



***THE AGRONOMY  
DEPARTMENT***



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## ***Introduction***

*Deltafina considers its farmers the main protagonists of the supply chain and in the company the Agronomy Department plays a fundamental role: it represents the point of connection between agricultural production and the final customer.*

*Between the Agronomy Department and the farmers, together with the field technicians and the Producers Groups, there is a close and synergistic collaboration made up of technical assistance, exchanges of information and continuous support during the entire course of the season. From year to year this relationship is nourished and improved in such a way that both parties can benefit in all aspects.*

*The purpose of this document is to raise awareness of the characteristics of this Department, describing in detail the people who work there, the activities and the targets of the activities carried out; a way to bring the grower even closer to the processor and pass our customers the message of the importance of working inside a real Team.*





## WHO WE ARE

The Agronomy Department is a technical office that takes care of the activities linked to the agricultural part of the tobacco supply chain. It has the task of supporting farmers by monitoring the crops progress both from an agronomic and ethical point of view, i.e. with reference to the working conditions. This assistance is carried out in each farm contracted by Deltafina, by the Producers Groups, in order to improve the operational and product quality aspects, making production increasingly sustainable.

The agronomy Team is composed by a manager located in central Italy (Bastia Umbra) and three people, each of whom has an operational base in the main interest areas of tobacco growing, namely Veneto, Umbria and Campania.

## 1. THE SUPPLY CHAIN DUE DILIGENCE (SCDD)

Our internal management system is structured on the so-called "*Due Diligence*", i.e. on a particularly scrupulous self-assessment activity, characterized by the collection, verification of data and information necessary for the identification of potential risks, based on continuous improvement of the productive process.

This activity is developed by five fundamental steps:

1. **Identification** of the work area, of interested parties and of potential risks along the supply chain;
2. Risk assessment with the consequent assignment of an intervention **priority**;
3. The **response** to the problem by determining one or more resolution plans;
4. **Measurement** of results to verify the effectiveness and efficiency of the process;



5. **Reporting** of the results achieved and possible future progress. The Due-Diligence system has become essential and it is also applied to all those agronomy programs that Deltafina adheres to and carries out during the season together with the Producers Groups, field technicians and its growers.

### **1.1 POLICY AND GOVERNANCE**

Deltafina is constantly committed to measuring, monitoring and continuously improving its management systems in terms of quality, environment, health and safety, in order to achieve its targets and does so by the implementation of a series of corporate policies based both on the National and Regional Laws in force in Italy and on the Universal policies, which are adopted by Deltafina and applied to both factories and offices. The adopted policies are the following:

1. Labor Policy;
2. Code of Conduct and Ethic Manual;
3. Health and Safety Policy;
4. Social Responsibility Policy;
5. Environmental Policy;
6. Human rights Policy.

Work responsibilities and work management are managed by a Governance framework.

Concerning the functions that manage the agronomy programs, the Department, based on the guidelines described in the STP 2.0 program, has developed its own STP 2.0 organizational chart.

It provides that at the top, the Deltafina Board of Directors is identified as the **STP Steering Committee**, which meets periodically (generally 4 times a year) and has the responsibility of supervising and then approving the various activities that take place during of the



season, provide guidelines; distribute human resources; establish relationships with external partners.

From an operational point of view, there is a second Group, called the **STP&ALP Italia Committee**, which includes the Agronomy Department, the Purchasing Department and the Group of field technicians of the Producers Groups for the data monitoring part by the MobiLeaf application.

The functions carried out by this Committee are many, including:

1. review and approve the STP Program self-evaluation;
2. discuss any problems that may have arisen;
3. monitor the activities and resolution plans in collaboration with any stakeholders;
4. make sure to manage resolution correctly and keep track of it.

This same Committee also has a further important function: that of being responsible for the ALP Program (English acronym for Good Agricultural Labor Practices) and therefore is concerned with managing all aspects linked to child labor, the protection of workers in the farm, the correct management of waste and agrochemicals, the supply of training and personal protection equipment (PPE), the health and safety of the supply chain workers.

Finally, there are two **STP Coordinators**, one for the agronomic part and the other for the processing part who act as a link between **the STP&ALP Italia Committee** described above and the **STP Steering Committee**.

### 1.2 THE PROCEDURES AND OPERATING FORMS

From a management point of view, the activities of the Agronomy Department also need to be supported by paper documentation that represents evidence of what is done and at the same time keeps track of events.



Just as already in use in the Bastia Umbra and Francolise factories for the management of production processes, the same type of documents defined as **Procedures and Operating Forms** are used by the Agronomy Department: in fact, the set of these documents represents the part of business management provided for the safety systems, quality standards and certification known as ISO.

Specifically, by the **Procedures**, the guidelines for managing the activities are described, while the **Forms** monitor the process by periodically recording its progress. In practice, the Agronomy Department can count on a list of Procedures (**see Fig.1**) with which it manages its activities during the season.

Every year these Procedures are reviewed, re-discussed, and if necessary updated, as are the respective forms. Constant updating of the documentation is essential since it effectively represents the company's business card and acts as an element of corporate traceability for the objective evidence of the work carried out, both towards customers and all stakeholders who require it.

<b>PRO 18</b>	Qualification of tobacco supplier and Purchasing
<b>PRO 19</b>	Training and monitoring of technicians and producers
<b>PRO 20</b>	Immediate Corrective Actions - Prompt Action Issue
<b>PRO 21</b>	Residue monitoring - CPAs and TSNA - pre-purchasing phase
<b>PRO 22</b>	Tobacco and by-product monitoring (CPAs, TSNA and chemical
<b>PRO 23</b>	Not Related Tobacco Materials procedure – NTRM
<b>PRO 24</b>	Humidity control and analysis of residues in purchasing phase
<b>PRO 25</b>	Unannounced Visits and Workers Interviews

**Fig.1 Deltafina Agronomy Department Procedures**





## **1.3 AGRONOMY DEPARTMENT ACTIVITIES**

The Agronomy Department work is carried out over an entire season. Here below, the main work areas are listed together with the related activities performed by the agronomy Team.

### **1.3.1 Activity planning and reporting**

The Agronomy Department plans the season by completing an Excel form (Form 18.03) which contains the description of the activities to be carried out during the season. These activities are based on the Due Diligence system adopted by the company, on the Sustainability Programs and on the indications of the various customers.

At the end of the season instead, the results of the implemented activities are reported by the preparation of reports wherewith the Steering Committee, the Producers Groups and the field technicians are informed.

### **1.3.2 Pre-Purchasing Meetings**

At the beginning of the season, meetings are organized with the People in charge of the Producers Groups: this involves an exchange of opinions regarding the producers' growing intentions and the purchasing requirements requested by Deltafina.

These are preliminary meetings, completely managed by the Purchasing Department, in which the guidelines for the new negotiation are drawn up.

Successively, there is the real negotiation phase, which will be followed by the signing of the contracts. This moment, always managed together with the Producers Groups, establishes the tobacco purchase prices, the overall trading volumes, the principles of Good Agronomy and Labor Practices to be adopted and the total number of growers.

### **1.3.3 Training and Monitoring**

One of the Procedures of the Agronomy Department (PRO 19) takes into consideration the training and monitoring of technicians and



growers. At the beginning of the season, Deltafina carries out training sessions for technicians to refresh the working principles and methods of collaboration with Deltafina, also for the managing of data collection (see MobiLeaf section below).

At the same time, it takes care of updating and informing growers on all new season news, both in agronomic and social terms, providing training material to be kept and hung in the farm.

### **1.3.4 Technical assistance and periodic meetings**

During the season Deltafina Agronomy Team, in collaboration with the technicians, carries out field visits. Depending on the growing area (North, Center and South), the Department develops a weekly program of visits to be carried out, shared with the Producers Groups. During these visits we talk to the grower, listen to the problems that may arise during the season, we pass on information regarding production and provide training material.

