

FAIRTRADE AND SUSTAINABILITY



PRODUCTIVITY AND QUALITY

Supporting farmers to improve the amount of crop they produce and its quality are important for sustainable livelihoods. It means farmers can earn more from what they produce to become more economically stable and more reliable suppliers, which improves the stability of business relationships.

Productivity and quality are increased as a result of improved farming practices and regular technical support, and so also have an important link to environmental sustainability.

Being part of Fairtrade networks and forming direct relationships with buyers exposes farmers and their co-operatives to new sources of market information which they can bring back to their farms to improve the quality of their crops. And better quality crops can boost incomes for farmers as they fetch a better price.

The Fairtrade Premium often enables farmers to make investments in productivity and quality. This could mean supplying farmers with tools and equipment for harvesting, or fertiliser to improve their soil.

Investments in shared facilities, such as warehousing, storage, transport, washing and drying facilities and nurseries for new crops also ensure quality and the reduction of wastage, and ultimately increase sales and income. These shared facilities and services are essential for farmers, who could not make these investments individually.

Loan schemes can also enable farmers to buy additional land, meaning that they are able to produce more of their crop and increase their income.

SMALL PRODUCER ORGANISATIONS SPENT 37 PERCENT OF THEIR FAIRTRADE PREMIUM ON INVESTMENTS SUPPORTING PRODUCTIVITY OR QUALITY



CASE STUDIES

COCOA

In [West Africa, cocoa organisations](#) spent around 36 percent of their Premium in 2012–13 on projects to improve productivity and quality.

[ECOOKIM](#), a cocoa organisation in Côte d'Ivoire, faced challenges among its member co-operatives with productivity at farm level and the quality of its cocoa. Lack of awareness among farmers had led to poor post-harvest techniques which meant some cocoa was too humid and grew mould while it was stored.

Now, approximately eight out of ten of all of ECOOKIM's producers have been trained in good agricultural practices which include correct fermentation and drying processes.

ECOOKIM has also constructed two storage warehouses for member co-operatives, partly funded by the Premium.

The union has also secured loans to construct upgraded drying racks at the co-operatives, again to improve post-harvest handling of cocoa.

The members of ECOOKIM were clear that they wanted the Premium to be spent improving productivity and quality – an example of how it is an easily accessed source of capital to invest in vital areas.



Siaka Foufana, a cocoa analyst for ECOJAD in Côte d'Ivoire

'It was difficult when I started four years ago: we had many problems related to quality. The cocoa was sometimes too damp and developed mould. With the right fermentation and enough drying, we found that we could remove these problems. Today, with the training that we provide, 90 percent of members are able to produce the right quality of cocoa. For me, Fairtrade is about having a strong organisation and good quality cocoa, which is grown in a safe and healthy environment, without child labour.'
Siaka Foufana, a cocoa analyst responsible for quality for the Fairtrade certified cooperative ECOJAD, member of ECOOKIM, in Dalao, Côte d'Ivoire

COFFEE

In Costa Rica, [COOPEAGRI](#) co-operative has over 8,000 members growing coffee on plots averaging 1.3 hectares. It has used Premium income to experiment with more productive coffee varieties that have increased yield per hectare from an average of 25 bags to 60 bags. Its technical assistance team advises farmers on how to keep down production costs, for example by planting shade trees to limit the undergrowth as a low-cost alternative to herbicides.

Like many co-operatives, it also has demonstration plots where it puts its recommendations into action, showing farmers how to improve productivity with simple day-to-day practices. COOPEAGRI has also built 160 coffee 'collection points' where farmers deliver their coffee before it is taken to washing stations. This saves farmers the time and expense and makes harvesting more efficient.

BANANAS

[Research in the banana sector](#) has shown that Fairtrade has increased yields and improved quality for export due to a combination of innovative training and modern technology. [In Colombia](#), banana yields were increased by up to 13 percent.

WHAT'S THE LINK TO THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS?

The [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#) are a new set of global targets for future international development. They follow and expand on the Millennium Development Goals, which expire at the end of 2015. UN member states will be expected to use the SDGs to frame their agendas and policies over the next 15 years.

Fairtrade's work on productivity and quality delivers towards the following SDGs:

- Goal 2 - end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
- Goal 12 - ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns