

Sustainable Coffee Certifications

A Comparison Matrix

Created by the SCAA Sustainability Committee (2009)

Certification / Verification	Organic	Fair Trade Certified	Rainforest Alliance	Smithsonian Bird Friendly®	Utz Certified	4 C Common Code
Mission	Create a verified sustainable agriculture system that produces food in harmony with nature, supports biodiversity and enhances soil health.	Support a better life for farming families in the developing world through fair prices, direct trade, community development and environmental stewardship.	Integrate biodiversity conservation, community development, workers' rights and productive agricultural practices to ensure comprehensive sustainable farm management.	Conduct research and education around issues of neo-tropical migratory bird populations, promoting certified shade coffee as a viable supplemental habitat for birds and other organisms.	UTZ CERTIFIED's mission is to achieve sustainable agricultural supply chains, where: Producers are professionals implementing good practices which enable better businesses, livelihoods and environments; The Food industry takes responsibility by demanding and rewarding sustainably grown products; Consumers buy products which meet their standard for social and environmental responsibility.	Achieve global leadership as the baseline initiative that enhances economic, social and environmental production, processing and trading conditions to all who make a living in the coffee sector.
Market Focus	All markets	All markets	Global, with special emphasis on N. America, Europe, Japan, and Australia	All markets	Mainstream and Specialty	Mainstream market (ambition: vast majority of coffee market)
History and Development	Trace back to 19 th century practices formulated in England, India, and the US. First certification 1967. Developed into internationally recognized system with production throughout the world. * The organic coffee sector	Began as Max Havelaar in the Netherlands in the 1970s. Now the German-based Fairtrade Labelling Organizations International (FLO) collaborates with more than twenty national branches throughout the world, including	Begun in 1992 by Rainforest Alliance and a coalition of Latin American NGOs, the Sustainable Agriculture Network (SAN). First coffee farm certification in 1996. The Rainforest Alliance Certified™ program requires that	Founded in 1997 with criteria based on scientific fieldwork. Operated out of the SMBC office initially, it currently involves 14 organic certification agencies as the eventual managers of the	Begun in 1997 as initiative from industry and producers in Guatemala; Utz Kapeh became an independent NGO in 2000. First certified farms in 2001. In 2008, Utz Kapeh changed its name to Utz Certified – Good Inside	Begun in 2003 as public-private partnership project by the coffee industry and the German development cooperation to initiate a multi-stakeholder dialogue for defining a mainstream code of conduct for sustainability: The 4C

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	represented nearly 3 percent of the total U.S. green coffee imports in 2007*	TransFair USA. TransFair USA has been administering the Fair Trade Certified label since 1998.	farms meet comprehensive standards covering all aspects of production, the protection of the environment, and the rights and welfare of farm families and their local communities.	program.	to encompass more diverse agricultural commodities including cocoa, tea, soy, and palm oil.	Association was founded as an international membership association in December 2006. Operational in market since coffee year 07/08
Code Founders	Certifiers and farmer groups began organic certification process around 1967.*	The first Fair Trade codes grew out of Solidaridad movement in The Netherlands. FLO, the Rainforest Alliance and SAN, Social Accountability International and IFOAM worked together to improve social standards and auditing practices	1980s farm-based research by SAN scientists and farmers, field-testing, and involvement of all relevant stakeholders.	A number of scientific studies in southern Mexico, Guatemala and Peru during the 1990s. Recent studies in Ecuador and Mexico support the criteria as being highly protective of biodiversity and providing refuge for biodiversity.	Field-based adaptation of EuropGap standard. Now officially GlobalGap equivalent plus. ILO Labor standards.	Multistakeholder adaptation of existing codes which resulted in a baseline Code of Conduct, Rules of Participation for Trade and Industry members, a Verification System, Support Services and a participatory democratic governance structure for decision making.
Scope of the Program	Organic Farming and processing practices.	Economic and environmental sustainability for farmers and their communities. Minimum price and social premium to cover costs of production and community-elected development programs. Organic premium for organic coffees. The model empowers small-farmers organized into democratically-run	Sustainable farm management in most holistic sense – social, environmental, economic and, ethical improvements are the cornerstones of the program.	Certification aimed at the production area of the coffee agroecosystem. (Future development of program may address the landscape mosaic as well.)	Sustainability: Economic performance through productivity and farm professionalism; environmental standards to preserve flora fauna shade, buffer zones; Worker Health and Safety.	Exclude worst practices and continuously increase the sustainability of coffee production and processing in the economic, social and environmental dimension.