From a monitoring point of view, the event is tracked by both Deltafina technical staff by a shared visits database and field technicians by the Mobileleaf application on the tablet, whose we will talk about later.

Approximately every month and a half, technical meetings are then organized with the technicians of the Producers Groups to receive an agronomic update regarding the current season and to try to face all important issues of the rest of the season.

### **1.3.5 Farmers Meetings**

In Deltafina's main targets, there is always keeping the farmer at the center of tobacco production. For this reason, meetings are organized during the year in which all growers are invited and they participate in the initiatives that Deltafina decides to undertake during the year and in which the grower himself is the protagonist.

In these meetings future projects, problems to be faced are discussed and exchanges are made to allow farmers to continue growing tobacco in a sustainable way.



### **1.3.6 People and Good Labor Practices**

For Deltafina, people and the community represent the cornerstone around which the entire production revolves. Deltafina pays particular attention to working conditions and to any social problem that may arise over time.

With the use of the monitoring tools previously described, it's been noticed to acquire, on one hand, greater knowledge regarding agricultural work and on the other the need to transmit and show the agricultural work sector without filters, presenting the real conditions of tobacco workers.

It has been and continues to be a path of common growth: Deltafina has acquired knowledge and transmitted its knowledge to the production sector, trying to improve its conditions. To achieve this aim, the process of growers monitoring and managing workers in the farm has been reviewed and updated from year to year, adopting two useful paper tools: the check list of unannounced visits and workers interviews.

The first is applied as a control tool for ordinary visits carried out by technicians during the season and it is carried out with minimal notice to the grower; the second, instead, consists in carrying out real face-to-face interviews with the worker, conducted exclusively by Deltafina's agronomy staff, without the presence of the grower.

The questions asked concern exclusively the worker's condition within the farm and his opinion regarding the personnel management methods adopted by his employer. Every year Deltafina tries to carry out an increasing percentage of unannounced visits and interviews, in order to monitor as many growers as possible.

### **1.3.7 Sampling and product analysis**

The issue relating to the management and correct use of CPAs is particularly close to Deltafina's heart, so much so that there are three Procedures dedicated exclusively to residues and Nitrosamines monitoring.



The three moments identified to keep pesticide residues under control are:

1. in the pre-purchasing phase: samples are taken directly on the farm from the growers, leaving a counter-sample for any retests that the grower himself may decide to carry out independently with the Producers Groups;
2. at the end of the purchasing: all growers' delivered tobacco samples are taken and composite samples are created;
3. in the processing phase: the blends realized for the various customers are analyzed.

From the point of view of the analytical tests carried out, the main reference is the Coresta list; subsequently, analyses are carried out on nitrosamines (TSNAs), heavy metal (HM) and GMO and on the sugar, nicotine and chloride content which represents the Chemical Analysis part.

### **1.3.8 Collaborations with third parties: Stakeholders**

To yearn for sustainable tobacco production, Deltafina needs to establish lasting relationships with the several partners wherewith it manages the production activity.

At an agronomic level, the main stakeholders are represented by the growers themselves and the Producers Groups, with whom the collaboration is at the best and particularly close.

The same concept of relationship with third parties is then applied to all the other several stakeholders who are part of the supply chain and listed below:

- Truck Companies;
- Agrochemical companies;
- Analysis laboratories;
- Universities and Research Centers.

To support the grower in the choice of CPAs and to train him on the good agronomy practices to be adopted, the Agronomy Department organizes tests including:

- Tests on new pesticides to be registered for tobacco;



- Monitoring of insects by the adoption of pheromone traps;
- Variety trials and tests to improve production technology (see mechanized Burley harvesting).

## 2. ESG

According to the **2030 AGENDA** action program where the UN describes the 17 sustainable development goals (see Fig.2), Deltafina is also committed to this process of change, implementing strategies and action plans that embrace three main intervention areas: **Environment, Social and Governance.**



Fig.2 2030 Agenda Program

In this context, Deltafina works to contribute to the achievement of the 2030 AGENDA targets by participation and periodic reporting in the various agronomy sustainability programs promoted by different customers. The main program to which Deltafina adheres is called **Sustainable Tobacco Program - STP 2.0.**

Each of these initiatives has the main purpose of providing a working methodology based on continuous improvement, applying a Due Diligence system that allows identifying potential risks and establishing priorities within the tobacco supply chain.



