The 2023 Scheme Objectives & Guidelines

The Sustainable Wines of Great Britain Guidelines are designed to meet the following objectives:

Vinegrowing	Winemaking
• Maintain and improve soil health	• Improve winery design to reduce environmental impact
• Manage vineyard canopies and yields optimally	• Reduce the energy and water footprint per bottle of wine
• Reduce (and optimise) pesticide inputs	• Reduce the environmental impact of wine packaging
• Conserve the vineyard (and surrounding) environment and promote biodiversity	• Reduce the carbon footprint per bottle of wine
• Reduce vineyard carbon footprint per hectare.	• Reduce, re-use and recycle winery waste and wastewater
• Reduce, re-use and recycle vineyard waste	

In order to work towards these objectives, the Scheme employs four categories of Guidelines:

- **Minimum Standard,** which must be applied for those who wish to produce wine for SWGB certification.
- **Best Practice** (from a sustainable perspective), which should be encouraged for those who wish to produce wine for SWGB certification. It is anticipated that these will ultimately become **Minimum Standard** guidelines for the scheme.
- **Evaluate and Plan.** These guidelines are compulsory for Members once they have successfully completed their first Scheme audit.

The quality improvement cycle below is deployed:

The observe/measure/record activities (at the top of the cycle) form the basis of the Minimum Standard Guidelines. The results of this activity will generate data that will be evaluated, compared and benchmarked (without attribution) with that of the other members through the Data Repository. The next steps are to set new standards, and draft plans to reach these targets, which can then be implemented. Subsequent to the first successful audit, members will be required to evaluate their practices and design an improvement plan/strategy in the following areas:

Vinegrowing	Winemaking
• Soil health and vine nutrition	• Winery building
• Vineyard floor management	• Energy use
• Vineyard canopy and yield management	• Water use
• Integrated pest management and biosecurity	• Wastewater disposal
• Estate conservation and biodiversity	• Packaging
• Waste management	• Waste management
• Carbon footprint reduction	• Carbon footprint management

Scheme Members save their evidence to support adherence to minimum standard guidelines, and their evaluations and improvement plans, on the SWGB Data Repository.

The 2023 Scheme Guidelines

Guideline categorisation	Vinegrowing Guideline	Evidence required to meet the guideline
Maintain and improve soil health		
Minimum standard	Ground cover is present in vineyard inter-row alleys in the winter.	Vineyard maintenance diary[1]
Best practice	Ground cover is present in the alleys and headlands in mature vineyards throughout the year.	Vineyard maintenance diary[1]
Minimum standard	For each parcel[2], carry out a soil survey that assesses soil fertility and health (including a soil profile; an evaluation of drainage, erosion risk, soil texture and structure; an earthworm count; and an analysis of macronutrient status, organic matter content & CEC[3]) at least every 3 years.	Triennial soil survey for each parcel[2]
Evaluation & planning[4]	For each parcel, evaluate the health of the soil, then create a plan designed to maintain and improve soil health, year on year, particularly focusing on regulating pH, maintaining soil structure, replacing soil nutrients and maintaining organic matter levels.	Soil health and vine nutrition evaluation and management plan for each parcel, revised every three years
Minimum standard	For each parcel, record the cultural interventions relating to the soil (including cultivations, and fertiliser & herbicide applications) carried out in the vineyard.	Vineyard maintenance diary
Evaluation & planning	Evaluate, from a soil health perspective, current practices used to manage the vineyard floor, then create a plan to reduce the impact of these interventions on soil health.	Vineyard floor evaluation and management plan for each parcel, revised every three years

[1] A day-by-day account of vineyard interventions, with a summary of total number of operations and inputs, for each parcel
[2] Parcel = unity of vineyard that is managed in the same way (receives the same treatments and inputs)
[3] Cation Exchange Capacity
[4] Evaluation and Planning Guidelines become compulsory on second and subsequent audits