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		cooperatives to compete on a global scale.				
Code Elements for Coffee Production	Environmental, farm production and processing standards.	Social, economic, environmental, democratic organization of cooperatives.	The Rainforest Alliance Certified™ program is based on the fundamental principles of sustainable agriculture including: best management practices; conservation of natural resources, ecosystems and wildlife; workers rights and benefits; and benefits to local communities.	Biophysical criteria of the shade component, provided that the farm is certified organic.	Socially, environmentally, and economically conscious growing standards.	Economic, social and environmental dimension
Scope of the Code	Federal standard with practices for producers and handlers applies to all organic product sold in US. Similar but unique standards are applied internationally.	Baseline and progress criteria. Continuous improvement required through Progress Requirements. Applies to democratically organized cooperatives formed by small-scale farmers.	More than 200 criteria (checkpoints); Field-tested indicators. Applies to farms and coops of all sizes. Continuous improvement required.	Organic certification as a condition for BF certification. Certification applicable to estate farms and cooperatives. Inspection linked to organic inspection, but only every three years.	Baseline criteria with field-tested indicators and independent, third-party auditing. Applies to farms and coops of all sizes. All countries possible. Continuous improvement required.	10 Unacceptable Practices and 30 Baseline criteria with 90 field-tested indicators; Participation possible with “average yellow”, continuous improvement towards “green” required. Applies to farms and to production structures of all sizes. Minimum capacity of “4C Unit” = 1 container of green coffee. Every country. “Stepping stone function” to provide easier access to certification/marketing schemes for producers.

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Technical Assistance and Capacity Building	<p>Part of many certifiers' role. Organic research federally and privately funded by non-profits and NGOs.</p> <p>SCAN perhaps the most well-known Technical Assistance and Capacity provider network – for all systems, not just organic.</p>	<p>Provided by TransFair USA for specific projects through its Global Producer Services department, and by FLO (Fair Trade Labelling Organizations International) worldwide through its Producer Business Unit. FLO Liaison officers located in most of the countries to support producer organizations. (Technical assistance and audit are kept separately.)</p>	<p>Provided by local NGO partners (Sustainable Agriculture Network), extensionists trained by the program, and by collaborating institutions. (TA and auditing are kept separate.)</p>	<p>Continual provision of training workshops to organic inspectors, NGO staff, cooperative technicians, and government representatives.</p>	<p>Provided by the program at very low cost to producers in alliance with other initiatives like the Coffee Support Network (CSN). Technical assistance providers are trained by Utz Certified and are available world-wide.</p>	<p>Support to 4C Units, members and other interested stakeholders through training-of-trainer workshops, educational sessions and access to tools & manuals; project facilitation; cooperation with other national and international organizations and between members of the 4C Association. Regional Offices in mayor coffee regions.</p>
Inspection Frequency and Accreditation	<p>Annual inspections for certified entities. USDA accreditation required for certifiers of organic product sold in US.</p>	<p>Annual inspections by independent and annually trained Fair Trade inspectors.</p>	<p>At least annual audits by teams of biologists, agronomists, sociologists and other specialists trained, authorized and monitored by the Rainforest Alliance</p>	<p>Every three years, linked to organic inspection. Inspection/certification arranged/provided by a USDA-accredited organic certification agency.</p>	<p>Independent auditors accredited to ISO 65 standard. 10 % shadow/surprise audits. Audits done annually.</p>	<p>Independent auditors accredited to ISO 65 standards and trained by 4C.</p> <p>Free tri-annual verifications for “4C Units”; free addendum verifications possible.</p> <p>Annual Self Assessment.</p>
Communication and Promotion	<p>Business to consumer. Backed by Federal Governments. Consumer groups, suppliers, and some certifiers communicate benefits to consumers.</p>	<p>Strong promotional efforts to consumers and businesses through awareness campaigns, media and on-product labeling.</p>	<p>Business to business and consumer marketing, communications, and media outreach undertaken by RA staff. Business to business, on-product labeling and</p>	<p>Business to consumer; business to business. Popular, trade, and academic articles.</p>	<p>Business to business and on-product labeling</p>	<p>Business to business. No product claim, seal or on-product labeling. Membership statement on pack possible.</p>

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			off-product promotion backed by the Rainforest Alliance.			
Traceability/ Chain of Custody	Yes, required by USDA National Organic Program. Organic products traceable from retailer to producer.	Yes, traceable from roaster to producer.	Yes, traceable from roaster to producer; transparency ensured via mandatory transaction certificates.	Yes, traceable from roaster to producer.	Yes, traceable from roaster to producer following supply chain roles. Identity preserved and mass balance functionality. Audited chain-of-custody for logo users.	Identity preservation from roaster to container level ("4C Unit"). Traceable from 4C Unit to producer.
Addresses All Actors in the Chain	Yes, except handlers who do not further process and retailers.	Yes, in fact all major actors must be registered with the program.	Yes, engages all actors in supply chain, from producer to retailer. Rules/regulations for participation for actors along the chain include mandatory transaction certificates, license agreements, and seal approvals by Seal Approval Committee.	Yes. Farms are certified; actors further down commodity chain are registered and bound by written contracts.	Yes, rules for participation and chain of custody	Yes, membership association with rules of participation
Price Differential to Farmers	Yes. Premiums versus non organic certified coffees are paid to farmers.	Yes, this is the heart of the program. All purchases must be at or above the Fairtrade Minimum Price as set by FLO (price varies by coffee type and origin). If the market price is higher than the Fairtrade Minimum Price, buyers shall pay the market price. Additionally,	Yes. Differential is negotiated between buyer and seller.	Growers have used BF seal to obtain 5-10 cents more per pound, over and above what they get for organic, with as much as an 18% "plus" in one long-term arrangement. Importers/roasters report seal tends to increase the speed of circulation of commodity.	Yes. Differential set by the markets. Feedback on market information of differentials and demand per quality provided to members.	No influence on mainstream market price mechanisms: Free negotiation between 4C members. Price should reflect coffee quality and sustainable production practices.

