Standards Committee
Minutes
Meeting 124: 22-25 September
Teleconference

SC members: Stijn Decoene (Chair), Emilie Sarrazin (Vice-Chair), Ben Huyghe, Gustavo Lopez, Silvia Herrera Hernández, Kalindi Lorenzo, Arun Ambatipudi

Observers: Fairtrade International and FLOCERT staff members have permanent observer status.

Other Observers: We do not display the full names of observers and contributing observers to comply with 'The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)[1]'. If you need additional information about the observers or contributing observers of this meeting, please contact standards-pricing@fairtrade.net

Disclaimer:
The Fairtrade International Standards Committee (SC) aims to reach consensus, but decisions may not always reflect the opinions of all people.
The section to introduce the topic (background information) has been written by the Standards & Pricing and may not have been discussed by the SC in full. Sections listing action points are an outcome of discussions of the SC but are not part of the decisions made.

Abbreviations

CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CLAC	The Latin American and Caribbean Network of Fairtrade Small Producers and Workers
CoE	Centre of Excellence
COSP	Cost of Sustainable Production
DRC	The Democratic Republic of the Congo
EC	Exceptions Committee
EMT	Executive Management Team
FET	Fairtrade Executive Team
FTO	Fairtrade Organizations
FI	Fairtrade International
FMP	Fairtrade Minimum Price
FOB	Free on Board
FP	Fairtrade Premium
FPC	Fairtrade Premium Committee
FSI	Fairtrade Sourcing Ingredient
FBW	Fairtrade Base Wage
GA	General Assembly
GOTS	Global Organic Textile Standard

[1] Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation). https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2016/679/oj

GPM	Global Product Manager
GPPP	Global Products, Programs & Policy
HL	Hired Labour
HML	Hazardous Materials List
HOC	Head of Oversight and Compliance
HREDD	Human Rights and Environmental Due Diligence
IDH	The Sustainable Trade Initiative
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
LB	Licensing Bodies
LI	Living Income
LIRP	Living Income Reference Price
LW	Living Wage
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
NAPP	Network of Asia & Pacific Producers
NEM	New Economic Mechanism
OC	Oversight Committee
O2B	Offer to Business
PC	People's Committee
PB	Producer Body
PEB	Producer Executive Body
PM	Project Manager
PN	Producer Networks
PT	Project Team
SA	Senior Advisor
S&P	Standards and Pricing Unit
SC	Standards Committee
SM	Salary Matrix
SOP	Standards Operating Procedure
SPO	Small-scale Producer Organizations
ToR	Terms of Reference
WRAC	Workers Rights Advisory Committee

Item 1 – Opening

The chair opened the meeting and welcomed the participating SC members. Reminded of consent to record and ground rules.

Agenda: The agenda was introduced and approved.

Declaration of conflict of interests: Ben Huyghe and Kalindi Lorenzo declared conflict of interest on the banana price review and will not vote on this item. Stijn Decoene was given the proxy to vote for Emilie Sarrazin.

Item 2 – News session

- **News from FI**

The CEO introduced the news from FI on the Fairer Futures Programmes which will be launched globally in October, with focus on cocoa including components such as the LIRP, productivity, climate resilience and child wellbeing.
Consumer research had been carried out for the topics of advancing living income and north to north in several countries.
The CEO also briefed on the FLOCERT shareholder strategy including 6 workstreams.

- **News from SC**

Nicolas Kadiri resigned as he now works outside of the Fairtrade system. The seat in the SC is vacant. A shortened appointment procedure will be carried out to fill the position, using applications of 2025.
In 2027, elections of Chair and Vice Chair will be held.
Emily Sarrazin's 3rd term is coming to an end in 2027 and she cannot be re-elected. NFOs will contribute to an appointment process, starting in 2026. For Gustavo Lopez, the TU representative, his 2nd term ends and will be checking with Gustavo if he is interested in serving a 3rd term; and with Arun Ambatipudi for a 2nd term, this will be checked with NAPP.

- **News from S&P**

Welcome Prakash Philipp as a new Head of Standards, he started 1 September 2026. Prakash introduced himself. The SC Chair welcomed Prakash.
Alina Amador moved into the position of Senior Advisor Standards focussed on STEP and implementation of STEP. Yun-Chu Chiu returned to the Pricing Unit from parental leave.

Action: Updated organisational chart will be shared with the SC members.

- **News from OC**

The OC meeting took place the day before.
The pilot updates were presented. Most of them are closed by now.
Request for guidance on additional initiative brought forward by LLI tea group to test a new premium model. Only guidance was asked as this is not considered a pilot anymore.
Approved granting of exception for use of a red list material, brought forward for LAC region for 2 chemicals which POs request due to pest outbreak.
Exchange on future of OC led to insight into changes to be expected due to changes in scheme ownership. The committee will still be needed but will change focus partly to be more technical. There is already a draft ToR document available and being discussed. One or 2 members from the SC could participate in the future technical OC which will no longer be a sub-committee to the SC.
The SC Sub-committee for North to North was approved. Call for candidates will be done to appoint members. Exploring already a labelling solution, first draft of a standard is ready, in discussion of the project team.

Next Steps.

The document will be finalized in October and recruiting for the various positions will commence between October, November so that it becomes a functioning committee in January 2027.

