

To: Fairtrade Cocoa producers and traders
Fairtrade members
cc: Standards Committee
Fairtrade International staff
FLOCERT staff

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Announcement from Fairtrade International - Cocoa Standard requirement 3.4.1 – Protection of forests and ecosystems

Dear Partners,

Following a revision of the implementation and assurance process for requirement *3.4.1 – Protection of forests and ecosystems*, updates to the guidance section and Interpretation Notes for the said requirement were published.

The requirement itself, a core requirement prohibiting deforestation and degradation of forests, protected areas and similar ecosystems, stays the same. Only the guidance, Interpretation Notes and supporting process have been changed. Under the current process, an SPO that believes a deforestation alert is false submits evidence to Fairtrade International within three months. This created an assurance gap, because Fairtrade International was assessing evidence for requirements that the certification body independently audits.

With the new approach, Fairtrade International identifies and communicates risk through Plot Insights, shares risk data with the certification body for audit preparation, and updates risk status after the certification bodies final outcome.

The SPO and its members check and correct geolocation data, investigate cases, complete an [Alert Investigation Form](#) where needed, keep the evidence, and present it at the audit.

The certification body uses the risk data for audit preparation and sampling, verifies on the ground, decides on compliance, raises Non-Conformities where needed, and reports the result back.

Changes to the process are part of Fairtrade's ongoing work to support Fairtrade certified producers and businesses to maintain their supply chains of Fairtrade – and deforestation-free – products to the EU.

You find the updated Cocoa Standard in [English](#), [French](#), and [Spanish here](#); and you find the updated binding Interpretation Notes [here](#) in [English](#), [French](#), and [Spanish](#).

For more information, please contact Standards & Pricing at standards-pricing@fairtrade.net

Best regards,

Andreas Kratz