

# **EXPLORING FAIRTRADE'S IMPACT**

**A REVIEW OF RESEARCH ON  
FAIRTRADE FROM 2015 - 2020**

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# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the research findings from a review of studies that examines the impact of Fairtrade International on beneficiaries. The literature review was carried out to inform Fairtrade International's Theory of Change (ToC), and the changes it seeks to make for small producers and workers. As a result, the evidence from the review has been "mapped" against various layers within the ToC and provides a narrative that explains how change happens as a result of its activities.

The evidence-mapping process was carried out by DBG consultants David Jodrell and Dwan Kaoukji in 2020 and builds on and refines a previously applied evidence map that was prepared by Fairtrade International internally in 2015. The new process applies a different methodology through which qualitative and quantitative evaluative evidence was prioritised, specific results from each study were individually mapped to each ToC area, and the quality and applicability of contributing results were captured via rating studies. This, and other key information, mapped against the ToC was categorised into groups to determine their contribution to outputs, outcomes and impacts, permitting assessment of the evidence base for each ToC area.

The report is divided into three parts:

**Part 1 – Evidence-mapping process:** Presents a summary of the mapping process and the approach taken to identify relevant research studies, examine them and rate them against the ToC. A summary of the analysis process is also provided.

**Part 2 - Research findings:** Provides the research findings from the evidence mapped against the ToC. A total of 151 studies were mapped, providing 235 individual results. From each ToC output, outcome and impact area the evidence base arising from mapped studies was classified into green, amber or red traffic light scores. Areas which did not have a sufficient number of evaluative results were scored as grey. A total of six ToC areas were classified as green, indicating areas in which Fairtrade can be confident of its effects. Seven areas were classified as amber where results were determined as encouraging, and three areas were rated as red suggesting that, overall, little evidence of Fairtrade effects were found. Most of the supportive evidence was found at output level. Overall the impact and outcome areas within the ToC displayed comparable scores. However, outcome areas in general had fewer studies assessed against them and, due to inability to distinguish between outcomes and impacts for four areas, the evidence base for two outcomes was assessed with their respective outputs. The results section also includes details on three "pathways of change" and the evidence that supports them. A pathway of change demonstrates how change happens for beneficiaries following the implementation of one of Fairtrade's interventions. Three key pathways emerged from studies examined. Namely I) Economic, II) Social and Empowerment and, III) Environmental pathways.

**Part 3 - Recommendations:** Provides implications from the research and recommendations for the further development of the Theory of Change, alongside suggesting future areas of research to investigate. The overall recommendations are displayed below:

## Recommendations for Fairtrade's ToC and future evidence generation:

### ToC

- Identify unique characteristics and measurement indicators for each box in the ToC
- Develop profiles of target beneficiaries for which effects are likely to be the greatest
- Apply a socio-ecological modelling approach to the beneficiaries
- Develop stronger hypotheses for change and time required to achieve it
- Split intervention by target group
- Split ToC by area of "attribution" vs. "contribution"

### Evidence Generation

- Commission first-hand evidence to validate pathways
- Evaluate indicators for making trade fair
- Invest in longitudinal studies
- Invest in evaluations which only focus on Fairtrade interventions implemented in isolation
- Focus on quantifiable outcome measures

The report presents both a concise (Section 4.2) and (Section 4.3) extensive account of the research findings considered when rating the strength of evidence for each ToC area. The report Appendix provides further information on the tools used to prepare the map.

## 2. ABOUT THE EVIDENCE MAP

Fairtrade is an alternative approach to conventional trade that is based on partnerships between producers and consumers that enable farmers and workers to have more control over their lives and decide how to invest in their future.

In 2011, Fairtrade International developed a ToC for Fairtrade to improve its Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) system and provide assumptions around which interventions aim to achieve Fairtrade's overarching goals, and how they are meant to contribute to the changes Fairtrade seeks to make. It also provides a framework for identifying appropriate indicators for measuring the results of Fairtrade and progress made towards its goals.

The development of the ToC began in 2011 through a series of workshops and consultations with those working within the Fairtrade system along with small producers and worker representatives (see Figure 1). The ToC was revised further in 2015 when appropriate research studies were identified and reviewed in order to contribute to an evidence-base that supports it. A total of 151 studies were identified and mapped against the ToC.

In 2019, Fairtrade International commissioned DBG Consulting, a team of two researchers, to develop a new evidence map with

an updated evidence-base. The purpose of the new map was to identify areas in the ToC that have the most robust research supporting them, along with those that appear to have gaps. This would ultimately inform Fairtrade's work internally by highlighting parts of the ToC that show a robust evidence-base, and at the same time identify areas of research that should be planned to further inform it in the future. In 2020, Fairtrade International began working in collaboration with academic researchers to review pathways within its ToC. The evidence generated from this mapping exercise has contributed to this work and will support it further.

The evidence map accompanying this report was created from 117 internally-held research studies which were reviewed against a new rating criteria and their findings re-mapped against the organisation's ToC. In addition to internally collated research, a new literature search was undertaken to identify the latest research in the sector. A total of 34 studies were identified which further explored the impact of Fairtrade and the broader Fair Trade movement. All 151 studies were entered into the new evidence map and their methodological quality rated. Following this, analysis of the research findings and evidence quality was undertaken, resulting in a rating for each aspect of the ToC. This report details the results from this process.



Figure 1: Fairtrade 2016 Theory of Change

# 3. THE EVIDENCE MAPPING PROCESS

The evidence mapping process was guided by the following two research questions:

1. What is the evidence-base for the impact of Fairtrade on small-scale producer and their organisations and hired labourer's livelihoods and wellbeing, and on making trade fairer?
2. What is the influence of 'context' on outcomes and beneficiaries for each pathway of change? And under what condition do interventions need to be delivered in order to arrive at impact?

The review targeted studies focused primarily on four key target groups for Fairtrade; small producer and workers (hired labour), and their organisations, Small Producer Organisations (SPOs) and Hired Labour Organisations (HLOs), and examined the influence of contexts on outcomes overall.

The mapping process consisted of three key steps that structured the process from identifying literature to reviewing their results and entering these into the evidence map, and rating the quality of individual studies and analysing their findings. These are outlined in the image below and explained further here:

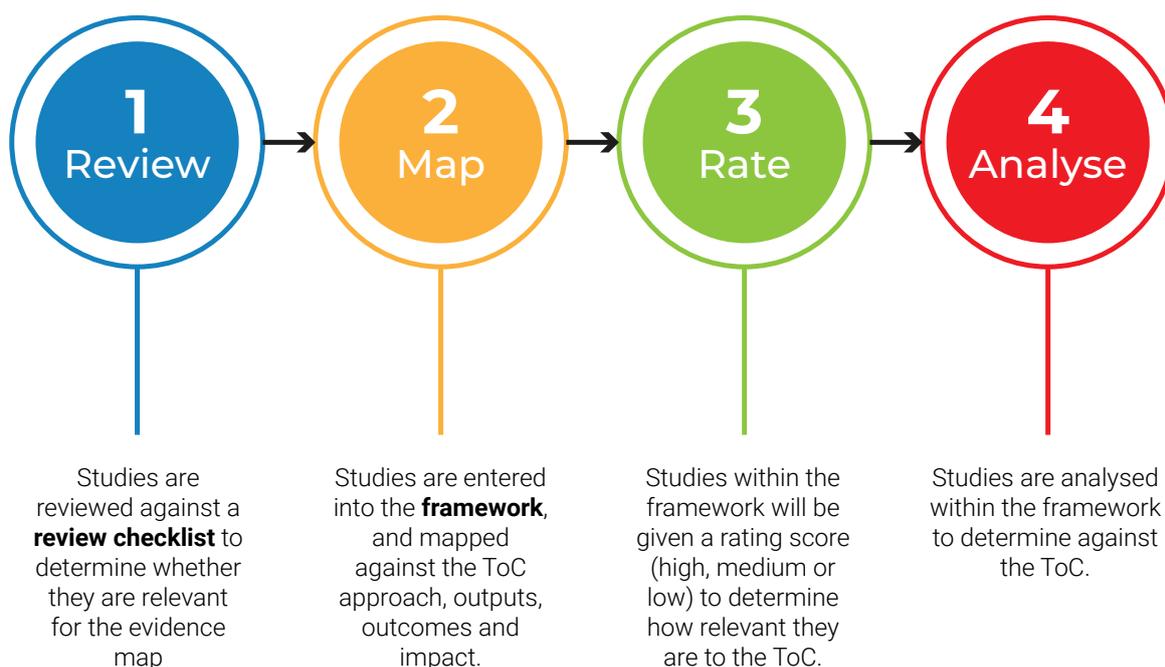


Figure 2: Steps within the evidence-mapping process

## Step 1: Reviewed and Identified research studies

The project drew from two existing sources of literature to identify appropriate studies for the evidence map; 1) research internally held in Fairtrade databases. This comprised of both research literature commissioned by Fairtrade, and external research studies, project evaluations, and grey literature and

peer reviewed research studies, 117 studies mapped of the 151 were selected from these data bases. 2) An external structured literature search which located 34 unique studies not held by Fairtrade. Appendix A provides further details on how studies were selected from internal and external sources.

## Step 2: Mapped studies to theory of change

Relevant studies were reviewed and then entered into a framework by mapping them, against specific areas in the ToCs' output, outcome and impact layers. Additional information such as funder, target groups, geography and activity type were also recorded. The framework is an excel document that made it possible to list details of the study and highlights where its findings contributes to the ToC. Further information such as

the details of the research methods, and the context for non-achievement of results were also captured for later analysis.

Research findings from each study were identified and individually mapped against the relevant components listed in the ToC; from intervention type through to its impact. This made it possible to build an evidence-base behind each component in the ToC in order to explore them in more detail.

## Step 3: Rated research studies

Once studies were entered into the framework, they were then rated against a criterion to determine how applicable findings were to Fairtrade, and credibility of the research undertaken (This is explained in more detail in Appendix B). From these two areas an overall relevance score was calculated. This was undertaken separately for qualitative and quantitative methods, meaning that mixed methods studies had two relevance scores. Specifically, the two criteria determining relevance were:

1. The credibility of research – this reviewed the methods employed, the conduct of the study, its analysis and reporting.
2. The applicability of findings to Fairtrade – this reviewed if studies focus on Fairtrade, or for studies of the fair

trade movement more broadly, how similar the activities examined were to Fairtrade's.

Both the credibility of research and applicability of findings were then combined together to generate a relevance classification for each study mapped. The overall relevance criteria categorised studies into three groups:

- High relevance; Fairtrade can have most confidence in the study's findings and conclusions
- Medium relevance; Fairtrade can be fairly confident in the study's findings and conclusions
- Low relevance; Findings and conclusions from such studies should be used with caution

## Step 4: Analysis of the map

The final stage of the mapping process involved carrying out the analysis of the research studies within the framework to understand the strength of evidence for each ToC area and identify key emerging pathways of change. To achieve this, the studies' relevance rating, and the "mapping" of results were examined alongside other studies for each output, outcome and impact area within the ToC. In addition to this, studies that were rated as "medium or highly relevant" were reviewed

further to understand how the data could be used to inform the ToC through a detailed narrative. This "advanced analysis" made it possible to examine the impact of findings further, identify emerging themes for the ToC, and provide a narrative around how it operates in practice. Specifically, for quantitative studies, an advanced review of methods and design rating was applied to identify key attributional evidence for each ToC area the study examined. Analysis of relevant qualitative results

provided insight into the contextual factors associated with the research. Medium and highly relevant mixed-methods studies provided both types of evidence for analysis.

Evaluative, and some monitoring studies which assessed Fairtrade's effects on output, outcome and impacts were used to rate the strength of evidence for each outcome area in the ToC. Studies classified as formative or policy-focused were primarily used for analysis of pathways and context. From evaluative studies, the following features were used to score each ToC area:

- Size and quality of the evidence base: Total number of evaluative studies mapped, alongside their methodological quality and relevance to Fairtrade. When few evaluative results were mapped to the ToC area it was scored grey.
- Consistency of the evidence base: The proportion of studies which found consistent evidence of effects, e.g., all of their results demonstrated Fairtrade's benefits. The proportion of mixed effects, e.g., results were generally supportive, but some areas of non-achievement were identified. And the proportion of studies demonstrating no evidence of effects.
- Features of the evidence base: For each ToC area specific features across studies were examined. Supportive studies with the following features were considered favourably when deducing a ToC area score<sup>1</sup>:
  - o Evaluations which accounted for alternative explanations through using significance testing and controlling for differences between certified and non-certified entities.

- o Studies which ascertained outcomes with objective measures (e.g., actual measures of yields, rather than recall of yields).
- o Agreement between quantitative and qualitative methods (triangulation).
- o Evidence which showed change over time and / or correlated increased exposure to Fairtrade (e.g., years certified) with larger gains in outcomes (a dose response relationship).
- o Evidence which explored how change occurs (e.g., examined pathways) and gained the perspectives of beneficiaries.

When rating the strength of evidence contributing to each ToC area, the evaluation result was discounted in some instances when it was deemed that findings were undermined by factors outside of Fairtrade's control. For example, when authors found no effect on inputs, but conceded that the remoteness of study location prevented SPOs accessing these, or the role of double certification (e.g., Organic and Fairtrade) reducing incomes because of Organic certification's negative effects on productivity. Furthermore, output, outcome and impact statements in the ToC are broad, therefore mapped results were assessed for coherence, and observed differences in effects are outlined. From these considerations each ToC area was given a traffic light score, shown in Figure 3.

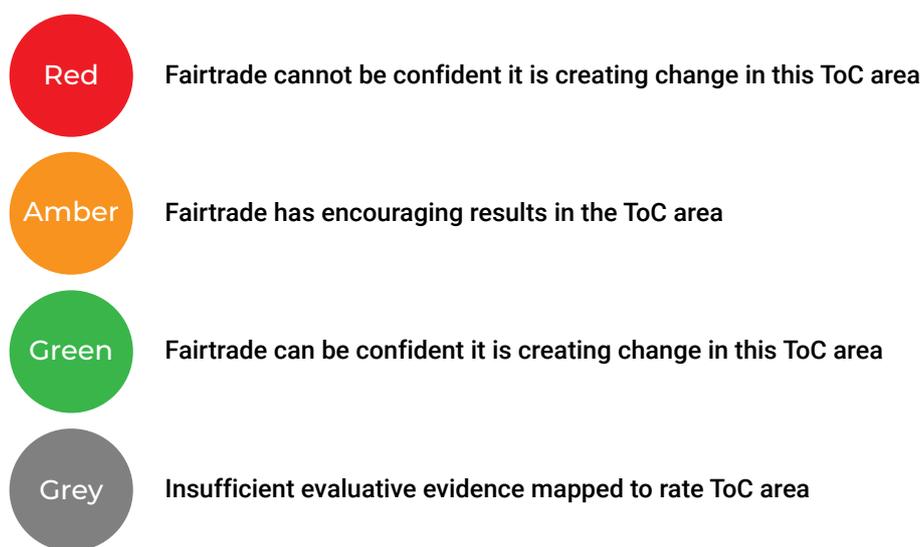


Figure 3: Evidence traffic light scores for each ToC area

<sup>1</sup> Parascandola, M. & Weed, D. (2001): Causation in epidemiology *Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health*; 55:905-912; Elwood, M. (1988): Causal relationships in medicine: a practical system for critical appraisal. (Oxford University Press, Oxford); BOND evidence principals, checklist (update 2018): [Accessed from <https://www.bond.org.uk/file/17815>].

# 4. RESEARCH FINDINGS

## 4.1 OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH STUDIES

A total of 151 studies were mapped to the ToC areas. During mapping we recorded study methods, the type of products and target groups. The studies focus on Fairtrade, and who commissioned the study.

