

# Fairtrade Standard for Cocoa

## Explanatory note

---

On April 2017 Fairtrade International published a revised Fairtrade Standard for Cocoa. This document provides additional information and answers to questions raised since the publication.

**UPDATED version, July 2019: Section A,** 'Fairtrade Minimum Price and Fairtrade Premium' clarifies the implementation of changes to Fairtrade Cocoa Pricing following the Cocoa price review.

**UPDATED version, April 2020:** Clarification of the FMP differential calculation methodology, such as specifying exchange rates, defining currencies for the FMP differential; Inclusion of details on the FMP differential reporting by the small producer organisations; FMP Clarification on the market price reference if legislation requires payment of a differential/premium; Updates on the Fairtrade prices for semi-processed cocoa products purchased directly from small producer organisations.

**UPDATED version, September 2021:** Introduction of timeline for the distribution of the price differential in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire by SPOs.

---

## Content

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>A. Fairtrade Minimum Price and Fairtrade Premium</b>   | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>B. Fairtrade Minimum Price and calculation of Fairtrade Premium amount for semi-processed cocoa products</b> | <b>7</b>  |
| <b>C. Mass balance conversion ratios</b>  | <b>8</b>  |
| <b>D. Purchase prior to sale</b>  | <b>11</b> |
| <b>E. Maximum period of validity for Fairtrade mass balance products</b>  | <b>12</b> |
| <b>F. Mass balance: like for like</b>   | <b>13</b> |
| <b>Other Questions and Answers</b>  | <b>15</b> |

## A. Fairtrade Minimum Price and Fairtrade Premium

### ***What is the intent?***

This section aims to clarify the changes to Fairtrade Cocoa Pricing in the Cocoa standard and how these changes should be understood and implemented. The changes aim to ensure transparency of farmer prices and to provide adequate benefit to producers.

### ***What is the rule?***

As of 1 October 2019:

- For conventional cocoa, the Fairtrade Minimum Price (FMP) is 2400 USD/MT at the point of export (FOB).
- For organic cocoa, the Fairtrade organic differential is 300 USD/MT above the market price or the Fairtrade Minimum Price (for conventional cocoa), whichever is higher at the time of sale.
- The Fairtrade Premium (FP) for conventional and organic is 240 USD/MT

#### ***Please also note:***

- The market price reference is the international market price, either New York (ICE FUTURES US) or London (ICE FUTURES EUROPE).
- In countries where prices are regulated, the official price set by the national government is the market price reference. However, if legislation requires payment of a differential/premium for farmers or SPOs, this value is included in the market price reference. The Fairtrade Minimum Price differential is the difference between the Fairtrade Minimum Price and the market reference price. It is only applicable when the Fairtrade Minimum Price is above the market price.
- The Fairtrade organic differential is the price paid on top of the conventional Fairtrade Minimum Price or the market price whichever is highest, when purchasing Fairtrade organic cocoa

### ***How does it work?***

The Fairtrade producers must at least be paid the Fairtrade Minimum Price for their Fairtrade products. The Fairtrade Premium is paid in addition to the Fairtrade Minimum Price.

In price regulated markets:

- When the Fairtrade Minimum Price is higher than the government-set price, buyers pay Fairtrade certified Small Producer Organizations (SPOs) the difference. This is the Fairtrade Minimum Price differential.
- The Ivorian and Ghanaian Small Producer Organizations are required to pass 100 percent of this payment to their members, to allow for greater transparency with the aim of maximizing income at farm level (refer to requirement 4.2.4).
- Fairtrade Premium is paid directly to the Small Producer Organization (SPO) by the trader responsible for paying the Fairtrade Minimum Price and Premium. No deductions are allowed by any actor in the supply chain.

For more rules and further clarification on the implementation of changes please follow the Q&A section below

## Questions and Answers

### ● Changes to the price structure of Fairtrade certified cocoa

**Q.1:** How should Small Producer Organizations (SPOs) distribute the FMP differential amount amongst its members?

- Taking into account different policies amongst Small Producer Organizations, SPOs can determine, if only members who delivered the Fairtrade sales volumes should receive the price differential or if the total value of the price differential received by the SPO should be shared equally across all members. Nevertheless, the SPO should have an agreed and transparent distribution policy with its members.

