AZERBAIJAN TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

Sustainable Food Sourcing Policy

Document type	Policy
Scope (applies to)	All campus food procurement and catering services
Issued	2023
Last revision date	2026
Review Cycle	Every 2 years
Version	v2.0
Approval Authority	University Council
Document owner	Sustainability Office
Status	Approved and Published

CONTENTS

1 CONTEXT AND PURPOSE....4
2 KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS....4
3 APPLICABILITY....4
4 GOVERNANCE AND RESPONSIBILITIES....5
5 SUSTAINABLE FOOD SOURCING PRINCIPLES AND STANDARDS....5
5.1. Sustainable farming requirements....5
5.2. Supplier evidence and traceability....5
5.3. Local and seasonal purchasing....5
5.4. Catering contracts and outsourced services....6
5.5. Menus and food resource use....6
6 IMPLEMENTATION....6
7 MONITORING AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS....6
8 POLICY EVOLUTION....7

1 CONTEXT AND PURPOSE

Azerbaijan Technical University (AzTU) seeks to ensure that food purchased and served on campus is produced through responsible agricultural practices. This Policy establishes requirements for food sourcing, supplier selection, catering contracts and monitoring, with particular attention to soil health, biodiversity, water stewardship and responsible use of agricultural inputs.

The Policy is intended to apply to both direct purchasing by AzTU and food provided through contracted operators. It supports the University's environmental and sustainable procurement framework and contributes to Sustainable Development Goals 2, 12 and 15. Sustainable farming requirements concern how food is produced, including where production takes place outside the campus.

Following approval, AzTU shall incorporate the requirements of this Policy into relevant procurement specifications, supplier assessments and catering contracts, subject to applicable procurement legislation. Implementation shall be documented and reviewed annually. This Policy enters into force only on the date of approval recorded in the approved document.

2 KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Sustainably farmed food means food produced through practices that protect soil and biodiversity, use water and agricultural inputs responsibly, reduce avoidable environmental harm and respect applicable labour and animal welfare requirements. A claim of sustainable production must be supported by proportionate, verifiable evidence.

Sustainable food sourcing means purchasing food against documented environmental, social and ethical criteria across production and supply. Traceability means the ability to identify the supplier, product origin and relevant production or certification information. A food supplier includes a producer, distributor, caterer or other operator supplying food to AzTU.

Local food means food sourced within a geographical area defined in the University's procurement specifications. Seasonal food means food produced during its normal growing or harvesting season in the relevant region. Local or seasonal origin alone does not establish that a product is sustainably farmed.

3 APPLICABILITY

This Policy applies to food and ingredients procured by or on behalf of AzTU for campus canteens, cafeterias, kiosks, vending services, university catering and university-organised events. It covers agricultural products, including fruit, vegetables, grains, pulses, dairy, eggs and meat, and applies to outsourced food services to the extent established in their contracts.

University units involved in purchasing, specification development, supplier evaluation and contract management shall apply this Policy. New and renewed catering agreements shall include relevant sourcing and reporting requirements. Existing contracts shall be reviewed for lawful opportunities to introduce these requirements; any transition arrangements shall be documented.

4 GOVERNANCE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The competent University approval authority shall approve the Policy, designate its owner and confirm the responsibilities of the relevant administrative units. The Rectorate shall oversee implementation and ensure that requirements are incorporated into operational planning and available budgets.

The Sustainability Office, as the designated policy owner, shall coordinate implementation, maintain the criteria and reporting framework, review exceptions and prepare an annual performance report. The procurement function shall incorporate approved criteria into purchasing documents, assess supplier evidence and retain procurement records.

The unit responsible for campus catering oversight shall check operator compliance, review menus and sourcing records, and coordinate corrective actions. Food suppliers and contracted operators shall provide accurate information, maintain product traceability and meet the sourcing obligations included in their agreements.

5 SUSTAINABLE FOOD SOURCING PRINCIPLES AND STANDARDS

5.1. Sustainable farming requirements

Procurement specifications shall set relevant sustainable production criteria for each major agricultural food category. Criteria shall address protection of soil fertility, prevention of erosion and land degradation, conservation of natural habitats and biodiversity, responsible water use, and lawful and controlled use of pesticides and fertilisers. Products associated with illegal land conversion or unlawful agricultural practices shall not be accepted.

For livestock products, specifications shall include applicable animal health and welfare requirements and responsible use of veterinary medicines. Criteria shall be proportionate to the food category and supplier risk, and shall remain compatible with food safety, nutritional needs and applicable procurement obligations.

