

2026-28 Fairtrade Strategy: our Thematic Approach

Invitation to Tender – April 2025

Background

Fairtrade is an international movement committed to ensuring that producers in low income countries are paid a fair price for their goods and are supported in achieving better working conditions and environmental practices. Through our certification system and programmes, we work to create a fairer, more sustainable global trade system that empowers small-scale farmers and workers, fosters local economic development, and champions environmental stewardship.

As part of our forward-looking strategy for 2026-2028, we are undertaking a **review of our approach to the thematic areas** we engage with (e.g. sustainable livelihoods, living income/wages, gender, climate & environment, decent work, human rights etc).

The aim of the review is to understand:

- Trends in the sector.
- Their relevance to Fairtrade.
- How Fairtrade should approach and frame its work with regards to these thematic areas.
- An analysis of these trends from a stakeholder and commodity lens.

Over the next few years, global trade patterns and regulations, socio-political and economic trends regarding Overseas Development Assistance (ODA), sustainability goals, and consumer demands are likely to evolve significantly and Fairtrade needs to be at the forefront of this evolving landscape.

Scope

The 2026-2028 strategy will focus on positioning Fairtrade at the forefront of emerging trends in the development and sustainability sector. This workstream will provide a holistic and robust understanding of the future landscape of the development sector, understanding trends (such as new frameworks/ approaches/ principles, technological advancements etc.) and their relevance for Fairtrade.

It will also look to understand this through the lens of our core stakeholder groups (Partners, Donors, Farmers, CSOs, Sustainability Schemes, Workers etc.). By understanding this evolving landscape, including our existing offering in these areas, we aim to shape and evolve Fairtrade's position and engagement on thematic, ensuring that we will further the goals of social, environmental, and economic justice in global trade.

We are seeking a consultant(s) with deep expertise in international development, including organisational strategy, to build on a review of the future development landscape and provide strategic, clear and tangible recommendations of Fairtrade's position and focus in this sector going forward.

The consultants will build on two pieces of existing/ongoing work at Fairtrade:

1. An internal review of our progress and impact in our thematic, including any commodity specific gaps or opportunities.
2. A rapid literature review of the current trends in the development sector, summarizing existing and future shifts, and an analysis of our competitors in this space.

Building on this work, the consultants will deepen the analysis of development trends over the next 5 years that are likely to impact Fairtrade supply chains, identifying key opportunities for business services, industry positioning and providing actionable recommendations. This will ensure that Fairtrade remains agile in navigating, integrating and influencing changing environments to support its mission.

Objectives

The consultant(s) will be required to conduct the following:

1. Review and build on existing work to identify and analyse key development trends that currently shape thinking in the sector, as well as those likely to emerge over the next 5 years, including the potential implications and impact that these will have on Fairtrade and our stakeholders (partners, donors, farmers & workers, CSOs, and sustainability schemes).
2. Highlight opportunities where trends could support Fairtrade's mission. This should include opportunities around business services and income generation, as well as impact.
3. Highlight areas where Fairtrade needs to evolve and respond to developments, including an analysis of where potential disruptions will come from and in what form.
4. Analyze the focus and positioning of Fairtrade's competitors in this space, especially in the theoretical framing of their thematic work (e.g. but not limited to, landscape approaches, market systems, donut economics, complex adaptive systems etc.), including an analysis of Fairtrade's UVP in this context.
5. Evaluate and analyze the funding landscape, including where commercial and donor partners will either continue to focus and/or shift focus in interest and funding over the next 5 years.
6. Provide evidence-based recommendations and a clear way forward to Fairtrade on future thematic focus, approach, market positioning, business service development and delivery. The recommendations are the key output of the consultancy and will be critical in shaping the future strategy.

Final Outputs:

- A slide deck outlining results of the above work, including:
 - An outline of Fairtrade's current position in terms of our thematic focus.
 - A list of key thematic trends for Fairtrade including a SWOT analysis for each.
 - An outline of what it would look like for Fairtrade to become a sector leader across prioritized thematic areas, including a clear vision with regards to the recommended way forward.

- A clear action plan to achieve this vision.

Timeline

This project must conclude by Friday 9th May 2025.

Topic	Additional information	Projected Timelines
Assignment advertised		Until 11 April
Review of proposals	Review of proposals and selection	w/c 14 April
Contracting and start-up	Contracting of selected consultant	w/c 14 April
Kick off meeting	Meeting with key stakeholders	w/c 14 April
Trend analysis	As outlined above.	22 April – 6 May
Mid-point check in	Review of progress and initial findings	30 April
Draft review	Write up of findings and review with Fairtrade Foundation.	6-7 May
Finalisation & Completion of Contract	Including in-person presentation to FTF team.	By 9 May

Skills and Experience

We are looking for a consultant/researcher that can provide the services outlined in this invitation to tender.

The individual/collective team should have:

- Strong understanding (e.g a Master's degree in a relevant field or at least 5 years of relevant experience) of international development, ideally with a focus on agriculture and food systems, global value chains, or ethical sourcing.
- Familiarity with Fairtrade principles and practices, including how we set and use Standards
- Familiarity with other relevant standards, certification schemes and industry bodies (e.g. Global Gap, Rainforest Alliance, ETP).
- Understanding of key thematic areas such as living income/living wage, gender equality, climate resilience, and human rights (including HREDD), and their application in international development.
- In depth knowledge of the fundraising environment and global giving trends.
- Demonstrable experience in strategy development, strategic planning.
- Excellent English writing skills and ability to communicate in English.
- Ability to present complex information clearly and concisely to a variety of audiences.

Data Protection

The protection of peoples' data is non-negotiable, and we expect applicants to be aware of and compliant with the relevant protection laws in the UK (GDPR) and those of relevant Fairtrade tea markets and sourcing origins.

Proposal Process and Budget

The deadline for proposals is 12:00 (midday, BST) 11th April 2025.

Please send your **short** proposal to florence.colletette@fairtrade.org with the subject: '2026-28 Fairtrade Strategy: our Thematic Approach'.

Your proposal (max 5 pages, excluding CVs) should include the following:

- Your proposed approach to the project
- Detailed costings, including day rates and costs for paid-for-data and additional activities
- How you/the team meet the criteria set out under the 'Skills and Experience' section above
- Relevant past consultancy experience and how that will support this project
- Please include CVs (max. 3 pages per person) of the proposed consultant/project team members
- Please outline any potential conflicts of interest within your proposal.

We are currently working to a budget of £5,000.

For any queries, please contact Taryn Holland, Head of Programme Partnerships on taryn.holland@fairtrade.org.uk or Rachel Wadham, Head of Evidence & Insights on rachel.wadham@fairtrade.org.uk.