**Q.2:** How should SPOs report on the FMP differential?

- Requirement 4.6.3 stipulates that SPOs in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire are required to have an accounting system in place that accurately tracks and identifies the payments of the price differential transparently. This should include the price differential payments received by the SPO and the price differential payments made by the SPO to each member of their organization.
- As of October 2019, to comply with requirement 4.6.3 organizations need to:
  - 1) Communicate publicly and raise awareness amongst members of payment dates and amounts to be paid as FMP differential and as cash distribution of Fairtrade Premium.
  - 2) Provide receipts to individual members' detailing the value of:
    - the FMP differential paid, including date, volume and cocoa season.
    - any Fairtrade Premium paid in cash, including date, volume and cocoa season.At this link you can find a template for a receipt.
  - 3) Demonstrate each cocoa season that the amount of FMP differential distributed to the members reconciles with the FMP differential received by the PO. In Ivory coast this amount should be the Fairtrade defined FMP differential multiplied by the volume traded by the SPO.
  - 4) Demonstrate in documentation separately the amounts received of Fairtrade Premium and Fairtrade Minimum Price differential.
  - 5) Report to the members collectively (at General Assembly) on total amounts of FMP differential, and Fairtrade Premium distributed as cash, if applicable.

**Q.3:** Will there still be a Fairtrade Minimum Price for Fairtrade Organic Cocoa?

- Yes, there is, but the structure of the Fairtrade Minimum Price will change with the introduction of a Fairtrade organic differential. The Fairtrade organic differential will be 300 USD/MT above the market price or the Fairtrade Minimum Price for conventional cocoa of 2400 USD/MT, whichever is higher at the time of sale. This is a change from the current Fairtrade Minimum Price of 2300 USD/MT for Fairtrade certified organic cocoa.

### ● Validity of the price changes to Fairtrade certified cocoa

**Q.4:** When did the new Fairtrade Minimum Price and Premium come into effect?

- For price regulated markets (Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire), the new Fairtrade Minimum Price and Premium must be paid on deliveries from Small Producer Organisations as of 1 October 2019. For non-regulated markets (worldwide except Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire), the new Fairtrade Minimum Price and Premium must be paid on SPO contracts signed as of 1 October 2019. For SPO contracts signed between 1 March and 30 September 2019 in non-regulated markets, cocoa deliveries at the current Fairtrade Minimum Price and Premium must be made by 31 December 2019. Otherwise the new Fairtrade Minimum Price and Premium applies.

**Q.5:** How does FLOCERT identify the delivery date?

- Delivery is defined as follows:  
For Côte d'Ivoire: When the Small Producer Organization is selling to an exporter (Fairtrade Conveyor) FLOCERT will reference the factory entry bill of lading (connaissance entrée usine). When the SPO is exporting, FLOCERT will reference the shipment bill of lading.  
  
For Ghana: the delivery is defined as the date indicated in the producers' pass books of when the cocoa was delivered to the LBC (Licensing buying company).  
  
For the rest of the world: when the SPO is selling to an exporter, FLOCERT will reference the applicable delivery documentation following local/regional trading practices. When the SPO is exporting, FLOCERT will reference the shipment bill of lading.

### ● **Applicability of the new Fairtrade Minimum Price / Fairtrade Premium beyond price and premium payers:**

**Q.6:** As a supplier (certified trader), should I start charging my customers the new Fairtrade Minimum Price (FMP) or Fairtrade Premium (FP) as of 1<sup>st</sup> October 2019?

- No. Fairtrade does not require that customer contracts further up the supply chain include the new FMP/FP as of 1st October 2019.

