

Q&A Equalitas

Q&A Equalitas is a periodically updated document containing interpretations or amendments to the SOPD Equalitas Standard and the Implementing Regulation. It is a normative document, therefore formally part of the Standard or of the Implementing Regulation, which is updated following reports from Certification Bodies or other stakeholders, or on the basis of reviews by the Technical-Scientific-Ethical Committee or by the Board of Directors of Equalitas. All the updates introduced with Q&A Equalitas constitute official additions and revisions of the Standard and of the Implementing Regulation and will form an integral part thereof when they are subjected to a formal revision.

The implementation of the new and/or updated rules comes into force two months after each new publication of the Q&A Equalitas unless specific indications are provided (for example "from the date of publication"). Mere interpretations must instead be considered applicable immediately.

1. CORRECT CLASSIFICATION OF THE FINDINGS

Is it permissible to include Suggestions for Improvement (SI) or Non-Compliances (NC) in the audit reports in relation to the "m" or "R" requirements when they are considered relevant to the specific situation of the audited organisation?

No, the Equalitas protocol does not provide for this eventuality. Only the findings against the "M" requirements should be formalised. The only NCs attributable to the "m" and "R" requirements could be formalised in the event of failure to meet the minimum 30% and 10% quotas respectively during the renewal audits. In this case too, the NC should not address the individual requirements, but the Implementing Regulation (paragraph 4.3).

However, it is possible to formalise an SI in response to the "M" requirements only, for example in the event that the lead auditor believes that the requirement is satisfied but as an end in itself and of little use to the company.

2. APPLICATION SCOPE OF THE STANDARD

How do you indicate the "Subject to whom the certification is addressed"? Can the wording "*company of the wine production chain*" be used in order to involve all subjects on the basis of the related process?

It is necessary to comply with the provisions of paragraph 4.1 of the Implementing Regulation, paragraphs I and II: "*I. The Standard applies exclusively to Organisations, Products and Designations of Origin in the wine sector. II. Aromatised wine products are also included in the scope of the Standard*".

3. ALTERNATING AUDITORS AT THE SAME FACILITY

The CB must ensure that the same Audit Team does not carry out more than 3 consecutive audits at the same site. By 3 audits do we mean 3 certifications (9 years to be clear) or 3 audits, including the surveillance phases? Is it therefore necessary to change the audit team every three years?



This aspect is not specifically dealt with in the Implementing Regulation and therefore needs to be officially introduced: the lead auditor is required to change every three audits, also taking into account the surveillance phases (extensions or supplementary audits are not counted). For any exceptions to the rotation, a reasoned request must be made to Equalitas.

4. OPERATIONS OF THE ORGANISATIONS DURING THE AUDIT

Is it necessary that the product subject to certification is being prepared, or that the organisation's processes are running at the time of the audit?

This aspect is not specifically dealt with in the Implementing Regulation and therefore needs to be officially introduced: it is required that the audit takes place during production activities at least once in every three-year period.

Based on the risk analysis, as required by the UNI EN ISO 19011:2018 standard, the CB can increase the frequency of audits to be performed when the product is being prepared or when the organisation's processes are running.

5. CHANGE OF CERTIFICATION BODY

Should a company already possess the certification and wishes to change the CB, are there any obligations to follow?

This aspect is not specifically dealt with in the Implementing Regulation and therefore needs to be introduced officially: in compliance with the ISO/IEC 17021-1 and ISO/IEC 17065 standards, a meeting must be held between the CBs during the transition phase (formal notice from the incoming CB to the outgoing CB). The incoming CB must also request the reports of the last 3 audits from the organisation. A copy of the new certificate must be sent to Equalitas. The certificate must indicate as first issue date the one already defined by the outgoing CB. Thus, the expiration date (end of the three-year certification period) will not undergo any changes.

6. SUSPENSION OR WITHDRAWAL OF THE CERTIFICATE DUE TO LACK OF SURVEILLANCE

What happens if a certified company avoids the surveillance audit? Does the company's decision need to be notified to the Equalitas administrative office? Is there a specific form?

This consists of the failure to comply with one of the obligations established by the Implementing Regulation, paragraph 10.1 section III. The Organisation has the right to request to the CB the postponement of the surveillance audit provided that it occurs by 31/12 of the ongoing year as required by the reference standards (Ref. REG_SOPD_002.1_20221001, chap. 11, par. 11.4, subpar. III). Notwithstanding ISO/IEC 17021-1 the date of the first surveillance audit, that follows the first certification audit, may exceed 12 months from the date of the decision of certification.

