we also facilitated the establishment of a local vocational training center for adult education within the Selectia Institute. These efforts demonstrate our dedication to fostering sustainable agricultural practices and enhancing knowledge and skills within the regions we serve.

Donau Soja / Europe Soya Standard

To guarantee quality education as stated by SDG 4, the Donau Soja / Europe Soya Standard contributes indirectly through well-established work contracts and fair salary.

In the standards, Donau Soja requires, that all children living on the farm shall have access to quality primary school education (see principle 10). Decent wages for farm workers indirectly favour children's education. The basic idea of prohibiting child labour also aims to ensure that children can attend school.

Main Areas of Work



Science, innovation, and analytical tools



Network building with members and partners



Credible standard systems



Gender Equality

SDG5 aims to achieve gender equality and to empower all women and girls. This goal recognizes that gender inequality persists worldwide and undermines social and economic development. The SDG 5 has several targets, including ending all forms of discrimination and promoting women's leadership and participation in all spheres of life, and strengthen policies and enforceable legislation for gender equality.

Donau Soja Organisation

Donau Soja is committed to the principles of gender equality and the empowerment of women across all our activities. We recognize that gender equality is not only a fundamental value but also a crucial element in achieving our goals and fostering sustainable and responsible practices. As part of our dedication to gender equality, we conducted a Gender Audit of the Donau Soja Organisation in 2019 and have since been actively implementing the recommendations from this assessment. Our ongoing efforts include the integration of gender equality into all our policies, programs, and projects. We aim to eliminate any obstacles that hinder women from accessing opportunities, benefits, and services.

In practical terms, we are proud to report that 66 percent of our executive management and 70 percent of our entire staff are women, demonstrating our commitment to gender diversity and leadership. Moreover, within our monitoring system for ADA Strategic Partnership activities, we diligently track the participation of women in the project activities. Over the past six years, we have consistently recorded female participation exceeding 25 percent, a notable achievement given our predominantly male-oriented sector. This achievement is a testament to our proactive use of gender-responsive methodologies, which consider and address the specific needs of women during trainings, knowledge transfer, and all other activities. Furthermore, our portfolio includes activities specifically designed to promote and empower women. We periodically organise campaigns and special events that serve as a source of motivation and encouragement for women to actively participate in agricultural value chains.

Donau Soja / Europe Soya Standard

According to principle 10 of the Donau Soja / Europe Soya Standard, the farmer shall comply with fundamental conventions of the International Labour Organisation (ILO Conventions), including equal payment for equal work, equal access to training and benefits, equal opportunities for promotion and for filling any available position. The Donau Soja / Europe Soya Standard forbids engagement in, support for, or tolerance of any form of discrimination, corporal punishment, mental or physical oppression or coercion, verbal or physical abuse, sexual harassment or any kind of intimidation.

Main Areas of Work



Science, innovation,
and analytical tools



Advocacy & policy



Communication,
marketing & events



Clean Water and Sanitation

SDG 6 strives to ensure sustainable access to water and sanitation for all, recognizing their fundamental importance for human rights and sustainable development. Its targets include universal access to safe and affordable drinking water, integrated water resource management in agriculture, protection of water-related ecosystems, and access to adequate sanitation and hygiene.

Donau Soja Organisation

Donau Soja is aware that water use is becoming more and more relevant, having in mind increasingly prolonged dry periods during the summer months caused by climate change. Therefore, efficient use of water is an integral part of Donau Soja / Europe Soya Standards. Donau Soja assessed the water footprint of Donau Soja / Europe Soya certified soya beans and soya products in comprehensive life cycle assessments (LCA). The studies showed that irrigation currently is mainly relevant for seed production.

Donau Soja / Europe Soya Standard

Donau Soja contributes to SDG 6 through the principles 5, 6, 8 and 10.

According to principles 5 and 6 good agricultural practices are required. This includes improving water quality for example by reducing pollution; minimizing the release of hazardous chemicals and materials; or preventing the release of untreated wastewater. The standard allows only substances approved in the EU and bans specifically hazardous substances (e.g. those classified under WHO1a and 1b). Additionally, there is a ban on aerial spraying and desiccation (i.e. drying down cultivated plants by means of a chemical agent to accelerate ripening before harvesting).

To increase water-use efficiency and ensure sustainable withdrawals, the farmer shall hold a valid water extraction license and ensure that any use of water, other than rainwater, has been approved by the relevant authorities. The farmer shall also ensure that their practices (e.g. water extraction) do not impact sensitive wetlands or swamps in the vicinity of their operation.

Principle 8 requires protection of water-related ecosystems, including a ban of conversion of peat land and wetlands. As well as establishing buffer strips to prevent pollution along water courses and contamination of ground or surface water.

Principle 10 requires that all workers shall have access to clean and safe drinking water, adequate sanitary facilities, and protective equipment.

Main Areas of Work



Credible standard
systems



Science, innovation,
and analytical tools

7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY



Affordable and Clean Energy

SDG 7 aims to ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all. This goal recognizes that energy is essential for economic growth, poverty reduction, and sustainable development, but it also has environmental and social impacts that must be addressed.

Donau Soja / Europe Soya Standard

Awareness raising is a first step for the energy transition. Principle 9 requires, that farmers identify and implement measures to minimise greenhouse gas emissions on the farm, by reducing the use of fossil fuels, increasing the share of renewable energies, implementing precision agriculture techniques, and other measures.

Main Areas of Work



Credible standard systems



Decent Work and Economic Growth

The objective of SDG 8 is to promote sustainable, inclusive economic growth and ensure decent work opportunities. Its targets include boosting economic productivity, encouraging entrepreneurship and innovation, and promote education and training where needed. Furthermore, the goal aims to improve labour rights, working conditions and reduce gender and pay inequalities.