**Q.7:** As a buyer (manufacturer/brand), when will my supplier start charging me for the new FMP/FP?

- It is expected that suppliers (certified traders) will start to charge their customers the new Fairtrade Minimum Price and Premium when the Fairtrade cocoa products being sold to the customer include Fairtrade cocoa purchased from Small Producer Organizations at the new Fairtrade Minimum Price and Premium. Consequently implementation of the new FMP/FP for customers will vary depending on the certified traders' stock<sup>1</sup> of Fairtrade cocoa products purchased at the current FMP/FP. It is, therefore, recommended that buyers of Fairtrade cocoa products request clarification from their suppliers about the date the Fairtrade cocoa beans were delivered from Fairtrade SPOs.  
**Please note:** Charging customers at the new FMP/FP for stock delivered by Fairtrade SPOs at the current FMP/FP is an example of "Unfair Trading Practices" (Requirement 4.8.1 – [Fairtrade Trader Standard, Interpretation Note](#)).

**Q.8:** Are suppliers (beyond price and premium payer) allowed to sell Fairtrade cocoa beans below the Fairtrade Minimum Price?

- Given that price and premium payers have to pay at least the FMP differential and the FP, it is equally considered an unfair trading practice to sell Fairtrade cocoa beans at a price below the purchase price. To ensure fair and sustainable trading practices are applied throughout the whole supply chain and to avoid excessive pressure on suppliers, all traders at /or beyond the price and premium payer, should sell and purchase Fairtrade products covering at least the applicable Fairtrade Minimum Price differential defined by Fairtrade and Fairtrade Premium.

**Q.9.:** As a Fairtrade manufacturer/brand, how will I know what Fairtrade Minimum Price differential was paid to Small Producer Organizations on the Fairtrade Cocoa Products I am purchasing?

It is recommended that buyers of Fairtrade cocoa products request clarification from their suppliers about the value of the FMP differential paid to Fairtrade Small Producer Organizations/the date the Fairtrade cocoa beans were delivered from Fairtrade SPOs, and how this translates into the price for Fairtrade Cocoa Products they are being charged.

---

<sup>1</sup> Stock also refers to mass balance volumes

Fairtrade recommends that suppliers adopt a *Transparent Pricing Policy* with their customers which details when beans were purchased from Small-scale Producer Organizations e.g. total volumes purchased pre and post the price increase and how this affects the prices of the cocoa products being charged during a particular time period. (Requirement 4.8.1 – [Fairtrade Trader Standard](#), [Interpretation Note](#))

For Ivory Coast, Fairtrade circulates an update on Fairtrade Cocoa Minimum Price differentials to all cocoa customers twice annually to align with the government price announcements on 1st April and 1st October.

The reference prices used to determine whether the Fairtrade Minimum Price is higher than the market price are detailed in the [Fairtrade Cocoa Standard](#) – Requirement 4.2.1.

### ● **Publising the USD-XOF exchange rate, applicable to sourcing from Côte d'Ivoire**

**Q.10:** All Fairtrade prices are set in USD. However, the exchange rate between USD and XOF will be fixed twice a year, which is applicable to sourcing from Côte d'Ivoire. How does fixing the exchange rate affect my payment?

- Fairtrade publishes the value of the FMP differential payable for the respective delivery period. The differential is published in USD twice a year using the XOF/USD exchange rate on 31st March and 30th September when determining whether the FMP differential is payable. The FMP differential as determined by Fairtrade is applicable regardless of the exchange rate mentioned in the contract with the PO or the exchange rate on the date of payment to the PO.
- The contract parties (1st buyer) are instructed to use the same exchange rate (USD-XOF) as detailed in every announcement to calculate the FMP differential in XOF and are recommended to use the same exchange rate to calculate the FP payment to producers in XOF, for the relevant trading season.
- Based on the currency specified in the purchasing contract, the value of the Fairtrade prices (eg. amount of FMP differential, FP and organic differential) should be respected, whether in USD or XOF. The payment can still be made in other currencies.

### ● **Volumes traded before the validity (1st of October 2019) of the new FMP/FP**

**Q.11:** Will I have to pay any difference between the current and the new FMP/FP to retain stocks / mass balance volumes purchased at the current FMP/FP?

- No, no additional payments are required to retain Fairtrade stocks / mass balance volumes

**Q.12:** I am a Fairtrade certified trader and have a bank of mass balance volumes, which accrued as a result of stock delivered prior to 1<sup>st</sup> October 2019 from Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, paid at the FP of 200 USD/MT, can I still use them after 1<sup>st</sup> October 2019?

- Yes. For Fairtrade mass balance cocoa products you can sell the Fairtrade equivalent output within 3 years of purchasing the Fairtrade input (Requirement 2.1.2 – [Fairtrade Standard for Cocoa](#)). These credits can be sold on until the end of the maximum three years validity period.

### ● **Discounts and the Fairtrade Minimum Price**

**Q.13:** Can quality discounts be applied by Fairtrade Payers to the FMP or the FMP + organic differential?

- No, quality discounts cannot be applied to the FMP or the FMP + the organic differential for Fairtrade organic cocoa. The FMP or the FMP + the organic differential, is an absolute minimum. No Fairtrade cocoa can be traded below.

**Q.14:** The Fairtrade Minimum Price for cocoa is set at FOB level but many Small Producer Organizations do not export. As an exporter can I deduct export costs?

- For Fairtrade Cocoa from non-regulated markets, the deduction of export costs is possible in accordance with requirement 4.2.3 in the Trader Standard.
- For Fairtrade Cocoa from Côte d'Ivoire, exporters are not permitted to deduct export costs from the Fairtrade Minimum Price differential at FOB level. This is for a number of reasons:
  - Due to relatively high export costs in Côte d'Ivoire (approx. 22% in 2018) allowing the deduction of export costs would significantly reduce the value of the price differential available and ultimately impact greatest on the price differential received by the farmer.
  - The consequence of a quasi EXWs price for Fairtrade cocoa from Côte d'Ivoire (whilst the same cannot be defined for Ghana) could result in unfair intra-regional competition in West Africa.
  - Provision for export costs is already made in the national cocoa pricing system of Côte d'Ivoire (Le Barème).

### ● Specification of Fairtrade Premium and the organic differential in contracts (Fairtrade Standard for Cocoa Requirement 4.1.3, 4.1.4)

**Q.15:** What information is required in order to comply with requirement 4.1.3?

- In the Cocoa Standard, requirement 4.1.3 states that traders along the supply chain should indicate in sales contracts with customers the amount of Fairtrade Premium to be paid, and Fairtrade organic differential when applicable, separately from the agreed purchase price of the Fairtrade cocoa products.
- To promote transparency of Fairtrade prices along the supply chain, it is required that in the contract between supplier and buyer, the Fairtrade premium for the contracted volume must be indicated separately from the agreed contract price. The same applies to the Fairtrade organic differential when contracting for Fairtrade organic products. Suppliers can choose to either indicate the Fairtrade Premium/Fairtrade organic differential as a total amount for the contracted volume or as a per unit (kg/mt) cost.

**Q.16:** What information is required in order to comply with requirement 4.1.4?

- Requirement 4.1.4 of the revised Cocoa Standard stipulates that Fairtrade payers clearly indicate the amount of Fairtrade organic differential to be paid, separately from the price in the purchase contract. The Fairtrade organic differential and the Fairtrade Premium should both be listed separately (Requirement 4.1.2 of the Fairtrade Trader Standard)

### ● Distribution of the price differential in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire by SPOs (Fairtrade Standard for Cocoa Requirement 4.2.4)

**Q. 17:** How soon should SPOs transfer the FMP differential payments received by the organization to their members?

- As of 1<sup>st</sup> October 2021, to comply with this requirement, organizations transfer any FMP differential payments to their members within 30 days of receipt by the organization. Organizations do not need to consult on the ideal timing of the price differential payments with their members.

## B. Fairtrade Minimum Price and calculation of Fairtrade Premium amount for semi-processed cocoa products

### **Fairtrade Premium (FP) for semi-processed cocoa products sold/purchased from traders, applying mass balance**

The value of the Fairtrade Premium for semi-processed products is derived from the average processing yield calculated based on the ratios stated in the requirement 2.1.1.

When calculating the premium value for semi-processed cocoa products, the following conversion ratios apply:

|             |   |                                    |
|-------------|---|------------------------------------|
| 1 MT beans  | ➡ | 0.82 MT liquor                     |
| 1 MT liquor | ➡ | 0.5 MT butter and 0.5 MT powder    |
| 1 MT beans  | ➡ | 0.41 MT butter and 0.41 MT powder. |

In case you are selling only butter or powder as Fairtrade in your supply chain, the Fairtrade Premium values for butter and for powder may increase to offset the uneven demand on butter and powder. However the total amount of Fairtrade Premium for butter and for powder should not exceed the FP for the total amount of beans needed to produce the product.

**Q.1:** As a certified trader, if I apply physical traceability in my supply chain, which conversion ratios apply to calculate FP?

- In case physical traceability applies, the actual processing yields/conversion ratios should be used to calculate the amount of Fairtrade Premium payable, based on the Fairtrade Premium value for beans at 240 USD/MT.

### **Calculation of Fairtrade Premium and Fairtrade Minimum Price for semi-processed cocoa products purchased directly from producers, i.e. cocoa producing Small Producer Organizations at origin**

**(Fairtrade standard for Cocoa, Requirement 4.2.5, 4.2.6 and 4.2.7)**

**Q.2:** How do I calculate the Fairtrade minimum price for semi-processed cocoa products purchased directly from Small Producer Organizations?

As per requirement 4.2.5, you negotiate the price of semi-processed cocoa with producers, when purchasing directly from Small Producer Organizations.

- For Liquor, the negotiated price is based on, at least, USD 2688/MT at producer level (EXW price). However, Fairtrade expects that processing costs and export costs (when the producers export themselves) are taken into account when determining the final price for liquor.
- For Butter and Powder, the price paid to the SPO should follow the relevant market prices.

**Q.3:** How do I calculate the Fairtrade Premium for semi-processed cocoa products purchased directly from Small Producer Organizations?

As per requirement 4.2.6, to increase price certainty for the SPOs, the FP for semi-processed cocoa products are fixed and should be paid in addition to the FMP and Organic differential. The values of the Fairtrade Premium for semi-processed products are follows:

|                   |
|-------------------|
| Fairtrade Premium |
|-------------------|

|        |            |
|--------|------------|
| Liquor | 300 USD/MT |
| Butter | 479 USD/MT |
| Powder | 425 USD/MT |

The Fairtrade Premium values are calculated using the following processing yields:

1MT beans  0.80 MT liquor

1MT beans  0.376 MT butter and 0.424 powder

Due to imbalanced cocoa butter and powder sales, the Fairtrade Premium values above share the associated cost risks equally between SPOs and buyers, by applying a ratio of 0.75 For example:

Fairtrade Premium for 1MT of butter =  $\$240 \div 0.376 \times 0.75$

Fairtrade Premium for 1MT of powder =  $\$240 \div 0.424 \times 0.75$

**Q.4:** How do I calculate the Fairtrade Organic differential for semi-processed organic cocoa products purchased directly from Small Producer Organizations?

The purpose of the Fairtrade Organic differential is to cover the additional costs of organic production, especially when the market fails to do so. The Fairtrade Organic differential is calculated based on the Organic differential for beans (300 USD/MT), paid on top of the FMP or the market price whichever is higher.

- The Fairtrade Organic differential for semi-processed cocoa products must be paid in addition to the FMP and FP, when purchasing organic semi-processed cocoa products from Small Producer Organizations
- The values of the Fairtrade Organic differential for semi-processed products are as follows:

| Fairtrade Organic Differential |            |
|--------------------------------|------------|
| Liquor                         | 375 USD/MT |
| Butter                         | 375 USD/MT |
| Powder                         | 375 USD/MT |