There are many sustainability programs in which Deltafina is involved, but they all develop starting from a **self-assessment** of performance based on key performance indicators (**kpi**), identified along the different areas of interest in the tobacco sector. The main topics on which self-assessment is requested, can be grouped as follows:

- 1) **Governance;**
- 2) **Crop;**
- 3) **Human and Labor Rights;**
- 4) **Soil Health;**
- 5) **Water;**
- 6) **Climate Change;**
- 7) **Natural Habitats;**
- 8) **Livelihoods**

Every year, for each of these intervention areas, it is asked to complete a questionnaire, which includes a variety of information that can be converted into numerical data and/or paper documents, demonstrating the monitoring and achievement of that precise target. Specifically, the processing of the requested information includes:

1. identification of the entered data type;
2. the assignment of priorities;
3. the response to the identified challenge and/or problem;
4. the methodology used to measure that specific data;
5. Recording and final evaluation of the results obtained.

Successively, the self-assessment control carried out, requires that the data entered is verified by a specific team (third-party), which evaluates the conformity and completeness of the information, requesting, if necessary, any further information about the entered information: thus opens the so-called "**in-depth assessment**" aimed at explaining and integrating the data entered, to then reach the resolution and closure of the discussion.



Obviously, each sustainability program has its own data management and control system, but essentially everybody follows the process just described.

### 3. THE MOBILEAF DATA COLLECTION PROGRAM

**MobiLeaf** is a project developed by Universal, implemented by



Deltafina starting from the 2015 season and applied to all its producers. It is a data collection software that allows you to track the progress of production in farms and process the gathered information almost in real time. This working tool can trace the

agronomy progress of crops and provide an overview of both the working conditions of the workforce employed and the management of the work environment (cleaning, machinery, use of CPAs, and PPE, etc...) providing a fairly complete picture of production.

MobiLeaf uses tablets as hardware, on which the previously described software is installed. The areas of interest for data entry are grouped in a menu which is in turn divided into macro work areas. These areas are:

- VISIT: type of visit to be carried out (ordinary/extraordinary);
- PERSONAL INFORMATION: grower's personal data;
- VISIT INFORMATION: assignment of growing varieties, grown hectares and contracted kg;
- SEEDBEDS: information on seedbed management (size, fertilization, treatments, etc...);
- PLOT: identification of the plots and related growing management (transplanting, treatments, fertilization, irrigation, harvesting, etc...)
- EVENTS IN THE FIELD: possibility of including any production losses due to extreme climatic events;



- CARE AND MANAGEMENT OF AGROCHEMICALS STORAGE: information regarding the care of tobacco and the management and storage of CPAs;
- FARMER PROFILE: information on the staff employed (type of contract, any accommodation provided, company conditions, etc...);
- NTRM/ALP/PROMPT ACTION: section concerning the monitoring of the foreign substances risk in the company and the recording of any non-conformities detected both in the field and in the company.

Every year, at the beginning of the season, the Agronomy Department gives each technician the tablet with the pre-loaded list of the growers assigned to him and on which he will have to carry out the technical assistance work for the entire season, periodically filling in all the sections present in the MobiLeaf program.

In practical terms, it involves a 360° degree monitoring and technical consultancy: during the agronomy season in fact, the farmer, interacting with the technician, transfers not only the agronomy data requested, but also establishes a real relationship of trust with the technician.

In this context, Deltafina Agronomy Department is in close contact with both technicians and farmers: during the field visits, it verifies the tablet is filled in adequately by the technician and at the same time it ensures the farmer is involved in this data gathering and technical support activity.

Concerning the reporting, during the season, the Agronomy Department sets deadlines for inserting data, at the end of which it downloads the entered up to that point information from a portal called **Power BI**.