Donau Soja Organisation

Donau Soja takes on a systemic and global perspective to address the decoupling of economic growth from environmental degradation. Currently six of nine planetary boundaries are transgressed, including the nitrogen cycle. Human activities in agriculture and industry play a key role in the change of these biogeochemical cycles. Improving resource efficiency in relation to the nitrogen cycle is a fundamental goal of Donau Soja's Protein Strategy for Europe. This strategy addresses the challenges Europe faces in the agrifood sector regarding crop rotation, fertiliser use and protein consumption and offers solutions for improving the current use of protein resources. An important aspect of the Protein Strategy for Europe is the promotion of European soya production, which is supported by the Donau Soja and Europe Soya Declarations.

Protein crops such as soya beans play an important role in the European agriculture and food industry. Currently, Europe imports the equivalent of around 40 million tonnes of soya beans per year from overseas, especially from the Americas, which makes Europe highly dependent on a foreign protein supply. At the same time, protein plants are grown on only two percent of European fields. At the same time, especially in Central and Eastern Europe, large areas suitable for protein plants can be found. Through the Strategic Partnership with ADA and the promotion of protein crops such as soya beans, peas, or broad beans, Donau Soja empowers farmers to introduce greater crop diversity to their fields and utilize their harvests as animal feed.

This not only reduces reliance on imported animal feed but also creates new opportunities for rural development. In addition to local cultivation, local, European processing plays a significant role in adding value to European value chains and rural employment. Currently, there are twelve European oil mills and 25 other certified primary processors actively participating in Donau Soja value chains.

Donau Soja / Europe Soya Standard

The Donau Soja / Europe Soya Standard contributes to SDG 8 through principles 1 and 10:

Principle 1 requires soya production to take place in the Danube Region / Europe respectively.

According to principle 10 of the Donau Soja / Europe Soya Standard, the farmer shall comply with fundamental conventions of the International Labour Organisation (ILO Conventions), including equal payment for equal work, equal access to training and benefits, equal opportunities for promotion and for filling any available position. The Donau Soja / Europe Soya Standard forbids engagement in, support for, or tolerance of any form of discrimination, corporal punishment, mental or physical oppression or coercion, verbal or physical abuse, sexual harassment or any kind of intimidation.

Main Areas of Work



Credible standard
systems



Network building with
members and partners



Market and supply-chain
development



Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

SDG 9 aims to build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and innovation. The goal emphasizes the importance of sustainable development in both developed and developing countries, recognizing the crucial role that innovation plays in achieving economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability. By investing in sustainable infrastructure and promoting innovation, countries can create jobs, improve access to essential services, and reduce their carbon footprint.

Donau Soja Organisation

Donau Soja contributes to SDG 9 in two ways:

Firstly, Donau Soja activities supporting soya bean supplychains and valuechains are inclusive for small and medium-sized enterprises. An important objective is to keep the valuechain from field to plate as short as possible. This increases the added value in the region and thereby reduces food miles and emissions associated with transportation. Within the ADA Strategic Partnership programme, Donau Soja supported more than 150 small-scale enterprises and more than 13,000 farmers in Southeastern and Eastern Europe.

Secondly, by providing a platform and taking on a coordination role, Donau Soja supports research and innovation in the fields related to the production and use of soya beans. Special emphasis is given to crop improvement, breeding, farming, and processing: In the area of crop improvement, twelve soya bean breeding companies are members of Donau Soja. They actively participate in cooperative soya bean research. Donau Soja supports enterprises of the soya bean processing industry by providing a simple and low-cost access to analytical tools. In 2022, about 14 SMEs in Austria and Germany regularly used the near-infrared analytical services offered by Donau Soja in cooperation with industry partners. Test results are used to optimise processing operations and to improve the nutritional quality of soya bean products.

Main Areas of Work



Credible standard
systems



Science, innovation,
and analytical tools



Network building with
members and partners

SDG 9: Example activities

EU-China Soya bean Research Partnership (Haberlandt Scholarship Project)

In 2015, Donau Soja signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS) on behalf of European soya bean breeders. The partnership between CAAS and Donau Soja aims to support joint activities of soya bean researchers in Europe and China. Between 2018 and 2022 Donau Soja coordinated the exchange of 154 varieties of European and Chinese breeding programmes in the framework of this partnership. 27 partners contributed to the joint experiments. Exchanged genetic materials and insights contribute to 11 breeding programmes in Europe and 10 in China.

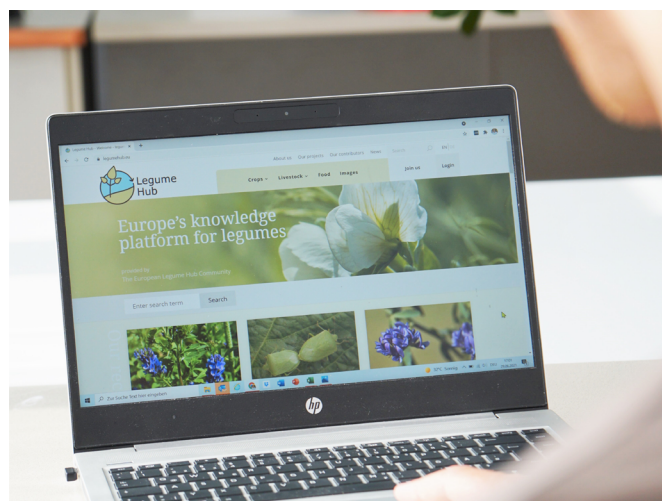


China-Europe soya bean field experiment with differences in progress to maturity (Tulln, Austria, 25 Sept 2019, photo by Johann Vollmann)

Legume Hub – Europe's knowledge platform for legumes

The Legume Hub is a multi-lingual publication and dissemination platform featuring written, spoken and visual media in English, German, Romanian, Russian, Serbian and Ukrainian. The platform is dedicated to sharing knowledge and successful practices across value chains, from plant breeding and on-farm activities to processing and consumption.

Donau Soja is providing the secretariat for the Legume Hub, building on the contributions of a growing community of legume experts across Europe. Currently, the Hub has more than 220 registered members contributing to the Hub with 290 articles and 85 videos on soya bean, faba bean, pea, lupin and lucerne. The Legume Hub is also a project platform, offering research project teams and consortia to use the Hub as platform for communication and dissemination.