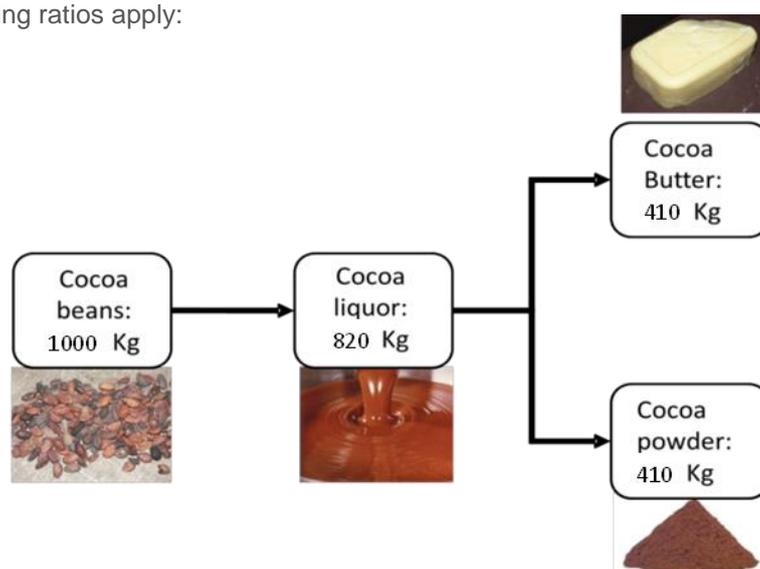
### C. Mass balance conversion ratios (Fairtrade Standard for Cocoa Requirement 2.1.1)

### ***What is the intent?***

The conversion ratios are used by operators applying mass balance to convert the volumes of processed cocoa products into cocoa beans. The conversion ratios have been revised to ensure that producers get the Fairtrade premium that corresponds to the cocoa volume sold as Fairtrade. These ratios have been slightly amended to align with the other sustainability standards and schemes (e.g., CEN/ISO standard (ISO 34101-3)).

### ***What is the rule?***

The following ratios apply:



The conversion is ONLY possible in the direction that is physically possible.

Note that the combined conversion ratio (valid until March 2017) has been deleted.

### ***How does it work?***

With 1MT Fairtrade beans, you can sell up to 0.41 MT Fairtrade butter and 0.41 MT Fairtrade powder. You cannot replace powder volumes with butter volumes and vice versa.

In other words, if you want to sell 1 MT butter, you need to buy at least 2.44 MT beans. With these 2.44 MT Fairtrade beans, you will be able to sell up to 1 MT Fairtrade butter and 1 MT Fairtrade powder.

To find out how many beans you need to buy in order to sell  $X$  MT of butter and  $Y$  MT of powder, you take the highest value of the two and multiply by the conversion ratio of 2.44.

### ***Questions and Answers***

**Q.1:** Is it correct that the conversion rate from cocoa butter or cocoa powder back to cocoa liquor (equivalent) is 2?

- Yes. For 1MT of butter you need 2 MT of liquor. For 1 MT of powder you need 2 MT of liquor. But for 1 MT of Butter and 1 MT of powder, you need 2 MT of liquor.

**Q.2:** Am I allowed to calculate all my purchases and sales of cocoa products back to cocoa bean equivalent and to compare the cocoa bean equivalents purchased with the cocoa bean equivalents sold?

- No. The mass balance rule requires that the amount of Fairtrade outputs is equivalent to the amount of Fairtrade inputs but also, it requires that both outputs and inputs are of the same kind and quality. If you only compare cocoa beans equivalents, compliance with the like for like requirement can't be ensured.

**Q.3:** Is it advisable to monitor the cocoa products separately in my balance, i.e. comparing liquor purchases with liquor sales, butter purchases with butter sales, and powder purchases with powder sales?

- Yes. If you process, it is advisable to monitor and compare bean purchases with liquor sales, or liquor purchases with butter and powder sales.

**Q.4:** In requirement 4.2.6, a different set of processing yields for liquor, butter and powder are stipulated in the guidance text. What is the purpose of these processing yields and how do they correspond with the conversion ratios indicated in 2.1.1?

- Requirement 2.1.1 and 4.2.6 apply to very different scenarios:
  - The purpose of requirement 2.1.1 is to define under mass balance how much output (semi-processed product) can be sold as Fairtrade, given the amount of inputs. The new conversion rates here apply as of January 2018.
  - The purpose of requirement 4.2.5 and 4.2.6 is to define how much price and premium the payer has to pay when buying semi-processed products directly from producers (i.e. small producer organizations/cooperatives)

**Q.5:** Can traders who buy semi-processed products compensate the Fairtrade cocoa butter by buying cocoa liquor instead?

- Yes, mass balance conversions are allowed in the direction that is physically possible (only): beans to liquor, liquor to butter and powder. E.g. companies cannot compensate powder for butter as from a processing perspective it isn't physically possible, but liquor to butter is allowed., We included this in the standard to stop operators interchanging butter and powder as a possible outcome was less beans being purchased as Fairtrade (so less premium paid) under mass balance than would have been needed physically.

## D. Purchase prior to sale (Fairtrade Trader Standard 2.1.9)

### ***What is the intent?***

To ensure that for each product sold as Fairtrade, an equivalent volume has been sold by producers under Fairtrade terms.

### ***What is the rule?***

Fairtrade inputs are purchased before the sale of the Fairtrade outputs.

### ***How does it work?***

The term **purchase** means either:

- Physical delivery of the product
- Payment for the product
- Invoicing of the product
- Binding purchase contract (or purchase order within a framework contract) for a specific delivery date within 3 months.

**Please note**, that intention of purchase can not be considered a purchase.

In order to keep your mass balance calculations you have to chose one definition and maintain it throughout all calculations. Best practice is to choose the date of physical delivery of the product or the date of invoicing of the product.

## ***Questions and Answers***

**Q.1:** How long in advance can I consider a contract to be purchase evidence with which to maintain a positive mass balance?

- You can consider a contract to be purchase evidence if it has been signed with a date stamp that is no more than 3 months before the date you sell the corresponding Fairtrade outputs.

## **E. Maximum period of validity for Fairtrade mass balance products (Fairtrade Standard for Cocoa Requirement 2.1.2)**

### ***What is the intent?***

To introduce a reasonable time limit to avoid operators selling Fairtrade equivalent volumes a long time after their purchase and to facilitate checks of mass balance calculations (inputs vs outputs).

### ***What is the rule?***

Companies have a maximum period of 3 years to sell the Fairtrade equivalent outputs after having bought the inputs.

### ***How does it work?***

When a company buys Fairtrade cocoa beans or semi-processed cocoa products, it can sell – for example – the corresponding volume of butter immediately, and it has 3 years to sell the corresponding volume of powder as Fairtrade (and vice-versa).

### ***Example***

*How can I demonstrate compliance if I am buying and selling Fairtrade cocoa products on a regular basis?*

*Do I have to start 'earmarking' purchase volumes?*

- When you are buying and selling Fairtrade cocoa products on a regular basis, you are assumed to be in compliance with the requirement. You will thus not be required to start earmarking purchase volumes, as constant turnover is taking place.

## F. Mass balance: like for like (Fairtrade Standard for Cocoa requirement 2.1.3)

### ***What is the intent?***

To ensure transparency and integrity, and avoid misleading claims within the supply chain (B2B).<sup>2</sup>

### ***What is the rule?***

If a company claims (in the sales documentation) that the cocoa sold as Fairtrade is of one specific category or origin, then the corresponding equivalent purchased volume of Fairtrade cocoa beans should be from the same category or origin (and this should be demonstrated in the purchase documentation).

### ***How does it work?***

The Trader Standard requires that the outputs sold as Fairtrade are of the same kind and quality as the inputs (like for like).

What defines “kind and quality” of cocoa?

- Category: fine & flavour vs. bulk cocoa:
- Organic vs. conventional status
- Origin

Since mass balance is based on documentary traceability, the auditor checks that what is being sold as Fairtrade corresponds to what is being purchased as Fairtrade and –depending on the claim from the operator– that the volume sold from one specific category or origin, corresponds to the volume bought from that same category or origin.

Adding information to the invoice might be challenging for operators, so this specific information could be in an annex or another separate document that includes a reference to the related contract or invoice number.

---

<sup>2</sup> Please note that the rules regarding Business to Consumer communication are not covered in this requirement, but are included in the Trademark Use Guidelines. Click [here](#) for more information.

## Questions and Answers

**Q.1:** If an operator buys Fairtrade fine flavor cocoa butter from one origin and bulk cocoa butter from another origin, can they sell the equivalent/total volume as Fairtrade fine flavor cocoa butter under mass balance?

- No, the claim “fine flavor” can only be made if both kinds of cocoa butter volumes are categorized as fine flavour. Only the amount of cocoa butter that has been purchased as Fairtrade fine flavour can be sold as Fairtrade fine flavour.

