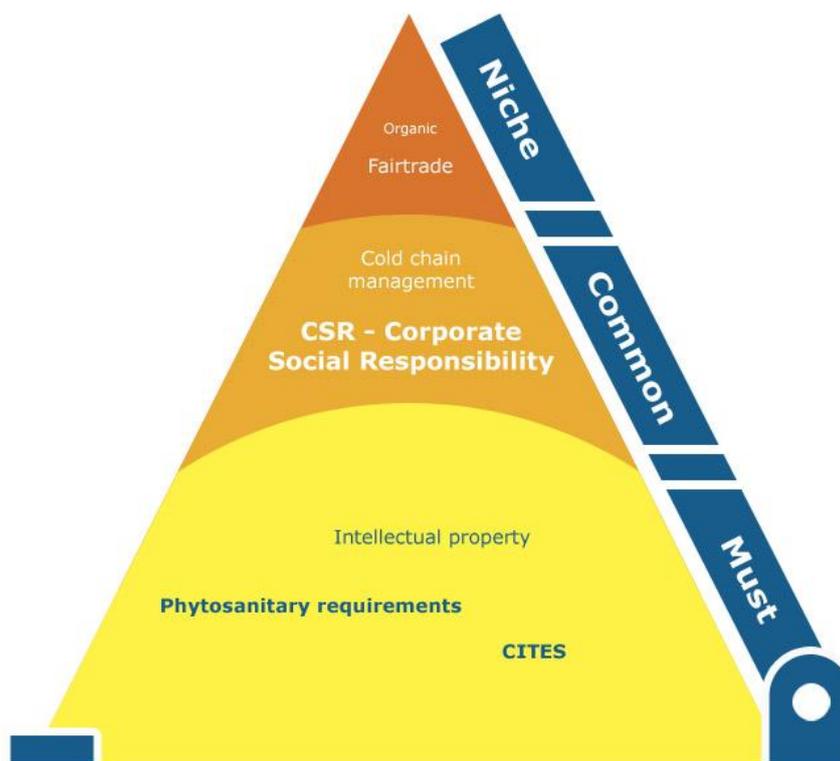




# EU Buyer Requirements for Cut Flowers

Buyer requirements can be divided into (1) *musts*, requirements you must meet in order to enter the market, such as legal requirements, (2) *common* requirements, which are those most of your competitors have already implemented, in other words, the ones you need to comply with in order to keep up with the market, and (3) *niche* market requirements for specific segments.



## Requirements cut flowers marketed in the EU must meet

### Plant health

Cut flowers exported to the EU, must comply with the EU legislation on plant health. The EU has laid down phytosanitary requirements to prevent introduction and spread of organisms harmful to plants and plant products in the EU.

Flowers imported in the EU must be accompanied by an official "phytosanitary

### Considerations for action

- Check with the relevant National Plant Protection Organisation for the exact procedures to get the phytosanitary certificate. Click [here](#) for a list of NPPOs
- A model phytosanitary certificate can be found in [AnnexVII](#) of the Plant Health Directive.
- Check if your country and the country you

certificate” guaranteeing the phytosanitary conditions of plants and plants products, and also that the shipment has been officially inspected, complies with statutory requirements for entry into the EU and is free of quarantine pests and other harmful pathogens.

Phytosanitary certificates are issued by your National Plant Protection Office (NPPO).

### Endangered Species – CITES

If you are exporting flowers that are listed as endangered according to the international CITES convention (e.g. certain orchids), you have to take specific procedures into account, to prove that trade will not be harmful to the survival of the specie in the wild. If your product is listed in [Annex A and Annex B](#) of Regulation (EC) No 338/97 all exports need to be accompanied by an export permit from the your country’s CITES authority and an import permit from the authorities in the country you are exporting to.

### Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)

Developing new plant varieties is often very expensive. The developers of new varieties are often European companies and they want their return on their investments. To avoid that just anybody can use these new varieties, they are protected by intellectual property rights. In recent years, there has been a growing attention for these breeders’ rights and illegal products are rejected from the market.

### Full overview of requirements for cut flowers:

For a list of requirements for cut flowers consult the [EU Export Helpdesk](#) where you can select your specific product under chapter 0603.

## Common buyer requirements: Sustainability

### CSR - Corporate Social Responsibility

EU consumers pay more and more attention to social and environmental circumstances during the flower production. As a result EU buyers require you to meet certain environmental and social standards in the form of certification of B2B schemes and consumer labels. Compliance with environmental standards (focusing on pesticide and water use) is a very common requirement, while social conditions are gaining importance.