Item 3 – Banana Price Review

The 2026 Fairtrade banana price review covered 47 prices across nine countries and ACP/non-ACP origins. Geopolitical instability, inflation, climate change, rising wages, higher Energy and transport costs, and increasing prices for agricultural inputs such as fertilizers and agrochemicals have all contributed to higher production costs. Weather-related challenges linked to a strong El Niño are already affecting several key producing countries, including Costa Rica, Panama, Guatemala, Peru, and Colombia.

Currency appreciation against the US dollar has also reduced producer income in many Latin American countries. Colombia has been particularly affected, with a strong appreciation of the peso, combined with a substantial increase in the national minimum wage and reduced working hours, leading to higher labour costs. In Ecuador, the removal of fuel subsidies has increased transport and operational expenses.

Market conditions have also changed. Increased organic banana production in Ecuador and Colombia has intensified competition in export markets, especially for producers in the Dominican Republic and Peru. At the same time, retail banana prices in major European markets have remained largely unchanged despite increasing production and trading costs, limiting the ability of the supply chain to absorb higher costs.

Despite this pressure, sales of Fairtrade bananas have increase. The FMP for bananas is revised annually to maintain its effectiveness as a safety net, which requires detailed, validated and regularly updated cost data.

The review process involved broad stakeholder participation, with 133 producers and exporters contributing cost data and 114 producers, exporters, and importers participating in consultations. Producers generally supported the proposed price increases, while importers expressed mixed views, balancing the need to reflect higher costs against concerns about market competitiveness and price absorption.
For 2027, Fairtrade Ex-works prices would increase by around 5.5% on average, with larger increases for Colombia due to significant cost increases. FOB differentials would increase by about 4% on average.

The EMT endorsed the proposal.

Discussion

A member asked why an appreciation of the Colombian peso leads to higher costs. It was explained that the cost of production is calculated in local currency and converted into US dollars, so producers receive fewer pesos per dollar to cover costs that are themselves rising.

A member expressed concerns about the market's ability to absorb a second major price increase in two years and about the growing price gap between Fairtrade and non-Fairtrade bananas. Conventional prices from Colombia are expected to rise significantly, although not by the same amount. If a strong El Niño materialises, Ecuador, Peru and Colombia would be affected on production, productivity and quality, which would make next year particularly difficult for Colombia.

A concern was raised that discussions often focus too much on market conditions and not enough on producers' livelihoods. It was emphasized that producers should not be expected to absorb rising production costs to remain in the Fairtrade supply chain. The member stressed that this is not about generating higher sales but about ensuring that producers can maintain a decent livelihood.

The workers' representative highlighted the serious challenges facing the banana sector, including job losses, lower productivity, rising labour costs, and the risk of companies leaving banana production. The project team acknowledged concerns about market absorption, particularly in key European markets that depend on Colombian supply and noted that retailers are often more concerned about the Fairtrade Premium than the price itself. To address these concerns, Fairtrade will continue engaging with the industry, explaining the cost drivers behind the proposed prices and promoting dialogue with producers, importers, and retailers.

The Head of Pricing acknowledged concerns about the potential impact of the proposed prices on market volumes and confirmed that the proposals had been strategically reviewed with the EMT before being submitted to the SC. EMT recommended applying the same pricing principles across all origins, while recognizing that the level of available cost data differs between countries. Members requested more information on the banana pricing methodology and a broader overview of the banana sector for future reviews. The GPM referred members to the existing Fairtrade banana dashboard and offered to provide additional analysis if needed. The SC also agreed to combine the separate decisions on ex-works prices and FOB differentials into a single decision covering all 47 banana prices.

Decisions
Two SC members declared a conflict of interest on bananas and did not take part in the vote.

Decision 1:
Approval of the 47 FMPs for bananas for 2027, comprising 18 ex-works FMPs and 29 FOB differentials, for organic and conventional bananas:

The SC unanimously voted in favour of the proposal., 5 Votes

Decision 2:
Delegation of non-substantive changes to the Director of Standards & Pricing, including an interpretation note or text on implementation:

The SC unanimously voted in favour of the proposal. 5 Votes

Next Steps

1. Preparation of the announcement and explanatory documents, operating tools, announcement letters, formulas and communication material

2. Price announcement expected by 5 October, one day before the start of Fruit Attraction
3. Communication campaign with industry and an event at Fruit Attraction with producers, importers and retailers are planned
4. Apply for the next price review with the same pricing framework to all origins, as recommended by the EMT.
5. A diagnostic paper on the banana production landscape (SPOs, hired labor organizations and exports and volumes – both organic and conventional - per production country and port of loading) and more insight into the pricing methodology to be considered ahead of the next price review cycle, (Ideally in Q1, no later than Q2)
6. Table of imputs costs per country to be considered as part of the SC paper in future reviews
7. Fairtrade banana dashboard link shared with SC members

Item 4 – Sugar Premium

The PM presented the review of the Fairtrade Premium for cane sugar. The premium levels have remained unchanged and previous reviews in 2009 and 2015 kept them at the same level to support the growth of Fairtrade sugar.

The proposed Fairtrade Premiums were updated based on inflation and purchasing power parity changes. This resulted in a proposed increase of 25%, raising the conventional premium from USD 60 to USD 75 per metric ton and the organic premium from USD 80 to USD 100 per metric ton.

