



**CALL FOR APPLICATIONS for
Organizational Strategy Development**

TERMS OF REFERENCE

In the framework of the EU Financial Framework Partnership Agreement Programme "The Future is Fair – empowering Producer Organisations to achieve the SDGs"

27 August 2025

1. Introduction

Fairtrade International is a global non-profit representing 22 member organizations, including three producer networks and 19 national Fairtrade organizations. We coordinate system-wide activities and own the FAIRTRADE mark, which appears on over 30,000 products worldwide. With approximately 90 staff at our central offices in Bonn, Germany, Fairtrade International is dedicated to empowering disadvantaged producers by connecting them with consumers, promoting equitable trading conditions, and advancing gender equality. Our work is grounded in inclusive, sustainable, and market-driven solutions that generate value for both people and the planet.

Our vision is a world where all producers have secure, sustainable livelihoods and the opportunity to fulfill their potential and shape their own futures. To build on our impact and drive lasting systemic change, we are developing a new organizational vision and strategy to guide us through our upcoming funding cycle (2026–2028) and beyond.

We seek a partner to support the design and facilitation of a process that engages internal and external stakeholders, collects key insights, and enables our core internal team to develop Fairtrade International's new vision and strategic direction. The selected party will collaborate closely with Fairtrade International's leadership and stakeholders to ensure outcomes that reflect our mission, values, and ambitions.

2. Purpose of the Assignment

The purpose of this assignment is to provide technical support for the design and facilitation of a process for Fairtrade's strategic direction in line with the EC FFPA programme objectives which aims to provide system-wide direction and unity and respond to emerging challenges that producers face. The scope of this assignment is outlined in this document, as well as the required activities, deliverables, and proposed timelines.



3. Objective

Support Fairtrade International in the structured collection and synthesis of findings, working in close partnership with our core team, to inform and shape the forthcoming strategy and implementation documents.

4. Scope of the Work

The selected partner will design and facilitate a collaborative process to shape Fairtrade International's organizational vision and strategy for 2026–2028 and beyond. This includes:

- Engaging internal and external stakeholders to gather critical insights and perspectives aligned with our mission of empowering producers and promoting equitable trade.
- Guiding the synthesis of findings, ensuring recommendations are evidence-based and reflect our values of inclusivity, sustainability, and market-led impact.

Working in close partnership with Fairtrade International's leadership to co-create a strategic framework that positions the organization for long-term relevance and success.

5. Required activities and deliverables

The consultancy is expected to:

- Analyze and synthesize market data to inform strategic priorities and actionable objectives.
- Deliver clear documentation of research findings, including trade opportunities, competitive positioning, supply chain partnerships, advocacy partners and the grant | donation strategy.
- Support the development of implementation guidelines to operationalize the new strategy.

6. Timeline

The process is expected to commence in Q4 2025, with the final vision and strategic framework delivered prior to the next multi-year planning cycle.

7. Envisioned Outcomes

The **envisioned outcomes** of this process are:

- A clear vision and strategy that ensures that Fairtrade International is future-proof, and our approaches are fit for purpose to ensure Fairtrade International's long-term relevance and help accelerate Fairtrade International's impact.
- Broad ownership by the organization and key stakeholders/donors of the new vision and strategy.
- Provide direction and guidelines outlining considerations for developing Fairtrade International's next multi-year plan, to begin after completing the vision and strategy in Q4 of 2025.

We envision that the final document needs to answer **following questions**:

- "Where do we want to go (where not)" - Vision
- "What will we have achieved" - Organizational goals and KPIs



- “Where do we play (and where not)” – Our role in key transitions
- “Who will we work/partner with (who not) and how” – Key partners and donors
- “How do we do it” – Approach towards programs, investment and solutions
- “Where will we make it happen (and where not)” – Selection criteria
- “What will we need to make it work” – high-level indication on funding, governance, organizational set-up, people, ops/data/IT

Our timelines are ambitious, therefore we envision a three-pronged approach that covers the following aspects:

- **The bigger picture:** Where is the world moving? Which global trends will be significant for our work within the next decade? What action will be needed to create lasting, systemic change? What is coming after the SDGs?
- **A vision for FAIRTRADE INTERNATIONAL (ours and others):** What are our impact ambitions? Where do we see FAIRTRADE INTERNATIONAL in the future? What do our key partner see for us? How do we merge these different visions into a vision for FAIRTRADE INTERNATIONAL?
- **Leveraging our experience and network:** What has FAIRTRADE INTERNATIONAL been doing in the past? What are we particularly good at and what not? What are others doing? And how do we differ? What is missing? How can we leverage others? Who should we partner with?

This stage of the strategic plan is focused on

- **The bigger picture:** Desk review of information (possibly complemented by external consultations) on the work broader field of work incl. e.g. current and future evolutions of global trade, international development policy and trends, sustainability of markets and supply chains.
- **Leveraging our experience and network (including a stakeholder and partnership analysis),** guided by the review of FAIRTRADE INTERNATIONAL materials and policies such as:
 - Mid-Term Review 2023-2025 and Multi-Year Plan 2021-2025
 - Past Corporate evaluations & management responses
 - Annual Reporting/Annual Planning documents

Since we have built a global team of many nationalities, backgrounds and perspectives, we believe it is important to develop a strategy that is owned by FAIRTRADE INTERNATIONAL's leadership teams across the globe, it should reflect **the One FAIRTRADE INTERNATIONAL vision**.

Deliverables

The written deliverables of this assignment will be:

- Detailed workplan to sign off on approach and deadlines (max 5 pages)
- Findings report on the bigger picture (max 30 pages)
- Findings report on FAIRTRADE INTERNATIONAL vision (max 10 pages)
- Findings report on experience and network (max 15 pages)
- Global stakeholder and partnerships analysis (max 10 pages)
- Implementation plan for the FAIRTRADE INTERNATIONAL strategy (max 20 pages, excluding possible annex)

For the successful completion of this assignment, guidelines for the final deliverables will be agreed upon with FAIRTRADE INTERNATIONAL at inception of this project. The exact timelines for



the deliverables and sub-items may be subject to change and will be agreed on with FAIRTRADE INTERNATIONAL and the consultant upon the approval of the detailed workplan.

8. Consultant(s) profile

The consultant(s) need to have the following experience / knowledge:

- Track record of similar assignments and knowledge of sustainability, agricultural trade, market systems, landscape approaches that are relevant for this assignment
- Expertise working with producers, traders, grocers, food brands and major donors.
- Long-term vision and strategy design in complex, uncertain, ambiguous settings
- Systems-thinking, transitions pathways design, complexity theory
- Proven experience in leading co-creative and participatory processes, strong conceptual thinker, able to break down complexity, able to quickly learn about FAIRTRADE INTERNATIONAL's context, transferable knowledge from similar sectors/organizations.

The consultant(s) need to have the following characteristics:

- Punctual, dedicated adherence to deadlines.
- Analytical and result oriented.
- Critical on quality & reliability of information.
- Sensitivity how to treat confidential information.
- Ability to effectively communicate with staff around the globe at all levels of seniority.
- Excellent written and spoken English, culturally sensitive, analytical.
- Registered consultancy with tax paying body as per the EC Program eligibility available [here](#).
- Adherence to Fairtrade's Code of Conduct available [here](#).

9. Selection Procedure

The procedure will be as follows:

1. Publishing the tender and inviting suitable consultants to submit a proposal based on this ToR.
2. Evaluation of the proposals by the evaluation committee, which will be composed of three members of the internal FAIRTRADE INTERNATIONAL core team and the evaluation committee is chaired by the CEO of FAIRTRADE INTERNATIONAL. The 3 proposals that receive the highest scores will be presented to the evaluation committee. The chair of the evaluation committee and the evaluation committee will evaluate the proposals individually based on the selection criteria as published in this ToR.
3. Decision on selection of the consultant.
4. Inception meeting with the selected consultant.

The schedule below indicates the timelines for the tender procedure:

Tender process	Timeline
Terms of Reference published	27 August 2025
Deadline questions relating to tender	31 August 2025
Answers will be sent on	7 September 2025
Deadline for submission of proposals*	12 September 2025
Presentation of top 3 proposals	Week of 15 September 2025
Selection of Consultant	19 September 2025
Start of assignment	22 September 2025



Proposals submitted after the deadline will be returned and will not be considered in the tender procedure. After the deadline to submit a proposal has passed, the evaluation committee will evaluate the proposals.

10. Selection Procedure

FAIRTRADE INTERNATIONAL is requesting the consultants to hand in a proposal of maximum 10 pages (excluding company biographies, CVs, sample work and references). The proposal must be handed in a MS Word or PowerPoint version next to a PDF submission to facilitate any copy-and-pasting of content that we may need during evaluation.

The proposal must at least include:

- a) A succinct, well-documented approach addressing the requirements set out this ToR. We request that the proposal structure matches the selection criteria as closely as possible.
- b) Maximum of three client references and a sample of previous work relevant to the deliverables in this ToR.
- c) An overview of the project team, including the CVs of the project team members reflecting all criteria mentioned below in the evaluation criteria under "track-record".
- d) Budget presented in Euros (excluding and including VAT) of maximum 150.000 € incl. VAT and inclusive of all travel and other expenses with a break-down of days/rate per project team member.

The proposal must be submitted to Fairtrade International at partnerships@fairtrade.net with the email's subject line "Consultancy Application: Organizational Strategy Development" before September 12 at 6pm.

11. Proposal Assessment (Testing and Weighing)

The assignment will be awarded to the consultant with the most economically advantageous tender. The most economically advantageous tender is determined on the basis of the evaluation criteria of price and quality.

Scoring and weighing

The evaluation criteria are compared and weighed according to the procedure below. This concerns a general outline of the scoring methodology, and an explanation of how the consultant can demonstrate compliance with the requirements.

Step 1 - Criterion Quality

Evaluation scores will be awarded for each of the components. The evaluation committee will score each component unanimously. The proposal will be assessed based on the following selection criteria:



Component		Criteria	Max. Grading
1	Proposal	<p>The extent to which the proposal meets the required quality of services, based on the requirements in Section 6 above using the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposal is clear in terms of objectives and approach • The proposed approach and work plan are appropriate to achieve the expected results • Appropriate tools and methods for the assignment are proposed • The proposal is realistic in its approach and objectives • The proposed budget is clear, realistic, and affordable • The proposed timelines are realistic • The proposal takes sufficient account of the expected challenges 	40
2	Track record	<p>The extent to which the consultant presents the required level of expertise and knowledge, based on the requirements in Section 6:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The candidate understands the expected results of this assignment • The candidate is independent and recognized as credible • The candidate has proven knowledge and experience in conducting similar work and carried out a similar assignment within the last three years <p>The candidate proposes a strong team composition incl. project lead to complete this assignment</p>	40
3	Budget	Best price for the proposed level of quality as described in the ToR.	20

The evaluation committee will unanimously score each component by assigning scores based on the maximum grading per component 1 and 2. The budget scoring will be determined in step 2.

Step 2 - Criterion Price

A combined price in Euros (ex VAT and incl. VAT) is to be presented, with a maximum of 150.000 € (inc. VAT) for the entire assignment, inclusive of all travel and other expenses.

Given the not-for-profit nature of the Fairtrade International activities, we encourage consultants to clearly mention if the budget might be positively impacted by partial pro bono work or reduced rate as a contribution to the successful delivery of the assignment.

Step 3 - Weighting

The final score will be weighted based on a 40% scoring for the overall quality of the proposal, 40% for the track record of the team and 20% on price.

If scores of consultants are equal, priority will be based on the total scores that were given for the Criterion Quality (Proposal and track record combined). The assignment will be awarded to the consultant with the highest score for the Criterion Quality. If the evaluation of the Criterion Quality does not lead to a distinction, the score for the component "Proposal overall" will be decisive.



Award

Once Fairtrade International has decided to which consultant it intends to award the assignment, a written notification thereof is sent to all Interested Parties that participated in the tender procedure. The Consultant is contracted via a letter of assignment.

The assignment will be awarded to the consultant with the most economically advantageous tender. This is determined based on the evaluation criteria price (20%) and quality (80%).

12. Communication and Confidentiality

The Consultant will ensure that all its contacts with Fairtrade International, with regards to the tender, during the tender procedure take place exclusively in writing by e-mail to partnerships@fairtrade.net with the email's subject line "Consultancy Application: Organizational Strategy Development."

The documents provided by or on behalf of Fairtrade International will be handled confidential. The Consultant will also impose a duty of confidentiality on any parties that it engages. Any breach of the duty of confidentiality by the consultant to third parties will give Fairtrade International grounds for exclusion of the consultant, without required written or verbal warning.

All information, documents and other requested or provided data submitted by the consultants will be handled with due care and confidentiality by Fairtrade International. The provided information will, after evaluation by Fairtrade International, be filed as confidential. The provided information will not be returned to the consultant.

Disclaimer

Fairtrade International reserves the right to update, change, extend, postpone, withdraw, or suspend the Terms of Reference, this tender procedure, or any decision regarding the selection or contract award. Fairtrade International is not obliged in this tender procedure to make a contract award decision or to conclude a contract with a participant.

Participants in the tender procedure cannot claim compensation from Fairtrade International, any affiliated persons or entities, in any way, in case any of the afore-mentioned situations occur.

By handing in a proposal, participants accept all terms and reservations made in this Terms of Reference, and subsequent information and documentation in this tender procedure.