In the event that inconsistencies arise or there are incomplete sections, the Agronomy Department notifies the responsible technician, trying together to resolve the problem and get back on





track. Also in this case, the collaboration with the Producers Groups and the technicians is at best: there is a relationship of trust and availability that allows us to work in a constant and profitable way. The set of data collected and the processing of information by Power BI is fundamental for compiling all those sustainability programs described at the beginning.

The methods of information transmission and the measurement of a specific piece of data requested by the customer represent the business card whereby Deltafina presents the Italian tobacco industry: it is in fact the operational key to communicating the level and methods of production management and at the same time the added value of this supply chain.

#### 4. GOOD AGRICULTURAL LABOUR PRACTICES: ALP

The ALP – **Agricultural Labour Practices** is based on the agricultural



labour regulations set out in the Fundamental Principles and Labour Rights Declaration (ILO) and on other relevant conventions of the same body and on the United Nations, as well as the fundamental

principles of the Italian Constitution and on labour laws. The ALP Program aims to eliminate child labour, abuse and discrimination in order to achieve fair, safe and better conditions for all companies in the supply chain.

**The 7 principles and the 32 measurable standards** whose this Code is composed must be interpreted and implemented in accordance with the conventions above described. Deltafina, in turn involved in this program, promotes the application of good agricultural labour practices in order to achieve the highest levels of workers protection. In fact, in all farms contracted by Deltafina there is a Poster (see **Fig.3**), displayed in a visible way, containing the description of the ALP



Code principles with the relative legislative application of good working practices at a national level.

By meetings with technicians and growers, Deltafina implements a periodic training and spreads the ALP code standards. Following the training received, the field technicians are responsible for monitoring and detecting any non-conformities at the associated farms.


This monitoring is carried out with the help of the MobiLeaf data processing system in which there is a specific section related to the ALP program.

Always remaining into the ethical sphere, the management of People represents one of the primary importance topics for Deltafina and since "Social" still remains one of the main areas of intervention when it comes to Sustainability (ESG), the Agronomy Department carries out not only activities of monitoring by technicians, but also in-depth analysis of the workers working conditions in the farms. For a few years now, following the results achieved during the season, Deltafina has deemed to intensify activities aimed at increasing knowledge regarding the working conditions in farms.

In this regard, two further work tools have been created which aim to delve deeper into this very sensitive topic: **unannounced visits and workers interviews**. These are two documents, managed exclusively by the Agronomy Department, that analyze on the one hand, the farm management at 360 degrees, both from an agronomic and social point of view (the unannounced visits) and on the other, they are real interviews with workers, without the presence of the farmer, in which we are informed about the working conditions in the farm (from the employment contract, to the management of breaks, to the type of accommodation when provided, etc...). Both documents are written during the season by the Deltafina Agronomy Team and every



year the percentage of visits and interviews carried out with respect to the total growers increases by 5%.



DELTAFINA S.p.A.

## BUONE PRATICHE DI LAVORO AGRICOLO CODICE ALP: 7 PRINCIPI e 32 STANDARDS MISURABILI



<p><b>1. LAVORO MINORILE</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Proibito l'impiego di manodopera minorile (al di sotto dei 16 anni di età).</li> <li>2. Divieto per i minori di svolgere <b>LAVORI PERICOLOSI</b> (anche nell'azienda di famiglia).</li> <li>3. Consentiti <b>LAVORI LEGGERI</b> ai minori (tra i 14 e 16 anni) nell'azienda di famiglia.</li> </ol> 	<p><b>2. SALARIO E ORE DI LAVORO</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Garanzia <b>Salario</b> minimo di base</li> <li>2. <b>Regolarità</b> e rispetto nei tempi di pagamento</li> <li>3. <b>Ore di lavoro</b> nei termini di Legge</li> <li>4. Lo <b>Storziario</b> è volontario</li> <li>5. Storziario pagato rispettando i termini di Legge</li> <li>6. Garanzia di <b>ferie e benefit</b> stabiliti per Legge</li> </ol> 	<p><b>3. TRATTAMENTO EQUO</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Nessun abuso <b>Fisico</b></li> <li>2. Nessun abuso <b>Sessuale</b></li> <li>3. Nessun abuso <b>Verbale</b></li> <li>4. Non è ammesso alcun tipo di <b>Discriminazione</b></li> <li>5. Possibilità di <b>denunciare</b> in totale anonimato eventuali forme di discriminazione subite</li> </ol> 	<p><b>4. LAVORO FORZATO</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Nessun tipo di <b>vincolo, minaccia o obbligo</b> per poter lavorare</li> <li>2. Assoluta <b>Libertà</b> di abbandonare il lavoro per giusta causa</li> <li>3. Nessun obbligo di <b>deposito</b> finanziario presso il coltivatore</li> <li>4. Divieto di <b>trattenere</b> stipendio ai di là dei termini stabiliti per Legge</li> <li>5. Divieto di trattenere alcun <b>documento di riconoscimento</b> del lavoratore</li> <li>6. E' proibito ogni forma di lavoro forzato</li> </ol>	<p><b>5. SICUREZZA nell'AMBIENTE di LAVORO</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Adottare</b> ogni <b>misura possibile</b> tale da fornire un ambiente di lavoro sicuro e ridurre il rischio di incidenti</li> <li>2. Aver ricevuto formazione appropriata in materia di <b>Materia del Tabacco Verde (GTS)</b></li> <li>3. <b>Divieto di manipolare prodotti fitosanitari</b> senza aver ricevuto adeguata formazione e <b>dotarsi del DPI</b> come richiesto dalla Legge</li> <li>4. <b>Rispettare</b> sempre i <b>tempi di rientro</b> nei campi</li> <li>5. Disponibilità di acqua corrente e potabile nell'ambiente di lavoro</li> <li>6. Fornire se necessario un abbiglio conforme ai requisiti di Legge</li> </ol>	<p><b>6. LIBERTA' DI ASSOCIAZIONE</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Divieto di interferire</b> con il lavoratore sulla Libertà di Associazione</li> <li>2. <b>Diritto di unirsi</b> liberamente in Associazioni sindacali</li> <li>3. <b>Nessuna discriminazione e libertà</b> di svolgere le proprie funzioni di rappresentante sindacale</li> </ol> 	<p><b>7. CONFORMITA' con la LEGGE</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Prima di iniziare il lavoro <b>informare</b> i lavoratori <b>sullo stato d'efficienza e stabilire i termini del contratto</b></li> <li>2. <b>Scrittoscrivere un contratto scritto</b> e riceverne <b>copia</b></li> <li>3. I <b>termini e le condizioni del contratto di lavoro non devono contravvenire</b> alcuna legge</li> </ol> 
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Fig.3 ALP Code Poster



## **5. THE EUROPEAN AGRONOMY DEPARTMENT**

In this system of synergistic collaboration between the parties, there is an additional level of the agronomy activities management described above, which broadens the view to Europe.

The European region, in fact, within Universal, has its own Agronomy Department which includes all the European countries that process tobacco for Universal: Italy, Spain, Poland, Hungary and France.

The management of this department is entrusted to a Coordinator, who acts as a point of contact between the various local departments. The European Team meets periodically, discusses, shares and updates on the countless issues concerning the tobacco sector and analyzes any challenges that may arise from season to season.

Among the various topics covered by the European Agronomy Department we can summarize the main ones, as follows:

- Coordination of activities carried out for the implementation of the various Sustainability Programs;
- Interaction with the various stakeholders in order to standardize the use of CPAs;
- Periodic reporting of the activities of each agronomy department;
- Participation in audits and formal visits;
- Processing and periodic updating of tobacco Production Costs;
- Monthly drafting of the Crop Report for each relevant area;
- Periodic update of the MobiLeaf Program and of the Power BI data processing system;
- Sharing of the agronomy results obtained and of the agronomy projects carried out during the season;
- Technical-scientific updates coming from Universal Conferences or from global organizations that deal specifically with tobacco (CORESTA).



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