The public consultation received 122 responses from 32 countries. Most stakeholders supported the proposed increase and preferred implementing it as soon as possible.

However, the largest premium-paying markets, including the UK, US, Germany, and France, opposed a one-time increase and requested a phased or delayed implementation due to concerns about a possible substantial impact on demand. In response, the project team undertook further discussion and proposed a phased increase as a compromise. The EMT endorsed this approach as an exception and emphasized that it should not become a precedent, recommending more frequent premium reviews in the future.

Discussion

SC members expressed that ten years between premium reviews is far too long. Even with the phased increase, the values will already lag behind inflation by 2028. They urged a more regular review cycle, like the annual updates for bananas, and the pricing team confirmed this is recommended in the paper.

Some members questioned the phased approach. Most consultation respondents favoured implementation in 2027, and producers have waited many years for an update. The pricing team explained that the risks of loss of half of volumes were substantial, and some project members have asked for the latest possible date of implementation. The compromise therefore puts the larger increase in July 2027 and the smaller one in July 2028. Observers added that the market is stable or declining and that the compromise reduces the risk of losing sales.

The committee noted that at a market price of around USD 420/MT, the new premium works out to roughly 15% or more, which is high compared with other products.

The certification body explained that its systems record invoice dates, not contract dates, and that retro-certification will add complexity. The team confirmed the phased approach can be implemented, and the details will be clarified in an interpretation note. Members stressed that the decision must stay confidential until it is announced, to avoid stockpiling under old contracts.

Decision 1:
25% increase (conventional USD 60 → 75/MT, organic USD 80 → 100/MT):

The SC approved the proposal. 6 Votes, one abstention due to conflict of interest.

Decision 2:
Phased validity dates: Approved with 4 in favour, 1 against and 1 abstention.

- July 2027: conventional USD 70/MT, organic USD 95/MT
- July 2028: conventional USD 75/MT, organic USD 100/MT

Decision 3:
Delegation of non-substantive changes to the Director of Standards & Pricing, including an interpretation note or text on implementation:

The SC unanimously voted in favour of the proposal. 7 Votes

Next Steps

1. Draft a document explaining how the phased implementation will apply to retro-certification and to contracts signed before the new Fairtrade Premium takes effect.
2. Internal webinar for members to explain the changes and FP implementation.
3. Announcement letter to members, commercial partners and producer networks in early November
4. Press release with Comms team in early November

Item 5 – Conflicted Affected Areas Standard

Discussion
This standard was developed as a solution for POs operating in contexts of war and long-standing conflict, which impact the implementation of current standards and audits and therefore new approaches are required. POs in conflict affected areas (CAA) have economies where local producers rely on the trade of Fairtrade certified products for local employment and revenues.

The CAA standard has a limited regional scope, including DRC, Myanmar and Palestine. It is a stand-alone standard that can be integrated into STEP at a later stage. This standard is not limited to currently certified organisations. It was mentioned that some POs in the region intend to become Fairtrade certified. The presenter commented that there are active and committed supply chains in CAA, particularly for organic Fairtrade coffee.

The CAA Standard was open for consultation during August 2026 with the participation from POs, key experts and one CB. The consultation results led to the development of a CAA standard which keeps 61 unchanged requirements from the SPO standard. Sixty-two requirements on sustainable practices of members will be adapted with new options to show compliance, while 16 requirements on PO's internal functioning to be as well adapted. In addition, 12 requirements were modified to integrate more flexibility related to travel restrictions, administrative and banking malfunctions and other restrictions coming from conflict context.

The CAA standard also includes 3 new requirements: POs receiving additional training support coming primarily from PNs; compliance with transitional provisions to keep the production certified during transition period; and the requirement for POs to assess, document their risk and propose how to adapt their ways of working and proof of evidence of compliance.

This standard intends to allow the operations of certified POs and when conflict makes it challenging, POs can adapt their ways of working to provide sufficient evidence of compliance. The final CAA standard guides SPOs to assess, manage and reduce the risk from connection with armed groups.

CAA Standard and compliance:
This new standard will be audited by multiple CBs who are active in the regions with the required safety measures. To allow this setup the assurance team with external consultants are developing workstreams, being relevant:

- Development of onboarding protocol for new CBs and technical solutions from DSU team as Fairtrace to manage a system with multiple CBs.
- Development of audit methodology adjusted to conflict regions with considers providing some time flexibility.
- Assurance review development.

One SC member asked if the scope of the CAA standard includes traders. The presenter mentioned that traders will follow the current trader standard, since during the research and consultation did not receive concerns from traders.

It was commented that the process to identify and reach agreement with the new CBs is an ongoing step. It will be necessary to make a new contract under the new CB terms. The goal is to integrate in the process new CBs with similar processes and credibility as FLOCERT. The accreditation body ASI can suggest about potential CBs from the group they work with.

The SC member commented on the relevance of POs communicating their buyers on the new changes.

Summary of the changes made.

There are 61 unchanged requirements, Modified requirements are 90 which included 62 modified new ways of demonstrating compliance with members sustainable practices, 16 modified new ways of demonstrating compliance with PO internal functioning and 12 modified greater flexibility for conflict related operational restrictions. There is also a new requirement (3) of 1 paragraph introductory section which would encourage the Pos to avoid linkages with armed groups, transitions requirements when CAA Scope evolves,

Requirement to partner with an expert support organisation and requirement ensuring conflict is not used to justify non-compliance.

