

## **Champagne Tange-Gerard within the frame of the UN goals**

In this document, we want to introduce you to the status of Champagne Tange-Gérard regarding the 17 UN sustainability objectives.

Obviously, we do not pretend to have weight on any global, national, or even regional scale, but we believe that our choices have an impact even when it may be symbolic mainly.

We find it difficult to separate professional and private areas completely. In our understanding, sustainability does not make much sense, if it is not applied thoroughly in all life choices.

### **Sustainability objectives in Champagne**

The sustainability certificate in Champagne is based on a balance between three elements: economic performance of a company, respect of the environment and work according to the expectations from society in general. The requirements are set by the Comité Champagne, and the objective is that everybody is certified organic, sustainable or HVE (Haute Valeur Environnementale) or similar.

The objective of the UN sustainability goals is “to end poverty, improve health and education, reduce inequality and spur economical growth whilst tackling climate change and preserve oceans and forest”.

In the following, we'd like to comment briefly on our understanding of each UN goal in our local context in a village in Champagne, France.

The objectives regarding clean water, clean energy, climate action, life on land but also sustainable communities and responsible consumption connect with our daily work. Objectives like gender equality, decent work and good health connect with the way, tasks are planned and performed in the company.

#### No 1: UN: End poverty in all its forms everywhere

Poverty is not acceptable in a rich society like France. This position can only find an answer on a political level. However, on our scale we offer jobs now and then that do not require any diplomas. Obviously, we hire few persons, and we depend on the quality of their work. Still when hiring, we consider who needs a job in a team, maybe to become able to move on.

#### No 2: UN: End hunger, improve nutrition, promote sustainable agriculture

We grow a range of vegetables and fruits for our consumption in the garden and give away any surplus. We complement with local produce, preferably organic, from the market, farm shops, and preferably small shops. This is more expensive, which motivates us minimize any waste. We support charity programs like Banque Alimentaire and Restos du Coeur.

### No 3: UN: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

Our varying tasks in the vineyards are often rather physical. We pay attention to maintain our bodies. This means we participate in preventive actions when suggested by the health system i.e., blood test, consultation et cetera and suggest the same for our employee. We offer tools and equipment to counteract the drawbacks of the many repeated movements whenever possible. In our understanding, well-being is also to speak nicely and show interest in people around us. In our team, people of all ages and horizons meet up. We consider it a quality to engage with someone different than yourself.

### No 4: UN: Ensure inclusive, equitable quality education, promote lifelong learning opportunities

Our company receives trainees at different levels: from last year of secondary school and up to university. We mainly offer work in the vineyards matched with the experience of a small company actively dealing with the challenge of a changing climate. When we occasionally hire unskilled, young people, we nudge them to consider going back to school. In France, most schools and universities are free and some funding possible.

### No 5: UN: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Men and women are treated the same and paid the same amount per hour for the same job in our company. However, there may be a difference in the tasks suggested as some demand physical strength that men are more likely to possess. For our team, we prefer a mix of men and women, young and experienced which we believe is good for the spirit and the exchange.

### No 6: UN: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

The best way an agricultural company can preserve subsoil water is to stop sprays of herbicides, insecticides and pesticides that may pollute. Currently, our company is certified Viticulture Durable en Champagne and in its first year of organic conversion in 2021 which means we use organic and biodynamic sprays to manage diseases. Our company is not equipped with frost protection based on water and have no such plans. Champagne vineyards are not irrigated.

The vinification takes place in our cooperative which is fully equipped to deal with cleaning the used water according to French law. This is to avoid discharging too much organic matter from the pressing and vinification processes that involve a lot of cleaning.

At the farm, we collect rainwater to water vegetables and new plantations of trees.

### No 7: UN: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all

Our company and household have bought green electricity since this was made possible several years ago. Furthermore, we have installed a heat pump to heat the house and solar panels to produce the electricity, we use. All windows are double glazed, and the attics has been insulated. The shutters in front of the windows help regulate the temperature inside both in warm summers and cold winters.