The most important B2B scheme for flowers is [MPS](#). MPS ABC certification covers environmental performances and is considered a must for growers. Furthermore they have several other schemes such as MPS-SQ (focussing on social issues) , MPS-GAP (on

want to export to have implemented digital services to facilitate the process of import and export. For example in Holland there is the [CLIENT export](#) system, which is also used by the Kenyan and Ugandan inspection authorities.

- Read more about [plant health](#) in the EU Export Helpdesk
- Check in the Annexes if import and export permits are required for your product. If you are not sure, contact [your local CITES authority](#).
- Getting all CITES documents may take some time (especially when you are a new exporter, not known yet by the authorities). Since timing is essential when handling with perishable goods as cut flowers, try to anticipate on possible delays during the application for a permit.
- Read more about [CITES](#) in the EU Export Helpdesk.
- Make sure that you know exactly who owns the IPR for your species and pay necessary royalties.
- An interesting trend is that breeders’ only let their new variety be grown by a select group of growers. Staying in contact with breeders and offering perfect conditions to grow their new variety may therefore be an advantage
- Familiarise yourself with the protection frameworks for new plant varieties, for example from the [Union for the Protection of New Plant Varieties](#) (UPOV) or the [Community Plant Variety Office](#) (CPVO).

### Considerations for action

- Both buyers and consumers (especially in Western and Northern Europe) consider environmentally friendly production very important and this importance is expected to increase in the future. Becoming certified is essential.
- Use your good practices and certification as a marketing tool in the communication with (potential) buyers.
- There is an abundance of standards to choose from (although the actual criteria show a lot of similarities). To determine which scheme you should follow, the market your targeting will probably be decisive (which country do you want to export to and which trade channels do you use?)

Good Agricultural Practices) and MPS-Quality. The most comprehensive scheme is MPS-Florimark, which is a combination of the aforementioned four schemes

[GlobalGAP](#) is a B2B scheme originally focussing on Good Agricultural Practices. GlobalGAP has been the most important scheme for fruit and vegetables for years, but it is gaining importance for cut flowers as well, especially when selling to supermarkets.

#### *Private labels*

The increasing share of the 'unspecialised' market (supermarkets etc) in comparison with the 'specialised' market has also had its effects on the buyers' requirements. Several supermarket chains offer flowers under their own private labels often referring to social and environmental conditions at the production level.

Furthermore importers may also participate in initiatives such as the [Ethical Trading Initiative](#) (ETI) in the UK, or the [Business Social Compliance Initiative](#) (in several Western European countries). These initiatives focus on improving social conditions in their members' supply chains. This implies that you, as a supplier, are also required to act in compliance with their principles.

#### **Cold chain Management**

Proper cold chain management has a positive effect on the quality and vase life of flowers. Therefore EU buyers' demands for cold chain protocols are growing. Note that, although improving your cold chain management may be a challenge, the higher product quality should also improve your profits.

### **Niche markets CSR in consumer labels**

#### **Fairtrade Certification**

Although CRS requirements are common buyer requirements, standards that are communicated through a consumer label still represent a relatively small part of the market, mostly in North-western Europe .

Examples of relevant consumer labels are: [Fair Flowers Fair Plants \(FFP\)](#), [Fairtrade International](#), [Flowerde](#), [RainforestAlliance](#) and [FLP](#).

#### **Organic, niche nichemarket**

Organic Flowers are produced and processed by natural methods defined in [EU legislation](#). The market for organic flowers is however very small and most organic flowers sold are produced in the EU.

- See [Channels and Segments](#) to see how market channels are changing
- Click [here](#) for an overview of all MPS schemes including links to the criteria per scheme.
- Click [here](#) for the relevant GlobalGAP standards for flowers and ornamentals.
- Check for existing initiatives in your country. Examples are the Colombian [Florverde](#) standards or the code of the [Kenyan Flower Council](#). Sometimes these local initiatives are benchmarked against GlobalGAP and/or MPS
- If you want to target supermarkets directly, check which sustainability criteria they impose.

- Familiarise yourself with the [ETI base code](#) to check what [ETI members](#) require from their suppliers.
- Assess your company's current performance by doing a self-assessment, which you can find on the [BSCI website](#).

- Developing and implementing cold chain protocols will be vital to survival in the coming years.
- Do not wait until buyers ask for improved cold chain management, but anticipate on the developments.

#### **Considerations for action**

- Always check with your buyer if he requires certification and which certification he prefers.
- Consult the [Standards Map database](#) for the different labels and standards relevant for cut flowers.

- Note that some flower traders perceive organic flowers as a lesser quality product due to a lower aesthetic quality and durability. As such, organic flowers are not much favoured in Europe yet.

This document was compiled for CBI by CREM B.V.

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