Reduced Inequality

The main objective of SDG 10 is to reduce inequality within and among countries. The goal aims to promote social, economic, and political inclusion for all individuals, regardless of their age, gender, disability, race, ethnicity, religion, or economic status. Achieving this goal furthermore contributes to sustainable development and building a fair and more inclusive society.

Donau Soja Organisation

At Donau Soja, inclusiveness and non-discrimination are fundamental principles that apply to all our partners and stakeholders. We are dedicated to creating an environment where every individual, regardless of their background, gender, ethnicity, age, or any other characteristic, is treated with respect and fairness.

In our operations, we ensure that everyone, irrespective of their background or characteristics, has the opportunity to participate and benefit. By nurturing a culture of inclusivity, we aim to maximize the engagement and contributions of all stakeholders. We recognize the value of diverse perspectives and experiences, which leads to more effective and sustainable changes and accelerates the achievement of our vision and mission.

We firmly believe in treating everyone with fairness, without any bias or prejudice. Our organisation is committed to fostering an inclusive and equitable environment where individuals can thrive and actively contribute to our collective success.

Donau Soja / Europe Soya Standard

According to principle 10 of the Donau Soja / Europe Soya Standard, the farmer shall comply with fundamental conventions of the International Labour Organisation (ILO Conventions), including equal payment for equal work, equal access to training and benefits, equal opportunities for promotion and for filling any available position. The Donau Soja / Europe Soya standard forbids engagement in, support for, or tolerance of any form of discrimination, corporal punishment, mental or physical oppression or coercion, verbal or physical abuse, sexual harassment or any kind of intimidation. No workers of any type shall be required to lodge their identity papers with anyone, unless required by law.

Main Areas of Work



Credible standard systems



Advocacy & policy



Market and supply-chain development



Sustainable Cities and Communities

SDG 11 aims to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable. The goal focuses on improving urban development and sustainable development planning on a regional and national level. It also aims to protect cultural and natural heritage, increase the resilience of cities to disasters, and provide universal access to green and public spaces. By contributing to SDG 11, cities can become more environmentally friendly and socially inclusive.

Donau Soja Organisation

Donau Soja links rural areas, where the cultivation of Donau Soja / Europe Soya soya beans is located and the urban and peri-urban areas, where most of food is consumed. Through its work, Donau Soja aims to increase the competitiveness of local soya producers and processors in structurally weak areas in Europe and increase access to local, regional and international markets through consumer-oriented information.

Donau Soja / Europe Soya Standard

Donau Soja contributes to SDG 11 through principles 8 and 10.

Principle 8 addresses the protection of natural heritage. The production of certified soya complies with a strict no-land-use-change principle (no deforestation / no conversion) with a clear cut-off date: Donau Soja / Europe Soya certified soya beans shall only be cultivated on land dedicated to agricultural use no later than 1 January 2008.

Farmers are not allowed to grow Donau Soja soya beans in protected areas unless the use of such areas for agricultural purposes is explicitly allowed in the respective management plan while respecting the protection goals within the protected area. Those areas include areas designated by law or by the relevant authority for nature protection purposes and areas for the protection of rare, threatened or endangered ecosystems or species (recognised by international agreements or the European Commission or included in lists drawn up by inter-governmental organisations or the International Union for Conservation of Nature [IUCN]).

Principle 10 addresses working conditions on the farm to be in line with human, social and labour rights including access to basic services.

Main Areas of Work



Credible standard
systems



Network building with
members and partners



Market and supply-chain
development

Responsible Consumption and Production

The objective of SDG 12 is to promote sustainable patterns of production and consumption. The goal focuses on efficient and responsible use of natural resources, reducing food waste, managing chemicals and waste responsibly, and encouraging sustainable practices by businesses. SDG 12 works furthermore towards a more environmentally friendly and efficient production and consumption of goods and resources.

Donau Soja Organisation

Raising awareness for sustainable consumption and production is fundamental to the work of Donau Soja. Donau Soja promotes sustainable development and responsible food consumption through its Protein Strategy for Europe (topics include efficient use of protein resources, healthier and more sustainable diets) and through Donau Soja organised events for members and the broader stakeholder community. In addition, Donau Soja participates in events and dialogue platforms to share knowledge and information about the role of legumes in our food system.

Donau Soja shares knowledge on sustainable soya bean production with farmers in the form of Best Practices Manual, Farmers Handbook and trainings (topics include integrated pest management, fertiliser management, waste management) to significantly reduce the adverse impact of soya bean cultivation on human health and the environment.

Donau Soja promotes more responsible soya sourcing practices by promoting the Donau Soja / Europe Soya Standard. Donau Soja further encourages companies to invest in sustainable soya production in Europe within the Protein Partnership Programme. As additional incentive to include responsibly sourced soya into their supply chains Donau Soja provides current sustainability information (e.g. LCA data on certified European soya beans) for companies to integrate into their sustainability reporting.

Donau Soja / Europe Soya Standard

Donau Soja contributes to SDG 12 through principles 4, 5, 6 and 7 as follows:

Donau Soja / Europe Soya Standards require responsible soil and nutrient management according to principle 4. This includes taking adequate measures to protect and improve soils and prevent erosion, a ban on burning stubble, the use of non-tillage techniques where possible, crop rotation and the use of cover crops. Integrated Pest Management principles and corresponding techniques should be implemented to avoid harm to soil, water and air quality, as stated by principles 5 and 6. Traceability and verification throughout the soya bean supply chain is established through external inspections in form of certificates. This guarantees comprehensive monitoring and confirmation of compliance of all participants.

To increase efficiency of other natural resources principle 7 demands to reduce, reuse and recycle waste where possible. The farmer shall manage and dispose of waste, including hazardous materials, agrochemicals, and their containers to avoid any risks to humans and the environment. Additionally, negative environmental and health impacts of phytosanitary products shall be reduced by implementing systematic, recognised Integrated Crop Management techniques.

Main Areas of Work



Credible standard
systems



Market and supply-chain
development



Communication,
marketing & events

SDG 12: Example activities

Donau Soja has shown a positive evolution in the production of certified soya volumes and physical projects within the last decade.

