



To: Producer Organizations
Producer Networks
National Fairtrade Organisations
FLOCERT

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Closure of Fairtrade pilot certification in conflict-affected regions (DRC specifically)

Fairtrade International is announcing an end to a special pilot certification option for producer organizations and traders in the Democratic Republic of Congo as a conflict-affected region.

This certification currently applies to five coffee producer organizations and three traders (of coffee, cocoa, and herbs and spices).

The certification option was set up as a temporary pilot in 2019. It was established specifically to apply to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) because of interest by producer organizations, traders, and some commercial partners. The goal was to test a pathway to Fairtrade certification for Congolese producers that were disadvantaged by long-standing armed conflict. It relied on a limited set of criteria that could be checked remotely by Fairtrade's independent certifier, FLOCERT, for both producer organizations and traders in the affected regions.

With the pilot ending, currently certified organizations will be transitioned to a full certification audit process. The eight currently certified organizations will continue to be audited under standard FLOCERT procedures against the applicable full Fairtrade Standard, namely for small-scale producer organizations or for traders.

Any new certification applications from producer or trader organizations in the DRC will be for full Fairtrade certification. The process for all new applications involves a check to determine whether the applicant falls within current Fairtrade certification scope, including a travel advisory check for the country or region. If travel is not advised, as is currently the case for parts of the DRC, FLOCERT applies a standard procedure of denying the application as out of scope of Fairtrade certification at this time.

Fairtrade International recognizes the serious challenges faced by farmers, producer organizations and traders based in conflict-affected regions. We believe fair trade and sustainable practices should be the norm, not just an exception. That's why we advocate for regulations that will raise the bar for all farmers and workers, not just those that are Fairtrade certified.

Any questions about this pilot certification can be directed to Fairtrade International at info@fairtrade.net. Currently certified producer organizations and traders can contact their responsible analyst at FLOCERT for questions about their next audit.

Best regards,

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