In case the Organisation avoids the surveillance audit (unplanned by 31/12 of the ongoing year) the CB must provide for the suspension of the certificate. Following the certificate suspension, the Organisation must allow the CB to carry out the surveillance audit within a 3 months period, otherwise the certificate will be withdrawn.



In any case, the provision of suspension or withdrawal must be communicated to Equalitas (there is no specific form). In the event of the withdrawal, the Organisation will not be able to request a new certification for a period of at least 6 months from its formalisation.

7. CORRECT ATTRIBUTION OF THE FINDINGS

Is it possible to relate an NC to two or more requirements of the Standard on the Audit Report?

No, it is not possible to group several requirements against a single NC. However, it is possible to use the same NC description for several requirements.

Example **CORRECT way**: Use of the same NC description for several requirements

RIF.	REQUIREMENT	CLASSIFICATION as it is stated on the Checklist	NC description
5.1.1	The Organisation adopts a sustainability management system for all points contained in this Standard.	NC	The Organisation has not formalized a management system: no improvement objectives have been defined, no internal audits have been carried out, no suppliers and outsourcers evaluation procedures have been applied.
5.1.2	The Organisation periodically monitors the sustainability criteria defined by the Standard and records the results in order to evaluate the improvements.	NC	The Organisation has not formalized a management system: no improvement objectives have been defined, no internal audits have been carried out, no suppliers and outsourcers evaluation procedures have been applied.

Example **WRONG way**: Grouping of several requirements with the same NC description

RIF.	REQUIREMENT	CLASSIFICATION as it is stated on the Checklist	NC description
5.1.1, 5.1.2	The Organisation adopts a sustainability management system for all points contained in this Standard.	NC	The Organisation has not formalized a management system: no improvement objectives have been defined, no internal audits have been carried out, no suppliers and outsourcers evaluation procedures have been applied.



Moreover, it is possible to group different findings against Major (M) requirements, attributing the NC to the main unfulfilled requirement. This methodology is not applicable in the case of minor (m) requirements and recommendations (R) since it would affect the calculation of the percentage of minor requirements and recommendations to be met over the three-year period of certification.

Example **CORRECT – alternative 1**: several M requirements classified as NC with the same description

RIF.	REQUIREMENT	CLASSIFICATION as it is stated on the Checklist	NC description
5.1.1	The Organisation adopts a sustainability management system for all points contained in this Standard.	NC	The Organisation has not formalized a management system: no improvement objectives have been defined, no internal audits have been carried out, no suppliers and outsourcers evaluation procedures have been applied.
5.1.2	The Organisation periodically monitors the sustainability criteria defined by the Standard and records the results in order to evaluate the improvements.	NC	The Organisation has not formalized a management system: no improvement objectives have been defined, no internal audits have been carried out, no suppliers and outsourcers evaluation procedures have been applied.
5.1.3	The Organisation defines a supplier qualification and management policy that also takes into consideration the sustainability requirements.	NC	The Organisation has not formalized a management system: no improvement objectives have been defined, no internal audits have been carried out, no suppliers and outsourcers evaluation procedures have been applied.
5.1.4	The Organisation collects information regarding the adoption of sustainability requirements by suppliers.	NC	The Organisation has not formalized a management system: no improvement objectives have been defined, no internal audits have been carried out, no suppliers and outsourcers evaluation procedures have been applied.
5.1.5	At least once a year, the Organisation conducts an assessment of the sustainability requirements with a	NC	The Organisation has not formalized a management system: no improvement



	view to highlighting the areas of improvement.		objectives have been defined, no internal audits have been carried out, no suppliers and outsourcers evaluation procedures have been applied.
5.1.6	Based on the outcome of the self-monitoring and of the third-party audits, the Organisation defines and adopts corrective and improvement actions, when necessary, on the issues set out in this Standard.	NC	The Organisation has not formalized a management system: no improvement objectives have been defined, no internal audits have been carried out, no suppliers and outsourcers evaluation procedures have been applied.
5.1.7	In cases where some activities falling within the scope of this Standard should be outsourced to third parties (outsourced processes), the Organisation guarantees the compliance of these operations with reference to this Standard.	NC	The Organisation has not formalized a management system: no improvement objectives have been defined, no internal audits have been carried out, no suppliers and outsourcers evaluation procedures have been applied.

Example **CORRECT – alternative 2**: several “M” requirements classified as NC with the same “root cause” – in this case it is possible to assign the NC to the main unfulfilled requirement of the section.

RIF.	REQUIREMENT	CLASSIFICATION as it is stated on the Checklist	NC description
5.1.1	The Organisation adopts a sustainability management system for all points contained in this Standard.	NC	The Organisation has not formalized a management system: no improvement objectives have been defined, no internal audits have been carried out, no suppliers and outsourcers evaluation procedures have been applied.
5.1.2	The Organisation periodically monitors the sustainability criteria defined by the Standard and records the results in order to evaluate the improvements.	NC	See 5.1.1
5.1.3	The Organisation defines a supplier qualification and management policy	NC	See 5.1.1



	that also takes into consideration the sustainability requirements.		
5.1.4	The Organisation collects information regarding the adoption of sustainability requirements by suppliers.	NC	See 5.1.1
5.1.5	At least once a year, the Organisation conducts an assessment of the sustainability requirements with a view to highlighting the areas of improvement.	NC	See 5.1.1
5.1.6	Based on the outcome of the self-monitoring and of the third-party audits, the Organisation defines and adopts corrective and improvement actions, when necessary, on the issues set out in this Standard.	NC	See 5.1.1
5.1.7	In cases where some activities falling within the scope of this Standard should be outsourced to third parties (outsourced processes), the Organisation guarantees the compliance of these operations with reference to this Standard.	NC	See 5.1.1

8. COMMERCIAL COMPANIES, MARKETED PRODUCTS, OUTSOURCED MANAGEMENT (OUTSOURCED PROCESSES) OF PRODUCTION PROCESSES FALLING WITHIN THE SCOPE OF APPLICATION OF THE CERTIFICATION

Is it possible for a company that falls into the "commercial" category to use the "Sustainable Winery" trademark on the label? Is it also possible in the case of a label bearing its own brand?

I. COMMERCIAL COMPANY

First of all, a company is considered “commercial” when it does not directly carry out any production, except for possible labelling and possible storage of the finished product, which fall within the scope of application of the certification. These are companies referred to in point G of table 1 of chapter 5 of the Implementing Regulation.

This category can include: wine shops, distribution centres, trading agencies. It also includes companies which, albeit by purchasing semi-finished wine products, do not directly manage any production process, but rely on work providers (for example an organisation that buys bulk wine, whose storage, processing and bottling take place at a work provider’s site).

Taking up what is expressed in the Implementing Regulation in point 5.8, marketed products are excluded from the certification, unless they come from certified companies.

Specifically, with regard to the Sustainable Organisation module, the commercial company can take advantage of the following options:

- A. Purchase a finished product with the Equalitas “Sustainable Winery” logo from a certified organisation. In this case the bottling - conditioning is indicated on the label as being performed by the manufacturing company which, being certified, can legitimately market it. In this case there is no need for the commercial company to be certified in turn.
- B. Purchase a finished product with the Equalitas "Sustainable Winery" logo from a certified organisation which has however affixed a label owned by the commercial company: bottling - conditioning is still indicated on the label as being performed by the manufacturing company but it bears brand names/names of commercial lines/logos that lead back to the commercial company. Again, there is no need for the commercial company to be certified in turn. However, it must be noted that the company name of the commercial company cannot be mentioned on the label, not even through the following wording "Distributed by *company name*", unless said commercial company is certified.
- C. Purchase raw materials or semi-finished wine products and outsource the production phases: the wording on the label will be "bottled/conditioned by *manufacturing company* on behalf of *commercial company*". In this case at least the commercial company must be certified, and the CB must necessarily provide for an audit at the work provider's production site. Therefore, the outsourcing of all production processes is a possible circumstance but the site that provides the work service will necessarily be subject to audit, even if it does not have to be certified.
- D. Should the Sustainable Organisation export its products bearing the “Sustainable Winery” logo to third countries, it is possible to insert the wording “Imported/Distributed by *name of the importer/distributor*” if, and only if, this information is specifically required by law (for example US, Canada, UK, Japan, South Korea, etc.).

Similarly, with regard to the Sustainable Product module, the commercial company can make use of the following options:

- E. Purchase a finished product labelled with the Equalitas "Sustainable Wine" logo from a certified organisation. In this case the commercial company can sell the finished product without having to be certified.
- F. Purchase the finished product with the Equalitas "Sustainable Wine" logo from a certified organisation which has however affixed a label owned by the commercial company: bottling - conditioning is still indicated on the label as by the manufacturing company but it bears brand names/names of commercial lines/logos that lead back to the commercial company. Again, there is no need for the commercial company to be certified in turn. However, it should be noted that the company name of the commercial company cannot be mentioned on the label, not even through the following wording "Distributed by *company name*", unless said commercial company is certified.
- G. Purchase semi-finished wine products and outsource the production phases: the wording on the label will be "bottled/conditioned by *manufacturing company* on behalf of *commercial company*". In this case, the outsourcer constitutes a production chain operator, and the commercial company will constitute the Leader Organisation. In compliance with point 11.5 of the Implementing Regulation, the CB must provide for the audit at the production site of the work provider.



- H. Should the Sustainable Organisation export its products bearing the “Sustainable Wine” logo to third countries, it is possible to insert the wording “Imported/Distributed by *name of the importer/distributor*” if, and only if, this information is specifically required by law (for example US, Canada, UK, Japan, South Korea, etc.).

For a better distinction between marketed products and outsourced products, the definition referred to in point 2.14 of the Implementing Regulation is integrated, as follows: “*Marketed products: finished products purchased and stored in the plant but not manufactured, processed or packaged by the Organisation.*”

The marketed product is therefore distinguished from the one obtained from 100% outsourcing with respect to the scope of application of the certification (for example in the case of purchase of a semi-finished product which is then processed at another site on behalf of the requesting organisation).

- II. MANAGEMENT OF ALL OUTSOURCED PROCESSES BY ALL OTHER TYPES OF ORGANISATIONS (reference to chapter 5, table 1 of the Implementing Regulation)

It should be noted that, as defined for the commercial company in points 8.C and 8.F of this document, even if the outsourcing of all processes concerns another type of organisation, the obligation remains valid for the CB to provide for an audit at the outsourcer's production site (such a case could arise, for example, for a company located within a DO that also produces wines belonging to another DO with a total restriction on the production and bottling in the area).

As regards the outsourcing of a part of the production processes, the CB is entitled, based on an analysis of the context and of the risk, to establish whether to subject the outsourcer's site to audit as well.

9. SPECIFICATIONS FOR THE CALCULATION OF THE WATER AND CARBON FOOTPRINT IN THE CASE OF OUTSOURCED PROCESSES

Is it necessary to include emissions deriving from outsourced processes within one's own organisational boundaries?

Should the requesting organisation manage all or part of the production processes falling within the scope of the certification in outsourcing, in order to calculate the organisation's carbon and water footprint, the organisation must include these processes in its reporting boundaries, adopting the criteria defined in the ISO standards of reference, indicated in the Standard.

10. SUPERVISORY SYNDICATES

If a Supervisory Syndicate manages more than one Designation of Origin, is it possible to certify only one? Or is it necessary to certify all those managed?

This aspect is not specifically dealt with in the Implementing Regulation and therefore needs to be officially introduced. Should a Supervisory Syndicate manage more than one Designation of Origin, it can decide to certify only one.

If Organisations that are already certified according to the SO or SP module are involved in the DfS certification project, do they still have to provide their data for the calculation of the Footprints?

Yes, the quantitative data for calculating the Footprints must be provided by all farms participating in the DfS project.

11. CLARIFICATIONS FOR THE APPLICATION OF THE SUSTAINABLE PRODUCT MODULE

What are the methods to be adopted by cooperative wineries in the context of certification pursuant to the SP module?

The Standard requires the implementation of a traceability system for the Sustainable Product throughout all stages of the wine production chain, guaranteeing its separation from products not subject to certification at each production chain operator.

In the specific case of cooperative wineries, for which it is possible to trace the individual day of delivery, the following methods are possible:

- A. Keep the Sustainable Product subject to certification separate throughout the entire production cycle. In this case, only the adhering members whose grapes contribute to the production of the wines subject to certification will be involved in the certification; these wines will be kept separate from the other batches throughout the process up to bottling.
- B. Involve all the members who provide a certain variety in the certification of the Sustainable Product chain and certify all the products deriving from it. In this case, all products containing that, or those, varieties must be certified according to the Sustainable Product module.

How do these methods influence calculations of the carbon and water footprint of the product?

In case A, the carbon and water footprints will be assessed by collecting the primary data relating to each production chain operator involved, in the same way biodiversity will be analysed only at the vineyards whose grapes contribute to the production of the wine or wines subject to certification.

In case B, the water and carbon footprints will be calculated for the total mass of the wine, referring to the primary data of all the members, to then allocate the impacts to the percentage of wine which will make up the wine labels subject to certification for the cellar phase – bottling. As far as biodiversity is concerned, the vineyards of all the members shall be taken into account, defining the indicator for homogeneous areas.

What are the data to consider if the vintage to be certified is prior to the current harvest?

This aspect is not specifically dealt with in the Implementing Regulation and therefore needs to be officially introduced.

Should the harvest year of the product subject to certification be prior to the current year, the following must be considered:

- The data relating to the harvest of the product subject to certification as regards good practices in the vineyard, good cellar and bottling/packaging practices;
- The data relating to the last harvest in the case of good quality assurance practices, good socio-economic practices, good communication practices and for the biodiversity indicator;



The calculation of the carbon and the water footprint must be carried out at least once during the three-year period of certification (reference to chapter 4.3 of the Implementing Regulation). Therefore, it is necessary to implement a principle of retroactivity of the three-year certification period, thus:

- if the year subject to certification is one year prior, there are still two years to calculate the indicators;
- if the year subject to certification is two years prior, there is one year for calculating the indicators;
- if the year subject to certification is three years prior, it is necessary to calculate the indicators in the current year;
- If the vintage to be certified is prior to three years, it is necessary to present the calculation of the water and carbon footprints for each past three-year certification period.

12. SUSTAINABLE PRODUCT CERTIFICATES

Is it necessary to add to the first certified year on the certificate of conformity of the SP module?

This aspect is not specifically dealt with in the Implementing Regulation and therefore needs to be officially introduced. The certificate of conformity to the SP module must indicate the first year of certification, in addition to the information already provided for in point 6.7 of the Implementing Regulation.

13. USE OF THE "SUSTAINABLE WINERY" LOGO

Is it possible to use the "Sustainable Winery" logo on the label of products harvested in years prior to obtaining the certificate of conformity?

This aspect is not specifically dealt with in the Implementing Regulation or in the Logo and Trademark Use Regulation, therefore it needs to be officially introduced. It is possible to use the "Sustainable Winery" logo on products harvested and bottled in years prior to the date of obtaining the certification, provided that labelling takes place after the issue of the certificate of conformity.

14. WATER FOOTPRINT CALCULATION

In relation to the calculation methods for the Water Footprint defined by Annex II of the Standard, is it possible to refer to assessment methods other than those indicated in table 2.1?

Annex II illustrates the additional elements, in addition to what has already been defined by the ISO 14046 standard, which need to be considered for quantifying and reporting the water footprint of the Organisation, Product and Denomination pursuant to the SOPD Equalitas Standard.

Table 2.1, concerning the impact categories for the Water Footprint analysis, shows specific assessment methods for each impact category. However, it is possible to use other equivalent and possibly more up-to-date assessment methods than those indicated in table 2.1.



15. NON-RENEWAL AND EXPIRATION OF THE CERTIFICATE

What happened if the CB does not complete the renewal audit and it is not able to verify the implementation of the corrections and the corrective actions in relation to every NC before the expiration date of the certification of conformity?

As required by ISO/IEC 17021-1, referred to in the Implementing Regulation (Ref. REG_SOPD_002.1_20221001, chap. 11, par. III), in case the renewal audit is not carried out or the evaluation of the corrections and the corrective actions implemented by the Organisation is not completed before the expiry of the certificate, the renewal of the certification must not be approved and the validity of the certification must not be extended.

The CB shall notify the Organisation and Equalitas of the non-renewal of the certificate.

Following the expiry of the certification, the CB may restore the same within 6 months, places that the pending certification renewal activities have been completed.

The date of the current issue on the certificate must be correspondent or subsequent to the decision of the renewal of the certification. The expiry date must be based on the previous certification cycle.

16. REPORTING SUMMARY OF MINOR REQUIREMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Following each audit, is it possible for Organisation to receive from the CB a summary of the minor requirements and the recommendations met?

Yes, it is. The CB must give to the Organisation a summary of the minor requirements and the recommendations that have been evaluated as compliant/non-compliant during the audit. This report may be given to the Organisation as an extract of the checklist or in other ways, sending it with or afterward the release of the certificate of conformity.