During harvest 2022, over one million tonnes of Donau Soja / Europe Soja soya beans were produced by more than 9,000 farmers in 12 countries and certified at 200 collectors. This represents an increase of 48 percent in volumes compared to 2019 and corresponds to 10 percent of the total non-GM soya production in Europe. This secures the leading position of the Donau Soja / Europe Soja Standard in soya certification in Europe.

As the European market has a demand of 40 million tonnes of soya per year and 11.5 million tonnes are produced in Europe, Donau Soja plans to expand sustainable soya cultivation in Europe by increasing its certified volumes to 1.5 million tonnes by 2025.

The main sectors consuming Donau Soja and Europe Soja certified soya products in Europe in 2022 are agriculture (eggs, poultry, pork) and aquaculture, followed by plant-based food. Plant-based foods are becoming increasingly popular and have proven to be a promising future market for the Donau Soja Organisation.

Austrian Egg Market

Since 2013, Austrian egg sector changed to Donau Soja certified feed. Practically all shell eggs sold through the Austrian food retail chains are fed with Donau Soja. Additional egg projects in Germany, Serbia and Switzerland are implemented on a local level.



Plant-Based Market

Since 2019, a variety of traditional soya-based products such as tofu, but also innovative meat alternatives and vegan spreads, using certified Donau Soja / Europe Soja, have been developed and are available in 25 European countries.





Climate Action

The objective of SDG 13 is to adapt and combat climate change and its impacts by taking action at a global level. The goal focuses on building resilience to climate-related hazards, integrating climate change measures into policies, raising awareness about climate change, and mobilising financial resources for climate-related initiatives. Through education, innovation and adherence to commitments it is possible to address climate change and protect the planet and its inhabitants from its adverse effects.

Donau Soja Organisation

Donau Soja contributes to SDG 13 on three different levels:

Donau Soja elaborated the Donau Soja / Europe Soya Declarations to promote soya cultivation in Europe on an institutional level. Due to nitrogen-fixing capacities of legumes, this reduces the need for nitrogen fertiliser inputs, while at the same time improving crop rotation in a cereal-dominated European agricultural system.

On the level of soya bean production, Donau Soja organises training programs and field days for farmers. Specifically, the Donau Soja Farmers Handbook provides recommendations for farmers on measures that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase carbon sequestration.

On the level of soya bean consumption, Donau Soja puts high effort into communication and awareness raising on the environmental footprint of soya beans. Deforestation and land use change are responsible for eleven percent of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. With its carbon footprint and Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) data Donau Soja highlights the potential for companies to take climate action within their own value chains by sourcing responsibly produced certified soya beans.

Donau Soja / Europe Soya Standard

To work towards SDG 13 especially Donau Soja / Europe Soya Standard principles 4, 8 and 9 are important.

Soils play an important role as carbon sink, therefore Donau Soja aims for the farmers to improve soil health and functionality. Required adequate measures to protect and improve soils and prevent erosion include a ban on burning stubble, the use of non-tillage techniques where possible, crop rotation and the use of cover crops (see principle 4).

According to principle 8 only agricultural land may be used for soya bean cultivation, thereby protecting carbon-rich ecosystems like forests, grasslands or wetlands from conversion for soya bean cultivation.

Donau Soja aims to raise farmers' awareness on how to reduce GHG emissions and increase carbon sequestration on their farm. The farmer must identify and implement measures that minimize emissions, for example this can be achieved by increasing the share of renewable energies, implementing precision agriculture techniques, controlled traffic farming, or using lighter machinery. Additionally, the farmer must identify and implement measures to increase carbon sequestration on their farm for example by planting cover crops or applying intercropping practices (see principle 9).

Main Areas of Work



Credible standard systems



Communication, marketing & events



Science, innovation, and analytical tools

SDG 13: Example activities

In 2020, Donau Soja commissioned the Dutch consultancy Blonk Consultants to assess the environmental impact of Donau Soja / Europe Soya certified soya bean cultivation in Croatia, Romania, Serbia and Ukraine. As part of the Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) the carbon footprint and other impact categories were assessed. Primary data was collected from more than 70 soya bean farmers who produce according to the Donau Soja / Europe Soya Standard.

The results show a carbon footprint of 0.3 - 0.4 kilograms CO₂-equivalents per kilogram Donau Soja / Europe Soya certified soya beans. This corresponds to about half the emissions of an average European soya bean or about a tenth of the emissions of Brazilian soya beans with deforestation background.

The full LCA datasets of Donau Soja / Europe Soya certified soya beans were published as branded datasets in relevant LCA databases (e.g. Agri-footprint, GFLI) and can be used by certified Donau Soja / Europe Soya companies downstream for reporting on scope 3 emissions, to show the reduced environmental impact in their value chains.





Life Below Water

SDG 14 strives to conserve and sustainably use oceans, seas, and marine resources for the well-being of present and future generations. The goal includes targets to protect marine ecosystems, reduce pollution, end overfishing, support small-scale fishers, and enhance the resilience of coastal areas to climate change. This goal contributes to the health of marine life and the livelihoods of communities relying on marine resources.

Donau Soja Organisation

Donau Soja promotes the cultivation of legumes, which contributes to a diversification of the current crop rotation and has another great advantage: It reduces the need for mineral nitrogen fertilisers, a major land-based factor for pollution of water bodies. Nitrate is the most common chemical form of nitrogen fertilisers. Nitrate is also found commonly in water bodies and contributes there to eutrophication of aquatic ecosystems. Soya beans, like other legumes, are capable of biological nitrogen fixation, thereby reducing the need for synthetic nitrogen fertilisers and the risk of causing damage to aquatic environment in the year of cultivation and in the following year.

The Donau Soja Best Practice Manual recommends the use of inoculation and conducting fertilisation based on soil tests. A 2020 survey conducted by Donau Soja indicated that only about half of farmers in target countries regularly use inoculation. These results underline the relevance of emphasising inoculation in farmer trainings.

