

REVISED FAIRTRADE STANDARD FOR SMALL-SCALE PRODUCER ORGANIZATIONS

Small-scale producers are at the heart of Fairtrade. More than 1.48 million farmers – approximately 90 percent of all Fairtrade producers – are members of small-scale producer organizations (SPOs). For many products including coffee, cocoa, and cotton, Fairtrade only certifies small-scale producer organizations. The Fairtrade SPO Standard aims to enable farmers and their cooperatives to become more resilient and build thriving businesses. As part of our commitment to continuous improvement and ensuring more impact for farmers and workers, we recently undertook a comprehensive review of this standard.

THE CHALLENGE...

What should the definition of a small-scale producer be? How can organizations better support their members to meet Fairtrade Standards? How could the standard help to increase farmers' resilience to climate change? How can the standards encourage more participation of women and vulnerable groups in Fairtrade? These were just some of the questions we sought to address in this review.

FAIRTRADE RESPONDS...

Following a wide reaching public consultation, involving more than 500 producer groups, we have revised the Fairtrade Standard for Small-scale Producer Organizations. The result is an improved, easier to understand standard which provides a strong framework for cooperatives to build resilient and inclusive organizations, improve their farming performance, and generate more benefits for farmers and their communities.

Key improvements include:

ENABLING STRONG PRODUCER ORGANIZATIONS

Fairtrade Standards provide farmers a framework to develop over time and chart their own development path. The revised SPO Standard includes more requirements to support this development, building up over the years an organization is certified. The standard also includes new requirements so organizations are better positioned to assess their members' performance and support them to understand and meet Fairtrade Standards.

FAIRTRADE PREMIUM: SUPPORTING BETTER PLANNING AND INCREASED TRANSPARENCY

The Fairtrade Premium is a unique way for SPOs to drive sustainable social and economic development of their members, their families and the surrounding community. Farmers themselves decide collectively how to use this money to best suit their needs. To support this decision-making process, SPOs now need to carry out a needs assessment in their first year of certification, as a basis to identify priority areas for future Premium projects. Based on Fairtrade's living income strategy and the experience of successful cooperatives, some additional guidance has also been provided on how best to spend the Fairtrade Premium. Checks and balances and surveillance requirements for organizations were also added, fostering greater transparency on Premium use and reporting.

THE SPO STANDARD AT A GLANCE

Key changes: Increased focus on small-scale producers and family farming; strengthened management practices; better Fairtrade Premium planning and transparency; more protection for workers; a new gender policy; increased resilience to climate change and strengthened environmental protection.

Who does the Standard apply to?

All small-scale producer organizations and their members

Applies from: 1 July 2019

(Transition periods apply for organizations certified before this date)

Where to get a copy:

www.fairtrade.net/standards.html



INCREASED FOCUS ON SMALL-SCALE PRODUCERS AND FAMILY FARMING

The Standard now further strengthens small-scale producers and family farming. While many Fairtrade producer organizations are composed solely of small-scale farmers, some organizations need to include medium-size members to produce enough to sell on international markets. It also enables small-scale farmers to expand and continue to be part of their organization. Previously, half of the members of a small-scale producer organization had to be small-scale farmers. This has now been increased to two thirds. Moreover, two thirds of the produce sold as Fairtrade needs to come from small-scale farmers. We have also introduced a size limit for the cultivated land where a farmer grows their Fairtrade crop.

MORE PROTECTION FOR WORKERS ON SMALL-SCALE FARMS

We have strengthened our requirements on employment conditions and occupational health and safety, making them applicable to farmers who employ ten workers or more (who work for more than 30 hours per week for one month or more in a year). In addition, all field workers must have access to clean drinking water.

FOSTERING WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND GENDER EQUALITY

A gender policy has been introduced as a development requirement. Cooperatives have the flexibility to design a policy relevant to their own context, with the goal of increasing women's active and equal participation in the farming organization, and empowering more women and girls to access the benefits of Fairtrade.



INCREASED RESILIENCE TO CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENHANCED ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

The revised standard has stronger requirements around soil and water use which, together with a new requirement on activities to adapt to climate change, will increase farmer's resilience and benefit the environment. Deforestation was already addressed in the standard but we have reinforced this by adding two new requirements on protecting tree canopy and vegetation, and by requiring organizations to have procedures to ensure deforestation does not take place. Finally, to further protect the health of farmers and workers we have strengthened requirements on pesticides use, storage, and disposal.

THE REVIEW

More than 500 producer organizations from 70 countries participated in online surveys and workshops, providing ideas and recommendations to improve the standard. The final decision on proposed changes was taken in November 2018 by the Standards Committee, a multi-stakeholder body representing small-scale farmer organizations and workers, traders and other members in Fairtrade.

IMPLEMENTATION AND NEXT STEPS

For organizations already certified, the changes to the standard will be implemented in three steps. One set of requirements (which do not require producers to make any major changes) will be applicable as of July 2019. A second set of requirements will be checked in audits as of April 2021, giving organizations enough time to adapt to the changes. Finally, requirements that may affect the membership of the organizations become applicable as of January 2022.

For new organizations, all changes are applicable as of 1 July 2019. In the revised standard, new organizations also will need to demonstrate that they are established organizations, have Fairtrade market potential and have made a democratic and informed decision to join Fairtrade.

TO FIND OUT MORE:

The 'Main Changes' document gives full details on the changes. The SPO Standard overview document shows which requirements are applicable when, the choices producers have, and connects the different chapters of the standard with the Sustainable Development Goals.

For more information, please contact our Standards Team: standards-pricing@fairtrade.net



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