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		buyers must pay a social premium of USD\$0.10¢ per pound and, when applicable, a minimum Organic Differential of USD\$0.20¢ per pound.				
Fees to Producers	Vary by certifier. Inspection costs drive up costs but are being reduced and increased coverage provided by regional in-country certifiers.	Cost of auditing, re-inspection fees	Cost of auditing plus an annual fee based on farm size. Group certification options improve access for smallholders. Auditing fees often paid for by buyers.	Per diem cost of added days at time of inspection, plus a minimal symbolic charge for the certificate (as growers are already paying for the organic inspection).	Zero from UTZ, auditing fees only	Yearly membership fees for all actors along the chain according to size and position in chain: producer's fee is smallest. Free verification and trainings
Fees to Buyers	Certification costs vary by certifier. Fees ranging from \$700 to \$3000/year.	Importers are not charged a licensing fee, but they must pay at least the Fair Trade Minimum and provide up to 60% of pre-harvest financing when requested by cooperatives. Licensed roasters pay TransFair USA USD\$0.10¢ per pound to cover the cost of audits, consumer awareness campaigns and FLO affiliation.	Currently, no fees charged to buyers of Rainforest Alliance Certified™ coffee. Many buyers support the participating farms (see above).	Importers pay \$100 per yr. to participate/use BF logo/term. Roasters pay USD\$0.25¢ per pound on coffee roasted and sold as "Bird Friendly®". (This royalty fee under re-evaluation as of 2008/2009.)	USD\$0.012 per pound to "first buyer", passed on through supply chain to final buyer	Yearly membership fees for all actors along the chain according to size and position in chain: roaster's fees are the highest.
Price Premium Associated with Code	Average price differentials of USD \$0.255¢ (+/-) per pound are paid to producers.	Minimum price of USD \$1.25* per pound plus a \$0.10¢ per pound social premium. An extra USD\$0.20¢ premium if	The Rainforest Alliance Certified™ program does not set prices, but honors the farmers' right to manage their own	USD \$0.05-0.10¢ per pound	2008: USD\$0.07¢ per pound average for Arabica: \$56 per metric ton for Robusta, based on	No; individual negotiation possible between 4C members

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		the coffee is also certified organic. *Fair Trade Minimum for washed Arabica. Prices vary by coffee type.	business affairs and gives them the tools required to succeed in the global marketplace. Farmers earn more through gains in efficiency, improved quality and controlling farm costs.		quality and market drivers	
Pounds Certified in 2007/2008	81 million pounds of organic coffee were imported into the United States and Canada in 2007	450 million pounds	Over 94 million lbs certified in 2005 and over 197 million lbs. certified by 2007.	9 million pounds worldwide	700 million pounds certified worldwide. 170 million purchased as Utz Certified	4.57 million bags verified in coffee year 2007/2008 (548 million pounds)
Countries of Consumption	US, Canada, EU, Russia, Japan	US, Canada, EU, Japan, Australia, New Zealand	From Singapore to Switzerland, Rainforest Alliance Certified™ coffee is consumed in 44 countries on 6 different continents.	US, Canada, Japan, The Netherlands	US, UK, NL, Norway, Sweden, Belgium, Spain, France, Japan	Countries of operation of 4C Industry members
Countries of Origin Represented	More than 40 nations supplying the global market – more than any other certification.	Bolivia, Brazil, Cameroon, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, East Timor, Ecuador, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Honduras, Indonesia, Kenya, Laos, Mexico, Nicaragua, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Rwanda, Tanzania, Thailand, Uganda.	Rainforest Alliance Certified™ coffee is produced in 17 countries throughout the tropics: Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Honduras, Indonesia, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Tanzania, Vietnam,	Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru, Venezuela	Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Colombia, Bolivia, Birundi, Brazil, Peru, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, India, Indonesia, Vietnam	Brazil, Cameroon, Colombia, Cote d'Ivoire, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Malawi, Mexico, Nicaragua, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Tanzania, Thailand, Uganda, Vietnam, Zambia

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		Venezuela	Uganda, and India.			
Information Provided by:	Organic Trade Association www.ota.org , Contact: Danielle Giovannuci	Transfair USA www.transfairusa.org Contact: Katie Barrow	Rainforest Alliance www.rainforest-alliance.org Contact: Petra Tanos	Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center Contact: Robert Rice	Utz Certified Contact: Illana Burk	http://www.4c-coffeeassociation.org Contact: Annette Pensel