

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Environmental protection is a key element of Fairtrade's view of sustainability. Fairtrade Standards require smallholder farmer and larger hired labour production set-ups to comply in key areas, such as:

- Energy and greenhouse gas emission reduction
- Soil and water quality
- Pest management
- Biodiversity protection
- Prohibition of genetically modified organisms and harmful chemicals
- Waste management

Amongst the many requirements, the Standards prohibit the use of certain agrochemicals that are harmful to the environment and health and focus on reducing the use of pesticides. They ensure personal protective equipment is used, that farms are free from hazardous waste and are using water sustainably, and encourage activities to enhance biodiversity.

The Standards also promote training for farmers, which can include advice on switching to environmentally friendly practices, such as developing nutrient-rich soils that support healthy plants and encouraging wildlife to help control pests and diseases. This has been shown to lead to good agricultural practices, which have encouraged environmentally sustainable production.

Beyond the Standards, the Fairtrade Premium is used to fund a range of projects and training that promotes environmental sustainability. One example is converting to organic production, which can be challenging for farmers because of the extra costs involved. But making the switch means they can often earn a higher price for their crop, and for some they can become more resilient to environmental shocks.

Some coffee and tea co-operatives have chosen to invest in reforestation projects such as tree-planting to help improve the micro-climate, protect soils and provide a habitat for indigenous wildlife.

'We don't see it as just a product in a cup – because behind every cup lies a forest that is being protected.' *Fatima Ismael, General Manager of [SOPPEXCCA](#) coffee co-operative, Nicaragua*

**OVER 50
PERCENT OF ALL
FAIRTRADE
CERTIFIED
PRODUCERS ARE
ALSO CERTIFIED AS
ORGANIC**

Small-scale farmers around the world are bearing the brunt of climate change, which is causing erratic weather patterns, the emergence of new pests and the rapid spread of diseases. The Standards promote best agricultural practices, which guide producers in adapting to climate change and mitigate their impact. Fairtrade is developing voluntary climate change standards to further support producers, such as FairCarbonCredits.

There are also a number of Fairtrade initiatives to advocate for farmers' needs, such as the Producer Support Programme for Climate Change, a climate change blog and Carbon Reduction Plans. The Fairtrade Premium can also give farmers a much-needed injection of cash to respond to emergencies.

CASE STUDIES

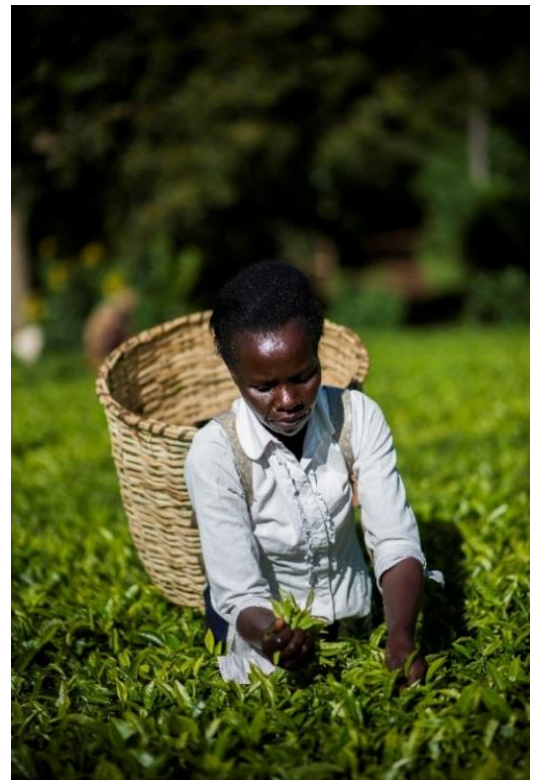
ADAPTEA PROJECT

Kenya is the world's leading tea exporter, grown mainly by smallholder farmers, who rely on tea for their income. Tea farmers in East Africa are already feeling the impact of climate change, including rising temperatures, changes in rainfall and frost.

[ADAPTea](#), a joint programme between [Fairtrade Africa](#), [Fairtrade International](#) and [Vi Agroforestry](#), aims to support 14,000 farmers in East Africa to develop a plan of action for tackling climate change and provide training in sustainable agricultural practices.

[Sireet OEP](#) is one co-operative involved. Members have used their Premium to co-fund climate change initiatives, such as establishing tree nurseries and providing training in reducing deforestation, organic composting and diversification. Over 150,000 trees have already been planted.

Find out more in this [film](#).



'Fairtrade has taught me so many things. One of them is on environmental conservation and also the use of chemicals. I have also planted trees in my farm... the trees provide shade for my crops, when they shed leaves the leaves decompose and they increase the organic content of the soil, making it more fertile... the yield has gone up as a result of those activities.' *Jane Sepkazi, tea farmer and member of Sireet OEP, Kenya*

TACKLING LEAF RUST

Coffee farmers in Latin America are dealing with the spread of 'leaf rust', a fungal disease which destroys coffee bushes. Fairtrade co-operatives are supporting farmers to combat the disease by supplying more resilient coffee bushes to replace old, more susceptible ones, as well as low-cost organic pesticides to control the fungus' spread.

Awareness-raising workshops mean farmers can learn from each other and handle the problem better together. Farmers organisations are also investing in new 'experimentation plots' and nurseries where pest-resistant and more productive varieties of coffee are being developed and tested.

Find out more in this [film](#).

THE IMPACT OF TRAINING IN SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE PRACTICES

[Research](#) has shown that Fairtrade (and organic) Standards have resulted in switches to less toxic pesticides, which, as well as being better for the environment, has a positive impact on producers' health and enables women to increase their involvement in cotton cultivation. The quality of cotton produced also improved and as a result farmers were able to receive better prices for their crop.

WATER USE

COOCAFE, a coffee co-operative in Costa Rica, has used its Fairtrade Premium to reduce the amount of water used to wash the beans by ten times. The Premium has also meant other farmers can plant shade trees around their crop, which is good for quality, water retention and soil fertility.

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 improving environmental protection and climate change adaptation delivers towards the following SDGs:

- Goal 12 - ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
- Goal 13 - take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
- Goal 15 - protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss