

BECOME A BETTER FOOD TRADER

CHANGE TASTES GOOD



STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

OUR MISSION

Better Food Traders are on a mission to provide an ethically-driven alternative to the mainstream, big business food system. We make it easy for people to choose climate- and people-friendly food. Better Food Traders offers an accreditation for community-led enterprises that sell good, healthy food as well as caring for the environment and all the people involved in the supply chain. We value fairness and transparency: paying ecological farmers and growers a fair price for their produce, sourcing climate-friendly food as locally as possible and telling customers more about the people that grow and supply their food.

What we are trying to achieve

Ultimately we want every shop, box scheme, market stall and retailer committed to the environment, to fairness in the food system and to providing people with great local food to join the Better Food Traders. We have established a network of Better Food Traders because we believe in the power of working together. Supporting each other, we can enable our smaller enterprises to thrive whilst providing people with an ethically-driven alternative to the current UK food system.



ACCREDITATION GUIDELINES

We can't wait for you to join us. Together we can create a food system that is better for people and the planet.

In this document we have written up all the questions you will be asked as part of the Better Food Traders accreditation process with some advice along the way.

Most importantly, we are here to support you! If there is anything you need help with, please contact hello@betterfoodtraders.org. Also if you have any feedback or comments they will be very helpful, as we are looking to keep refining and improving the application process.

BEFORE YOU START

Firstly... you should have been sent an email with a unique link to the Box Scheme Application Form. This form assesses how well you meet the BFT principles. It takes around 4 hours to complete. If you have not received an email with the form please initially check your junk folder and following this get in touch with us at hello@betterfoodtraders.org.

Information you will need before you get started:

- Your accounts
- Your spend with each producer and supplier that you use, and their relation to you within the 'food zones' (<https://growingcommunities.org/food-zones>)
- Your organisational policies
- Knowledge of how your business reduces waste and carbon footprint
- Thoughts about how you are making an impact on the food system and in your community.
- Ideas about what you would like to do better over the next 12 months and some realistic targets for improvement.

Data collection

As a Better Food Traders member you will be required to share your business data within the network and with selected campaigning and academic researchers. This is so we can create benchmarks and demonstrate our collective impacts. This will always be anonymous and specific data will not be linked with your business unless you have given us permission. We will be asking you to agree to this at the end of the form.

You will also be asked to read and understand our privacy policy (<https://betterfoodtraders.org/privacy>) in relation to the small amount of personal data that will be collected with this form - for example your name, business contact number, email and address.

Question	Subtitle/ options	Guidelines	Standards
Business information and contact details		Some questions relate to core thresholds: you need to meet all of these to become an accredited Better Food Trader. These are indicated by green text. Subsidiary thresholds are scored on a sliding scale, and we expect at least a 50% total to become an accredited Better Food Trader.	
Name of business			
Email address			
Address of business			
Postcode			
Contact name			
Contact phone			
What year did you start trading?		This should be the year you were constituted as a legal organisation.	

What was your income from food sales in the last financial year?	Please check this figure, and make sure it's accurate for the financial year you're referring to.	Please just state income from food sales, even if your business trades in other goods. This application should only relate to the food-trading aspect of your business and if this is not the whole of your income as an organisation, this proportion of income should be highlighted in the accounts document you upload.	BFTs are food retailers - so we are measuring only this aspect of your business with this application form.
Of that total food income, what was your income from fresh fruit & veg sales?		Again, please make sure this is from the same financial year.	
Which financial year are you using?		Please ensure that all answers relate to this time period	
Please upload your accounts for that year			
How many paid employees do you have?		Please tell us the number of different people your food business employs. We will ask about employee and volunteer hours later in the form.	
PRINCIPLE 1: MISSION			
What business structure do you have?	Sole Trader Ltd Company Partnership Cooperative Community Interest Company Other	We are open to all kinds of business structures, so long as you can show that you are mission driven. If your legal structure means that you have an asset lock that ensures residual assets can only be distributed for the benefit of the enterprise's mission, you are likely to score more highly than if you do not. If you are a private company, your pay ratio (see Principle 4) will be expected to be low.	Any legal structure that does not include making profits for shareholders