Decision 1
Approval of unchanged and modified requirements. And here the Standards Committee is requested to approve the proposed amendments to the proposed Fairtrade Standard for conflict affected areas comprising of 61 unchanged requirements and 90 modified requirements as presented today and included in Annex 4.

The SC unanimously voted in favour of the proposal. 6 Votes

Decision 2
Approval of the new requirements. And here, the Standards Committee is requested to approve the three new requirements included in the proposed Fairtrade Standard for Conflict Affected Areas, as presented and included in Annex 4, and a summary of what the three requirements are about. The first one is on transition requirements when the CAA scope evolves. The second one is on partnering with an expert support organization, and the third one is on ensuring conflicts is not used to justify non-compliance.

The SC unanimously voted in favour of the proposal. 6 votes

Decision 3
Approval of the new introductory text. And this is on approving the new paragraph, encouraging producer organisations to avoid linkages with armed groups in the introductory section of the proposed standard as presented today and in Annex 4.

The SC unanimously voted in favour of the proposal. 6 Votes

Decision 4.
Approval of publication of the standard, and here, the Standards Committee is requested to approve the publication of the Fairtrade Standard for Conflict Affected Areas as a stand-alone standard. And the proposed standard will initially be applicable to the following regions, Democratic Republic of Congo, Myanmar, and Palestine.

The SC unanimously voted in favour of the proposal. 6 votes

Decision 5.
Delegating non-substantive changes and final wording of the standard to the Director of Standards and Pricing.

The SC unanimously voted in favour of the proposal. 6 votes

Item 6-Hazardous Materials List (HML) for Flowers & Plants standard

Introduction

The Standards Project Manager (S&P) presented the project scope and timelines, the approach, the consultation results and the recommendations for SC decision, highlighting the following key aspects:

- This is the first product-specific Fairtrade HML. It applies in addition to the generic HML. Scoping and a pre-consultation on a sample of materials started in May 2024. The project was then on hold due to other priorities. Public consultation took place in February - March 2026, and the first SC decision on Abamectin, Lambda-Cyhalothrin and Glyphosate materials was taken in May 2026. Publication of proposed Flowers & Plants HML is planned for Q4 2026 and implementation for Q1 2027.
- Rationale to introduce the HML specific for Flowers & Plants: Flowers are not eaten and are mostly grown in greenhouses. Cuttings produced in Africa are grown out in Europe under different regulatory regimes. Pest-free produce is essential to meet import restrictions. Producers face challenges both in phasing out materials prohibited by the HML and in meeting market-specific quarantine requirements.
- Fairtrade approach to HML. The generic HML is based on the PAN International list of Highly Hazardous Pesticides (HHP). Materials are classified as Red (prohibited), Orange (restricted) or Yellow (flagged) according to their hazard profile.
  The approach for Flowers & Plants HML was based on the existing approach used in the generic HML. Thus, for Flowers & Plants HML, the hazard profile is the primary basis for classification. Consultation evidence was used to assess feasibility and transition periods. Restricted use was considered where substitution is difficult. Remaining options were checked for resistance management. EU status and retailer and civil-society concerns served as supporting information only.
- Outcome of consultation: The questionnaire received 82 responses, from 67% of producer organisations and 36% of trader organisations; Technical input per material came from 49 producer organisations (mainly Kenya and Ecuador), one crop protection company and two traders. A feasibility re-assessment with producers took place in August–September 2026.
- Key takeaways: transition deadlines are necessary, and further proposed as 1 January 2028, 1 January 2029 and 1 January 2031; HML for Flowers & Plants to be decided under condition that exceptions for individual materials will no longer be possible; alignment with other schemes served as a sense-check rather than a target for decision; producers will need continued support.

The presentation was complemented with the following contributions:

- An NFO member flagged the need for closer alignment with EU and retailer lists, more attention to environmental risks, and stronger implementation support.
- The Lead of the Support Center Climate & Environment called that the proposed HML for Flowers & Plants will help Fairtrade respond better to public scrutiny on pesticide use in flowers.

The standards project manager also flagged that the order of proposals was changed to accommodate for the logic of three lists applicability.

Proposals 1.1 & 1.2: Approach to the Flowers & Plants HML.

The Flowers & Plants HML follows the generic HML approach of classifying materials according to their hazard profile. Specific conditions for Orange List materials are added to reduce environmental risks in flower production:

- use in permanent greenhouses with controls on drainage water and spray drift;
- use in open fields with measures against water contamination and spray drift;
- use as a fertiliser only.

Consultation views were mixed. Some respondents questioned the need for a product-specific list, and views on the conditions ranged from too restrictive to not stringent enough.