Donau Soja / Europe Soya Standard

The Donau Soja / Europe Soya Standard contributes to SDG 14 indirectly through the principles 4, 5 and 6.

Farmers are required to implement good agricultural practices to minimise diffuse and localised impacts on surface and ground water quality from chemical residues, fertilisers and erosion or other sources (see principle 4, 6).

The quality of water bodies on or close to the farm and farm land shall be protected by establishing riparian buffer strips along water courses. There shall be no application of pesticides within thirty meters (or more if required by national law) of any populated area or water body (see principle 5).

Main Areas of Work



Certification and QM



Science, innovation,
and analytical tools



Life On Land

SDG 15 aims to protect, restore, and sustainably manage terrestrial ecosystems, forests, and biodiversity while combating desertification and land degradation. The goal includes targets to conserve and restore ecosystems, prevent deforestation, combat desertification, protect endangered species, and integrate biodiversity into development planning. Summarised, SDG15 is crucial for preserving natural resources, such as forests and protect essential ecosystem services.

Donau Soja Organisation

Donau Soja as an organisation contributes to SDG 15 by its ambition to integrate sustainably produced, non-GM soya from Europe into European supply chains. This ambition is supported by the Donau Soja and Europe Soya Declaration. The signatories commit to the sustainable development of efficient, resilient and productive agricultural and food systems directly supporting SDG 2 (see page 13) and supporting SDG 15 through associated measures to protect agricultural resources and natural and semi-natural ecosystems. This includes integration of soya beans and other legumes in well planned-crop rotations while at the same time maintaining landscape features and protection of high nature value biotopes.

Donau Soja's Protein Strategy for Europe shows a way to address the European protein challenge, which also contributes to the global climate and biodiversity crisis.

Donau Soja / Europe Soya Standard

Donau Soja contributes to SDG 15 directly with its principles 4 and 8 regarding the preservation of natural habitats and using sustainable management principles.

Principle 8 entails the production of soya beans only on land areas that were already declared as agricultural land before 2008 (meaning 2008 as cut-off date for deforestation and land conversion), to protect nature reserves, natural forests, riparian vegetation, wetlands, moors, floodplains or steep slopes. Furthermore, farmers shall sustainably manage natural habitats. The farmer shall protect rare, threatened, or endangered species on the farm including a ban on gathering or hunting threatened or endangered species as well as illegal hunting or fishing. The farmer shall prevent the introduction of invasive species and remove them promptly if detected. The farmer shall maintain nonproductive land features such as set-aside land, buffer zones, and special landscape features and minimise land fragmentation. Landscape features like hedgerows, ditches, or woods must be retained, and hedges and trees should not be cut during the bird breeding and nesting season.

Principle 4 requires responsible soil and nutrient management. This includes taking adequate measures to protect and improve soils and prevent erosion, a ban on burning stubble, the use of non-tillage techniques where possible, crop rotation and the use of cover crops.

Main Areas of Work



Credible standard systems



Advocacy & policy



Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

SDG 16 focuses on promoting peaceful and inclusive societies, ensuring access to justice for all, and building effective and accountable institutions at all levels. The goal targets reducing violence, ending exploitation of children, promoting the rule of law, combating corruption, and enhancing participatory decision-making. Contributing to SDG 16 ensures a more just future for all generations regarding the reduction of insecurities and injustices on different levels.

Donau Soja Organisation

Donau Soja is a non-profit member-based organisation. With more than 320 members from 29 European countries, Donau Soja represents a diverse set of stakeholders, including industry, farmers, civil society, research, and public institutions.

Donau Soja fosters dialogue between different stakeholders to create a policy and regulatory framework that supports sustainable soya bean production and trade and contributes to the development of effective, accountable, and transparent institutions at all levels. Donau Soja's way of work is dedicated to responsive, inclusive, participatory, and representative decision-making (see Donau Soja statutes).

Donau Soja / Europe Soya Standard

Through the principles 3 and 10, the Donau Soja / Europe Soya Standard contributes directly to SDG 16.

The standard requires farmers and other value chain actors to respect applicable laws. Farmers shall conduct business with integrity, respecting applicable laws and avoiding all forms of bribery, conflicts of business interest, fraudulent practices, and respect land use rights (see principle 3).

Compliance with fundamental conventions of the International Labour Organisations (ILO Conventions) are mandatory. This includes a ban on forced, compulsory, bonded, trafficked or otherwise involuntary labour; no corporal punishment, mental or physical oppression or coercion, verbal or physical abuse, sexual harassment, or any kind of intimidation; no child labour. Equal work must be equally paid. All workers shall have equal access to training and benefits and shall have equal opportunities for promotion and for filling any available position (see principle 10).

Main Areas of Work



Certification and QM



Advocacy & policy



Network building with members and partners



Partnerships for the Goals

It emphasises the need for collaboration and cooperation among governments, businesses, civil society, and other stakeholders to achieve all the other Sustainable Development Goals. The aim is to strengthen international cooperation, promote partnerships, and use technology and innovation to address global challenges and create a more sustainable and inclusive world by 2030.

Donau Soja Organisation

Donau Soja is a non-profit member-based multi-stakeholder organisation that supports its partners and members in progressing change to address social, environmental, and economic challenges in soya production and consumption. Donau Soja aims to mobilise and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources to sustainable production and consumption of soya beans in Europe.

Donau Soja is mobilising additional financial resources for developing countries from multiple sources. Best example for this is our cooperation with the Austrian Development Agency. The Strategic Partnership with the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) financed 50 percent by public grant and 50 percent by private investment of Donau Soja members and partners through the Donau Soja Association, delivers advantages to the domestic market, food producers, consumers, and the environment. The completed DevRAM project financed by the EU, managed by ADA and implemented by Donau Soja is also a great example of joint forces aimed to increase the competitiveness of the agri-food sector in Moldova through integration into domestic and global value chains, especially in the soya sector.

The organisation engages in dialogue with key stakeholders, including farmers, food processors, and retailers, to raise awareness and align on policies that prioritise sustainable agriculture and promote the use of non-GM soya beans.