Please upload your company or business governing documents (e.g. memorandum and articles of association for a limited company):			
If you have a separate mission statement, please upload it here:		You don't need to upload anything if your mission statement is already in your governing documents. If you have a mission statement that covers social and environmental impact, you will score more highly.	Statement shows commitment to social and environmental aims as well as/ alongside profit making and other aims
How does your enterprise embed the mission within your governance?		For example, you may state your mission within your Articles of Association, or you may be a Community Interest Company whose legal structure incorporates an asset lock. You may find the definition of Social Enterprise (https://www.socialenterprise.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/What_makes_a_social_enterprise_a_social_enterprise_April_2012-1.pdf) useful in thinking about this.	Mission should be written into a legal doc, eg within Articles of Association, or in a written constitution

PRINCIPLE 2: TRANSPARENCY

How do you inform customers of the standards of your business?		We want to see regular reminders or signposts to the standards in a permanently accessible public place (e.g. website), and in customer communications; The standards themselves should be easily accessible and understandable.	1 point per option of permanent publicly accessible place MAX=2
How do you inform customers about where their food comes from and who grows it?		We expect the provenance of each different product to be clearly labelled or described at either the point of sale or delivery. The provenance information for each product includes farm or farmer's name, county (if UK grown) and/or country.	1 point per option of permanent publicly accessible place MAX=2

How do you inform customers of the impact of your business?		This could be through your newsletters, website, annual report or impact report. Letting customers know about impact is a great way to improve customer retention - people can see that their actions are making change happen. BFT can help with this.	Informing customers of impact via any method =2
If you have an annual report, please upload it here:			
What purchasing, trading or buying guidelines do you use?		We expect you to have a buying rationale, similar to the food zones (https://www.betterfoodtraders.org/why-it-matters/the-food-zones/) where you are taking into account the relationship to the grower, their farming methods, and the proximity of the farm to your enterprise.	Written buying policy = 2, anecdotal policy =1, no policy=0
If you have a buying policy, please upload it here:			
			POTENTIAL SCORE = 8

PRINCIPLE 3 & 5: SOURCING & ECOLOGICAL SUPPLY

Are you familiar with the food zones for informing sourcing? You can link to them here <https://growingcommunities.org/food-zones> in order to answer these questions.

Please include only your supplier spend on fresh fruit and veg.

Direct Suppliers (please answer this question for all your direct suppliers)



Name of producer 1?		Use this section to tell us about your suppliers with whom you have a direct relationship. Within this section we also include wholesalers who are following similar principles to Better Food Traders, such as the Better Food Shed, and maintaining direct relationships with farmers.	40% of spend should be with direct suppliers All produce should be organically certified, with the following exceptions: 1. up to 10% of total supply (measured by spend), or £15k worth of produce, can be uncertified 2. the uncertified produce may only come from a producer with whom you have a direct relationship (ie. not a wholesaler) 3. you must have some form of documentation provided by this producer that explains why you believe they are growing ecologically. NB. Better Food Traders believes that organic certification is the best robust and verifiable standard we currently have in the UK, to demonstrate ecological growing practice, and we wish to encourage all our businesses to sell mostly organically certified produce. In-conversion to organic status, with documentation to verify this, is also acceptable. If you have an uncertified growing operation as part of your business, or if you buy produce from someone who does, BFT can help you with advice on certification, from other small-scale growers who are experienced in the process. Please contact us for help.
How much did you spend with this producer in the last financial year?		Please make sure you are telling us about the same financial year as every other answer in this form.	
Which food zone are they in?	1: Urban traded land 2: Peri-urban land 3: Rural hinterland	Please see the diagram of the food zones (https://growingcommunities.org/food-zones) but keep in mind that YOUR retail enterprise is at the centre, so the zone titles such as urban, peri-urban etc. may not apply to you. The zones represent the relationship you have with the growers who supply you i.e. direct or not, as well as the distance from you.	
How do you know they are growing ecologically?	They have organic or 'in conversion' certification You have other evidence of their production methods You don't know if they are growing ecologically	All supply of fruit and veg should be ecologically grown, but we allow for the fact that some very small-scale growers face economic barriers to legal organic certification.	
Please upload their organic or 'in conversion' certification:			

Please describe the evidence you have:			
(Repeated for up to 12 direct suppliers)			
Wholesalers (please answer this question for all wholesalers)			
Name of wholesaler 1?			100% of wholesaled/indirect supply should be certified organic
How much did you spend with this wholesaler in the last financial year from zone 4?		Zone 4 = UK produced wholesale produce (indirect relationship with farmer/grower).	75% of total spend should be from within the UK (ie. zones 1-4)
How much did you spend with this wholesaler in the last financial year from zone 5?		Zone 5 = European produce.	
How much did you spend with this wholesaler in the last financial year from zone 6?		Zone 6 = rest of the world produce.	
Is this wholesaler certified organic?	Yes No	We expect 100% of produce bought from wholesalers to be legally certified as organic	
(Repeated for up to 3 wholesalers)			
Please use the calculations below to double-check the answers you have entered above. Have you included all producers and wholesalers? Are the spend figures correct and from the same financial year?		We have used the figures you supplied for Q9, <i>income from fresh fruit and veg sales</i> , and Q23-109, <i>supplier spend</i> , to calculate the average mark-up you are using.	To reflect a viable business model and also good value to your customer, we would expect this margin to be in the region of 1.7-2

PRINCIPLE 4: YOU TRADE FAIRLY			
Can you confirm that in the last 12 months all produce you purchased from 'Zone 6' was certified Fairtrade?	Yes No	We expect 100% of fresh produce purchased from zone 6 to be Fairtrade. Zone 6 = rest of the world produce (beyond Europe).	100% certified Fairtrade
How much did you spend (£) on 'zone 6' produce that was certified Fairtrade?		Please only include figures for zone 6 produce.	
Please tell us how you know it was Fairtrade produce:			
Please upload any evidence that you have:		Copies of receipts to wholesalers, or photos of Fairtrade symbol on products can be used as evidence here.	
What is your approach to ensuring you pay your suppliers a fair price for their produce?		Please let us know how you go about this, eg. Letting the suppliers set the price, whilst being aware of market / wholesale prices - which might include letting a grower know when they can get a higher price Prioritised ordering Responsive and flexible ordering - i.e. ways of dealing with gluts so that suppliers sell as much as possible of their crops Clear, open & honest approach to quality issues - not taking any old poor quality but having a supportive approach to lower spec produce Promptness of payments	We expect you to operate in a way that supports farmers and growers. At least 1 method of ensuring a fair price to suppliers should be stated.
Do you pay the Real Living Wage to your employees?	Yes No	2019 figures: £9.30 across the UK and £10.75 in London. See the Living Wage Foundation (https://www.livingwage.org.uk/what-real-living-wage) for up-to-date information.	BFTs are legally required to pay at least the Living Wage (the old minimum wage) but would expect them to aim to pay the Real Living Wage by the time their business is over 5 years old.

Are you an accredited Living Wage Employer?	Yes No	This is an accreditation given by the Living Wage Foundation https://www.livingwage.org.uk/become-a-living-wage-employer	
Please upload your accreditation:			
Please tell us more about your approach to paying the Real Living Wage:		For example: are all your staff paid at or above the Real Living Wage, or just some of them? Have you thought about getting accredited?	
Do you have a pay ratio policy?	Yes No	Pay ratios are a way of comparing the annual income of the highest paid people in each company with the lowest paid. The publishing of pay ratios, and a commitment to work towards more equitable pay ratios, demonstrates a company's commitment to social responsibility and to fair treatment of workers. Pay ratios are one way of illuminating inequity in the food system (where pay disparities happen to be wide).	8:1 is considered to be good practice by the international WageMark Foundation. We expect Better Food Traders to be operating with a lower pay ratio than this - closer to 3:1. Pay ratio policy that is below 8:1 exists = 2 If a private company, a Pay ratio policy is a core requirement and must exist - please send us a copy if this applies to you
What is the highest hourly rate paid by the organisation to employees?		We want this to calculate your pay ratio.	See standards for pay ratio above
What is the lowest hourly rate paid by the organisation to employees?		We want this to calculate your pay ratio.	See standards for pay ratio above
How do you ensure you give your customers a fair deal?		Evidence might include price comparisons and mark-ups.	At least one method of ensuring fair deal to customers.
			POTENTIAL SCORE = 2
PRINCIPLE 6: DIET			
How many veg bags/boxes did you supply over the last financial year?		Please include all fruit and veg bags/boxes over the whole year - this will help us to demonstrate impact	
What are your latest weekly customer numbers?		Again, this is to demonstrate impact	

