

DEVELOPMENT OF FAIRTRADE STANDARDS - SHORT SUMMARY

Fairtrade generic Standards exist for 3 types of producers: Small Producers' Organizations, Hired Labour Situations and Contract Production Set-ups. Producers must also comply with the Product Standards applicable to their Fairtrade products. Traders must in addition to the Product Standards adhere to the Trade Standards.

The Standard Unit of Fairtrade International develops Fairtrade Standards in compliance with the ISEAL Code of Good Practice for Setting Social and Environmental Standards.

Definition of project scope, planning

Fairtrade international may internally identify the need for a Standards project, but stakeholders may also submit a Standards project request. A Standards project can be to develop a new Standard or to review an existing Standard. Any project starts with drafting a project assignment, which summarizes the terms of references of the project. The project assignment is placed on the Fairtrade International website (www.fairtrade.net) to give all stakeholders (including the public) the opportunity to comment on it. Based on the obtained comments, the project assignment can still be modified before it becomes final.

Research

After the planning phase, the assigned project manager from the Standards Unit conducts a research. The project manager may involve stakeholders in the research as needed to develop a draft Standard.

Consultation

The draft Standard is sent to the identified stakeholders for feedback. Those stakeholders include usually producers, Producer Networks, suppliers, retailers, other units within Fairtrade International, FLO-CERT and Labelling Initiatives. The draft Standard is also posted on the Fairtrade International website. In any project, at least two rounds of public consultations (of 60 days each) are planned in to give stakeholders sufficient opportunity to comment.

Approval and publication

Standards need to be approved by the Fairtrade Standards Committee which is a stakeholder committee of producers, traders, Labelling Initiatives and external experts. Minor decisions can also be delegated to the Standards Unit Director. Within one month after approval the binding English version of a Standard is published on the Fairtrade International website.

Review and complaints

Stakeholders can complain against Fairtrade Standards following the Standard Operating Procedures for complaints against Fairtrade Standards setting. Standards are reviewed at least every five years.