Specific partnership programmes, such as the Protein Partnership programme mobilise resources and contribute to capacity building by investing in training and certification up to the primary collectors. The partnership programme funds and organises trainings for farmers and participation in field trials in partner countries, especially in CEE countries. Donau Soja holds networking and collaboration close to its heart, considering them fundamental aspects of the organisation's DNA.

Donau Soja / Europe Soya Standard

Donau Soja strengthens the rule of law in European countries, as legal compliance is a prerequisite for farmers and other value chain actors.

According to principle 3 the farmer shall conduct business with integrity, respecting applicable laws and avoiding all forms of bribery, conflicts of business interest and fraudulent practices.

In various aspects, the standards go beyond legal compliance. The same requirements apply for farmers inside and outside the EU, thereby contributing to creating a fair and competitive environment across the European continent and promoting the adoption of consistent sustainable agricultural practices. The creation of a level playing field serves as a bridge between the EU and markets outside the EU.

Main Areas of Work



Network building with
members and partners



Communication,
marketing & events



Credible standard
systems

SDG 17: Example activities

In 2017 Donau Soja started its cooperation with ADA. This cooperation is mobilising resources and 9 million Euro funds from ADA and the private sector – the Donau Soja Association, its members and partners. The cooperation is related to a programme that aims to build sustainable, inclusive and well-functioning value chains for non-GM soya and organic soya in Moldova, Ukraine, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The programme is implemented in a period of seven years, and it is financed 50 percent by the development cooperation and 50 percent from private sector. After the first six years of implementation, the project has registered more than 20,000 participations of individuals from more than 500 legal entities from the soya sector in Ukraine, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and

Moldova. More than 60 percent of the beneficiaries were small and medium-sized farmers and companies. The monitoring system also recorded 25 percent women's participation. The work also had a significant positive environmental impact. In this six year time period (2017-2022) a total of more than 1,7 million tonnes of Donau Soja / Europe Soya certified soya beans in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Serbia and Ukraine were made available for the international value-chain through the Strategic Partnership Programme with ADA.

This effort resulted in: avoidance of forest loss (up to 15,242 hectares of forest areas in Brazil are not converted for soya bean cultivation), avoidance of GHG emissions (up to 6,711,568 tonnes of CO₂-equivalents compared to a scenario with the total volume imported from Brazil) and avoidance of herbicides (123,598 litres).



V. SUMMARY OF RESULTS

The assessment identified that 79 out of 169 SDG targets are within the sphere of influence of the Donau Soja Organisation. This corresponds to 47 percent of the total number of targets. Further, the assessment showed that the Donau Soja Organisation contributes directly or indirectly to all targets within its sphere of influence. The targets within the Donau Soja Organisation sphere of influence can be seen in figure 6.

Overview of Donau Sojas contribution to the SDGs



Donau Soja Organisation contributes to all 17 SDGs and 47% of the 169 targets.

Figure 6: Overview of Donau Sojas contribution to the SDGs

- | | |
|---|--|
| 01 No Poverty | 10 Reduced Inequalities |
| 02 Zero Hunger | 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities |
| 03 Good Health and Well-being | 12 Responsible Consumption and Production |
| 04 Quality Education | 13 Climate Action |
| 05 Gender Equality | 14 Life Below Water |
| 06 Clean Water and Sanitation | 15 Life on Land |
| 07 Affordable and Clean Energy | 16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions |
| 08 Decent Work and Economic Growth | 17 Partnerships to achieve the Goals |
| 09 Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure | |

Overview of Donau Soja’s contribution to the 17 SDGs as organisation

Figure 7 gives an overview of how much the Donau Soja Organisation contributes to each SDG. The extent of contribution per SDG is indicated.