No 8: UN: Promote sustainable economic growth, full employment and decent work for all

In Champagne, jobs are available in the vineyards, and it is not easy to find staff. Robots are introduced in different areas of the profession, lately also to do some tasks in the vineyards. This helps to reduce tasks with a lot of repetitive movements. Decent work in our view offers varied tasks that may accompany the wish and shown responsibility of employees as much as possible.

No 9: UN: Build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization, foster innovation

Our company works in an innovative way. Tasks and structures are constantly the targets of change into more efficiency. A small company has a low total of working hours available, therefore they must be used in the best possible way.

We vinify in the cooperative that we share with 250 other local winegrowers from the Vertus area. This means that individual needs must fit into collective ones, which sometimes complicates what we can achieve in a year. But we believe that sharing very expensive and modern equipment to get a maximum usage is a quite sustainable approach.

No 10: UN: Reduce inequality within and among countries

We mainly hire people who need work for the money or for the experience. The wages follow agreements between trade unions and employer organizations in the champagne business and the payment is above the minimum in France (SMIC).

No 11: UN: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable

There is a rather strong community in the village, built around the city council and the committee of festivities. Local winegrowers in the village and owners of neighboring plots collaborate, for instance regarding the “confusion sexuelle”. This operation is only possible as a cooperation since 20 adjoining hectares are the minimum and plots are generally small.

No 12: UN: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

Our company is based in an old farm that belongs to the family. The buildings are full of things that are too old to be of much interest but not old enough to be antiques. We repair and recycle as much as possible and give away what we don't use if it still has some value. When we buy something, we look for quality that will last. We work with local stores and craftsmen.

We have kept our champagne packaging at the lowest possible level to keep our carbon footprint low (in Champagne, 33% of CO2 emissions were due to packaging in 2015).

No 13: UN: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

The main challenge for our company is CO2 emissions linked with transport. Our company and family depend on several cars as we do not currently live and work in the same place. On top of this, we drive to buy stuff needed for our company, mostly within 5 or 20 minutes drives. We will move to electrical cars when autonomy is good enough.

Another challenge is our indispensable motorized equipment in the vineyards – the wine tractor and the little multipurpose caterpillar machine – that run with gas. We plant trees, grow a garden and work with green covers in the vineyards which binds carbon. We don't buy CO2 quotas.

14: UN: Conserve and use the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development

We reduce plastic as much as we can. Many professional products come in plastic of some sort. We have skipped plastic staples in our vineyards and use those made of starch exclusively. In our private life, we buy sustainably fished seafood and fishes and try to stop buying plastic emballage.

No 15: UN: Protect, restore, promote sustainable use of land ecosystems, halt biodiversity loss

In one of our vineyard locations, a ditch carries water down the slope in early spring. In and around it, plants of all sizes from small flowers and grasses up to small trees constitute a n ecosystem where plant and animal life carry on independently of our work. We have reframed our understanding of it: now the ditch represents biodiversity, and we live with its various inconveniences. We sow grasses and cereals between the vines for their roots to restructure the soils and to counter the competition between the naturally growing grasses and the vines.

No 16: UN: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development

Our general mindset is that we believe in cooperation with others. We share our experiences with neighbors and others who are interested. Locally, we participate in various meetings and trainings, mainly on topics that regard sustainability, organic or biodynamic trainings. Alain Gérard is Soulières correspondent of the AVC association and collects climate and growth data.

No 17: UN: Revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

We participate in local work with other neighbors in the commune and other winegrowers in our areas. We consider our professional clients as part of our network, which means that we spend time together when possible and help each other with whatever we have to offer.

We exchange about our experiences and approaches and theirs with our private customers.

It is always a human experience so far.

*Solveig Tange & Alain Gérard, Champagne Tange-Gérard, Soulières, October 2021*