Discussion

- on whether any pesticide on EU or retailer restricted lists would remain allowed. It was explained that full alignment is not achievable, but the gap from what is currently applicable- is reduced.
- on extensions of phase-out dates. Since there is no exception procedure, timelines can be reviewed through a monitoring review if needed, as was done for the generic HML and as part of the SOP for standards setting.
- concern that the Flowers & Plants HML is stricter than Rainforest Alliance list in some cases and not in others. The Support Center Climate & Environment added that the generic HML is already stricter than RA for many pesticides.
- on allowing use of some pesticides that are banned for use in the EU but remain allowed under Fairtrade. It was explained that their use is justified through the conditions outlined in the orange restricted list of materials, when some materials are allowed only under controlled greenhouse conditions. It was also clarified that wider EU export issue is a political question beyond the SC's remit. Also, flowers have no EU maximum residue levels, so import issues are unlikely. This would also need to be further monitored.
- On greenhouse definition in the context of flowers & plants production, and whether these greenhouses are permanent or how is this structure regulated through standards. The Global Product Manager confirmed that flower greenhouses are grown in permanent structures. It was suggested to consistently use the term "permanent greenhouse".

Decisions 1.1 & 1.2*:*

- Do you approve the approach for classifying materials in the Flowers & Plants HML, applicable in addition to the generic HML?
- Do you approve the introduction of specific conditions for the use of Orange List materials included in the Flowers & Plants HML?

The SC unanimously voted in favour of the proposal.

Approved: 7 in favour. 6 votes cast in the session with quorum, 1 added later.

Section on proposal for Red List of prohibited materials specific to Flowers & Plants

Proposal 2.1:

The proposal is to keep 11 currently prohibited materials on the Red List and mark them as relevant for Flowers & Plants. There is no implication as change in practice for producers.

The standards project manager highlighted that there are some materials that are currently prohibited for use on Flowers & Plants but are proposed to be allowed as restricted materials. For example, Magnesium phosphide that is now proposed to be in the Orange List for restricted post-harvest use, as covered under Decision 2.2. Such materials are therefore excluded from the Prohibited list for decision.

Discussion. There were no additional questions or discussion.

Decision 2.1: Do you approve the inclusion of 11 materials in the Prohibited List of the Flowers & Plants HML?

The SC unanimously voted in favour of the proposal.

Approved: 7 in favour.

Section on proposal for Yellow List of flagged materials specific to Flowers & Plants

Proposal 2.5:

- to include 36 materials in the Yellow List with four materials that are no longer in use are moved to the Orange List with a phase-out date.

Consultation views were mixed. Some producers saw flagged list of materials as too restrictive, while others suggested moving certain materials to the Red List. The standards project manager clarified that flagged materials are not restricted. They are listed so that their use can be monitored

Discussion. There were no additional questions or discussion.

Decision 2.5: Do you approve the inclusion of 36 materials in the Yellow List of flagged materials in the Flowers & Plants HML?

The SC unanimously voted in favour of the proposal. 7 Votes

Section 3 on proposals for Orange List of restricted materials specific to Flowers & Plants

Proposal 2.2: to include 39 materials in the Orange List with specific conditions of use and phase-out dates:

- 24 materials to be phased out by 1 January 2028;
- 14 materials to be phased out by 1 January 2029, including:
  - magnesium phosphide, for post-harvest treatment in the Africa region only;
  - pyridalil, for greenhouse use only;
  - abamectin, to be phased out by 1 January 2031, as approved in May 2026.

Proposal 2.3: to introduce use of risk assessment and monitoring as compulsory for Orange List materials, in addition to the phase-out plan. Producers may use an equivalent tool of their own.

Proposal 2.4. to include 24 materials in the Orange List with specific conditions of use and without a phase-out deadline.

Consultation feedback. Producers found some timelines too short. A retailer, on the opposite and asked for earlier phase-out; another trader asked for fixed phase-out dates for all materials.

Discussion.

- SC chair noted that some EU-banned materials remain on the Orange List, including some without a phase-out date. This was confirmed.
- An SC member asked whether producers would be motivated to phase out materials without a deadline, and what happens if use increases, for example due to a pest outbreak. It was explained that producers must include these materials in their phase-out plan, auditors check that the plan exists but not progress against it; the specific conditions act as a risk-based restriction; a monitoring review in about two years may move materials to the Red List or to introduce fixed phase out dates; Finally, it was concluded that this approach avoids exception requests when deadlines are reached.
- the SC chair asked who will monitor implementation and implication of changes in legislation. It was explained that implementation is monitored as required by the SOP, through engagement with the Producer Networks and desk monitoring. A more structured approach to chemicals regulation is planned with the Support Center Climate & Environment. The SC chair stressed the need for a structured approach.
- SC chair requested the members to vote on decision 2.4 separately, as one NFO did not support allowing EU-banned materials without a phase-out deadline. It was clarified that all Orange List materials are expected to be phased out eventually. It was also noted that full alignment with EU approval dates is not possible, as these change over time, but EU status was considered as an indication in most proposed changes.

Decisions 2.2 & 2.3: Do you approve the inclusion of 39 materials in the Orange List of restricted materials in the Flowers & Plants HML, subject to the specified conditions of use and phase-out by one of three deadlines: 1 January 2028, 1 January 2029 or 1 January 2031? Do you approve the introduction of risk assessment and monitoring as one of the conditions for the use of Orange List materials?

The SC unanimously voted in favour of the proposal. *7 Votes*

Decision 2.4: Do you approve the inclusion of 24 materials in the Orange List of the Flowers & Plants HML, subject to specific conditions of use and without a phase-out deadline?

The SC voted in favour of the proposal. – 4 in favour, 1 against, 2 abstentions

The SC approved of the proposal. Approved: 4 in favour, 2 abstentions, 1 against.

