



**Report on the 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the  
Focus Group on Specialty Coffee**

1. The Executive Director, Dr Vanúzia Nogueira, welcomed all participants to the first meeting of the Focus Group on Specialty Coffee (FGSC) which took place on 13 March 2024.
2. Representatives of the following Members were present: Brazil, Cameroon, Colombia, El Salvador, EU-Italy, India, Indonesia and Panama.
3. The Executive Director shared the following definition of specialty coffee from eight years prior: “Beans free from impurities and defects that have distinctive sensory attributes. These attributes, which include a clean and sweet cup, balanced body and acidity, give your drink a score of over 80 points in a sensory analysis. In addition to intrinsic quality, specialty coffees must have certified traceability and meet environmental, economic and social sustainability criteria at all stages of production.” She also highlighted that the definition did not distinguish between Arabicas and Robustas.
4. Additionally, the Executive Director shared a complementary definition from the Specialty Coffee Association, allowing members of the FGSC to understand the wide-ranging scope of speciality coffee: “Specialty coffee can consistently exist through the dedication of the people who have made it their life's work to continually make quality their highest priority. This is not the work of only one person in the lifecycle of a coffee bean; specialty can only occur when all of those involved in the coffee value chain work in harmony and maintain a keen focus on standards and excellence from start to finish.” She then highlighted what it meant to work with specialty coffee at each step of the global coffee value chain.
5. The delegate of Panama shared that her country focused mainly on quality rather than quantity due to its limited geographic size, highlighting that the national coffee institution could benefit greatly from more research and development, with tools for marketing and promoting specialty coffee also needed.

6. The delegate of the EU-Italy indicated that the Coffee Quality Institute also has projects on specialty coffee and that World Coffee Research was conducting research to improve coffee genomics.

7. The delegate of Brazil suggested inviting the directors/heads of national specialty coffee associations to meetings of the FGSC to give them the opportunity to present any areas in which their organizations might be lacking and also the direction in which the FGSC should potentially head in order to cater to their needs. He also stressed how to increase sustainability within the specialty coffee sector, such as through increasing specialization. Lastly, he emphasized the need for robust statistics on specialty coffee through, for example, a vehicle similar to the ICO's Certificate of Origin, highlighting that this would encourage consumption and lead to a standardized global definition worldwide. The delegate of Brazil stated that information regarding specialty coffee was very important, as it dealt with the commerce and price of the product, all whilst addressing the transparency of the market. Thus, the delegate from Brazil argued that aggregating data through a specialty coffee certificate would protect the market from speculation and oscillations.

8. The delegate of Colombia reiterated Brazil's point regarding the importance of statistics along the entire coffee value chain.

9. The delegate of El Salvador underlined the need for more tools to allow specialty coffee farmers to better position themselves in the market landscape. To this end, she mentioned that the FGSC should focus on improving the dissemination of agricultural best practices and techniques to address demand, such as marketing guidance. Moreover, she shared the need for better market transparency so as to allow producers to cater to changing demands. Lastly, the delegate requested that the FGSC examine ways to enhance how producer organizations and associations can involve and incorporate themselves further in the global coffee value chain.

10. The delegate of Indonesia suggested that specialty coffee should not be limited to Arabicas but also include Robustas given the market demand for them within the fine coffee market segment.

11. The delegate of India shared that there was a need for more education among value chain actors in order to better represent the qualities of specialty coffees.

12. The Executive Director shared that the BSCA definition of specialty coffee did not distinguish between Arabicas and Robustas, clarifying that the methods for production and post harvesting processes had evolved greatly.

13. Additionally, the Executive Director shared information about projects to be undertaken under the new Memorandum of Understanding with the Specialty Coffee Association, including an educational programme named 'Access to Markets', aimed at producing countries. She informed members of the FGSC that she would keep them up to date as the project evolved.

14. In response to Members' requests for greater transparency, the Executive Director advised those present that she was in the process of organizing a dynamic webinar on trends and consumption alongside the National Coffee Association. The webinar aims to advise producers on how to cater to the demand for specialty coffee.

15. Referring to the ICO Statistical Coordinator's points, who shared details from the [ITC's 4th Coffee Guide](#), where differentiations between specialty and gourmet are not set internationally, the delegate of Brazil re-iterated that a standardized definition of specialty coffee was lacking.

16. The Executive Director took note of the suggestions made by all Members who attended the meeting of the FGSC, in particular regarding the following points:

- The need to work towards a specialty coffee definition;
- The need to examine further collaboration opportunities with coffee research and development institutes;
- The need to share learnings and discoveries across the coffee producer landscape; and
- The need to promote specialty coffee consumption.

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| <p>17. For the next meeting, delegates of the FGSC agreed to invite their respective national heads of speciality coffee associations to attend, tentatively in mid-May, noting that this would enable the FGSC to assess their needs and evaluate how the ICO could support them.</p> |
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18. Members decided on a tentative date for the next meeting of mid-May 2024, when the frequency and length of meetings would be established. 12pm in the UK was chosen as the preferred time. With regard to documents, it was agreed that agendas would be shared prior to the meetings and draft reports thereafter.