The vast majority of studies examined multiple areas of Fairtrade's ToC, meaning that the 151 studies were mapped against the ToC 297 times. The image presented in Figure 4 shows how these studies results are distributed across impact output and outcome layers. The majority of studies assessed outputs and impacts, with outcomes representing

a 'missing middle' in the ToC. The high number of studies examining impacts is driven by the wellbeing area, which had 63 studies mapped against it. Outcomes, when assessed, were often supplement to impact assessments (e.g., effect of yields when understanding effects on farmers' incomes). In some instances, studies were unable to distinguish between outcomes and impacts, resulting in a lower number of studies that looked specifically at outcomes. For this reason, evidence for increased investment and enhanced benefits are considered together, as are improved labour conditions and decent work.

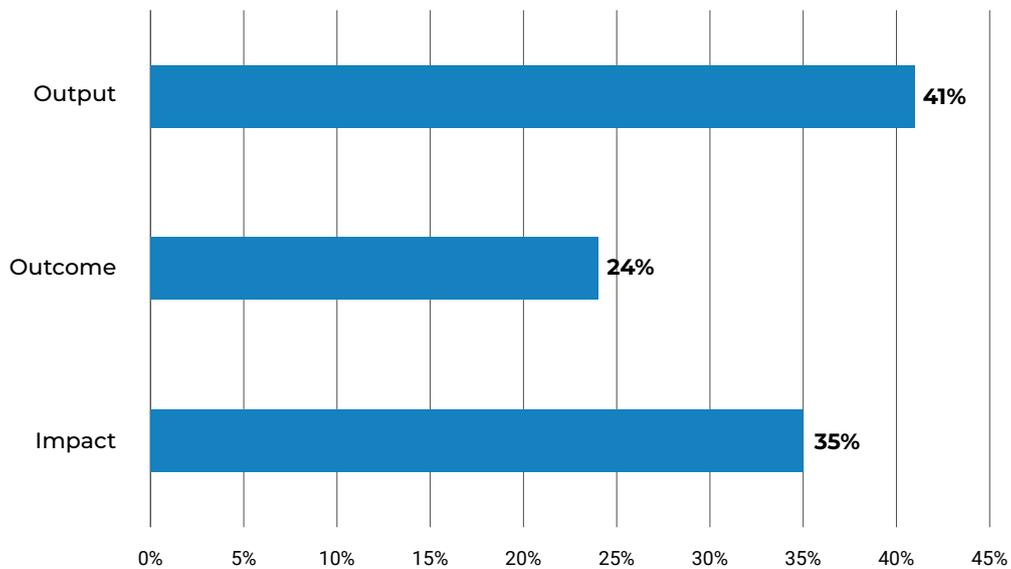


Figure 4: Breakdown of studies mapped against each ToC layer

Studies were classified as formative, monitoring, policy or evaluative. Reflecting this, 56 percent of studies were classified as evaluative, 26 percent of studies were formative, 14 percent were policy-focused, and only three percent were classified as monitoring. Almost all studies mapped were focused on Fairtrade, either on its own or in combination with other Voluntary Sustainability Standards (VSS) (89 percent). Overall, 24 percent of mapped studies were commissioned by Fairtrade and 2016 was the median publication year.

Qualitative studies accounted for 42 percent of studies mapped, 27 percent of studies were classified as mixed-methods and 30 percent were quantitative. For mixed-methods studies the methodological quality for both quantitative and qualitative findings was rated independently. Figure 4 provides the breakdown of high, medium and low relevance ratings by method type. Approximately one in four studies mapped were classified as high relevance. A large proportion (53 percent) of quantitative studies were rated as lower relevance. This was primarily due to cross-sectional survey methods not making use of a counterfactual. Qualitative studies rated as lower

relevance was due to methods being outside those considered (e.g., review the contents of certification) or use of superficial methods (e.g., a handful of in-depth interviews). Across both methods, investigations were also classified as low relevance as they were unfocused and examined a broad area of enquiry, and it was unclear from the evidence how authors arrived at their conclusions.

The design specifics of quantitative studies were an important factor in distinguishing methodological quality. Medium quality studies at a minimum must measure effects compared to entities without certification (i.e., use a counterfactual), and high-quality studies must have made some attempt to control for characteristics which could explain effects (i.e., account for confounding). Qualitative studies delineated between high and medium quality based on depth of measurement relative to the ToC.

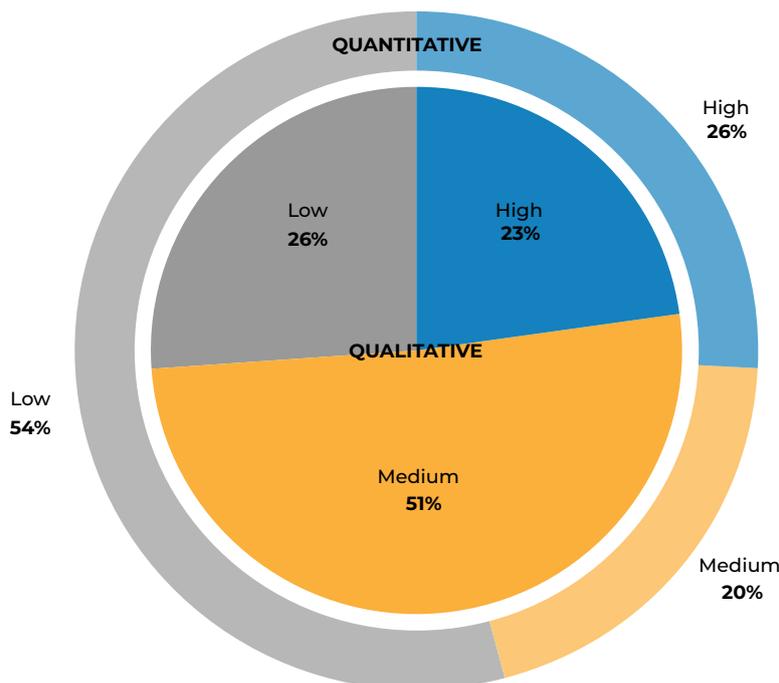
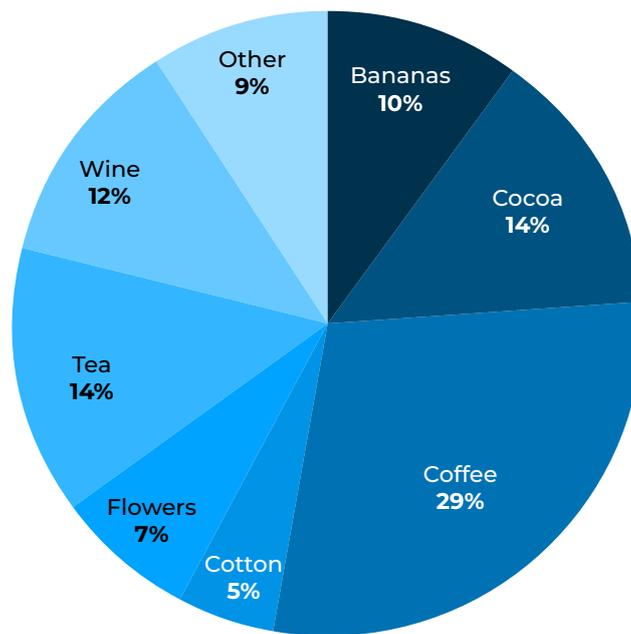


Figure 5: Breakdown of qualitative and quantitative relevance rating

In order to sum up the evidence base for each ToC area, high and medium quality quantitative studies were further rated in order to delineate between conflicting findings and identify strong evaluative results which would play a key role in strengthening the evidence base for a specific impact, outcome or output areas. This “advanced rating” accounted for factors such as method, sample size, quality of outcome measures, correct use of significance testing, and bias which could distort results. On closer inspection 60 percent of medium and high quality quantitative studies displayed some type of limitation. The reasons were methodological, e.g., using cross-sectional design, using small sample sizes, and challenges in ascertaining outcomes. Only two quantitative studies rated as high quality demonstrated substantial limitations, which resulted from challenges in their implementation, such as SPO dropout. The remaining 14 relevant studies demonstrated minimal limitations, using longitudinal methods, or summing up evidence from other high quality studies through meta-analysis.

Quantitative evidence was dominated by cross-sectional studies (57 percent). Here, data is collected at a single time point, meaning difference rather than change is being assessed. Coincidentally, this type of evidence is less effective for attributing effects to Fairtrade. Stronger evaluative methods accounted for 13 percent of quantitative studies comprising longitudinal or cohort studies, experimental evaluations, and meta-analysis. For qualitative methods, almost 40 percent used in-depth discussions (38 percent) as their primary method. Other common methods were review studies (32 percent), ethnographic studies (eight percent) and focus group discussions (seven percent).

A total of 104 studies mapped to one or more relevant product areas. The overall coverage of products is given in Figure 6 below. Coffee is overrepresented accounting for almost one-third of products evaluated, with sizable proportions of studies also investigating cocoa, tea and wine.



**Figure 6: Breakdown of different product areas mapped**

A few studies investigated pineapple, rice, quinoa, herbs and spices, sugar, honey and sports balls, which are all classified in the "Other" category. No studies examined carbon credits, composite products, fruit and juices, gold and precious metal products. SPOs and farmers were the most investigated with 96 studies examining these groups. Only 42 studies examined hired labour or their employers.

## 4.2 EVIDENCE MAP: OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH FINDINGS AGAINST THE TOC

A key output of the mapping process was to establish the strength of evidence contributing to Fairtrade's combined ToC impact, outcome and output areas. The results of this process are summarised in Figure 7 which provides the traffic light score for each ToC area with the total number of studies

contributing results mapped. A succinct summary is provided for each impact, outcome and output areas over the following pages. For those areas with numerous studies examining it, a detailed narrative on the evidence base is then provided in Section 4.3.

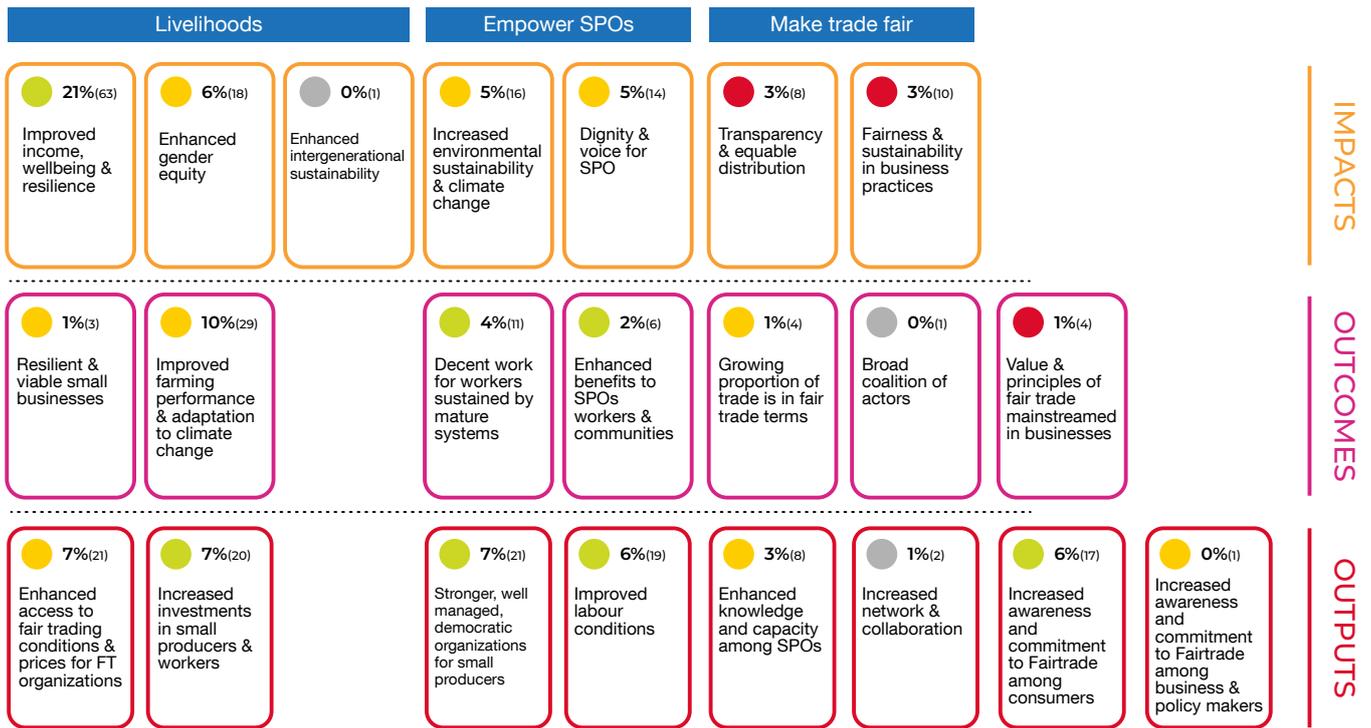


Figure 7: Number of results mapped to Fairtrade ToC and the traffic light rating for each ToC area

## Summary of Outputs

### Enhanced access to fair trading conditions and fair prices for Fairtrade certified organisations

This output area has been rated as **amber**. Enhanced access received the medium score for several reasons. While 21 studies mapped directly assessed this output, most of the measurement was poor, with a majority using staff's perception of access and trading conditions. Some supportive quantitative studies did measure access directly but results were often drawn from monitoring data which assessed market size

and sales volumes of Fairtrade overall, rather than enhanced access for individual organisations. Furthermore, numerous studies cited insufficient market access as a reason for non-achievement when evaluating other ToC areas. Thus, while results are encouraging, Fairtrade cannot be fully confident in achieving this output.

## Increased investment in small producers and workers AND Enhanced influence and benefits for small producers

Increased investments (output) and enhanced benefits (outcome) were combined to score this ToC area as mapped studies did not sufficiently distinguish between the two. Considerable overlap with other areas in the ToC was also apparent. Despite a lack of specificity, these areas are

scored **green**. Fairtrade can be confident in their effects. Mapped qualitative and quantitative studies were high quality, overwhelmingly supportive, and the evidence base was bolstered via studies that controlled for characteristics which may have explained Fairtrade's observed benefits.

## Stronger, well-managed, democratic organisations for small producers

The output of stronger democratic organisations for small producers is rated as **green**. Fairtrade can be confident they are strengthening SPOs. All high and medium quantitative evaluations mapped demonstrated consistent evidence of effects, and while less consistent, qualitative studies were also supportive. Differences between these methodologies appear to reflect types of outcomes assessed. Quantitative

studies focused on organisational capacity, while qualitative studies focused on representation and democracy. There is more consistent evidence of Fairtrade fostering the former. Across studies, the evidence base displayed a number of positive features, including evidencing pathways and gaining the perspectives of SPO employees and members.

## Improved labour conditions and freedom of association for workers AND Decent work for workers, sustained by mature systems of industrial relations and increased business capacity to invest

Improved labour conditions (output) and decent work (outcome) were combined as studies did not sufficiently distinguish between these outputs and outcome areas. There was also overlap between the two ToC areas with regard to the wellbeing, and voice and dignity impacts. There was inconsistency between quantitative and qualitative results, which was driven by the lack of effect on workers' wages measured numerically.

Despite Fairtrade Standards showing fewer effects on workers' wages, specific outputs and outcomes, such as contracts, payment terms, health and safety, and job satisfaction were supported. These indicators were more supported by studies rated as higher quality. Thus, both labour conditions and decent work are rated **green**. Fairtrade can be confident it is improving conditions for waged workers.

## Enhanced knowledge and capacity among small producers, workers and their organisations

This output area is rated as **amber**. While a large number of mapped studies provided some mention of training, it was usually in the context of assessing other ToC areas. Evaluations which did examine training in adequate depth were of sound methodological quality and results were consistent. However, the measurement of training was weak. Studies

generally examined numbers of training sessions available, and perception of benefit rather than gains in knowledge and skills and changes in practice. Thus, while results are encouraging, Fairtrade cannot be completely confident of its effect on this output.

## Increased network and collaboration

Only two formative studies were mapped to this area, thus there was insufficient evidence for this output to be scored and it is marked as **grey**. Both examined Fairtrade's governance structures with one examining Fairtrade directly. This study

concluded that Fairtrade has displayed a commitment to improving farmer participation and governance structures. However much remains to be done to ensure farmers are engaged in the organisation's decision-making.

## Increased awareness and commitment to fair and sustainable trade among citizen-consumers, business and policy-makers

This output area is rated as both **green** and **amber**. Evaluative studies were of high quality, including a number of experimental studies which found the Fairtrade brand positively influenced consumer awareness, trust, purchase intention, and willingness to pay, alongside actual purchasing behaviour. Thus, the evidence base for consumers is clearly **green**, and

Fairtrade can be confident it is increasing awareness and purchasing intention. Commitment among business and policy-makers was only assessed by one study. This study was methodologically robust and supportive, thus results for this group are encouraging but replication is required before Fairtrade can be confident of its effect.

## Summary of Outcomes

Both the enhanced benefits to SPOs, workers and communities and decent work for workers sustained by mature systems are considered alongside their respective output areas. Only one study was mapped against Broad coalition of actors (including farmers, workers and citizen-consumers) driving change in the way trade is structured and practiced. The study described

the development of a trade network for certified producers in Malawi. The case study of this network was supplementary to other areas within this qualitative evaluation and thus this outcome area is marked as grey, reflecting a lack of evaluative evidence.

## Resilient and viable small producer businesses

Only three studies were mapped against this outcome area, two of which were evaluations with one policy and review-focused. The first was a mixed-methods study, which showed mixed effects for both quantitative and qualitative results. It concluded that there was strong evidence that Fairtrade improved assets, quality and processing, but economic performance needs addressing, especially with regard to bargaining power with buyers. This study had a number of methodological weaknesses. The second study was more supportive in its

findings. Moreover, this was a systematic review that combined results from a number of high quality evaluations. The third policy and review study also comprehensively analysed the findings of other research, finding positive results with regard to SPO access to and use of credit, accumulation of assets, and investments. Thus, despite the fact that only three studies contributed evaluative evidence, the results are encouraging and the outcome area was scored **amber**.

## Improved farming performance, protection of the environment and adaptation to climate change

This outcome area is rated **amber**, meaning results are encouraging but Fairtrade cannot be fully confident. There is a discrepancy between quantitative and qualitative results. Among qualitative studies rated as high or medium quality, results were uniformly supportive, but outcomes were ascertained through measures of perception, recall of practices and inputs and thus, were weak assessments of effects. Quantitative assessment used stronger measures, such as amount of yield or productivity, but described less supportive results. Some evidence was inconsistent because both

environmental protection and productivity were subsumed in this outcome area. Fairtrade should review the coherence of including both in the same outcome area as the environmental and productivity results are not always compatible. This, alongside inconsistent results across studies and supportive studies not providing the types of evidence that would improve confidence (e.g, fully describing pathways to increased productivity). The outcome area received the medium score of **amber**.

## Growing proportion of trade is on Fairtrade terms (in sectors where Fairtrade operates)

Four studies were mapped against this outcome area. Two of them were Fairtrade monitoring reports; the others were evaluative, mixed-methods studies. Of the two evaluative studies, one contributed quantitative results and the other qualitative findings. The quantitative study was rated as low quality, but the results were supportive describing an increase in the share of Fairtrade produce sold. The qualitative study was rated as high quality; however, the results were mixed. As this outcome is better investigated through monitoring data two

monitoring reports were also mapped. Both of these described the majority of Fairtrade's 20 product categories showing year-on-year increases in the global volumes sold of Fairtrade terms. (Some product categories, however, notably tea, flowers and plants, and fruit juices showed a sustained reduction in sales volumes.) Overall, considering both evaluative and monitoring results, Fairtrade appears to be increasing volumes sold on Fairtrade terms, though this is not uniform, and therefore this outcome area is scored **amber**.

## Values and principles of Fair Trade increasingly mainstreamed in business practices and policy frameworks

Four evaluative studies were mapped against this outcome area, all of them qualitative. Two studies were rated as high quality, one medium and one low. The results were either mixed or no evidence of impact was found. Across studies employing adequate methodology, some evidence was found for Fairtrade

increasing awareness of sustainability issues among farmers and workers and local regulatory frameworks. However, little support was found for effecting international frameworks or business practices. Fairtrade cannot be confident of its effect for this outcome and the outcome area was scored **red**.

## Summary of Impact

### Improved income, wellbeing and resilience among small producer and worker households

This was by far the most examined ToC area with the results of 63 studies being mapped to it. A large number of these were evaluative and rated high relevance. Overall results were consistently supportive for this outcome area, particularly when findings that were constrained by factors outside of Fairtrade's control were removed. Impact was most consistently demonstrated for prices and incomes for SPOs, but overall results were less supportive for hired labour income. Also, mixed or unsupportive findings often came from assessments of Fairtrade's effect on poverty, which was unlikely to see change over short-term evaluative periods. Supportive findings were demonstrated by studies that followed beneficiaries

over time and controlled for differences between certified and non-certified entities. The evidence base also demonstrated other positive features, such as increased engagement with Fairtrade Standards resulting in larger income gains; pathways from SPO and producer capacity to yields, prices and income, alongside gaining supportive perspectives from beneficiaries. Thus, this impact area is rated **green** and Fairtrade can be highly confident of the results for small producers in particular. However, results on the impact of Fairtrade certification on the incomes of waged workers should be further investigated by Fairtrade. For this group positive results were primarily demonstrated through in-kind benefits.

### Enhanced gender equity and intergenerational sustainability in rural communities

This impact area has been scored **grey** for intergenerational sustainability and **amber** for gender equality. For intergenerational sustainability, there was a lack of evaluative evidence. For gender equity, Fairtrade can have confidence it is increasing this in some areas, although the results appear inconsistent and positive impacts appear to reflect representation and participation rather than equality or empowerment of women. A total of 19 studies were mapped to this outcome area, only three of which were low quality. Most studies demonstrated either consistent or mixed effects

on gender equity, though a significant proportion of studies mapped reported no evidence of impact. When mixed results were reported, the effects are cited as 'small' and 'inconsistent'. Reviewing these results, it appears that, overall, success is confined to representation. This means that while positive impacts have been reported for women's participation within SPOs, including leadership positions, measures of quality of participation were less supportive. Also, HLO Standards appear to be more successful in ensuring equality of pay. For SPOs, income equity does not seem to be realised in

households reflecting deep-seated equality issues, which the Fairtrade Standards alone are unlikely to address. This said, some examples were found of certification improving women producers' agency though results were far from consistent. Fairtrade may do well to separate gender equity and intergenerational sustainability to improve the coherence of this impact area. In doing so, Fairtrade may wish to redefine

gender equity in light of effects which are achievable through certification and its requirements (i.e., development of a gender strategy). This could involve including areas within the ToC covering participation and representation, which would enable assessment of Fairtrade's effect on outcomes less dependent on longer-term cultural changes in gender norms and hierarchies.

## Increased environmental sustainability and resilience to climate change

This impact area is scored as **amber**. Overall, more than half the evaluations found evidence of impact, although when examining for high or medium relevance the study results become slightly less supportive. Moreover, evaluative results come from eleven studies, but most were general evaluations of Voluntary Sustainability Standards, rather than Fairtrade standards specifically. Large differences exist between

Sustainability Standards in the level and types environment provision included. Considering this, the lack of direct focus on Fairtrade limits this impact area's score. Studies only examined environmental impact rather than 'resilience' per se. The evidence mapped is encouraging, but further evaluations of Fairtrade's Standards specifically are required before Fairtrade can be confident of its effects in this area.

## Dignity and voice for small producers and workers at local, national and global levels

A total of 14 studies were mapped to this outcome area, 12 of which were evaluations and of adequate relevance. Only one study provided quantitative results and was classified as low relevance. All the other studies provided qualitative assessments of dignity and voice and were classified as medium or high relevance. Results were consistent with only two studies finding no evidence of effects. However, those results appear to have been undermined by local unions. Despite this consistency, the measures of empowerment

were extremely broad both within and across studies, with some authors defining areas such as perceptions of loyalty as empowerment. This appeared to influence the uniformity of effects found within studies. Large differences between how outcomes were defined, and the lack of meaningful quantitative investigation, suggests while results are consistent; Fairtrade can view these results as encouraging and the impact area rated **amber**.

## Transparency and equitable distribution of risks and rewards in supply chains

A total of eight studies were mapped against this outcome area: five were evaluations, two were classified as policy-focused and one was formative. Only four evaluations were classified as medium or highly relevant. Three of the studies contained qualitative results and demonstrated no evidence of effects. The quantitative evaluation did demonstrate that, compared to conventional bananas, Fairtrade farmers, co-operatives and exporters receive higher revenue returns along the supply chain, to the detriment of retailers. However,

qualitative results highlighted no redistribution of profits from traders to farmers, and value was skewed in favour of consumer countries. Unequal exchange relations that define conventional commodity chains were reported as continuing with Fairtrade. Thus, from the majority of studies examined, it appears that the Fairtrade model is not currently set to change power balances between upstream and downstream actors in supply chains. As a result, this impact area is scored **red**.

## Fairness and sustainability embedded in business practices, policy and societal norms for production and consumption

A total of 11 studies were mapped against this area, although only six studies provided evaluative results. The majority of these evaluative studies found no evidence of effects, only two found mixed evidence of effects, and none found consistent evidence of impact. With the exclusion of one study, all evaluations supplied qualitative assessments of fairness and sustainability. Quantitative evaluative results arose from a study classified as low quality. Findings were not supportive when it came to the distribution of wine profits in

the supply chain. There were mixed findings in one qualitative assessment which examined fairness and sustainability with regard to SPO participation in markets. It concluded that Fairtrade is supporting the existing SPOs to participate, but that information asymmetry and lack of contact with buyers were significant barriers to fairness. Moreover, asymmetry in regulation and monitoring between farmers and other supply chain actors were cited by those studies that concluded there were no impacts or negative impacts. This coincides with the

findings reported under equitable distribution of risks and rewards in supply chains. The other study, which provides mixed results, examined the effect of Fairtrade over 15 years on key the target groups of civil society, politics/public sector, manufacturers/retail, and consumers. It found the movement

had contributed to awareness and commitment, but it had achieved little in terms of structural reforms. Thus, Fairtrade cannot be confident of achievement in this impact area and it is scored **red**.

### 4.3 EVIDENCE MAP: DETAILED RESEARCH FINDINGS AGAINST THE TOC

Thirteen ToC areas had a sufficient number of evaluative studies with results mapped to provide further detailed results behind their overall ratings. These are outlined in the summaries provided in Section 4.2. The ToC areas in question are shown in Figure 8 below:

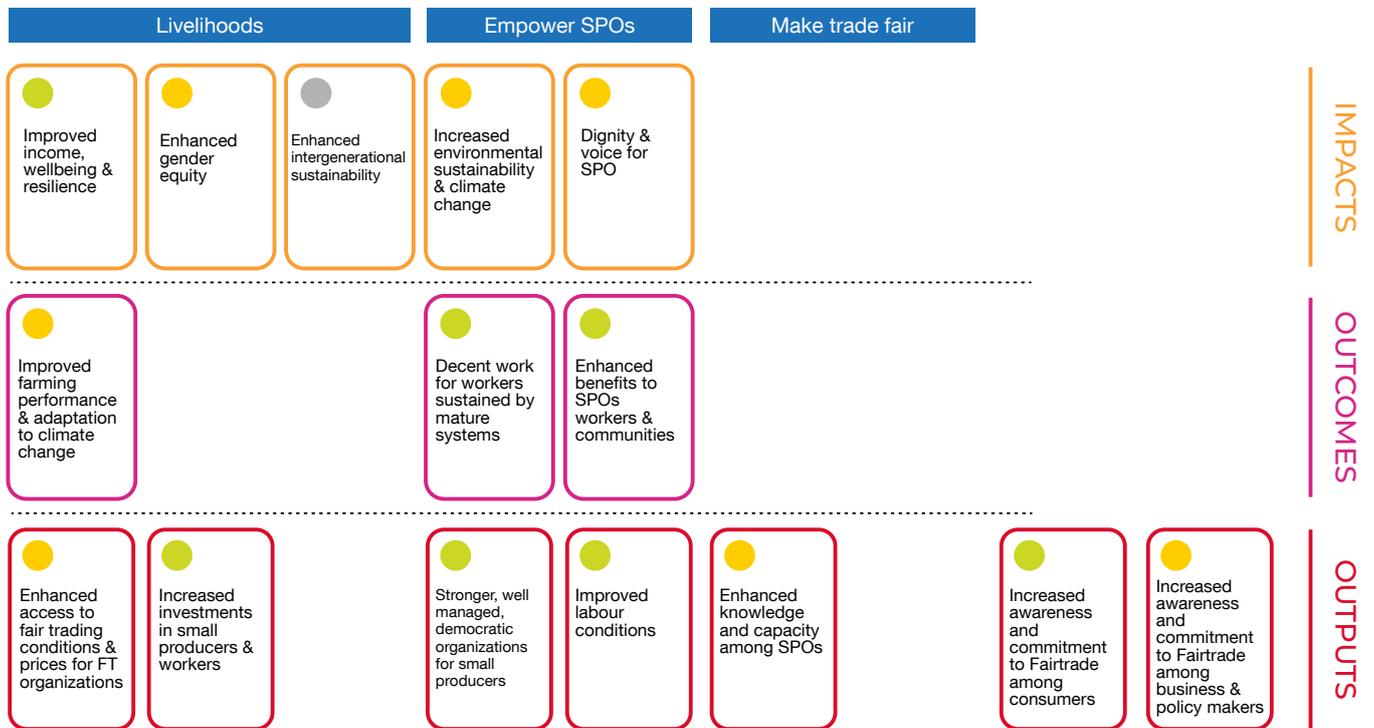


Figure 8: ToC areas covered in the detailed evidence overview

The detailed results presented in this section provide further information on the type of studies mapped, ratings of their methodological quality, the specific results mapped to each indicator area, the consistency of results, and a detailed summing up of the evidence base behind their traffic light rating.

## Detailed Output Results

### Enhanced access to fair trading conditions and prices for Fairtrade organisations

A total of 21 studies were mapped to enhanced access, 20 of which evaluated Fairtrade Standards solely or in-combination with another VSS. Indicators such as Fairtrade's effect on market conditions, access and size, price security in market decline and prices that farmers have received through SPO access to Fairtrade markets, and access to international buyers

were mapped to this outcome area. Nine of the studies were qualitative with six quantitative and six mixed-methods studies also mapped. A total of 15 of the 21 studies were evaluations, three were monitoring and three were formative studies. Just over one-third (38 percent) of the studies were commissioned by Fairtrade.

Table 1: Number of mapped studies by their methodological relevance

Rating	Qualitative Studies	Quantitative Studies
High	8	2
Medium	5	3
Low	2	7

Table 1 provides an assessment of the methodological relevance for studies mapped to the output area. Quantitative studies were of lower quality with less than half considered adequate (medium or high). Qualitative studies were of higher quality. Only two studies defined as low relevance contributed evidence and only one of these studies provided evaluative results.