Donau Soja Organisation contribution per SDG

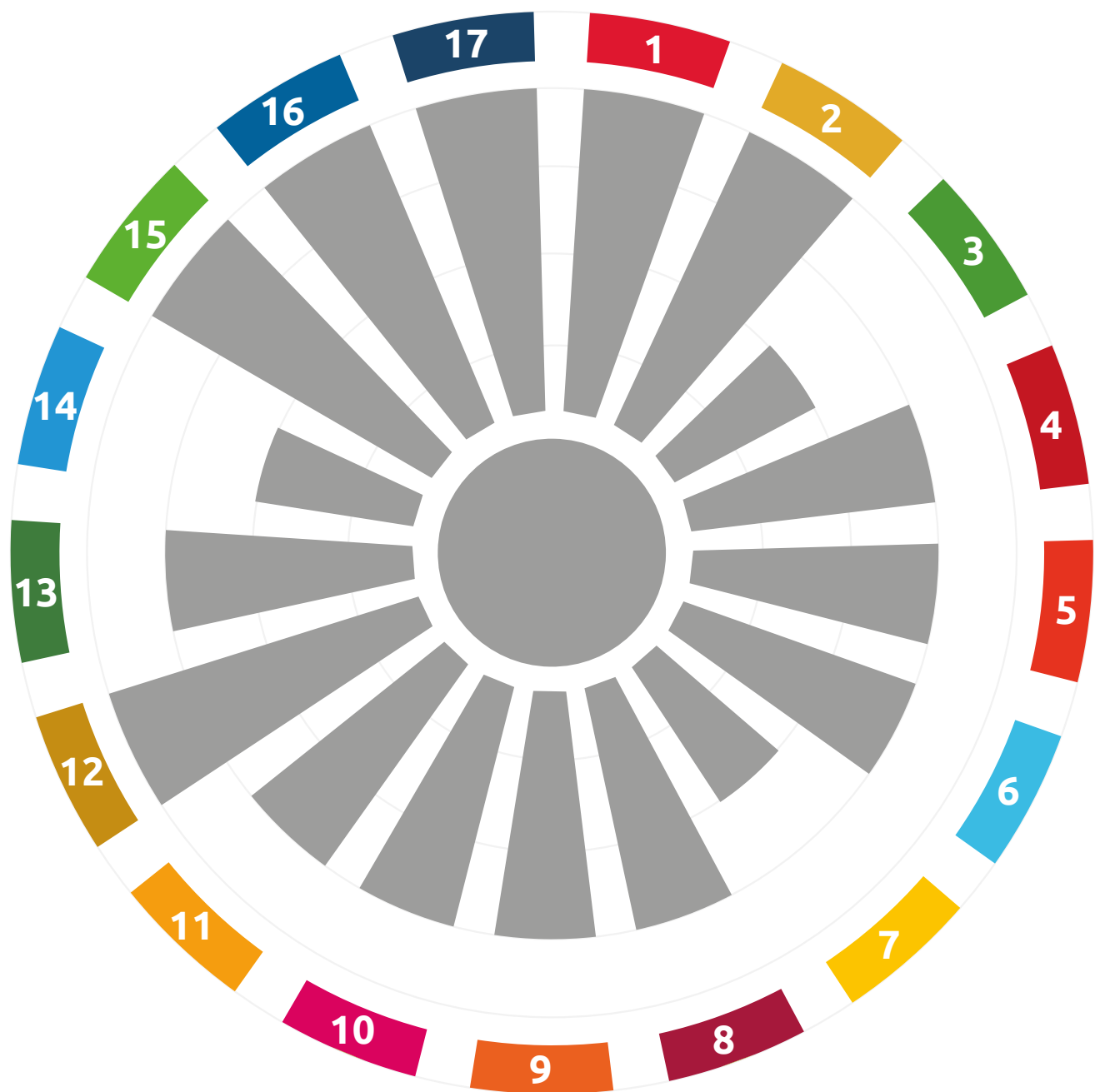


Figure 7: Contribution of the Donau Soja Organisation per SDG

- | | |
|---|--|
| 01 No Poverty | 10 Reduced Inequalities |
| 02 Zero Hunger | 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities |
| 03 Good Health and Well-being | 12 Responsible Consumption and Production |
| 04 Quality Education | 13 Climate Action |
| 05 Gender Equality | 14 Life Below Water |
| 06 Clean Water and Sanitation | 15 Life on Land |
| 07 Affordable and Clean Energy | 16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions |
| 08 Decent Work and Economic Growth | 17 Partnerships to achieve the Goals |
| 09 Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure | |

Overview of Donau Soja's contribution to the 17 SDGs through the Donau Soja / Europe Soya Standard

Figure 8 gives an overview of how much the Donau Soja Organisation contributes to each SDG through the Donau Soja / Europe Soya Standard. The extent of contribution per SDG is indicated.