Decisions on publication and implementation timelines

Decision 3: Do you approve the Flowers & Plants HML to be applicable from 1 January 2027, with the phase-out timelines for Orange List materials as indicated in the HML?

The SC unanimously voted in favour of the proposal. 7 Votes

Decision 4: Do you agree to the delegation of approval of non-substantive changes and final wording to the director of S&P?

The SC unanimously voted in favour of the proposal 7 Votes

Next Steps

- S&P finalises documents, publishes the Flowers & Plants HML, informs producers in Q4 2026 and briefs FLOCERT ahead of 1 January 2027.
- S&P writes “permanent greenhouse” consistently in the final text.

Monitoring review in about two years, covering materials without a deadline and the NFO input. S&P and Climate & Environment set up a structured way to track EU regulation

Next Steps

- S&P finalises documents, informs producers in Q4 2026 and briefs FLOCERT ahead of 1 January 2027.
- S&P writes “permanent greenhouse” consistently in the final text.
- Monitoring review in about two years, covering materials without a deadline and the NFO input. S&P and Climate & Environment set up a structured way to track EU regulation.

Item 7 – Standard Advancing Farmer Livelihoods

Director S&P presented the key aspects of the project, the review process and other relevant points and actions, including the rationale for introducing the add-on Standard.

- The new EU Empowering Consumers Directive (EmpCo) requires that impact claims to consumers can be proven and that sustainability labels are backed by third-party certification. As retailers want to make claims on their additional payments into supply chains, a certification scheme & Standard are needed. Due to EmpCo effective timeline, the Standard had to be ready by 30 September.

- This is the first Fairtrade add-on Standard. It is voluntary and only open to organisations that already hold Fairtrade certification. Decertification under the add-on Standard has no impact on existing Fairtrade certification. For this Standard only, the scope is extended to retailers and licensees, as their claims need independent certification.

- Following the SOP, a public consultation was conducted. The feedback included inputs from retailers, traders, Ivorian producer organisations supported by Fairtrade Africa, and the Ivorian regulator. The Ghanaian regulator was invited but did not respond. Stakeholders overall responded with support in the consultation, but some local aspects at origin are yet to be clarified.

- The assurance approach will be finalized by FLOCERT in Q4, with first audits expected in Q1 2027.

- Fairtrade Africa builds on its experience from the West Africa Cocoa Programme, and guidance documents are being prepared by the end of the year.

- Fairtrade International Legal has reviewed the current version of the Standard, and the final version will be checked again.

- The add-on Standard is proposed to start with a two-country scope and three-year mandatory commitments to pay the LIRP, a producer program package, additional monitoring and reporting to commercial partners and accompanied by targeted Producer Network support.

- As a labelling solution the Fairtrade certification mark with an additional banner is proposed, which was strongly preferred by consumers and was clear to most consumers, although there were some national differences. Some consumers will need further clarification through good communications at launch.

- The claim will refer to advancing incomes, which is supported by the working group with NFO representatives, as it is the best option taking the limitations and legal requirements into account. Engagement with commercial partners on the detailed claim will happen after the decision.

- The Standard will be renamed to 'Fairtrade Fairer Futures Standard'. The Fairtrade International Executive Management Team (EMT) approved the Standard content. The EMT requested an accreditable assurance approach to be developed, and mark extension registration to happen as needed.

Discussion

The following comments and questions were raised and clarified:

- The proposed Standard is very focused on one country; suggestion is to keep the scope flexible so that other cocoa origins can be added more easily. It was explained that the steering committee asked to limit the scope to where the programmes are launched, as supply chains in other regions work differently. Country-specific details can later be moved to country annexes without changing the requirements.
- Suggestion to develop similar Standard for hired labour. It was explained that the programmes focus on Tier 1 products, and that a programme for banana hired labour will be developed, possibly in 2027 or 2028.
- Question raised who decides which differential to be paid when a retailer sources from several countries. It was explained that rules for mixed sourcing still need to be added to the Standard, in the direction supported by the steering committee. The differential will be recalculated every year, and NFOs will agree the payment with retailers based on volumes per country.
- On the distribution of the funds, it was explained that the implementation fund is shared with the SPO, PN and 10% for monitoring, while the LIRP differential is fully passed on to SPO members. It was also clarified that the additional SPO audit is paid by the SPO. There was a suggestion on thresholds applicable to the existing requirement on a financial audit and those in the new Standard to be aligned, which was agreed to be added to the monitoring log.
- On the importance of all suggested farm services. Fairtrade Africa responded that the listed services have in the past have proven to be significant in improving productivity in the first countries of implementation, but that the list might in future need to be reviewed when the Standard will be scaled to other countries.

- There was a question on the impact of a SPO non-compliance on the add-on Standard on the flow of funds. The producer network explained that there is existing experience on what is required, such as payments in tranches and monitoring. Related details were suggested to be included in the assurance approach.
- Existing Fairtrade traders' ambitions around auditable traceable supply chains will be considered when scaling to other origins.
- It was clarified that payment timelines will be part of the contract between the commercial partner and the NFO, so that payments match the sourcing commitment in a credible way. Details on this will be in the scheme documentation.
- There was a suggestion on a timeline to achieve a sourcing link with the SPOs benefitting from the program. It was also suggested to integrate the LIRP in the Fairtrade minimum prices to avoid consumer confusion. It was explained that the Standard, which sets the bar to be audited, is not the right place for capturing such ambitions.
- On how this Standard will be published. it was clarified that most likely it will be a published as a separate Standard, but that integration can well take place under STEP. It was also clarified that there is no impact on existing HREDD requirements.