Guideline categorisation	Vinegrowing Guideline	Evidence required to meet the guideline
Manage vineyard canopies and yields optimally		
Minimum standard	Keep annual records of buds left per hectare at pruning, yields, average bunch weight and pruning weight/hectare for each parcel.	Annual vineyard monitoring record of yields, pruning weights and average bunch weight for each parcel.
Best practice	Grapevinepruning is informed by the SWGB principles of sustainable pruning.	Completed SWGB sustainable pruning form.
Evaluation & planning	Evaluate vineyard canopy and yield management for each parcel, focussing on the quality of the winter pruning, the resulting canopy, and the yield and quality of grapes produced, then create a plan to optimise canopy and yield management, setting new targets and actions to meet these targets.	Vineyard canopy and yield management evaluation and plan, revised every three years.
Minimise and optimise pesticide inputs		
Minimum standard	During the growing season, monitor for pests and diseases at least every fortnight	Vineyard monitoring diary,
Minimum standard	Use biological, cultural, mechanical, biosecurity and physical plant protection methods, in conjunction with chemicals.	A list of plant protection methods used in the vineyard, also evidenced in the vineyard maintenance diary
Minimum standard	Pesticide applicator calibration and service records are kept.	Pesticide applicator calibration and service records
Minimum standard	Records are kept of every spray application for each parcel.	Vineyard pesticide application record.
Best practice	Calculate the total Health Toxicity (HTI) and Environment Toxicity (ETI) Indices for each growing season.	A list and summary of the ETI and HTI values of the pesticides used in each growing season.
Evaluation & planning	Evaluate the effectiveness of all plant protection measures after every growing season, then create a plan, with targets and actions to increase efficiency and effectiveness and to minimise and optimise the use of pesticides	Vineyard protection measures evaluation and plan, revised every three years

Guideline categorisation	Vinegrowing Guideline	Evidence required to meet the guideline
Conserve the vineyard (and surrounding) environment and promote biodiversity		
Minimum standard	Map wildlife habitats and environmental, landscape, archaeological and historical features in the vineyard.	Estate conservation map, with photos of features
Best practice	Monitor the range of plants in vineyard alleys and headlands.	List of plant names found in vineyard alleys and headlands.
Evaluation & planning	Evaluate the conservation value and biodiversity of the vineyard (and surrounding) environment, then create a long-term plan for both cultivated and non-cultivated land that protects and enhances conservation features	Estate conservation and biodiversity evaluation and promotion plan, revised every three years
Reduce vineyard carbon footprint per hectare		
Minimum standard	Use the WineGB Carbon Calculator for calculating vineyard carbon footprint per hectare of vineyard	Carbon footprint data per hectare, as generated by the WineGB Carbon Calculator.
Evaluation & planning	Evaluate the carbon footprint per hectare and its contributory factors, then create a plan to reduce these figures and increase carbon sequestration, aiming to become carbon neutral by 2030.	Carbon footprint evaluation and reduction plan, revised every three years.
Reduce, re-use and recycle vineyard waste		
Minimum standard	Keep records of all waste generated by vinegrowing activities	List of waste produced by vinegrowing activities
Evaluation & planning	Evaluate the amount and type of waste generated by vinegrowing activities, then create a plan to reduce, re-use or recycle this waste.	Vinegrowing waste reduction and recycling evaluation and plan, revised every three years.
Best practice	Assess the environmental sustainability of major purchases	Standard SWGB form completed for up to six purchases with a value of over £10,000