**Q.2:** Can I sell cocoa products as ‘fine flavor’ if a respective reference is missing on the purchase documentation provided by my supplier, but the origin (e.g. Ecuador) could be an indicator?

- No, as it would be difficult for the auditor to assess if the cocoa is fine flavour or not. The origin claim alone is not sufficient.

**Q.3:** Can I buy a Fairtrade dark chocolate and sell white chocolate as Fairtrade, as long as the cocoa ingredients add up?

- No, as dark, milk and white chocolate do contain different amounts of cocoa liquor and cocoa butter. The standard does not consider liquor and butter as 1:1 equivalents. It is therefore necessary to compare liquor purchases and sales as well as butter purchases and sales separately

**Q.4:** If an operator buys Fairtrade fine flavor cocoa butter from one origin and Fairtrade bulk cocoa butter from another origin, can they sell the equivalent/total volume as Fairtrade bulk cocoa butter under mass balance?

- Yes, they can make the claim. This is understood as “downgrading” and is allowed in the standard.

**Q.5:** If downgrading is allowed, am I allowed to ‘upgrade’ as well? If I intend to sell one MT of cocoa beans as Fairtrade Organic, am I allowed to buy 1 MT of Fairtrade cocoa beans (i.e. non-organic) and 1 MT of organic cocoa beans (i.e. non-Fairtrade)?

- No, "upgrading" is not allowed. You can't buy Fairtrade Conventional and sell as Fairtrade Organic.

**Q.6:** What does the standard mean by ‘origin’? Are country-specific claims allowed (e.g. Fairtrade from Tanzania), although I have been sourcing Fairtrade cocoa beans from e.g. Ghana?

- No. If the claim is on a country, the purchase should be from the same country, if it is on a region, it should be the same region.

**Q.7:** How should I make an origin claim to my customer if I have not been able to purchase the equivalent volume from the same origin?

- If selling final product to consumers, you cannot make an origin claim on a Fairtrade product, if you have not been able to purchase the Fairtrade equivalent amount from the same origin.  
If you are a trader, selling to a company, and your customer has requested Fairtrade cocoa from a particular origin, you would either supply the Fairtrade cocoa from that requested origin or you would need to indicate in your sales documentation that you had not been able to source from the requested origin. Fairtrade is not prescribing how you indicate this, but it needs to be clear to your customer.

## G. Other Questions and Answers

**Q.1:** If the term 'cocoa beans' explicitly refers to fermented and dried whole seeds of the cocoa tree, is it correct that one could purchase unfermented (wet) cocoa beans below the Fairtrade minimum price?

- Yes, then the Trader Standard requirement 4.2.3 on price adaption applies.  
The term 'cocoa beans' explicitly refers to fermented and dried whole seeds of the cocoa tree. Unfermented (wet) cocoa beans can thus be bought below the Fairtrade minimum price, if the costs of fermentation and drying are clear and transparent and agreed upon in writing between the producer organization and the buyer (acting as Fairtrade price and premium payer).

**Q.2:** What does 'delivery docket' mean?

- It refers to any delivery documentation (delivery note, bill of lading (B/L) etc.) [Fairtrade Standard for cocoa, requirement 2.1.5]

**Q.3:** Does requirement 2.1.6 on the sale of multi-certified cocoa mean that FLOCERT / NFOs will have to start checking my UTZ mass balance as well?

- No, but during audits you need to demonstrate in your records that cocoa beans bought as Fairtrade and UTZ have not been sold as Fairtrade and also as UTZ certified. [Fairtrade Standard for cocoa, requirement 2.1.6]

**Q.4:** When does the cocoa trading season start and when does it end?

- This may vary from one region to the other. For example, in West Africa 1 October to 30 September with the main crop harvested from October to March and the mid crop from May-August. Harvests in Latin American countries vary somewhat. For an overview of harvests in different regions see: <https://www.icco.org/faq/58-cocoa-harvesting/131-what-time-of-year-is-cocoa-harvested.html> [Fairtrade Standard for cocoa, requirement 4.5.1]