Decisions
One OC member declared a conflict of interest and abstained from voting.

Decision 1:
To approve the proposed Fairtrade Standard for Advanced Farmer Livelihoods (AFL) (annex 1) and including amended title and requirements as aligned during the session.
The standard shall be published as a voluntary add-on standard applicable to Fairtrade-certified cocoa producer organizations in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana and to commercial partners within the scope of the standard.

SC Vote: Unanimously approved. 6 in favour

Decision 2:
To delegate non substantive changes to the standard to the Director S&P. Changes may include improvements on technical clarity of requirements including the current placeholder for sourcing from Ghana (guidance for 2.1.), amendments needs for legal compliance of the amended final version, and improvements on auditability based on feedback from FLOCERT to the final version and operationalization by SPOs and commercial partners based on further technical expertise becoming available prior to publication, and also in response to further feedback from CCC regarding alignment with Ivorian regulation.

SC Vote: Unanimously approved. 6 in favour.

There was a question on the definition of non-substantive changes. It was agreed that in case of doubt the Director consults with the Chair and will loop the SC in if needed, who would quickly vote on the matter then. Otherwise, the SC will receive a track change version of the standard for information.

Next Steps
- Publication planned for 15th October

- Further work with FLOCERT on the assurance approach
- Further work with scheme management and legal to ensure EMT requests are met

Session closed with thanks to the team and all contributors who worked on developing this Standard.

Item 8 – Deforestation Requirements

The Senior Advisor for Climate & Environment started the session by informing and updating the standard committee about the revised deforestation assurance process.

No changes have been proposed to the requirement as the prohibit forestation as degradation in the primary and secondary forest, protected areas and carbon system after December 31, 2018, and that there was no deforestation requirement for coffee & Cocoa. However, there are concerns in the updated guidance's, interpretation notes and supporting process for the assurance of the requirements and not the changes in the standard requirements. More so this change has resulted in some challenges with the process. This included the fact that when the SPOs had alerts of deforestation, they are required to submit dispute form to FI but there is a grey area as to who was going to take responsibility since the alert evidence was intended to demonstrate compliance with requirements that ultimately FLOCERT would audit. In the same space it was resolved by removing FI from the evidence processing role. Hence moreover emphasises are on maintaining a separation between identification and risk, alert verification and independent assurance. Therefore, to achieve the above, the plot insights platform will be utilised as support for the requirement verification. Plot Insights is a platform that enables SPOs to upload their geolocation data and receive a geolocation risk analysis by our partner Satilligence.

As a result of this development FI and FLOCERT agreed on a clear vision and division of responsibilities for audit and preparation & verification.

The revised process now includes 8 steps.

1. Geolocation and Risk
2. Check Geolocation
3. Alert investigation form
4. SPO supports members with collection evidence
5. Retention of Documentation
6. Fairtrade Recommendation for the audit sampling
7. FLOCERT AUDIT
8. FLOCERT feedback back to Fairtrade when a change in risk category results from the audit

Next in the true cases of deforestation, The POs propose corrective actions to address a true case of deforestation just as with all other requirements, FLOCERT would determine whether corrective actions are enough to make the PO compliant with the standard.

Overall, FI is working with FLOCERT for a suitable corrective action, however FLOCERT decides what is enough for the PO to prove that the volume sold under FI terms is complaint with the deforestation requirement.

Currently we are exploring how deforestation can be delimited to a plot which is being explored with FLOCERT and the focus here is avoiding deforestation while protecting farmers' market access.

Furthermore, we are looking at a progressive approach rather than immediate non-compliance while we can verify progress for the SPOs below the geolocation. The requirement in this situation states that, it the geolocation data for 100% of the members cultivating coffee and cocoa has to be submitted, the GPS points and polygons for plots over 4 hectares and it applies to coffee 316 and Cocoa 345.

Some concerns were raised by the SC members where they feared that the due diligence system may not align with the results that the platform will have at the time of purchase, export and import to the EU.

Also, what would happen and what corrective measure or action would be taken where deforestation has been found or confirmed.

Next Steps:

1. Finalize the versions of the guidance and interpretation notes.
2. Finalizing the assurance methodology described in the FI communication scheme document
3. Publication of the standards union documents to be published be the 7th of October 2026.
4. FLOCERT will develop the corresponding criteria to meet this new process and operational changes to be approved then by the scheme owner, Standards & Pricing Director.
5. The SPO and PN will receive accordingly some training on the new processes, including alert investigation forms and evidence requirements.
6. The implementation phrase begins in January 2027.

Additionally, there will be a consultation on deforestation requirements held by end of Q2 2027. Because of team availability and resources restrictions, the Support Centre Climate & Environment will start the process in Q1 2027 and consequently, the Standards unit will be incorporated for guidance in Q2.

Item 9 – Project Updates

The Chair invited the members to ask questions on the submitted paper.

