



To: Certified small-scale producer
organizations and traders in cocoa and
coffee
Fairtrade members

cc: Standards Committee
Fairtrade International staff
FLOCERT staff
Fairtrade International Board

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New certification requirement for cocoa and coffee producer organizations and traders

Dear partners,

A key factor in cocoa and coffee farmers being able to improve their livelihoods and move towards earning a living income is that they can sell more of their crop on Fairtrade terms. Among other benefits, this includes receiving the Fairtrade Minimum Price and the mandatory Fairtrade Premium, an additional amount on top of the selling price that farmer cooperatives choose how to invest in their businesses and communities.

During its meeting on 12 March 2020, the Fairtrade International Board decided to implement a certification requirement for new coffee and cocoa producers and traders, as one step among several measures to deepen benefits for farmers.

The requirement, which takes effect 1 June 2020, requires cocoa and coffee producer organizations and traders to have commitments in place for new Fairtrade sales volumes in order to be eligible for Fairtrade certification. The commitments must be confirmed by the end buyer, whose products bear the FAIRTRADE Mark, and validated by the respective national Fairtrade organization. It will also be possible for new producer organizations to become certified, if necessary, to ensure supply continuity of an existing contract for Fairtrade certified cocoa or coffee.

This certification requirement is being implemented concurrently with the stakeholder consultations on the Fairtrade Standards reviews for [coffee](#) and [cocoa](#), as a preliminary step while the full consultations can take place. Through these consultations, producers and other supply chain stakeholders will provide their input on various options and measures related to improving farmers' incomes. The requirement will be in effect for 14 months, or until superseded by the revised product-specific Fairtrade Standards, whichever occurs earlier.

Details of the new requirement are as follows:

- A cocoa or coffee producer organization or trader newly applying for certification as of 1 June 2020 will be required to submit a recommendation letter from a national Fairtrade organization confirming that the producer organization or trader has commitments for purchase of new Fairtrade volumes, through the supply chain to a final end Fairtrade buyer.
- Once contacted by the producer organization or trader with a request for a recommendation letter, the national Fairtrade organization will verify the terms of the sourcing commitment with the indicated end buyer. This will usually be a company that licenses the FAIRTRADE Mark, or intends to as part of a new Fairtrade supply chain.
- If the company is based in a country without a national Fairtrade organization, Fairtrade International will provide the recommendation letter.



- The relevant Fairtrade organization will also check with the Fairtrade Producer Network in the relevant region (Africa/Middle East, Asia/Pacific, or Latin America/Caribbean) to assess whether the new commitment could be fulfilled by a currently certified producer organization.
- In the event that the certification application is related to a need to fulfil existing Fairtrade commitments that can't otherwise be met (for instance, meeting certain quality, quantity, or product specifications), then the producer organization or trader applicant is required instead to submit a recommendation letter from their regional Fairtrade Producer Network (if based in producing regions), or from a national Fairtrade organization or Fairtrade International.
- The recommendation letter is then submitted by the applicant (producer organization or trader) as a part of the certification application package.

The goal is that producer organizations that are currently Fairtrade certified can continue to benefit from existing or expanded sales, while newly certified organizations will have committed Fairtrade buyers lined up. Fairtrade Producer Networks will also be able to provide a higher level of assistance to a more stable number of producer organizations. Traders that are part of Fairtrade supply chains can continue to develop trading relationships, with full commitment to Fairtrade principles.

At the same time, Fairtrade is also pursuing other measures to support farmer incomes, including focused producer support and marketing efforts to expand demand for Fairtrade coffee and cocoa.

Fairtrade International will be monitoring the implementation of this measure and assess its effectiveness, including to inform the product-specific cocoa and coffee standards reviews currently underway.

For more information, please contact Eleonora Gutwein at: assurance@fairtrade.net.

Best regards,

Gelkha Buitrago