Do you have an idea of how many people on average you are feeding each week? If so, please tell us the number:		Again, this is to demonstrate impact	
Please tell us about how you came to this figure:		For example, you may have carried out a customer survey to ascertain who is in a typical customer's household.	
What percentage of your food sales is fresh or minimally processed produce?		We include bread as minimally processed.	at least 85% for this sector (veg schemes)
Please tell us more about any other food products you sell			
What percentage of your food sales is plant based?		We expect that, if you are using this application form, your main product consists of fresh fruit and vegetables.	at least 80% for this sector
Of the non-plant based food (i.e. animal), please tell us more about how that food is sourced, produced and certified		We expect all animal-based food to be certified organic.	We expect all animal-based food to be certified organic
Please tell us what you do to help your customers reduce the amount of food waste at household level		For example: avoiding marketing-driven bulk-buy offers, e.g. BOGOFs; promoting recipes that use more of the produce, e.g. tops of leeks, celery, turnips etc.; clear messages on how to best keep the produce at home (storage advice); clear and easy ways for customers to change their order (i.e. buy less or more when they need to).	1 point per option MAX=2
Please tell us about what you do to promote a seasonal, plant based, minimally processed diet		We are looking for a strong emphasis on customer communications relating to cooking and recipes, nutrition, healthy eating, and seasonality of produce.	At least 1 method of promoting a seasonal, plant-based, minimally processed diet.
			POTENTIAL SCORE = 2

PRINCIPLE 7: DISTRIBUTION			
Do you monitor the energy use of your business premises?	Yes No		Yes=1
Please tell us how you do this:		Please tell us about your use of power within your business premises.	
Have you set any energy reduction targets?	Yes No		Yes=1
Please tell us what your targets were, and whether you met them in the last financial year:		This could be a year on year reduction of 5%, or a target of reducing energy use by 50% over 5 years from a baseline measurement.	Target met =1
What have you done to minimise non-renewable energy use within your business?		There are some useful ideas at https://www.52climateactions.com/power - for example using renewable energy supplier, ensuring premises are insulated well, movement sensitive lighting.	1 point per option MAX=2
Does your business have any policies on minimising environmental impact from distribution of your products, and within your supply chain?		Measures could include: minimising fuel use by using efficient delivery vehicles, electric vehicles, bike delivery, collective ordering.	1 point per option MAX=2
Does your business have any policies on minimising environmental impact from transport to and from work?		Measures could include: subsidised bike scheme, encouraging use of public transport/bike/legs, car share scheme.	1 point per option MAX=2
What percentage of your produce is air freighted?		Better Food Traders are expected never to buy or sell airfreighted produce	0% should be airfreighted

How do you minimise waste generated within your business?		For example: sourcing and supplying products with minimal packaging; good handling and storage of produce; making good use of uncollected or surplus produce; second-hand equipment and infrastructure; email newsletters and internal documents rather than print.	1 point per option MAX=2
Please tell us about anything you have done which aims to minimise waste within your supply chain:		For example: crop planning with suppliers; effective practices to deal with unexpected gluts; good policy and practice in handling and storage of produce; returning packaging for reuse.	1 point per option MAX=2
			POTENTIAL SCORE = 13
PRINCIPLE 8: COMMUNITY			
On average, how many hours of paid staff time do you employ each week?		We would like you to let us know your employee hours within the project. This is to demonstrate our impact.	
On average, how many hours of volunteer time do you support each week?		We would like you to let us know your volunteer hours within the project. This is to demonstrate our impact.	
Do you have a volunteer policy or code of practice?	Yes No	BFTs are encouraged to have a volunteer policy. NCVO provide free online advice https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/your-team/volunteers/keeping/policy	Yes=1
How do you involve customers and/or the local community in the running of your business?		For example, through volunteer roles in operations or on the board of trustees or directors; through an AGM with an opportunity to input on policy.	1 point per option MAX=2
How do you engage with and help to build your community?		For example, events and activities - please tell us about these; invitations to contribute to newsletter or blog; through donations to local organisations (e.g. food banks, community kitchens).	1 point per option MAX=2

Do you offer any training and knowledge-based activities in your community?		For example cookery classes, growing training or apprenticeships, internships or work experience opportunities.	1 point per option MAX=2
How are you working to be inclusive within your community?		Tell us about how your organisation tries to ensure engagement with people of different race and culture, different ages, citizenships, faiths, genders, physical abilities, neurodiversity and sexuality.	1 point per option MAX=2
			POTENTIAL SCORE = 9
PRINCIPLE 9: BIGGER PICTURE			
Have you initiated or been involved in any local or national campaigns and promotions in the last 12 months?	Yes No		1 point per option MAX=2
Please tell us about these:			
Are there any campaigns that you promote to your customers?			
In the last 12 months, what other organisations have you been working with?			
			POTENTIAL SCORE = 2
			POTENTIAL MAX SCORE = 36
THINKING AHEAD	Please identify a minimum of three priority areas in which you would like to significantly improve your impact over the next 12 months.		
Is there anything else you are doing that you think qualifies you as a Better Food Trader? Please tell us about this:			