Discussion

One member asked whether it had been decided to phase out the CP standard. The former Head of Standards explained that the review project had been paused for 2 years and would be resumed now post consultation in 2024. The finalized proposals would be included into the framework of evolved standards framework in 2027.

Another member inquired after the Fresh Fruit Standard and the timing of the questions related to maximum land size in HL set ups, which should have been solved by the time that the banana register had re-opened. It was explained that this had to be paused as it could be considered discriminatory. In future, this topic would not be part of the standard anymore but move to questions checked during the application process as eligibility criteria prior to certification. Hence, it is not part of the SU workplan any longer. The scheme owner will be responsible to design the process. Also, for other standards entry requirements will be analysed and split up according to parts which will move into the application process as eligibility criteria and parts which might remain in the standard. The SC will remain informed on the evolving changes.

SC members requested clarification on:

Status of Contract Production Standard review: it was clarified that the review is on pause to focus on the development of evolved Fairtrade Standards (STEP). The current plan is to focus on having the new framework approved by the SC and subsequently integrate the revised CP Standard. This means that the conclusion of this project is expected to happen in 2027 where the team will bring it to the SC for decision.

Requirement on maximum land size for hired labour organizations (banana): decision was to de-prioritized further assessment of this requirement because challenges posed due to EMPCO as well as accreditation which require criteria to be non-discriminatory. It is also the plan to integrate such eligibility requirements in the certification criteria / application criteria which is part of the system changes due to Fairtrade certification scheme transitioning fully to Fairtrade International. Scheme management governance/decision making is at the level of the EMT. Potentially a legal assessment and further analysis needs to be carried out to determine which requirements will be affected. Timelines for implementation are to be confirmed.

Item 10 –Director's Direction

The Directors summarized decisions taken since the last SC meeting, e.g. on responsible fibres in the textile standard, several fibres were assessed and approved to be included into the list.
On flowers, a decision was taken to exclude values merging from any legal obligations from the floor wage calculations.
Resulting from the cocoa price review, there was a gap in applicability of farm gate price by the government and by FI. Hence, a decision was taken to amend the price application also for differentials to 1 September.

Item 11 –STEP

Discussion

Key facts were presented during the session around consultation results, feedback analysis method and lessons learnt in this new consultation approach. One key element potentially attributed to the new consultation format and need to improve and support going forward. As a result, some actions are needed now: 1) Correct misconceptions and build trust (stakeholder engagement & targeted communication); 2) Build confidence; and 3) Plan with PNs for 2027 and beyond. CLAC representative clarified their concerns around change of scope for some requirements, while seeking clarification on how open the system is to changes and whether 2028 implementation is realistic. The S&P Director clarified that the standards should be relevant to the market. Duplication of requirements is being addressed to achieve greater consistency and coherence. Proposals that are rejected by a large majority will be revised. Any extension to the timeline will be requested if there are valid reasons for doing so. Resources are being mobilised.

In addition, high level insights on how the linkages between the evolved standards and the global programme development are considered.

The SC was also informed of what can be expected for the upcoming December meeting where decisions on evolved standards are planned.

SC members requested clarification around potential changes to the SOP. It was clarified that recent changes intended to align with changes to ensure EmpCo compliance and the new FI governance and

any further changes due to STEP will need to be assessed if required at later stage already changes can be expected to be very limited. Clarification on alignment with the Fairer Future Standard was requested, to which it was indicated that later, even in 2027, it will be integrated into the STEP framework. All standards will be available on a digital platform, and this is work that is being coordinated with DSU.

S&P director informed the standard committee that the STEP standard will be published in February latest in March 2027. Including the fact that the department is working with the DSU department to integrate the whole thing into a digital version, and by February there should already be in existence a relatively simpler way on how any producer's organization can select a file to find out from the various files that a particular one or 2 applies to the PN. An Sc member raised the concern that the project required external experts and the PM assured that the team is already working with external experts in some areas of the project to manage the workload.

The SC was also updated on the status of other workstreams in STEP and Risk Map Governance decisions taken by the EMT in September and expected actions to make sure methodology and Risk Map are available by when the evolved standards become available.

Next Steps.

1. Prepare and present to the Standards Committee in December. SU and STEP core team will work to make the decision-making session as interactive and engaging as possible avoiding that there is a review of word by word of the standard criteria.

2. Offer a session to the Standards Committee to explain the implications of the new scheme management reality.

3. Continue plans for 2027, engagement of stakeholders and targeted communication, and implementation support, including budget and resources alignment.

Item 12 - AOB

125th SC meeting (December). Expected three days for decisions around STEP. In preparation an interactive session with the SC members. SC members are invited to save the 4 days (Tuesday-Friday) to make sure there is enough time for decision making and for any other topics to be brought to the SC members are also invited to join on Monday Nov. 30th the OC meeting and evening get-together. Two members of SC will be expected to join the Technical Committee for scheme which is expected to be in place towards end of October or beginning November. This will be organized via E-mail.

Role of EMT in decision making. SC meeting in December it is expected to have a joint session with EMT and SC on STEP. Currently, there are 3 members (CEO -interim-, Director Legal Affairs, and Director Finance and Administration) in the FI Constitution is minimum 2.
Board is currently recruiting EMT members.

124th SC Meeting was closed on Sept. 25th, at 15:20 CET.

The 125th SC meeting has been stated and agreed for 1st December to 2nd December.