Guideline categorisation	Winemaking Guideline	Evidence required to meet the guideline
Improve winery design to reduce environmental impact		
Minimum standard	Evaluate the winery site and building according to geographic location, orientation, site integration and design factors, particularly those that pertain to environmental impact and energy efficiency.	Document evaluating winery site selection and building design, focusing on environmental impact and energy efficiency.
Evaluation & planning	Evaluate a range of actions that could reduce the environmental impact and increase the energy efficiency of the winery through design features, then create a three-year plan to implement the most effective and efficient improvements.	Environmental impact evaluation and plan for winery building, revised every three years.
Reduce the energy and water footprint per bottle of wine		
Minimum standard	Service machinery and equipment regularly, and repair or replace to ensure optimum energy consumption.	Servicing and repair records for winery machinery and equipment.
Minimum standard	Keep quarterly records of all energy sources used in the winery, and use them to calculate an energy footprint per bottle of wine.	Quarterly energy use records, in the form of energy statements, bills, or financial statements. Statement of total number of bottles produced per season in the winery.
Minimum standard	Monitor the amount of water used in the winery, and generate a figure for the amount of water used per bottle of wine produced.	Data on water used for the full production process, and number of bottles of wine produced.
Evaluation & planning	Evaluate winery energy use, then create a plan that sets new targets and recommends strategies to improve energy efficiency.	An energy management evaluation and plan, with energy use reduction strategies, revised every three years.
Evaluation & planning	Evaluate water use in the winery, then create a plan to reduce water use.	Written evaluation and plan of water use, with measures for reduction in consumption, updated every three years.
Best practice	Real-time energy use records are collated in the form of metrics data to enable a detailed analysis of winery energy use.	Real-time energy use records

Guideline categorisation	Winemaking Guideline	Evidence required to meet the guideline
Reduce the environmental impact of wine packaging		
Minimum standard	Record the products used for packaging wine, including colour & weight of glass, nature of stoppers and use of cardboard and plastic	Summary of products used for packaging wine.
Evaluation & planning	Evaluate the sustainability of the packaging used, then create a plan that aims to use products and services that minimise waste and have minimal environmental impact.	Packaging evaluation and plan, with actions to reduce environmental impact, revised every three years.
Reduce the carbon footprint per bottle of wine		
Minimum standard	Obtain at least 33% of winery energy from renewable sources (either internal or external).	Evidence of alternative energy supplying equipment (e.g. solar panels), or bills from suppliers of energy who use renewable sources.
Best practice	Obtain 100 % of winery energy from renewable sources of power	Evidence of alternative energy supplying equipment (e.g. solar panels), or bills from suppliers of energy who use renewable sources. including REGO certificates from suppliers.
Best practice	Bottles should be bought from a supplier using sustainable energy.	Statement from bottle supplier formally stating that all sources of energy used in their manufacture is sustainable.
Minimum standard	Calculate the winery carbon footprint (using the WineGB Carbon Calculator) for the whole of the wine production process from transport of grapes to the finished, packaged wine. Does not include storage, marketing or distribution.	Results from WineGB Carbon Calculator, leading to calculation of carbon footprint per bottle.
Best practice	The wine production process is carbon negative overall (including offsets)	WineGB Carbon Calculator report, plus proof of any offsets used.
Evaluation & planning	Evaluate the carbon footprint per bottle of wine produced, then create a plan to reduce this figure, aiming to become carbon neutral by 2030	Evaluation of carbon footprint and plan to reduce carbon footprint, revised every three years.

Guideline categorisation	Winemaking Guideline	Evidence required to meet the guideline
Reduce, re-use and recycle winery waste and wastewater		
Minimum standard	Keep records of all waste generated by winemaking activities	List of waste produced by winemaking activities
Minimum standard	Report on how rainwater, winery wastewater, and other wastewater generated from the winery building, is dealt with.	Written report
Best practice	Grape marc is recycled, re-used (e.g. distilling) or used to generate energy	Written report on the fate of grape marc generated by the winery.
Best practice	Bidules and crown caps are recycled	Written report on the fate of bidules and crown caps used by the winery.
Best practice	Assess the environmental sustainability of major purchases.	Standard SWGB form completed for up to six purchases with a value of more than £10,000
Evaluation & planning	Evaluate the amount and type of waste generated by winemaking activities, then create a plan to reduce, re-use and recycle this waste.	Evaluation of winemaking waste, then a plan for reduction and recycling, revised every three years.
Evaluation & planning	Evaluate the environmental impact of wastewater management in the winery, then create a plan to reduce the environmental impact over a three-year period.	Evaluation of the environmental impact of wastewater management in the winery, then a plan to reduce the environmental impact over a three-year period.