The International Trade Centre’s Coffee: An Exporter’s Guide, first published in 1992, is the world’s most extensive, hands-on and neutral source of information on the international coffee trade.

It covers trade issues relevant to coffee growers, traders, exporters, transportation companies, certifiers, associations and authorities and other relevant actors. For many in the coffee industry, it is the go-to reference.

ITC is now undertaking a remarkable coordination effort to update its most downloaded publication. The 4th edition will be released in the first quarter of 2021, building on its strong legacy.

The new edition is the result of a co-creation process with coffee industry actors, from seed to cup. An advisory panel of over 60 members from across the globe are helping to shape its structure and content.

Producer organizations, major coffee roasters and brands, policymakers and coffee organizations offered their time, knowledge and experience to raise the bar of the even higher.

Our goal is to provide the industry with information that is both useful and in line with current realities. Here is a glimpse into key topics you can expect:

- **A focus on a values-based supply chain** featuring climate change, living income, gender, youth and overall sustainability.
- **A new definition of data and quality.** Quality is an evolving concept, linked ever more closely to sustainability. The guide introduces cutting-edge concepts to collect data based on quality segmentation.
- **An exploration of digitalization** for a more productive, efficient and equitable supply chain.
- **An analysis of COVID-19 impact** and its influence on next steps for the world of coffee.
- **Producer and buyer perspectives:** A collaborative process for inclusion of all supply chain actors, across chapters.
A VALUES-BASED SUPPLY CHAIN

Sustainability and alliances for a coffee sector with values are the consistent thread that brings the guide together. Topics of climate change, price volatility and unbalanced supply chain dynamics are addressed. It also explores definitions of living income, the ‘Project Drawdown’ logic for climate solutions, and the role that youth and women can play in taking coffee forward.

“The impact will be on several aspects of coffee world, from human rights to environmental protection.”

A central focus is to preserve the dignity of coffee farmers and their families and the organic integration of good practices in our coffee systems."

Mario Cerruti, Chief Institutional Relations & Sustainability Officer, Lavazza Group

“Women remain champions in the coffee sector, from seed to cup. We must provide avenues for their continued empowerment.

Youth are also critical in ensuring continuity and that the sector continues to thrive in the future. They must be engaged to move the sector forward.”

Jhannel Tomlinson, Board Secretary, International Women’s Coffee Alliance, Jamaica

NEW DEFINITIONS OF QUALITY

Quality in coffee is an evolving concept. For many years, the coffee industry looked at quality from the perspective of what was at a minimum acceptable level for the market.

Today, definitions of quality have become much more precise and are also closely interlinked with concepts of sustainability.

The guide considers coffee quality, markets and data according to a tiered quality segmentation: Standard, Premium and Specialized. This brings a brand-new data set to the industry for a more comprehensive market analysis and a better recognition of value.

“For quality and price to be positively linked, consumers must be able to identify the quality attributes that are important to them.

This can include flavour and aroma, as well as sustainable provenance, a production system that delivers rewards equitably across the value chain, and an absence of unethical practices.”

Ric Rhinehart, Former Executive Director, Specialty Coffee Association
DIGITALIZATION, FROM SEED TO CUP

Online sales are not the only emerging trend. Digitalization is happening across the supply chain, allowing more productivity, quality control, consistency and efficiency than ever before.

The digitalization of the coffee supply chain could have major social and economic implications and bring more balance to an industry with inequities related to markets, opportunities and capacity levels.

“Digitalization enables the flow of information, which could dramatically shift how value is distributed through supply chains. To make it work, we first need systems to:

- Ensure access to meaningful information.
- Curate information to make it actionable, meaningful, and valuable to all parts of the supply chain.

Digitalization can democratize information and open new possibilities for transparency, quality, productivity and profitability. However, it’s a mistake to think of digitalization as a replacement for necessary systems and institutions to support farmers.

The ITC coffee guide curates information across the industry and highlights the key themes that merit attention or areas requiring deeper understanding."

Jennifer ‘Vern’ Long, CEO, World Coffee Research

COVID-19: UNEXPECTED OPPONENT

The global outbreak of the COVID-19 virus is having a major impact on international trade. The coffee market and supply chain have not been spared.

It represents an unprecedented economic shock, as demand and supply are scaled back around the globe and across sectors. The covid-19 pandemic is likely to have a profound impact on the global coffee sector, including production, consumption and international trade.

“2020 has been a challenging year. While the production chain only has been slightly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, it has accelerated a shift in consumption patterns, with more at-home consumption and e-commerce, and much less on-trade business. Moving forward, coffee producers around the world continue to increase productivity and quality through investments in research and development, sustainable production and post-harvest technologies."

Vanusia Nogueira, Executive Director, Brazil Specialty Coffee Association

“The pandemic has caused the coffee sector to question its traditional way of doing business. It is creating both challenges and opportunities for small producers. Consumers are now looking for cleaner, more sustainable products. As business resumes online, small farmer cooperatives are now tapping into markets that were previously difficult for them to access.”

Joao Mattos, Supply Chain and Commercial Manager for Coffee, Latin American and Caribbean Network of Fair Trade Small Producers and Workers (CLAC)
A PROCESS OF CO-CREATION

The coffee sector is of major importance to many developing countries and notably for producer communities, small firms and exporters. It occupies a large segment of global trade. As such, it is important that the International Trade Centre continues to play a key source of knowledge for the coffee sector.

As it has done in the previous edition, the update is highly participatory, with a wide range of contributors around the world. The current update relies on the Alliances for Action methodology, which is participatory and includes broad consultations with key stakeholders.

A multidisciplinary team of authors are leading the update the Coffee Export Guide, informed by an Advisory Expert Panel composed of key stakeholders from across the coffee, trade, and international development landscapes. Representatives include:

- Producer groups: 5
- Traders, roasters and coffee brands: 7
- Coffee associations and institutions: 12
- Certification bodies: 3
- Finance and investment groups: 2
- International organisations and NGOs: 10
- Academia and research: 6
- Expert support services across the supply chain: 18

The Advisory Expert Panel has inclusive, geographical representation.

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