5.2. Supplier evidence and traceability

Suppliers shall identify the origin of products covered by sustainable farming requirements and provide evidence of relevant production practices. Evidence may include recognised organic or sustainable agriculture certification, independently verified farm standards, producer records, audit findings or other equivalent documentation that demonstrates compliance with the specified criteria.

The procurement function shall assess the scope, validity and relevance of evidence. Certification shall not be treated as proof of requirements beyond its actual coverage. Supplier declarations may support an initial assessment, but higher-risk claims shall require corroboration or verification. Unsupported sustainability claims shall not qualify expenditure as verified sustainable food procurement.

5.3. Local and seasonal purchasing

Where permitted by procurement rules and consistent with quality, availability and value for money, AzTU shall favour seasonal products and supply arrangements that reduce unnecessary transport, storage and packaging. Engagement with local farmers and smaller suppliers shall help them understand and meet the University’s criteria. Local origin shall complement verified production standards.

5.4. Catering contracts and outsourced services

New or renewed food service agreements shall specify the applicable sustainable farming criteria, product categories, evidence requirements, reporting frequency and access to relevant records. Operators shall communicate equivalent requirements to their food suppliers and retain the information needed to verify compliance.

Contracts shall provide for notification of material changes in product origin or supply arrangements, proportionate compliance checks, corrective action and remedies for persistent or material non-compliance. Contract terms shall be applied in accordance with applicable law and the agreed contractual provisions.

5.5. Menus and food resource use

Campus food services shall provide nutritionally appropriate plant-based options and consider seasonal ingredients in menu planning. Food purchasing, storage and portion planning shall seek to prevent avoidable waste. Operators shall record food waste where required by their contracts and identify opportunities for reduction. Food safety shall govern any redistribution of suitable surplus food.

Packaging shall be reduced where practicable, with reusable or recyclable options selected where suitable collection systems exist. Menu changes, waste reduction and packaging improvements support responsible food services, but shall be reported separately from evidence that food is sustainably farmed.

6 IMPLEMENTATION

Within three months of the date of approval, the designated policy owner and procurement function shall map food service arrangements, identify major food categories and suppliers, and assess the availability of sourcing records. They shall establish a baseline for the value and proportion of food procurement supported by verified sustainable farming evidence.

Within six months of the date of approval, the University shall approve category-specific sourcing criteria, an evidence checklist, standard contract clauses and an implementation plan. The plan shall set annual targets based on the baseline, supplier capacity, food availability and budget. Staff and contracted operators shall receive guidance on applying the requirements.

Where compliant products are temporarily unavailable, or a documented food safety, dietary or continuity need prevents compliance, an exception may be authorised by the designated responsible authority. The record shall state the reason, affected category, duration and corrective steps. Exceptions shall be reviewed periodically and shall not be counted as verified sustainable purchases.

7 MONITORING AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The policy owner shall review implementation at least annually using procurement records and operator reports. The principal indicator shall be verified sustainable agricultural food expenditure divided by total agricultural food expenditure within the reporting scope, multiplied by 100. The reporting scope, period, exclusions and evidence basis shall be stated, and double counting shall be avoided.

Additional indicators shall include the proportion of relevant catering contracts containing sustainable sourcing clauses, the proportion of suppliers assessed, the number of non-compliances and corrective actions, and the number and duration of exceptions. Food waste and local or seasonal purchasing may be tracked as complementary indicators with separately defined methods.

Compliance checks shall be proportionate to supplier and product risk and may include document reviews, sampling of purchasing records and requests for additional verification. Corrective action plans shall identify the issue, responsible party and deadline. Persistent or serious failures shall be referred for action under the relevant contract.

The annual report shall present progress against approved targets, evidence limitations and priorities for improvement. A public summary may be published through AzTU's sustainability reporting channels, subject to confidentiality and data protection requirements. Performance statements shall distinguish verified results from future commitments.

8 POLICY EVOLUTION

This Policy shall be reviewed every two years after approval, or earlier where changes in law, food supply conditions, institutional priorities or monitoring results require revision. The review shall include relevant university units and contracted operators and may seek input from students and suppliers.

Changes shall be submitted to the competent University authority for approval. The approved version, date of approval, policy owner and review date shall be recorded and communicated to affected staff and service providers. Superseded versions shall be retained in accordance with the University's document management procedures.

AZTU

AZERBAIJAN TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

25 H. Javid Avenue, Baku, Azerbaijan, AZ 1073
(+994 12) 539-13-05

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