Across all evaluative studies, 55 percent of study had results that were consistently supportive, 25 percent provided mixed

results, in which evidence for some areas assessed or some sites and context were found but not for others, and 20 percent of studies had results that showed no evidence of impact. Table 2 shows studies disaggregated by method type and study rating. Evaluative results arising from qualitative methods were more mixed, although both quantitative and qualitative results showed no evidence of effects. While qualitative results were more consistently supportive, relatively few evaluations were mapped to this area.

Table 2: The percentage of supportive, mixed, and non-supportive study results by type of method and study rating

Results	All evaluations		Medium and high	
	Qual (%)	Quant (%)	Qual (%)	Quant (%)
Consistent effects	33	88	36	75
Mixed effects	42	0	46	0
No effects	25	17	18	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>4</b>

For both methods, most studies mapped showed supportive evidence, either through consistent or mixed evidence of effects. The less consistent qualitative results shown in Table 3 were partly because the qualitative assessments included a number of comparative studies and review articles. These found adequate market access in some product areas (e.g., bananas and coffee), but not in other areas (e.g., cocoa and tea). Moreover, price stability was often earmarked as a

success, although a low proportion of produce being sold on Fairtrade terms was a common area of underperformance. Results appear highly dependent on context, although challenges did not appear specific to product or geography per se. For example, cotton, cocoa, coffee and tea from Africa, Asia and Latin America all reported challenges with market access. However, positive results were also found for coffee. As with the evidence map in general, coffee was by far the

most investigated product, and a number of authors found the supply of certified coffee was outstripping demand (1–3). Although some studies did highlight that SPOs had better access to international buyers as a result of Fairtrade (4,5), others highlight unintended consequences of competition between certified farmers (1).

Most studies, however, relied on perceptions of market access rather than tracking sales directly. A number of econometric studies did attempt to assess the effects of markets, and while these theoretical results were positive, they did not use evaluative data (6,7). Considering the importance of enhanced access in realising other areas of the ToC, there is a relative dearth of evaluative data examining this output. Indeed, a number of studies assessing impact in other ToC areas, such

as wellbeing, cited lack of market access as a reason for under achievement (3,8–13). These studies, however, contrast with the picture painted by monitoring data provided by Fairtrade, which indicates year-on-year increases in volumes of most products sold, or consistent long-term growth, and increased investment in farmers and workers. This difference in results may reflect market access challenges for certified entities with specific products and in specific geographies. Thus, despite mapped results showing more supportive than unsupportive results, measurement of access in evaluations was generally weak and relatively few quantitative studies evaluated this output. A range of other studies citing market access as a barrier to effects in other ToC areas meant this outcome area was rated **amber**.

### Output: Increased investment in small producers and workers AND Outcome: Enhanced influence and benefits for small producers

A total of 28 studies contributed to this combined outcome and output area, the majority of which were evaluations (20). Two formative, three monitoring and two policy-focused studies were also mapped. All studies examined Fairtrade on its own or with other standards-based systems, and 46 percent were internally commissioned. Most mapped studies were mixed-methods (16), six were quantitative and six were qualitative studies.

There was a high degree of overlap between these two ToC areas because the research did not distinguish specifically between investment and the results of this investment, i.e., the benefits that small producers receive. Moreover, influence was typically examined under strong, democratic SPOs or, more generally, under dignity and voice ToC areas. Overlap with wellbeing was also apparent for areas such as educational performance. For example, educational improvements could be the result of more opportunities arising from the Fairtrade

Premium (at community level), or increased income for educational spend (at an individual level). The latter would be better subsumed within the wellbeing impact area. Thus, studies were mapped when representing investments, which were independent of the beneficiary's individual of economic gains and arose either from the Fairtrade Premium or from benefits provided by certified SPOs. The indicators mapped to this area measured:

- Community investment and availability of seeds/inputs
- Educational benefits
- In-kind benefits, improved health, childcare and education
- Access to services (such as credit), development of productivity services (such as milling facilities)

Table 3: Number of mapped studies by their methodological relevance

Rating	Qualitative Studies	Quantitative Studies
High	13	6
Medium	7	7
Low	2	9

Across all evaluations, 74 percent of studies had results that were consistently supportive, nine percent provided mixed and 18 percent provided no evidence of effects. As shown in Table 3, studies mapped to these outcome and output areas were generally robust, with over half the studies being of high or medium relevance. Only two qualitative studies were classified as low relevance. Table 4 shows the number of studies with results that were either consistently supportive, provided mixed but supportive evidence or no evidence of Fairtrade's effect on increased investment or enhanced benefits. The results

are overwhelmingly positive with 100 percent of qualitative relevant studies demonstrating some evidence of effects. Four quantitative studies demonstrated no evidence for Fairtrade. However, two of those studies were rated as low relevance. The second set of unsupportive results came from a meta-analysis (8). However, this review was examining VSS in general and, as discussed, it was unclear if the lack of results described for education was due failure to generate community effects or individual gains in income.

Table 4: The percentage of supportive, mixed, and non-supportive results by type of method and study rating

Results	All evaluations		Medium and high	
	Qual (%)	Quant (%)	Qual (%)	Quant (%)
Consistent effects	80	64	89	80
Mixed effects	10	7	11	0
No effects	10	29	0	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>5</b>

Therefore, studies were high quality and consistently supportive of Fairtrade's effect on increased investment and enhanced benefits. Despite challenges with the specificity of results for these output and outcome areas, both have achieved the **green** rating, and Fairtrade can be confident of its benefits. Supporting this score, quantitative studies demonstrated positive effects

after controlling for differences between certified and non-certified organisations (14,15). Another found supportive results when combining the effects of multiple high-quality investigations (16). The few results which demonstrated no effects can be explained by study quality and a focus on VSS in general.

## Stronger democratic organisations for small producers

A total of 21 studies contributed to this output area, 17 of which evaluated Fairtrade's effect on strengthening SPOs. Three of the remaining four studies were defined as formative research and the other was policy-focused. Twelve studies were mixed-

methods, seven were qualitative and two were quantitative. All research mapped was focused on Fairtrade, or Fairtrade with other standards-based systems. Approximately 40 percent of the studies were internally commissioned by Fairtrade.

Table 5: Number of mapped studies by their methodological relevance

Rating	Qualitative Studies	Quantitative Studies
High	10	3
Medium	7	5
Low	2	6

A broad array of indicators was mapped to this output area, however all centred around positive SPO characteristics, such as management capacity and efficiency, SPO financial performance, support offered to farmers and their perceptions of trust in the SPOs, representation of women and youth, and SPO governance structures and participation of members, particularly in decisions around the Fairtrade Premium.

A number of studies supplying quantitative results were of low relevance reflecting inadequate methodological quality (Table 5). Nevertheless, results were supplied by 25 robust investigations and most qualitative studies were of high quality. Across all evaluative studies mapped, 59 percent found consistent evidence of effects, 18 percent provided mixed evidence, and 23 percent of mapped studies found no evidence of effect. Table 6 shows the evaluative results mapped by method type and study rating.

Table 6: The percentage of supportive, mixed, and non-supportive study results by type of method and study rating

Results	All evaluations		Medium and high	
	Qual (%)	Quant (%)	Qual (%)	Quant (%)
Consistent effects	53	71	62	75
Mixed effects	27	0	23	0
No effects	20	29	15	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>4</b>

From the medium and high quality studies, one quantitative study was removed as low market access meant SPOs dropped out of the intervention without sufficient time for their capacity to improve (3). This resulted in all robust quantitative studies demonstrating consistent evidence of effects. Qualitative evidence was more mixed, although the vast majority of medium or high relevance studies demonstrated some evidence of effect (85 percent). When focusing on studies rated the highest relevance, 80 percent demonstrated consistently positive results. The higher proportion of mixed and no effects found in the qualitative results appears to arise from the type of areas this method assessed. Evidence on democratic governance and collective action, and equity in distribution of benefits tended to be more mixed. Some authors highlighted that the size and pre-existing capacity of SPOs effect Fairtrade's achievements (17). Results on gender representation were also more mixed with the organisations' and, in particular, the countries' socio-normative contexts appearing to have a greater influence (18). However, results consistently showed benefits in management systems and financial capacity, and beneficiaries' perception of benefits. While management capacity was seen as improving, it was often from a very low base, and thus certification can be overly bureaucratic (16,19). Adequate knowledge of Fairtrade was found among SPO staff, but low knowledge was typically found among members.

Considering the variable strength of the different SPOs engaged with Fairtrade, the high proportion of results which describe benefits from Fairtrade certification is highly encouraging. A good number of high quality studies evaluated this output area, and accounting for contextual factors, all quantitative evaluations indicated that Fairtrade strengthened producer organisations. Supportive results included counterfactual comparisons, although they did not control for differences between certified and non-certified organizations. In a similar vein, many evaluations only compared a limited number of producer organizations. However, gathering a large number of clusters for comparison and adjusting analysis for pre-existing differences is highly challenging when comparing clusters (such as SPOs). Moreover, the positive effects replicated across a range of settings in Africa, Latin America, and Asia provides confidence in Fairtrade's effectiveness at strengthening producer organizations. Furthermore, one mixed-methods study traced the pathway between training, improved governance and transparency, and better results at farmer level (3). A number of studies gained the beneficiaries' perspectives and indicated perceived benefits at both management and producer level. Supportive effects were demonstrated from reviews that combined the results of multiple high quality studies (16). Therefore, Fairtrade can be highly confident they are strengthening SPOs despite evidence that organisational democracy is less consistently positive.

## Output: Improved labour conditions and freedom of association for workers, AND Outcome: Decent work for workers, sustained by mature systems of industrial relations and increased business capacity to invest

Evidence for both improved labour conditions and decent work are considered together as mapped studies did not sufficiently differentiate between the two. These outcome and output areas also showed high overlap with wellbeing and voice and dignity. In total, 30 studies provided results for these outcome and output areas. The majority of results mapped come from qualitative studies (14) or mixed-methods investigations (14). Only two quantitative studies were mapped to these areas. All but one of the studies mapped examined Fairtrade on its own or in combination with other VSS, and approximately one-third of studies were internally commissioned.

A wide range of indicators were considered under labour conditions and decent work, grouped under payment conditions (contracts, wages, payments, remuneration for overtime), in-kind benefits, health and safety, and empowerment indicators such as bargaining, representation, positive relationships, and workers' rights. Table 7 indicates that mapped results came predominantly from medium or high quality studies, particularly qualitative results. Nineteen contributing studies were evaluations, five were formative studies and five were policy research. One study was classified as monitoring.

Table 7: Number of mapped studies by their relevance

Rating	Qualitative Studies	Quantitative Studies
High	15	5
Medium	7	5
Low	4	4

Across all evaluations, 43 percent of studies had results which were consistently positive, 37 percent were mixed and 20 percent of studies showed no evidence of impact. Examining evaluative results from high and medium relevant studies, half

of the qualitative studies showed consistent positive effects for Fairtrade on workers' employment conditions while half of the quantitative studies showed mixed evidence of effects (Table 8).

Table 8: The percentage of supportive, mixed, and non-supportive study results by type of method and study rating

Results	All evaluations		Medium and high	
	Qual (%)	Quant (%)	Qual (%)	Quant (%)
Consistent effects	48	33	50	17
Mixed effects	33	44	35	50
No effects	19	22	15	33
Total	<b>21</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>6</b>

Our analysis identified a number of contextual factors which were outside Fairtrade's control. These were restrictive legislation and restrictive roles of unions for effects on wages (20). In addition, one study examined the effect of Fairtrade certification on waged labour employed by small producers. This group is not currently addressed in Fairtrade's certification system. Once the results from these studies were excluded, overall results became more supportive of Fairtrade improving the working conditions of those in waged employment. From evaluations rated as medium and high quality, 48 percent of mapped results consistently demonstrated effects, 30 percent demonstrated mixed effects and 22 percent demonstrated no evidence of effects.

The less supportive findings identified through the quantitative results are driven by wages, which appeared largely unaffected by the Fairtrade Standards. Evidence was much more supportive for working conditions, such as remuneration for overtime and adequate breaks, although this was still not uniformly demonstrated. Several studies reported higher job satisfaction among certified workers, and health and safety were regularly investigated with studies reporting consistently positive results. Fairtrade's effects in these ToC areas appear to be on shorter-term outcomes which can be audited (21). For longer-term effects such as representation, empowerment and wages, the Standards appear to have a contributory effect and external factors, such as the nature of certified organisations and the regulatory environment, have an important influence (17,22). Worker representation was less investigated than

other areas. Mapped results were qualitative in nature and findings were mixed. Conceptually, empowerment and wage outcomes, included under decent work and improved labour conditions, will depend on changes at the impact level, e.g., voice and dignity. Indeed, studies mapped to this area provided less evidence for worker empowerment and representation. Most of these results have been considered under the voice and dignity impact area.

The lack of effect on wages is concerning and includes results from one meta-analysis where this was the only dimension of decent work examined (8). Excluding wages, however, the results overall suggest Fairtrade is having a positive impact on the working conditions of those in waged employment. Results were demonstrated by robust quantitative studies that compared both certified and non-certified employers, and that accounted for differences which may explained results, providing increased confidence in Fairtrade's benefit. Qualitative evidence sought the views of beneficiaries, and the majority of high quality investigations showed either consistent or partially supportive results. Overall, Fairtrade can be confident its Standards are contributing towards improved labour conditions and decent work with the output and outcome areas classified as **green**. However, the contribution Fairtrade can have on workers' wages specifically should be further reviewed. This outcome has also been examined at the impact level through wellbeing, and it is also likely to result from gains at the impact level through worker empowerment and ability to bargain (e.g., voice and dignity).

## Enhanced knowledge and capacity among small producers, workers and their organisations

Over 20 studies mapped to the framework included some measure of training or capacity building. However, this was typically supplementary to investigation of other ToC areas. Eight studies did examine knowledge and capacity in reasonable depth; of these seven were evaluations. Four studies were mixed-methods, two were qualitative and two were quantitative. Seven studies examined Fairtrade, either on its own or with other VSS, and only one study was internally commissioned.

All studies mapped were rated either medium or high relevance. Of these, 45 percent of evaluative studies demonstrated consistent evidence of effects, 45 percent found mixed evidence and nine percent found no evidence of impact. Overall, there was little difference between qualitative and quantitative results. However, how training was assessed was very weak, typically examining the number of training sessions provided and perceptions of benefits rather than changes in knowledge, skills and practice. One mixed-methods study

was well designed and provided in-depth assessment but the results were not encouraging with little difference between certified and non-certified training in relation to reach, topics covered and quality of training (3). One qualitative study that examined capacity building in detail provided more positive results on the effects of training but also questioned its sustainability, commenting that long-term arrangements with NGOs are often required for Fairtrade certification (23). Thus, while the evidence base is quite consistent, from the mapped evidence it is scored as **amber**, reflecting a dearth of credible outcome measurement. Monitoring data may be more suited to evaluating this output area and Fairtrade could make some simple scales available for topics they aim to improve capacity in and which are routinely provided to a sample of beneficiaries, such as administration. Measuring gains in knowledge relative to before training, alongside attitudes and self-reported practices would be a relatively light touch approach to strengthening the evidence base for this output area.

## Increased awareness and commitment to fair and sustainable trade among citizen-consumers, businesses and policy-makers

A total of 18 studies were mapped to this output area. Most studies were classified as formative (11), one study was policy-focused, and six were evaluations. Studies were predominately quantitative (14), one study was mixed-methods and three were qualitative. Ten studies evaluated Fairtrade on its own, six assessed Fairtrade alongside other labels, and two looked at the movement more broadly. Only one mapped study was commissioned by Fairtrade. In general, studies mapped to this output area did not include a control group, and thus 12 quantitative studies were rated as low quality. The others were all classified as high quality and used experimental methods.

All evaluative studies demonstrated consistent evidence of Fairtrade's effects. This includes results arising from

experimental evaluations that the Fairtrade brand positively influenced consumer awareness, trust, purchase intention, and willingness to pay, alongside actual purchasing behaviour. However, for business and policy, only one study mapped examined this output area for these groups. Results were encouraging and indicating that Fairtrade contributed towards acceptance of fair and sustainable trade through lobbying, development of supply chain and public awareness. The study was also well designed and high quality, giving a strong narrative of Fairtrade's contribution (24). This, however, was only a single investigation so the evidence base for business and policy groups is **amber**. For consumers, the evidence base is **green**.

## Detailed Outcome Results

### Improved farming performance, protection of the environment and adaptation to climate change

Overall, 29 studies were mapped to this outcome area. Two studies were focused on policy; all the others were evaluative. Fourteen studies examined Fairtrade on its own, 13 examined it alongside other types of certification, and two examined the Fair Trade movement more broadly. Only five studies were

internally commissioned. The majority of results came from mixed-methods studies (14). There were six quantitative and nine qualitative investigations. Table 9 shows that most of the studies assessing this outcome were of sound quality and relevant.

Table 9: Number of mapped studies by their methodological relevance

Rating	Qualitative Studies	Quantitative Studies
High	12	5
Medium	8	10
Low	3	5

While the indicators mapped to this area were distinct from other areas in the ToC, the internal coherence of this outcome area is questionable as it is comprised of both environment and productivity outcomes:

- Yields
- Quality of produce
- Environmental practices and use of agricultural inputs (fertilisers/pesticides/herbicides)
- Productive practices and use of agricultural inputs

- Productivity/cost effectiveness

Table 10 provides evaluative results disaggregated by study relevance. Across all evaluative studies 50 percent found consistent evidence, 27 percent found mixed evidence, and 23 percent found no evidence of effects. Focusing on medium or highly relevant studies slightly reduced the supportive results. Table 10 shows large differences between qualitative and quantitative results mapped. All relevant qualitative studies showed some evidence of effects, whereas over half of quantitative studies had results which demonstrated no effects.

Table 10: The percentage of supportive, mixed, and non-supportive study results by type of method and study rating

Results	All evaluations		Medium and high	
	Qual (%)	Quant (%)	Qual (%)	Quant (%)
Consistent effects	79	25	77	23
Mixed effects	21	31	23	23
No effects	0	44	0	54
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>15</b>

Our analysis identified a number of contextual reasons for poor performance that were outside Fairtrade's control. Foremost among these was double certification with Organic (8,15,25–27) although it is worth noting that double certification with Organic amplified benefits for environmental outcomes (1,28).

Results from two other studies were also discounted – one because it evaluated use of inputs when these were unavailable because of the remoteness of location (15); the other because of drop-out by all Fairtrade certified SPOs (3). Accounting for this exclusion, the results were more supportive. All of the

qualitative studies had results showed some evidence of effects and 63% percent of the quantitative studies mapped also demonstrated some evidence of impact.

<p><i>Medium and High Quality Qualitative Studies</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistent evidence of effect = 83%</li> <li>• Mixed evidence of effect = 17%</li> <li>• No evidence of effect = 0%</li> </ul>	<p><i>Medium and High Quality Quantitative Studies</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistent evidence of effect = 38%</li> <li>• Mixed evidence of effect = 25%</li> <li>• No evidence of effect = 38%</li> </ul>
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The weak agreement between qualitative and quantitative results is explained by areas assessed. Qualitative results focused on adoption of practices, inputs, and perceptions of quality. Quantitative indicators tended to focus on yields and productivity. The results also delineated between productivity (agronomic) and environmental outcomes. Moreover, some findings included under improved performance appear to be in tension leading to inconsistency in what has been described as beneficial results. For example, some authors highlight a focus on inputs (28) with evaluations not necessarily distinguishing between approved and non-improved inputs (29), or other areas such as enhanced access to inputs undermining environmental effects (30). The following results were apparent for these two sub-areas under improved farming performance:

### Environmental:

- Studies mapped showed weak evidence for use of environmentally damaging inputs. For example, one study commented how Fairtrade SPOs were so effective at providing inputs. This resulted in higher use of chemical fertilisers/pesticides/herbicides despite efforts to adhere to Fairtrade environmental Standards.
- Adoption of environmental practices appears to be initially high, although adherence did appear to wane following certification.
- Evidence for environmental practices rather than use of inputs is more supportive.
- Double certification with Organic increased the effectiveness for environmental measures.

A high number of studies provided results against this outcome area, and studies were generally methodologically robust. As farming performance was only of secondary interest few studies controlled for differences between certified and non-certified farmers. However, one that did do this, demonstrated improvements in farming performance (31), and another demonstrated improvements over time (14). The fewer positive results described by quantitative studies, which used harder measures of productivity and yields, undermines confidence in Fairtrade's effects for this outcome. For example, one meta-analysis found no evidence for the effects of certification on yields (8). By contrast, a systematic review demonstrated positive effects for environmental indicators (32). Qualitative indicators mapped tended to come from reviews of existing literature or as part of a mixed-methods study. A number of these studies attempted to examine pathways, e.g., training >

### Agricultural:

- Yields seem to be a particular indicator where Fairtrade is seeing a lack of effect. Only two studies which evaluated effects on farmers yields found consistent positive results for Fairtrade, and meta-analysis and systematic reviews also highlight this as an area of little impact.
- The quality of produce by Fairtrade certified entities appears consistently positive. Mapped studies were also broadly in agreement that certification improved productivity and input use.
- Negative effects on yields and productivity were most severe when Fairtrade and Organic certification were used jointly.

practice adoption > improved output/stronger environmental practices. Some interesting links were demonstrated, e.g., increased income leading to productivity investment, increased availability of inputs. None demonstrated a convincing pathway in its entirety (8,25). Overall, this outcome area is rated as **amber**.

## Detailed Impact Results

### Improved income, wellbeing and resilience among small producer and worker households

A total of 63 studies contributed to this impact area making it by far the most examined. Of them, 49 studies were evaluative, eight were formative and six were policy-focused. The majority of evidence mapped came from mixed-methods studies (29).

Seventeen studies were quantitative and seventeen were qualitative. Table 11 details the rating of studies mapped to this outcome area.

Table 11: Number of mapped studies by their methodological relevance

Rating	Qualitative Studies	Quantitative Studies
High	21	18
Medium	19	13
Low	7	15

Mapped findings draw from a good number of robust studies with 39 studies classified as high relevance contributing results. A total of 57 of the studies examined Fairtrade directly, either on its own or combined with other VSS, and 27 percent were internally commissioned by Fairtrade. Indicators mapped to this impact area predominately cover income although other quality of life measures were also examined.

- Farm and household income
- Prices for produce
- Household assets
- Poverty levels
- Food security, health nutrition and education

- Wages, in-kind benefits and living wages
- Quality of life

Across all evaluative studies the results were generally supportive with 57 percent demonstrating consistent evidence of effects, 25 percent demonstrating mixed evidence and 18 percent finding no evidence of impact. Table 12 shows disaggregated evaluative results by qualitative and quantitative method, and by study relevance rating. Results are comparable between method type with just over half of robust and relevant studies providing consistently positive results. That said, focusing on medium and high relevance studies slightly reduced the amount of consistently supportive results found, and a higher proportion of quantitative studies show no evidence of effects.

Table 12: The percentage of supportive, mixed and non-supportive study results by type of method and studies rating

Results	All evaluations		Medium and high	
	Qual (%)	Quant (%)	Qual (%)	Quant (%)
Consistent effects	57	56	56	53
Mixed effects	29	23	32	27
No effects	14	21	12	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>30</b>

When we examined the conduct and context of the studies, we were able to remove the results of nine medium and high-quality evaluations due to factors outside Fairtrade's control. Studies were removed from the results below for a number of reasons:

Restrictive local policy and the role of unions constrained Fairtrade's effect on workers' wages (17,22,33).

- Double certification with Organic, which has the potential reduced yields restricting impact on farmers' incomes (25,26).

Challenges with SPO selection and retention; including biased selection of producer organisations (13), and SPO dropout (3).

- Evaluations of waged workers employed by small producers; Fairtrade does not currently address this group in its Standards or monitor through auditing (17,31).
- Outcome ascertainment that is unlikely to change due to certification. For example, educational level of the head of households (10).

Once these studies were discounted, the overall findings became more supportive of Fairtrade's effects. Only 13 percent of quantitative and eight percent of qualitative studies showing no evidence of impact.

<i>Medium and High Quality Qualitative Studies</i>	<i>Medium and High Quality Quantitative Studies</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistent evidence of effect = 59%</li> <li>• Mixed evidence of effect = 33%</li> <li>• No evidence of effect = 8%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistent evidence of effect = 71%</li> <li>• Mixed evidence of effect = 17%</li> <li>• No evidence of effect = 13%</li> </ul>

Within the indicator areas assessed, there is highly consistent evidence for price received with a majority of evidence supporting an effect on farmer income even though yields are often reported as limiting change. The evidence for poverty is less conclusive. Mixed evaluative results were often due to improvements in income and consumption, but immaterial effects on poverty were most often demonstrated. Double certification with Organic showed, in some instances, an increase in poverty levels (25,26). When Fairtrade certification was evaluated on its own, results for poverty were positive but not significant. Measures of poverty typically used proportion of those under a poverty line (headcount) or depth of poverty (gap) measures. The results were inconsistent between these measures, with some studies showing greater effects on headcount (34) and others on gap (3). It appears that the improvements in income are not sufficient to move

beneficiaries out of poverty (26), although the evaluations may also not be of sufficient duration to detect effects (15).

Eight studies had examined nutrition and food security with five finding positive effects of Fairtrade certification. Of those that did not demonstrate impact, two examined hired labour (12,35) and the third demonstrated no increase in consumption levels although household income increased, as did educational expenditure (14). Other evaluations demonstrated effects in the number of days food was available, food security and scarcity, and caloric and macro-nutrient intake (2,36,37). Despite Fairtrade's effects, beneficiaries sometimes still faced challenges in meeting their food needs (36).

Education was examined through two studies. One showed an increase in education-related expenditure for Fairtrade certified workers (14); the second examined household educational levels and found no Fairtrade impact. However, that evaluation only lasted for two years giving insufficient time to effect educational achievement. Educational results were also considered under increased investments and enhanced benefit. One meta-analysis found no evidence of impact on education (8). However, this study evaluated a range of sustainability standards and it was unclear if lack of achievement was due to limitations in income or community benefits. The assessed literature demonstrated a clear split between hired labour and small producers. Reflecting results reported under decent work, and improved labour conditions for evaluations of workers' income showed little evidence of effect, due to lack of increase in wages, and where impact is demonstrated it was through in-kind benefits. Indeed, studies examined living wages directly (38,39) found no impact in this domain, with another finding cost of living of workers on Fairtrade plantations constantly outstripped income, which was primarily accrued from wages.

The vast majority of quantitative and mixed-methods evaluations drew from cross-sectional data, which means that difference rather than change was assessed. However, the majority of studies did make comparisons between certified farmers and workers. Studies which controlled for differences between certified and non-certified entities demonstrated more evidence of Fairtrade's benefits than those which did not. Three studies were longitudinal in design, two of them methodologically robust. One longitudinal sample found no effect, but was examining wages of workers; the second found evidence of improvement in farmers' incomes. The findings in this area are supported by a number of systematic reviews, which have combined individual results from the most robust evidence.

Quantitative studies mapped to this impact area demonstrated deeper engagement with Fairtrade (e.g., years certified and number of certified farmers within an area) and resulted in stronger income gains. Such dose-response relationships are highly favourable for attribution. Qualitative results were comparable, although findings tended to be more mixed. This is unsurprising as results came from a number of review articles summing up multiple findings and tended to make comparisons between multiple sites. Further strengthening the evidence for this impact area, a number of qualitative studies examined pathways and gained the perspectives of beneficiaries when looking at the effects of certification on

wellbeing. This said, most positive income results were driven by farmers with certification demonstrating less effect for worker income and wages. Overall, this impact area was rated as **green** and Fairtrade can be confident of its effects. However,

as highlighted under decent work and improved labour conditions, the contribution Fairtrade can have on workers' wages specifically should be further reviewed.

### Enhanced gender equity and intergenerational sustainability in rural communities

A total of 19 studies were mapped to this impact area, 16 of which were evaluations, two were classified as policy and one was a formative study. Ten studies were mixed-methods, seven studies were qualitative and two were quantitative. Almost all of the studies measured gender empowerment. One quantitative evaluative result was mapped in relation to intergenerational sustainability and identified only small effects (40). Some measures of empowerment were weakly defined as participation in SPO meetings, or positions held by female employees. All studies examined Fairtrade or Fairtrade alongside other certification schemes, and two were commissioned internally.

Across all evaluations, 20 percent of the studies found consistent effects, 45 percent of studies mapped identified some type of impact, and 35 percent found no evidence of impact. Only one quantitative and two qualitative studies classified as low relevance provided evaluative results. Thus, Table 13 presents mapped results from studies rated as either medium or high relevance. Across these robust qualitative and quantitative studies, 19 percent found consistent evidence of effects, 44 percent found mixed evidence and 38 percent found no evidence.

Table 13: The percentage of supportive, mixed, and non-supportive study results by type of method

Results	Medium and high	
	Qual (%)	Quant (%)
Consistent effects	17	25
Mixed effects	50	25
No effects	33	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>4</b>

The majority of studies mapped to this impact area found some evidence of impact although consistently supportive evidence was uncommon, and half of the quantitative evaluations found no evidence of impact. Moreover, across methods, studies most often reported mixed results, and when results were found they were cited as 'small' and 'inconsistent'. Within these mixed results, Fairtrade Standards may be more effective in addressing representation and non-discrimination, particularly in HLOs. In one study about gender and waged workers, males and females perceived themselves as having equal rights. Several studies highlighting that certified HLOs had mechanisms in place for equal pay and addressing uncompensated labour (41). On the other hand, for certified employers, women were less likely to be found in management roles. Conversely, in certified producer organisations, women were more likely to both participate and have better representation in leadership positions compared to non-certified entities (39,41). However, the quality of women's participation was low and they were less likely to input into governance and Premium decisions (41). In the context of producer organisations, income equity does not seem to be realised in households, in part because of gender hierarchies in the division of labour, which have not been addressed without focused Fairtrade or donor support (39,41). Conversely, one

study measuring agency as control over coffee production and output found very encouraging results. This study was well designed and controlled for differences between certified and non-certified farmers (37). Similar results have also been found by others (42), although different evaluations found little impact on agency (39,41). Reflecting on this inconsistent evidence, the effects appear to be at the participation level. With other areas that depend on deeper-seated equality issues, certification appears to be limited in addressing these impacts, at least on a consistent basis (39,41,43). In other words, the strength of gender hierarchies, norms and cultural practices appear too salient to overcome through certification alone. While the majority of evaluative studies mapped found some evidence of impact, the variability of results in this impact area has been rated **amber** for gender equity. For intergenerational sustainability, it has been classified as grey reflecting a dearth of research. For gender specifically, Fairtrade would do well to clearly delineate what outcomes are likely to be achievable through standards and certification.

## Dignity and voice for small producers and workers at local, national and global levels

A total of fourteen studies were mapped to this impact area, 12 of which were evaluations. All evaluations were classified as either high or medium. Eight studies were mixed-methods, six were qualitative, and no solely quantitative studies were mapped to this impact area. Moreover, only one quantitative evaluative result was mapped. As with other areas on the empowerment pathway, there is overlap with other ToC areas. The following types of indicators mapped were:

- Voice of farmers and waged workers
- Decision making / ownership of SPO / individual choice
- Workers' rights
- Power relations / management responsiveness
- Quality of relationship / social dialogue
- Social capital

Only three studies examined Fairtrade alongside other certification schemes; all the others examined Fairtrade exclusively. Approximately 60 percent were internally commissioned. All qualitative evaluations were classified as either medium or high relevance, meaning results are not disaggregated by method type or study relevance. For qualitative evaluations, 46 percent found supportive results, 38 percent found mixed evidence of effects and the remaining 15 percent found no evidence of Fairtrade improving dignity and voice. The single quantitative result was mixed and came from a survey which did not use a counterfactual and was therefore classified as low quality. For qualitative findings, results demonstrating no effect arose from two studies. One of these was in India and Sri Lanka, which highlighted trade

unions acting as barriers to workers' representation and voice. Trade unions were seen as having low engagement, lack of interest in workers' representation, a monopoly on membership (which was tied to political affiliation) and were responsible for negotiating and setting the (low) wages for all plantation labour in an area. This impeded collective action and bargaining (33). Furthermore, of the five studies which demonstrated mixed effects, three concluded that Fairtrade provided development but effects stopped short of empowerment. This was put down to a lack of training and long-term capacity building (16,39,44). For the other two studies, one used a measure of social capital for waged workers (45) and the other used a very wide range of indicators including wages, unionisation, optimism, assets across four different countries. The results were understandably mixed.

While these results are encouraging, a challenge for this impact area and its evidence base is the highly varied set of indicators used to examine empowerment. This was apparent both across and within evaluations. For example, empowerment was defined in one study with outcomes as varied, as loyalty, and power relations. This variability in how dignity and voice was measured, alongside the relatively small number of evaluative studies contributing to this indicator, limit the ability to examine differences in results. For waged workers, the role of Fairtrade Premium Committees appeared key with one study describing a pathway from training of waged workers, increasing their confidence through participation in Fairtrade Premium Committees and this increasing their perceptions of individual choice (46). Results are encouraging. However, only one low quality quantitative set of results were mapped, and while overall findings are relatively consistent, variations in how this area has been defined means reproducibility in mapped results was limited. Thus, this area has been rated as **amber**.

## Increased environmental sustainability and resilience to climate change

Sixteen studies were mapped to this impact area, seven of which were quantitative, three were mixed-methods and six were qualitative. Eleven studies provided evaluative evidence, three were classified as formative and two were policy-focused. Results mapped were specific to environmental impacts, such as freshwater conservation, marine protection, biodiversity, forestry, presence of pesticides, and environmental toxins. However, none of the studies directly evaluated resilience to climate change.

The rating of the studies' relevance is shown in Table 14. Few high quality quantitative studies contributed to this impact area and most were medium quality. Moreover, a lower proportion of studies mapped focused on Fairtrade. With six examining just Fairtrade, two studying Fairtrade with one or more VVS and six examining standards in general, these were all evaluations. Five studies were commissioned by Fairtrade.

Table 14: Number of mapped studies by their methodological relevance

Rating	Qualitative Studies	Quantitative Studies
High	2	1
Medium	4	5
Low	2	4

Overall across all evaluations, 55 percent had consistently supportive findings, 27 percent found mixed and 18 percent found no evidence of effect. However, as shown in Table 15, focusing on medium or high quality studies removed one consistently positive study for both method types. Unlike productivity, and yields and income, double certification with Organic was beneficial. Overall results between quantitative and qualitative studies triangulated. Though, in general, qualitative measurement from research using primary data collection was much weaker, such as adoption of practices or perceptions rather than measurement of environmental conditions. Moreover, a number of mapped qualitative findings were provided by review studies. These incorporated a range

of certification schemes, and due to the lack of consistency between certification types, the results are less generalisable to Fairtrade (28). This limits the confidence in supportive results. The most consistent effects were for biodiversity and toxicity arising from pesticides. One study, which quantitatively demonstrated impact, did make use of a counterfactual comparison of non-certified farmers, but the sample size was small and did not control for differences between those certified and non-certified. While overall results are encouraging for climate change and resilience, the evidence base is too limited and draws too significantly on general evaluations of standards. As a result, the evidence for this impact area is classified as **amber**.

Table 15: The percentage of supportive, mixed, and non-supportive study results by type of method and study rating

Results	All evaluations		Medium and high	
	Qual (%)	Quant (%)	Qual (%)	Quant (%)
Consistent effects	50	60	40	50
Mixed effects	33	20	40	25
No effects	17	20	20	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>

## 4.4. THREE PATHWAYS FOR CHANGE

The following section presents a narrative that describes how change happens following the implementation of a number supported interventions. It describes the pathway of impact on outcomes and outputs following the implementation of activities supported by Fairtrade. It also examines the conditions needed to implement the activity and the barriers that prevent it from being achieved.

The purpose of this analysis is to examine the details of how a change happens within a pathway and identify the key factors contributing to that change, as well as the barriers that prevent it from occurring. Furthermore, a review of the research within the pathway provides an overview of the chain of effects within a specific thematic area for Fairtrade, such as the economic or social interventions. This makes it possible to identify the areas within the chain that need attention and how to prioritise efforts moving forward.

Following a review of the research in the evidence map, three thematic pathways emerged that were most commonly researched by experts in the field. These have been identified and associated with the pathways that exist in the ToC and have been highlighted in this report as the following:

- **Economic pathway** - this pathway examines the economic benefits of Fairtrade interventions on target groups. It looks, in particular, at the financial returns of Fairtrade for farmers and hired workers, and how these benefits may have ultimately

contributed to an improvement in their wellbeing and built resilience.

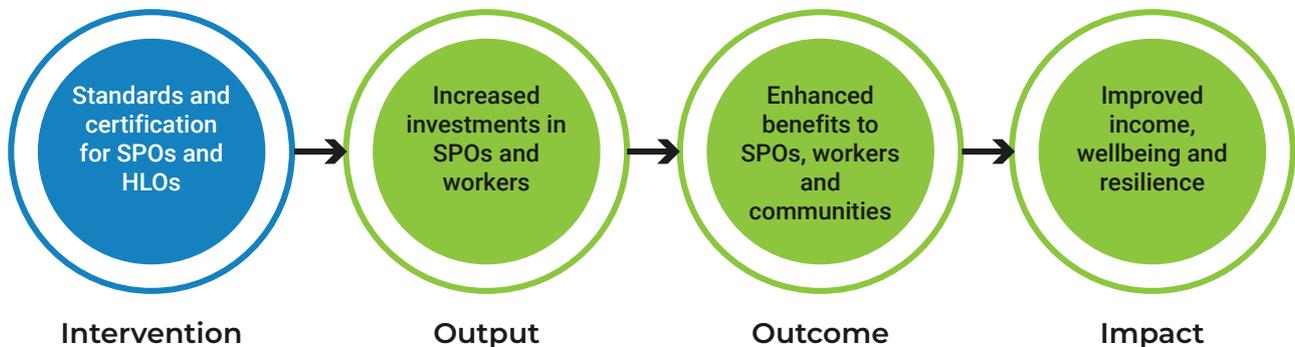
- **Social and empowerment pathway** - this pathway examines the social outcomes and impacts associated with Fairtrade interventions. It specifically explores the outcomes that improve the working conditions of SPOs and HLOs and how that leads to their dignity and voice being recognised in their workplace and working conditions and to improved working relationships with traders and managers.

- **Environmental pathway** - this pathway examines the environmental consequences of Fairtrade interventions and their impact on climate change more broadly. It specifically explores the role of the interventions aimed at improving the capacity and knowledge of SPOs to enhance their farming practices in order to contribute to environmental sustainability.

The three pathways presented in this report encompass most of the elements within the ToC. Each pathway begins with a description of an intervention supported by Fairtrade and goes on to describe the direct effect on a specific output, the nature of the changes to outcomes and, finally, an impact on SPOs or HLOs. While the three pathways presented here emerged as the most salient from studies reviewed, the list is not exhaustive and it is expected that other pathways may be included in further research studies.

### 1. Economic pathway

The economic pathway examines the relationship between setting Standards for and certifying SPOs and HLOs that ultimately results in economic benefits and leads to improved wellbeing of the target groups.



## Intervention: Standards and certification for SPOs and HLOs

One of Fairtrade's key interventions is to provide SPOs and HLOs with access to Standards and a certification system that allow them to participate in Fairtrade, improve access to credit and ultimately leads to better economic opportunities with buyers. The Standards establish "rules" and conditions for engagement, such as the adoption of economic protection policies that aim to offset volatility in prices and reduce risks for SPOs and HLOs. The Standards often distinguish between core requirements for Fairtrade certification among SPOs and HLOs, and organisational requirements for them to build their institutional capacities over time. Certification contributes to higher and more stable producer prices for SPOs and HLOs and guarantees some protection from price volatility during periods of market crisis.

Two Fairtrade activities within this intervention were commonly reviewed in the research to demonstrate the economic impacts of these interventions. They are:

1. The Fairtrade Minimum Price is the minimum price that must be paid by buyers to small for a product to become certified against the Fairtrade Standards. The minimum price

is a floor price which covers the farmers' average costs of production and allows them access to their product markets.

2. The Fairtrade Premium is an additional sum of money which producer organizations receive for the produce or labour. The premium goes into a communal fund for workers and farmers to improve their wellbeing as defined by their democratically agreed priorities. The Premium enables farmersto invest in economic, social and environmental development. The Fairtrade Premium, in particular, is highlighted as a critical part of Fairtrade's support by almost all the studies reviewed. Specifically, the Premium is seen as bringing key economic benefits for producers in SPOs and workers in HLOs.

The assumption underpinning this intervention in the ToC suggests that by setting a Fairtrade Minimum Price, this encourages SPOs to be efficient and helps them to avoid losses. By receiving the average costs to cover their production that will ultimately prevent them from suffering losses and enable further production. Receiving the Fairtrade Premium ensures that SPOs and HLOs benefit from their profits collectively. The money is often reinvested to address their direct needs, thereby increasing investments in SPOs, including their members and plantation workers.

## Output: Increased investment in SPOs and workers

The outputs reviewed in the research focused on the direct effect of the two instruments (the Fairtrade Minimum Price and the Fairtrade Premium) on investment in SPOs and HLOs. It should be noted that the review of the pathway included both increased investment and enhanced benefit as the two outputs could not be disaggregated. The research rarely distinguished between investment and the results of this investment. The studies were very positive and showed that the support and profits generated from the benefits of the FMP / premium that leads to increased profits for SPOs. That profit is made available to the cooperative as a whole and also leads to more investment in social projects (such as improved schools and clinics). In addition, it allows SPOs to benefit directly from cash payments for farmers and provides an income. These profits are also shared with HLOs and invested in their practices and productivity as well, particularly in the services and benefits workers receive, such as transportation, education, and health care.

Overall, the studies reviewed showed that certification led to direct investments in Fairtrade cooperatives. These appeared to be stronger as a result of the investment, often showing greater management capacity, ability to survive in difficult times, and ability to provide important services to producers (such as greater access to credit, training). The studies also showed that the Fairtrade Premium, in particular, generated a great deal of investment into community-wide benefits, such as educational services, buildings and SPO processing facilities. Increased investment in services for HLOs was also reported. Additionally, the research showed that SPOs and HLOs that benefitted from the Fairtrade Premium were typically those in cohesive Fairtrade cooperatives or plantations. Cooperatives that were characterised as being too bureaucratic did not benefit from the support or have access to investment support and opportunity. In some cases, farmers within the cooperative also appeared to influence the distribution of Premiums.

## Outcome: Enhanced influence and benefits to SPOs, workers and their communities

The outcomes reviewed for this pathway examined the enhanced benefits to SPOs, workers and communities that have come about as a result of the increased investments yielded by the FT minimum price set by farmers and the Price Premium. This outcome was chosen due to the nature of the evidence generated by the research, which showed an increase in benefits to SPOs and workers and their communities. It

was also chosen as a result of the quality of the studies, which showed a high methodological rigour to the research undertaken.

The benefits to SPOs and workers reviewed by the research included increased investments in health services, housing, education and wider community services. The research

reviewed demonstrated that benefits were facilitated by SPO managers who worked collectively to make decisions on how best to manage the investments for the benefit of their communities. The evidence showed consistent improvements to communities as a result of the benefits accruing from

the price standards set, and is particularly significant when compared to non-Fairtrade certified SPOs. However, much of the evidence pointed to short-term effects for SPOs and few examine the impact on HLO workers.

## Impact: Improved income, wellbeing and resilience

The economic support provided by Fairtrade in this pathway, along with the benefits of Fairtrade certification, is ultimately directed at improving the income and wellbeing of certified SPOs, farmers and labourers. This long-term impact is expected to result in increased farmer wealth, in particular farmers within Fairtrade co-operatives, and ensures employment opportunities, access to loans and other social benefits, thereby improving their resilience against economic challenges they might face. The key measures reviewed by the research associated with improved income, wellbeing and resilience include improvements to farmer and household income, produce prices, food security and education, wages and in-kind benefits, quality of life and poverty levels.

Almost all the research reviewed in the evidence map focused predominantly on examining the impact of the Fairtrade Standards and certification on improved income and wellbeing of farmers, workers and their surrounding communities. Studies showed that while the Fairtrade Standards and certification led to an increase in direct income for farmers in particular, the evidence for workers was much less consistent. The increase in income resulted in improved financial benefits for farmers and workers as a result of the Fairtrade Minimum Price, as well as an increase in investment in services for Fairtrade members and surrounding communities. However, most of the research studies indicated that there was little impact of this pathway on long-term economic growth. The scale of this impact showed small economic improvements, but no effect on addressing poverty rates within communities.

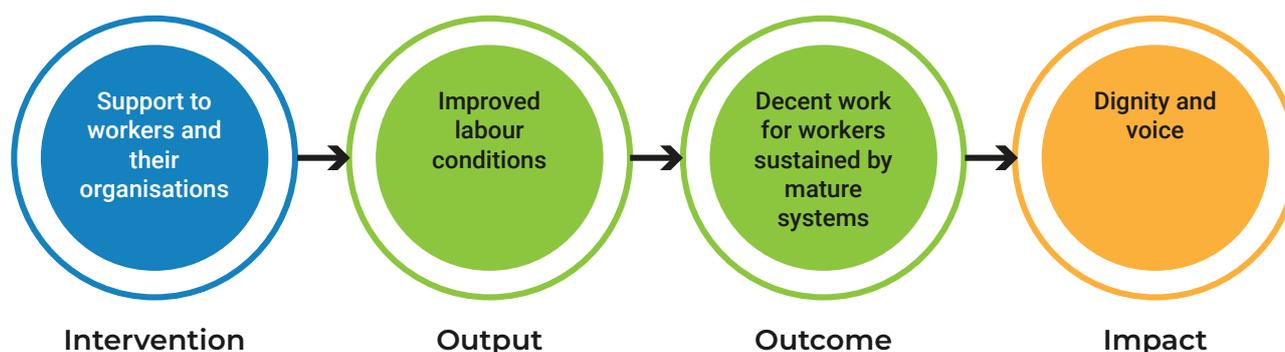
The research highlighted a number of factors that created barriers for farmers and workers and prevented them from

benefiting from the increased investment. Key contributing factors included limited market demand for produce, and farming yield showing little increase while farm gate prices offered were higher. This was the case particularly when SPOs also had to comply with Organic requirements, that ultimately impinged on productivity, reduced yields and, consequently, income as well. These factors, however, were predominantly context-specific and often out of Fairtrade's control.

Overall, the evidence showed that the Fairtrade Standards and certification do lead to economic benefits and improvements for farmers and SPOs and provide important forms of price security during periods of market crisis (through the Fairtrade Minimum Price mechanism). Furthermore, the Fairtrade Premium, when invested effectively, was highlighted as a key benefit to farmers and their communities. However, the research also showed that a number of conditions are necessary for this pathway to show an impact at scale. For example, the Fairtrade Premium was not always used for long-term investments. Instead, it was directed at addressing the needs of the wider community who did not contribute to the collective profit. This was justified if the membership agreed on the needs of the community being targeted. Furthermore, certified supply in some cases outstripped demand. This led to limitations on access to Fairtrade markets, with various unintended consequences in terms of competition between certified farmers. Balancing supply with demand for certified products is one of the challenges of the movement, particularly given the time-lag involved in preparing producer organisations for certification. Finally, the effects on income for waged workers were limited. This is discussed in further detail in the pathways below.

## 2. Empowerment pathway

The empowerment pathway examines the relationship between setting standards aimed at improving the empowerment policies within SPOs and HLOs to improve their dignity and voice. This includes both the organisations and farmers for the SPOs, and the workers within the HLOs. However, this pathway will focus on SPOs and their relationship with the products they produce.



### Intervention: Support to workers and their organisations

One of the key principles of Fairtrade is its focus on empowering farmers and workers, and it introduces empowerment policies to support them to develop and implement strategies for sustainable development based on their own aspirations and priorities. This includes providing support to SPOs and workers to organise and network at local, national and global level to achieve greater collective influence within the supply chains they are part of, and in doing so, making them aware of their rights within them. For example, the conditions set by Standards and certification require collective decision-making regarding premium usage.

In addition to examining support for farmers, this pathway also looks at the Standards set for SPOs to ensure they meet the social criteria for Fairtrade certification. This includes running democratic organisations and cooperatives, participatory decision-making, transparency, and non-discrimination (including gender equity). For companies where hired labour is part of the system, the Standards expect them to operate with non-discriminatory employment practices, to ensure pay rates are equal or higher than the legal minimum wage, and to ensure that the health and safety of workers are prioritised. Finally, any forms of forced labour or child labour are prohibited by the Fairtrade Standards.

### Output: Improved labour conditions

The output on improved labour conditions and decent work was selected to be considered for the pathway as this yielded the most studies with the most robust evidence and focused on SPOs in particular. The ToC posits that better working conditions are a key output of Fairtrade's empowerment policies. These conditions include better compliance with Fairtrade Standards and national laws, but also effective grievance procedures. For waged workers in particular, the research showed that certified plantations had improved working conditions for hired labourers. This covered aspects such as better physical spaces, fewer working hours, improved job satisfaction and a positive commitment to their working environment. A key emerging theme from the research was that SPOs that received support from Fairtrade ensured that resources were used to improve the farming conditions and labour conditions of farmers. Almost all the HLOs reviewed benefitted from better working environments. SPO members demonstrated improved participation in cooperatives, and

ensured better resources were used to improve farming. The evidence pointed to positive improvements in the working conditions of waged workers, a better understanding of workers' rights and appropriate wages. This would ultimately help them to negotiate better wages, particularly through organised workers' groups or unions as doing this in isolation is difficult. At the same time however, waged workers, unions were often cited as ineffective and lacking connection to the workers they represent. Their collective bargaining agreements often led to constrained wages, and this could act as a barrier for other interest areas in the ToC, such as wellbeing.

### Outcome: Decent work for workers sustained by mature systems

The outcome selected for this pathway examines the effect of the Fairtrade Standards on labour conditions and work opportunities for workers in HLOs and producers in SPOs as a result of improvements to labour conditions over a sustained period of time. The review of the research shows that there is some overlap between this outcome and the previous output in the pathway. Decent work also included improved terms and conditions for workers, as well as better health and safety conditions and the ability to voice their concerns and exercise their rights to achieve decent work. In-kind benefits were also found, such as support for social services including education and health. Similarly, SPOs that adopted the Fairtrade Standards showed positive effects on addressing child labour and making improvements in this area. However, as discussed previously for waged workers on Fairtrade certified plantations, little evidence was found of any effects on wages.

Fairtrade certified farmers in particular exhibited improved farming practices more so than non-Fairtrade farmers. However, on further review, the evidence did not provide details about the causes of that improvement. Some research suggested that improved farming practices among certified Fairtrade farmers was a result of strong organisational structures and services that are required to be adopted by the Standards. Other research studies suggested that the prior selection of SPOs for certification were already achieving higher yields. The evidence for improved yields was also much less consistent than that for product quality. Moreover, double certification with Organic often reduced yields and increased the required labour resources. Furthermore, the evaluations reviewed focused more on the direct effect of certification as an input, and less on the effects of training on farming practices.

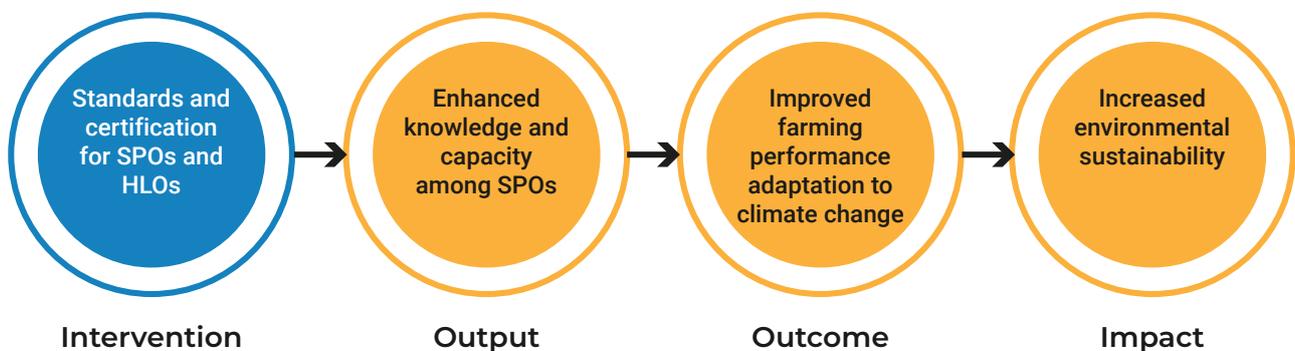
### Impact: Dignity and voice

The ultimate impact of the empowerment pathway is to show that Fairtrade's support has had an effect on the dignity and voice of workers and farmers. The expected long-term impact of this support on SPOs and workers suggests that it leads to more opportunities for decision-making, an increase in the confidence of workers and a sense of ownership in the ToC. The key measurement indicators for dignity and voice include social capital for small producers, decision-making and ownership within the SPOs, workers' rights, power relations and management responsiveness, as well as the voice of farmers and waged workers, and social dialogue for farmers.

The research looked at the impact of Fairtrade at improving the nature of decision-making for small producers, and the dignity and voice of workers and farmers in their co-operatives. Some studies showed that HLOs in particular expressed a sense of ownership in their work and satisfaction after receiving support from Fairtrade. Other studies examined worker representation, the development of committees among Fairtrade supported farmers, and the culture around unionisation. Overall, the evidence of impact on dignity and voice is not as researched as it was for the outputs and outcomes within this pathway, and the majority of evidence examining it was qualitative.

## 3. Environmental pathway

This pathway explores the support provided to organisations and SPOs to examine if they have increased their environmental sustainability and adapted to climate change.



## Intervention: Standards and certification for SPOs and HLOs

The Fairtrade Standards and certification system require SPOs and farmers to adopt environmental standards and behaviours before they can become certified. At the same time, Fairtrade provides training directly to SPOs (and through partners as well) on the benefits of environmental protection, and support to develop and implement strategies for sustainable environmental production.

Attaining defined environmental standards on issues such as water management and soil use, pest control and use of pesticides, fertiliser application and biodiversity conservation are included in the Fairtrade Standards for both small producer organisations and plantations. However, studies indicate that it is questionable whether these positive effects are as a result of the strength of cooperative organisation, or other environmental approaches promoted by other organisations, rather than from Fairtrade certification.

## Output: Enhanced knowledge and capacity among SPOs

Research showed that Fairtrade certification did improve SPOs' awareness and knowledge of environmentally sustainable production methods and agricultural practices, and had influenced their application in practice. The knowledge and awareness of waged workers, however, was less referenced in this outcome and not looked at in the same detail as SPOs. The evidence reviewed did not examine improvements in the levels of knowledge or awareness of farmers as a result of training,

but instead examined improved farming performance as an indicator of that knowledge. A focus on farming performance suggests improved knowledge and the adoption of specific skillsets, but it does not determine if it was as a result of the training received. This was due in part to a dearth of evaluative evidence studying changes in knowledge and attitudes. Instead, indicators reported results such as the number of trainings offered or the perception of the benefits.

## Outcome: Improved farming performance

Evidence from the review shows positive effects of certification and the application of environment-related standards on farming practices in both small producer organisations and on certified plantations. Environmentally conscious farming practices are adopted by SPOs, and resources are used to improve their capacity to adapt to climate change. However, the evidence was less supportive when it came to the adoption of environmentally appropriate resources, such as natural fertilisers or ceasing to use environmentally damaging inputs. Such outcomes were not investigated in much detail in the studies reviewed. Instead, the studies focused mostly on farming practices and performance and less on the environmental effects of these practices on SPOs and communities more broadly.

Some studies have shown that while Fairtrade certification requirements have ensured that profits are reinvested

appropriately for SPOs and HLOs, they have not focused on the adoption of good agricultural practices or measures intended specifically to increase yields. As a result, the evidence supporting this outcome is still unclear. Additionally, the evidence on adaptation to climate change was not prevalent in the research.

Overall, while there appeared to be improved knowledge of environmentally-related farm practices, the evidence suggested that this information was not always applied in practice. For example, in one study, Fairtrade certified farmers exhibited a positive effect on natural resource management when it related to a single crop, but not where there were multi-crop systems. These informed practices did not apply to all their crops. The link with the Organic certification standards, however, did show a positive effect for the adoption of environmentally appropriate resources.

## Impact: Increased environmental sustainability and climate change

The impact of this pathway on increased environmental sustainability is limited in the research, particularly around the direct impact on the environment, such as improved levels of forestry coverage, biodiversity or decreasing levels of toxicity in soil. Most of the research focused primarily on the adoption of environmentally-conscious farming practices instead, rather than on the impact of these practices on the environment. Moreover, the evidence examined for this output was general to sustainability standards rather than specific to the Fairtrade Standards. Evidence from the review shows that certification

and the application of environment-related standards on farming practices in both small producer organisations and plantations has had positive effects on improving knowledge and implementing some practices. However, it does not apply to a wide range or all environmental practices, and how they are applied appears limited. Environmental practices covering issues such as water management and soil use, pest control and use of pesticides, fertiliser application and biodiversity conservation are included in the Fairtrade Standards for both small producer organisations and plantations. Although they

have improved awareness of the benefits, more resources are needed to ensure that these practices are adopted by SPOs over a sustained period of time, and further studies are required to examine the impact on the environment of improvements made by farmers and waged workers.

Overall, the review found that Fairtrade certification had a positive impact on SPO and farmer knowledge and on most of the practices aimed at addressing climate change and increasing the resilience of farmers. However, the evidence in this category is limited and also broad in the type of evidence presented. As a result, the evidence base for this category is not as reliable as the two other pathways.

# 5. RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

## 5.1 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TOC

Following a review of the ToC and the evidence underpinning it, a number of recommendations have been identified to support improvements to the articulation and structure of the ToC. These recommendations should be viewed in light of its purpose. A ToC can be used for communicating an organisation's overall approach or, alternatively, it can be used to specify the logic of an intervention to support evidence generation through outlining assumptions and dependencies. Fairtrade's current ToC meets the first objective well. It is inclusive of all activities and is general enough to cut across products, target groups and geographies. The recommendations provided below make suggestions to gain further clarity within different parts of the ToC and ways of addressing it. These are:

- Identify unique characteristics and measurement indicators for each box in the ToC:

The areas in the ToC are designed to be broad and touch on multiple themes in order to capture different characteristics of the outputs, outcomes and impacts. However, in some cases, there appears to be some overlap between the measurement indicators for each component of the ToC, and that indicators for each component have often been used interchangeably. For example, increased investment in small producers and enhanced influence and benefits. External literature, in particular, was unable to discern these outcome and impact areas. It is recommended that individual characteristics be identified for each component. There should be a description of how best to measure them and how change is meant to happen for each one. For example, a key distinction of an output is that it shows the immediate result of an intervention being implemented. Typically, an output should prioritise measurable indicators at an individual level which are directly attributable to the activity implemented, e.g., increase in skills as a result of training, or monitoring data from audits of environmentally sustainable practices. An outcome indicates the effects of a change that has occurred as a result of an intervention. They could typically be short to medium-term, such as the management changes that occur as a result of training, or increase in yields, or higher farm-gate prices, which lead to higher income (an impact).

- Develop profiles of target beneficiaries for which effects are likely to be greatest:

Context is critical in realising the effect of certification. This extends to the type of certified organisation that Fairtrade works with, such as SPOs that show promising management capacity, or HLOs that have the ability to contribute to increased wages. For example, flower and cotton producing organisations typically demonstrated positive responses to Fairtrade certification; tea plantations, on the other hand, consistently did not. Within producer organisations, smaller producers typically benefitted less than medium and larger-scale farmers. Targeting is contrary to that of scale as it would, by definition, limit who Fairtrade engages with. However, careful consideration of who and what entities Fairtrade is most likely to benefit would aid in articulating impact and focusing evaluative resources.

- Apply a socio-ecological modelling approach to the beneficiaries:

A strength of Fairtrade's approach is that it aims to achieve impact holistically on multiple levels: creating market demand, providing certification, advocacy work that builds an enabling environment for fairer trade, stronger producer organisations that result in the wellbeing and empowerment of its members. This holistic approach is, however, complex and presents a challenge in disentangling direct and indirect effects, especially when considering that interventions are often addressing more than one area. One recommendation is to position the ToC in a hierarchical framework, such as the socio-ecological model. Such frameworks overtly account for the multiple levels on which Fairtrade operates<sup>2</sup>. Therefore, clustering outcomes and activities within its levels could also provide clearer understanding of how different activities can work to bring about change.

<sup>2</sup> Stokols, D., 1992. Establishing and maintaining healthy environments: Toward a social ecology of health promotion. *American Psychologist*, 47(1), p.6

### • Develop stronger hypotheses for change, and time required to achieve it:

Critical for evaluative planning is to develop hypotheses of likely duration for intended outputs, impacts and outcomes to be achieved. Within the same ToC area, some sub-areas are likely to shift over a shorter duration than others. Take for example income and poverty: both have been subsumed under improved income and wellbeing, although poverty is much slower to affect than income. Again, the ecologically layered idiosyncrasy of Fairtrade's approach makes the need for understanding likely timings of effects more important. Changes at the individual level are often at least partly dependent on changes at higher levels (institutional, markets), which typically take longer to achieve. Using the example of improved income: this depends greatly on the capacity of the SPO and it is often slower to achieve than individual gains in farmer yields or the prices they receive. Both depend on market conditions, and in the longer-term, on the fairness of business practices and the transparency of markets. Articulating the potential benefits for differing levels in Fairtrade's ToC would support the planning of evaluations, along with narrating what is achievable within one, five and ten-year activity cycles.

### • Splitting intervention by target group:

Activities could be split by combining activity type and by impact on specific target groups for example, certification, support to workers and farmers, and advocacy could be a way in which activities may be classified to account for targeting and impact type. Moreover, there needs to be clarity on activities which are delivered by Fairtrade and that Fairtrade is accountable for versus activities which should be delivered by others and which Fairtrade is not accountable for. For example,

training for developing and implementing internal SPO control systems for environmental standards is provided by Fairtrade, whereas training on productivity is provided by an SPO as a result of certification. This is potentially a critical difference because Fairtrade is responsible for an increase in skills arising from training in the former, whereas in the latter Fairtrade is responsible for it taking place. One way this could be achieved would be to structure the ToC within a layered framework as previously mentioned. This could be implemented by first considering target groups at different levels, i.e., farmers and workers, organisations, other groups (such as unions) and then broader target groups (such as markets and policymakers). This would allow for outcomes and activities and assumptions to be clustered within its levels and also provide additional clarity on how different activities can work to bring about change.