17. DATA COLLECTION OF OUTSOURCED PROCESSES FOR THE CALCULATION OF CARBON AND WATER FOOTPRINTS

Whether the audited Organisation decides to exclude from its application scope the outsourced processes, is it possible to exclude the data related to those outsourced processes from the calculation of carbon and water footprint?

Yes, it is. In the case of corporate certification, for the calculation of carbon and water footprint, it is correct to exclude data related to outsourced processes if those processes have been excluded from the scope of application.

18. OUTSOURCED PROCESSES

As part of outsourced processes, when is it legitimate/necessary to apply requirement 5.1.7 (module OS), and when is it legitimate/necessary to apply requirement 5.5.5.5 (module OS)?

In the Implementing Regulation the outsourced processes are defined as *“intermediate production processes which are performed at another company or plant”* (Ref. REG_SOPD_002.1_20221001, chap 2, par. 2.13). This means that during the outsourced process, the partially processed product leaves the certifying site to complete the production process; therefore requirement 5.1.7 of the Standard must be applied.

Any other production processes carried out by third parties within the certifying site are not considered outsourced processes; therefore, those production processes must be managed by the certifying company



through the evaluation of the work suppliers (service providers company). In this case, requirement 5.5.5.5 of the Standard must be applied (including cases of works carried out at the certifying site with mobile unit).

It should be noted that, with reference to requirements 5.1.7 and 5.5.5.5, the discriminating element determining the applicability of one or the other requirement appears to be where the process (either the entire process or the intermediate process) is physically carried out.

In summary:

- Process or processing carried out outside the certifying site, requirement 5.1.7 must be applied;
- Process or processing carried out from third-party companies/service providers at the certifying site, requirement 5.5.5.5 must be applied;

19. REFERENCE OF THE ASSESSMENT PERIOD FOR ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATORS IN THE CERTIFICATE OF CONFORMITY

Should the CB indicate on the certificate of conformity the reference period to which the assessed environmental sustainability indicators refer?

Yes, the CB must indicate on the certificate of conformity the reference time period to which the evaluation of the indicators evaluated refers.

20. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY INDICATORS - BIODIVERSITY

For the evaluation of the indicator "biodiversity" is it possible to use alternative methodologies compared to the *Biodiversity Friend* methodology currently proposed by the SOPD Equalitas Standard? Do the biodiversity indexes to be evaluated always remain SOIL, AIR and WATER?

With a view to innovation and research, Equalitas updates the "Biodiversity" requirement. The update of the requirement stems from the desire to provide companies that are certified according to the SOPD Equalitas Standard with different methodologies for assessing soil biodiversity, an index more influenced by the activities of organizations. While the air and water biodiversity indices present random profiles when evaluating the results.

Therefore, with the update of the requirement, to measure their level of soil biodiversity, Organisations, Lead Organisations and Supervisory Syndicates have the possibility to choose one of the following methodologies:

- Soil biodiversity indicator (SBI - bf): soil biomonitoring.
- QBS (Biological Quality of Soil): index QBS - ar;
- Metabarcoding:
 - Indexes for metazoa: Mites/Collembola ratio, Oribatid Mites/other Mites ratio;
 - Index for biodiversity: Shannon (H'), Relative abundance of taxa;
 - Functional analysis of groups: Nematodes, Arthropods (Hexapods, Mites), Annelids;

If the Organization, Leading Organization or the Supervisory Syndicate decides to evaluate the SBI - bf soil biodiversity index, it must proceed according to the *Biodiversity Friend* methodology; Instead, if the Organization, the Lead Organisation or the Supervisory Syndicate decides to apply the soil biodiversity index QBS-ar or the indexes provided by Metabarcoding, sampling shall be carried out in accordance with the operating instructions for sampling defined by Equalitas.



Finally, with the updating of the requirement, the evaluation of the air and water indexes, which can be carried out only through *Biodiversity Friend* methodology, is to be considered as optional.

21. CARBON FOOTPRINT AND WATER FOOTPRINT REPORTING

Since the SOPD Equalitas Standard requires, for the analysis of the carbon footprint and water, to perform a "quantification" using as reference respectively the ISO 14064 -1 and ISO 14046, should the same references also be taken into account in reporting?

Failure to mention the term "reporting" as confirmed in Annexes I and II of the SOPD Equalitas Standard rev. 4.1. Therefore, it is confirmed that the abovementioned ISO reference standards should also be taken into account in reporting.