

SPP, Small Producers

Incorporating Social Sustainability and the Role of Certifications



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| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dietetic Educator | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Policy Change | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Food Prices |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Foodservice | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Menu Change | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Industrialized, Capitalist Systems |

At a Glance:

- **SPP is both an intercontinental network and a label** belonging to small organic fair trade producers organizations from Latin America, Africa, and Asia, with its own independent certification system.
- It is the **only 100% producer-driven collective** for fairly traded and ecologically sustainable food products.
- This unique structure ensures that prices are based on the **real cost of sustainable production**, protecting producers from exploitation.
- 100% production is conducted via organic and agroecological farming methods, as we require SPP certification from producers and by having our own agroecological Environmental Standard; we do not have non-organic fair trade products.
- SPP integrates **both social and ecological criteria** in a single certification system, offering a truly holistic approach to sustainability.

Fair Trade Certifications

In a world where food supply chains increasingly span the globe, **sourcing foods closer to where they are consumed** is an effective strategy for improving traceability, understanding, and sustainability. Designing menus around **seasonal produce** and prioritizing **local procurement** can strengthen local economies, enhance food security through support for regional production capacity, and promote greater **transparency and accountability** in production practices. However, some foods—such as **coffee, cacao, sugar**, and various **tropical fruits and vegetables**—can only be grown in specific ecological regions and must be obtained through **international trade**, particularly by temperate countries. In these cases, **third-party certifications** that establish standards for production and trade relationships offer a valuable mechanism for evaluating and improving the **environmental and social impacts** of products that travel long distances and involve actors who may never meet directly.

A range of **fair trade certifications** exists (see *Other Relevant Examples* below), and it is crucial to understand their **strengths and limitations**, especially regarding their standards, accountability mechanisms, and the degree of producer participation they allow.

Small Producer Symbol

The Small Producer Symbol (SPP) was launched in 2006. It is the only 100% producer-driven collective that provides independent certification for fairly traded and SPP (previously called Small Producer's Symbol) was launched in 2006. It is the only 100% producer-driven collective that provides independent certification for fairly traded and ecological products.



SPP is the culmination of the evolution of various small producer networks and movements starting in the 1960s. It was created in response to the challenges and continuing inequities faced by small producers working to meet consumer-driven fair trade certifications. Without equal representation from and decision-making power in the hands of producers, consumer-driven fair trade certifications may fail to

represent producer perspectives, consider producer-specific challenges, and cover the real costs of production.

SPP consists of 132 small producers' organizations representing around 84 thousand families across Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa, and Asia. Products from 29 countries are certified by SPP and sold in about 50 consumer countries. SPP represents a simple but powerful shift in the mechanics of fair trade by centering producer voices and concerns in the process of determining what 'fair' prices and criteria are, while offering consumers traceability of products and transparency on production techniques and organizational structures.

As a producer-driven initiative, the SPP independent certification represents:

1. Solidarity between organized small producers, committed companies, and consumers
2. High quality organic, agroecological, and healthy products
3. Prices based on the real cost of production and are free of exploitation
4. Complete supply chain traceability
5. Living income for producers

"SPP has been created and is controlled by the producers themselves, without intermediaries, which generates greater closeness between consumer and producer thanks to transparency, allowing them all to transform the world together through fair trade. **That's why we say SPP is the Empowering Label.**"



Other Relevant Examples

- [Fair Trade International](#)
- [European Fair Trade Association](#)
- Fair World Project offers a list and analysis of [North American fair trade Certification Labels and Membership Organizations](#)

Food for Thought

- *What aspects of social sustainability feel most relevant to your work?*
- *What role can certifications play in helping your organization or community set and meet social sustainability targets?*
- *How important does it feel to have producer voices equitably represented in determining certification criteria and standards?*

Contact Information

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The ICDA SFS Toolkit is made to be used & shared freely.

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