Donau Soja / Europe Soya Standard contribution per SDG

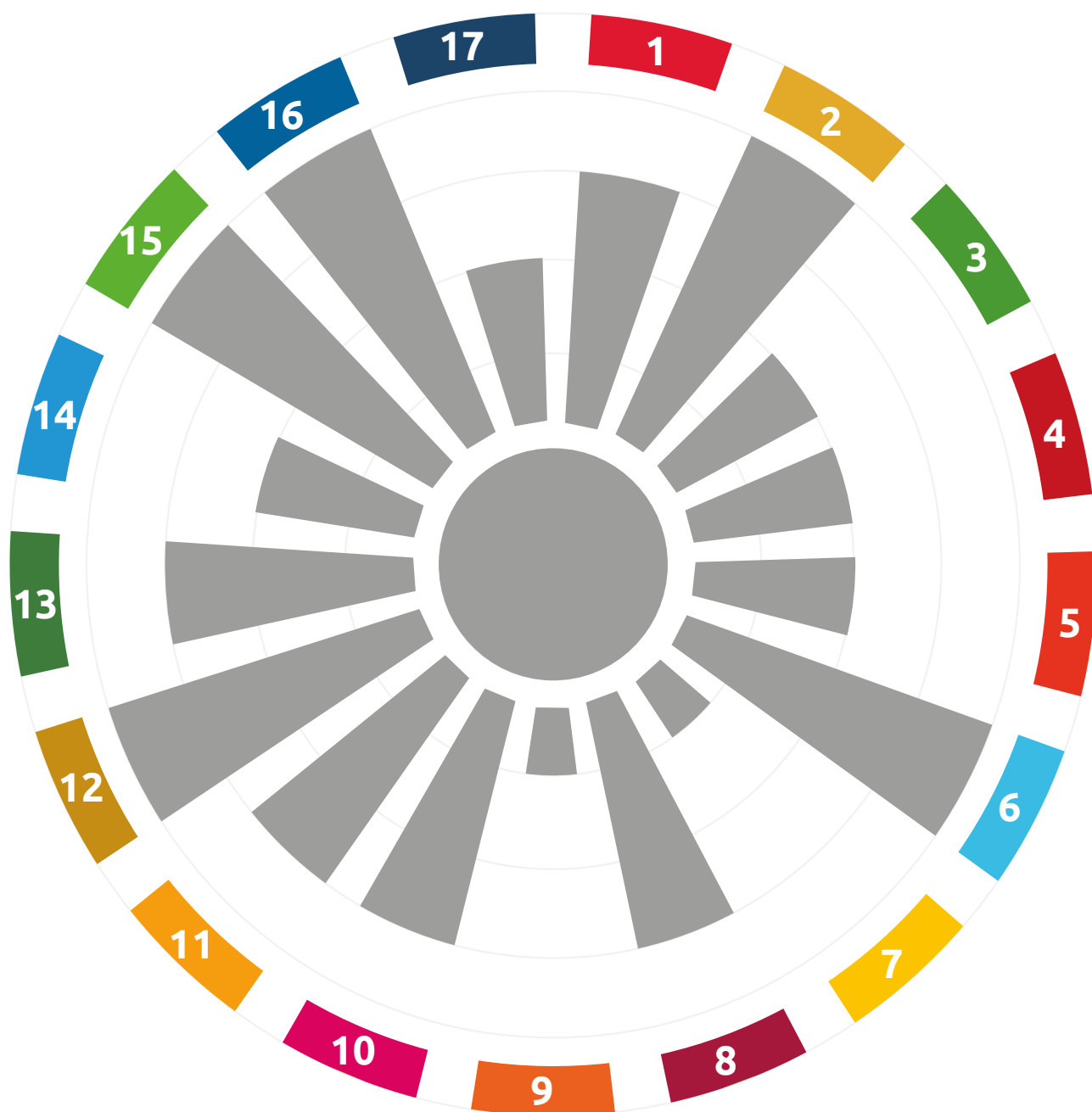


Figure 8: Contribution of the Donau Soja / Europe Soya Standard per SDG

- | | |
|---|--|
| 01 No Poverty | 10 Reduced Inequalities |
| 02 Zero Hunger | 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities |
| 03 Good Health and Well-being | 12 Responsible Consumption and Production |
| 04 Quality Education | 13 Climate Action |
| 05 Gender Equality | 14 Life Below Water |
| 06 Clean Water and Sanitation | 15 Life on Land |
| 07 Affordable and Clean Energy | 16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions |
| 08 Decent Work and Economic Growth | 17 Partnerships to achieve the Goals |
| 09 Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure | |

Figure 9 gives an overview on how the 10 principles of Donau Soja / Europe Soya cultivation contribute to the SDGs (see 10 principles in Figure 5)

The SDGs and the matching Donau Soja principles

01 No Poverty	Principle 3	Principle 5	Principle 10
02 Zero Hunger	Principle 2	Principle 3	Principle 4
03 Good Health and Well-being		Principle 5	Principle 10
04 Quality Education			Principle 10
05 Gender Equality			Principle 10
06 Clean Water and Sanitation	Principle 5	Principle 6	Principle 8
07 Affordable and Clean Energy			Principle 9
08 Decent Work and Economic Growth		Principle 1	Principle 10
09 Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure			
10 Reduced Inequalities			Principle 10
11 Sustainable Cities and Communities		Principle 8	Principle 10
12 Responsible Consumption and Production	Principle 4	Principle 5	Principle 6
13 Climate Action	Principle 4	Principle 8	Principle 9
14 Life Below Water	Principle 4	Principle 5	Principle 6
15 Life on Land		Principle 4	Principle 8
16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions		Principle 3	Principle 10
17 Partnerships to achieve the Goals			Principle 3

Figure 9: The SDGs and the matching Donau Soja principles

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List of abbreviations

ADA..... Austrian Development Agency
DevRAM..... Development of Rural Areas in the Republic of Moldova
EU..... European Union
FPIC..... free, prior, informed and documented consent
GDP..... Gross Domestic Product
GFLI..... The Global Feed LCA Institute
GHG Greenhouse gas
ILO International Labour Organisation
LCA Life Cycle Assessment
Non-GM..... non genetically modified
SDG..... Sustainable Development Goal
SFS Sustainable Food Systems, Switzerland
UN..... United Nations
WHO..... World Health Organisation

Endnotes

- ⁱ United Nations, 2023: online available at <https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/2023-04/SDG%20Progress%20Report%20Special%20Edition.pdf>
ⁱⁱ Eurostat, 2022: online available at <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat>
ⁱⁱⁱ Donau Soja Organisation, 2023 based on data from the World Bank, the Government of Ukraine, the European Union, the United Nation
^{iv} Donau Soja Organisation, 2023 based on the data of State Statistical Service of Ukraine, Ministry of Agriculture and Food of Ukraine
^v Richardson, K. et al. . (2023). Earth beyond six of nine planetary boundaries. Science Advances 9. doi:10.1126/sciadv.adh2458

Annex 1: Overview relevant documents

Document and Information	Current Link
10 Years Anniversary & Annual Report 2022 Donau Soja	https://www.donausoja.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/DonauSoja_Anniversary-Report2022.pdf
ADA/DevRAM	https://www.donausoja.org/projects/previous-projects/ada-devram/
Austrian Development Agency (ADA)	https://www.entwicklung.at/en/
Best Practice Manual	https://www.donausoja.org/agriculture/best-practice-manual/
Donau Soja and Europe Soya Declarations	https://www.donausoja.org/organisation/donau-soja-and-europe-soya-declarations/
Donau Soja Standard and Guidelines	https://www.donausoja.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Donau_Soja_Guidelines.pdf
Europe Soya Standard and Guidelines	https://www.donausoja.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Europe_Soya_Guidelines.pdf
Donau Soja Statutes	https://www.donausoja.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/DS-Statutes_-Donau-Soja_29092022-1.pdf
Field days	https://www.donausoja.org/agriculture/field-days/
Food Day Donau Soja	https://www.donausoja.org/donau-soja-food-day/
Governance and statutes Donau Soja	https://www.donausoja.org/organisation/governance-and-statutes/
Labels and products on the market Donau Soja and Europe Soya	https://www.donausoja.org/organisation/labels-and-products-on-the-market/
Legume Hub	https://www.legumehub.eu/
Life Cycle Assessment Donau Soja / Europe Soya soybeans	https://www.donausoja.org/projects/lifecycle-assessment-carbon-footprint-project/
Life Cycle Assessment/Carbon Footprint Projects	https://www.donausoja.org/projects/lifecycle-assessment-carbon-footprint-project/
Market information Donau Soja	https://www.donausoja.org/market-information/
Market report Donau Soja	https://www.donausoja.org/news/market-report/
Past research projects	https://www.donausoja.org/projects/previous-projects/
Protein Partnerships	https://www.donausoja.org/agriculture/protein-partnership/
Protein Strategy Donau Soja	https://www.donausoja.org/organisation/donau-soja-protein-strategy/
Regional Climate Partnerships	https://www.donausoja.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Donau-Soja-Factsheet_Regional-Climate-Partnerships_EN-1-1.pdf
Soya analysis tool	https://www.donausoja.org/agriculture/soya-analysis/
Strategic Partnership	https://www.donausoja.org/projects/ada/
World Soybean Research Conference 11 (WSRC11)	https://www.wsrc11vienna.com/

Annex 2: Assessment on target level



**Donau Soja Organisation
contributes to all 17 SDGs
and 47% of the 169 targets.**

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