### • Splitting ToC by area of "attribution" vs. "contribution":

This is similar to the point above. Some Fairtrade activities have a direct impact and Fairtrade is accountable for them. Then there are others for which they are not. However, even within areas where Fairtrade is accountable for some outcomes (even those at the impact level), Fairtrade should be able to attribute impact. An example of this at the outcome level would be environmental practices, which are included in the Standards as these are extremely proximal (close) to certification, whereas an alternative outcome "Resilient and Viable SPOs" are extremely distal (far away) from the effects of certification. There are a range of factors which will determine the success of SPOs above and beyond certification. As a result, Fairtrade could only have a contribution effect for this area. An alternative approach would be to focus more closely on outcomes which can be audited and monitored.

## 5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

### • Commission evidence to validate pathways:

More research could be carried out to further validate emerging pathways as well as to collect more evidence on drivers and barriers to existing outcomes and a clearer understanding of how they inhibit or support the ToC. This could be achieved in part through monitoring research that examines the implementation of activities. This would allow more evidence to be gathered on conditions needed to ensure they have an effect on outcomes. It would also capture the ways in which interventions are implemented and discern if outcomes have not been reached because of implementation failure, or because activities are ineffective at creating change.

### • Evaluate indicators for making trade fair:

There is an apparent dearth of evidence contributing to areas under this part of the ToC. Fairtrade's role in this outcome will only ever be contributory and progress is likely to be gradual. Nevertheless, longer-term outcomes and impacts could be formally evaluated using contribution analysis methods, such as outcome mapping, or most significant change to test and validate Fairtrade's role in markets. Insights from this type of evaluation could also work to further support the development of Fairtrade's market strategy.

### • Invest in longitudinal studies:

A number of studies have highlighted that impact between certified and non-certified producers may simply reflect systematic pre-existing differences in wealth and resources which attract entities to certification. Beneficiaries self-select Fairtrade and this provides a significant challenge when attempting to attribute impact. Moreover, the majority of evidence is cross-sectional and while a number of these studies have applied statistical controls to account for the bias of self-selection, these are limited as difference can only be ascertained when measuring outcomes at a same timepoint. Alternatively, longitudinal evidence, particularly quantitative studies which track individuals, can measure change rather than difference, meaning such effects can be fully understood and investigated.

### • Invest in evaluations which only focus on Fairtrade implemented in isolation:

The majority of studies, especially the most methodologically robust quantitative studies, tend to examine a range of certification schemes. This often leads to a "certification bundle", which makes it difficult to disentangle the success and limitations of Fairtrade specifically. This also raises the question as to whether evaluations should also focus on specific components of certification, proving these areas before focusing on different activities. This is because the multiple activities which are included in certification means that failure to reach expected output, outcome and impacts cannot disentangle performing aspects of certification from underperforming aspects. Admittedly, Fairtrade is often used in conjunction with other certifications schemes. In light of this, analytical techniques, such as factorial designs, could be investigated. Factorial approaches would enable the main effects of Fairtrade to be identified by comparing different certification schemes (i.e., Fairtrade vs Rainforest Alliance vs Fairtrade and Organic).

### • Focus on quantifiable outcome measures:

How outcomes were ascertained was extremely variable. From the evidence mapped to the ToC, some areas such as knowledge and capacity, access to fair trading conditions, and environmental sustainability were particularly weak in their assessment. In general, they used perspectives rather than tangible measures of improved skills and knowledge, for example. Other areas which typically measured softer concepts such as empowerment, or gender inclusion also used very inconsistent measures of success. Where possible, evidence which measures outcomes, such as yields, or validated measurements of environmental conditions should be prioritised. For other areas, such as empowerment, validated indicators are available. For these harder to define outcomes in Fairtrade's ToC it may be beneficial to provide either clear definitions of what these areas represent (e.g., empowerment includes women having control of profits from farming but does not include decision-making outside of this, for example, their health care) or, alternatively, provide an indicator compendium of measures to capture benefits.

# 8. APPENDIX

## APPENDIX A: STUDY IDENTIFICATION

The project drew from two existing sources of literature to identify appropriate studies for the evidence map:

- 1) Research internally collated in Fairtrade databases,
- 2) An external structured literature search to identify more recent peer reviewed studies not collated by Fairtrade.

### Fairtrade's internally collated research:

This comprised of research commissioned by Fairtrade, external grey literature and peer reviewed studies. Studies were held within a number of different databases and included recent external studies (post-2014), which were reviewed previously by Fairtrade for evidence-mapping, publications on Fairtrade's website, and older external studies (prior to 2014).

Across internal databases a total of 223 studies were available, although a number of duplicate entries were apparent. The research team manually reviewed approximately 150 studies to identify those most appropriate. Fairtrade staff suggested 47 for entry.

### Literature search:

An external structured literature search was undertaken and located 34 unique studies not held by Fairtrade. The search was carried out on 23rd June 2020 using the following bibliographical databases:

1. Academic Search Complete
2. Web of Science
3. Campbell Collection

The following keyword search terms and synonyms covering certification schemes and evaluation types were developed by

the study team and reviewed by Fairtrade staff. Only studies published later than 2014 were considered.

Only articles available in English were considered. A total of 558 studies were identified by the search terms. On the advice of Fairtrade only articles which were cited over 3+ times were considered, except for publications in 2019/2020 as these studies would not have had sufficient chance to be cited. Overall, the search returned 201 quantitative studies and 51 qualitative studies. All abstracts were assessed and checked against the framework for duplicates. From this pool of 252 studies the detailed review identified 34 studies that were relevant and not already mapped against the framework.

Table 16: Synonyms to use for search terms

Certification schemes	Methods Quant	Methods Qual
fair trade	Most significant change	RCT
Fairtrade	Ethnography*	Instrumental
certification	In-depth-interview*	Interrupted time series
voluntary sustainability	Focus Group	Attributional
eco label*	Systematic review	Quasi Experimental

Certification schemes	Methods Quant	Methods Qual
Sustainab* stand*	Outcome Map*	Longitudinal
Sustainable trade		Cohort
agricultural certification		Propensity score
		Structural Model*
		Regression discontin*
		Difference in difference
		Multi-level modelling
		hierarchical linear model*
		Randomi*ed Control Trial
		Experiment*

\* = truncated to account for different endings or US / UK spelling

## APPENDIX B: CRITERIA FOR RATING STUDIES RELEVANCE

As described in Section 3 of this report, once studies were mapped against the ToC areas in the framework, a criterion was used to determine the relevance of results to Fairtrade. Relevance was a composite indicator reflecting both how applicable findings were to Fairtrade and the credibility of the research. Relevance rating was undertaken separately for qualitative and quantitative methods, meaning that mixed-methods studies had two relevance scores. All studies were classified as:

- **High relevance:** Fairtrade can have most confidence in the study's findings and conclusions
- **Medium relevance:** Fairtrade can be fairly confident in the study's findings and conclusions
- **Low relevance:** Findings and conclusions from these studies should be used with caution

### Study applicability to Fairtrade:

The same criteria were applied for qualitative and quantitative and mixed-methods studies. The studies that focused on Fairtrade were entered into the Excel framework. Studies were determined as focusing exclusively on Fairtrade, or studies which examined Fairtrade alongside other sustainability standers, or studies which did not study Fairtrade. For studies which did not examine Fairtrade on its own or in combination with other standards the activity types investigated were

examined for comparability with Fairtrade's as these were also entered into the framework.

This classified all studies as "Relevant" or "Not Relevant". Not relevant meant those studies which did not directly evaluate Fairtrade or comparable activities. Studies classified as not relevant automatically received the lowest relevance score, irrespective of their credibility.

### Credibility of research:

This score draws on three elements of the study: i) methods employed, ii) particulars of study design, analysis and reporting, and iii) the number of areas relevant to the ToC. This classified all studies as:

- **Low:** Findings and conclusions should be used with caution
- **Medium:** We can have confidence in the study's findings
- **High:** The study findings and conclusions in which we can have most confidence

This classification score was determined by the lowest result across elements. For example, a robust method with no aims or objectives would be classified as low credibility.

**i) Methods employed:** This element differed between qualitative and quantitative research. Namely, any methods differing from those listed in Table 2 below were classified as other (though details were recorded), and these studies would have received the lowest credibility classification. For qualitative research, all of the methods listed were classified as either high or medium credibility and this was determined by the other elements examined. For quantitative research, some methods needed to make use of a counterfactual to be considered medium credibility, and control for confounders to be considered high credibility. See Table 17.

Table17: qualitative and quantitative methods considered

Qualitative Methods	Quantitative Methods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ethnographic study</li> <li>• In-depth interviews</li> <li>• Observational study</li> <li>• Focus group discussion</li> <li>• Longitudinal study</li> <li>• Most significant change methods</li> <li>• Rural participatory methods</li> <li>• Review articles including systematic reviews</li> <li>• Ecological studies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cross-sectional time series</li> <li>• Ecological studies</li> <li>• Cross-sectional</li> <li>• Pre-post test</li> <li>• Cohort / longitudinal (including Pre-post-test with counterfactual)</li> <li>• Stronger Quasi Experimental Methods (instrumental, interrupted time series, regression discontinuity)</li> <li>• Difference in difference design</li> <li>• Randomised control trials</li> <li>• Meta-analysis</li> </ul>

**ii) Particulars of study design, analysis and reporting:** The study check list presented below was also considered for qualitative and quantitative research. For a study to be classified as medium credibility it needed to have clear aims, objectives or hypothesis and it needed to be clear, or mostly

clear, how the authors arrived at their conclusions. Any study which did not have these characteristics would be scored low credibility. For a study to be classified as high credibility the study needed to be scored 1 or 2 on all the checklist points below.

## Study checklist:

<b>Q1 Publication</b> – where was the study published	
The study was published in a peer reviewed journal	2
The study was commissioned by, or publication is associated with very noteworthy academic, organisation, NGO or institution	1
The study was another type of publication, e.g., Master's thesis	0
<b>Q2 Study aims</b> – Are the research questions, objectives or aims clearly reported	
Yes - the study provided a number of research questions and/or hypothesis	2
Yes – the study did not have research questions, but had clear objectives or aims	1
No – the study only gave a very broad area of investigation, reporting no specific aims, hypothesis or questions	0
<b>Q3 Study sample</b> – is it clear how participants were sampled?	
Yes – the study provided a clear but detailed overview of how participants were selected	2
No – the study only provided brief/unclear overview on how participants were selected	1
No – the study did not detail how participants were selected	0
<b>Q4 Reproducibility</b> - it is clear how the findings and conclusions have been arrived at?	
Yes – it is clear to me how the authors have arrived at their conclusions	2
Somewhat –it is clear to me how most conclusions have been arrived at, however, in some cases effects and results were overlooked	1
No - it is unclear how the authors have arrived at their conclusions based on their results, or conclusions overlook important effects	0
<b>Q5 Limitations</b> – are the results interpreted in relation to limitations of the study (e.g., potential sources of bias)	
Yes – the report describes the study limitations, potential sources of bias and how these can affect results	2
Somewhat – the report does list some limitations, but does not discuss how these could have affected results	1
No – the report does not discuss or outline any study limitations or sources of bias	0

**iii) Areas mapped to the ToC:** For qualitative research, the number of results relative to the ToC were also used for credibility. This was employed to capture depth of focus of the study. Studies which examined no outcomes relevant to the ToC were classified as low credibility, studies which examined

one or two areas relevant to the ToC could be classified as medium, and finally studies examining three or more areas relevant to the ToC could be classified as high credibility.

## Combining applicability and credibility into relevance:

In developing study credibility classification, the three elements were combined in Excel. Following this, the credibility scores were combined with the applicability rating. How these various factors informed the overall relevance classification is shown

in Table 18 below. Qualitative and quantitative methods were considered individually, and therefore for mixed-methods studies a relevance rating was returned for both these components.

Table 18: overall classification for study relevance

Study rating	Quantitative Criterion	Qualitative Criterion
<p><b>High relevance –</b> the study findings and conclusions in which we can have most confidence</p>	<p><b>Credibility:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The study uses Stronger Quasi Experimental Methods (instrumental, interrupted time series, regression discontinuity), Randomised control trial or Meta-analysis method</li> </ul> <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The study uses Cross-sectional time series, Ecological studies, Cross-sectional, Pre-post-test and method and must use a counterfactual and must control for confounding.</li> </ul> <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The study uses Difference in difference, Cohort / longitudinal (including Pre-post-test with counterfactual) method and must control for confounding.</li> </ul> <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All areas assessed within the study checklist to rate research quality are rated at least a 1 or above.</li> </ul> <p><b>Applicability:</b></p> <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Either evaluated Fairtrade on its own or in combination with other certification schemes, or evaluated activities comparable to Fairtrade</li> </ul>	<p><b>Credibility:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The study employs any qualitative method listed above</li> </ul> <p>AND</p> <p>Covers 3 or more areas in the ToC</p> <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All areas assessed within the study checklist to rate research quality are rated at least a 1 or above.</li> </ul> <p><b>Applicability:</b></p> <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Either evaluated Fairtrade on its own or in combination with other certification schemes, or evaluated activities comparable to Fairtrade</li> </ul>

Study rating	Quantitative Criterion	Qualitative Criterion
<p><b>Medium relevance –</b> we can have confidence in the study's findings</p>	<p><b>Credibility:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The study uses Cohort / longitudinal (including Pre-post-test with counterfactual), Stronger Quasi Experimental Methods (instrumental, interrupted time series, regression discontinuity), Difference in difference design, Randomised control trials or Meta-analysis method.</li> </ul> <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The study uses Cross-sectional time series, Ecological studies, Cross-sectional or Pre-post-test method and must use a counterfactual</li> </ul> <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The study must have clear aims or objectives (i.e., scored as 1 or 2 for Q2 on the rating of research quality checklist)</li> </ul> <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It must be clear how conclusions have been arrived at (i.e., scored 1 or 2 Q5 on the check list).</li> </ul> <p><b>Applicability:</b></p> <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Either evaluated Fairtrade on its own or in combination with other certification schemes, or evaluated activities comparable to Fairtrade</li> </ul>	<p><b>Credibility:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The study employs any qualitative method listed above</li> </ul> <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Covers 1 or more areas in the ToC</li> </ul> <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The studies must have clear aims or objectives (i.e., scored as 1 or 2) rating of research quality checklist</li> </ul> <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It must be clear how conclusions have been arrived at (i.e., scored 1 or 2 Q5 on the checklist).</li> </ul> <p><b>Applicability:</b></p> <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Either evaluated Fairtrade on its own or in combination with other certification schemes, or evaluated activities comparable to Fairtrade</li> </ul>
<p><b>Low relevance–</b> findings and conclusions should be used with caution</p>	<p><b>Credibility:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The study uses another type of quantitative method</li> </ul> <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The study uses an ecological OR cross-sectional OR Cross-sectional time series OR Pre-post-test method without a control group</li> </ul> <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The study scored a 0 for Aims and Reproducibility for the rating of research quality checklist</li> </ul> <p>Applicability:</p> <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The study only studied other certification schemes and investigated activities outside those listed by Fairtrade</li> </ul>	<p><b>Credibility:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The study uses other qualitative methods listed</li> </ul> <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The study investigates less than 1 ToC area</li> </ul> <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The study scored a 0 for Aims and Reproducibility on the checklist</li> </ul> <p>Applicability:</p> <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The study only studied other certification schemes and investigated activities outside those listed by Fairtrade</li> </ul>

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