

**Report of the 3rd Meeting of the Focus
Group on Specialty Coffee**

1. The Executive Director, Dr Vanússia Nogueira, welcomed all participants to the third meeting of the Focus Group on Specialty Coffee (FGSC), which took place on 15 January 2025.
2. Representatives of the following countries were present: Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, El Salvador, EU-Germany, EU-Italy, Gabon, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Mexico, Nepal, Norway, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, the Philippines, Republic of the Congo, Togo, Vietnam, Zambia and Zimbabwe.
3. The Executive Director shared the report of the second meeting of the FGSC, as contained in document [FGSC-02/24](#), which was subsequently approved.
4. As agreed at the second meeting, the Secretariat put together a list of existing specialty coffee definitions, as presented in [FGSC-03/24](#). This report was shared with the Group and no comments were raised.
5. The Executive Director explained that, due to the lack of budget, interpretation was not available for the meeting.
6. The delegates of Colombia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, El Salvador and Indonesia shared their definitions of specialty coffee, as subsequently circulated in [FGSC-03/24 Rev. 1](#).
7. The delegate of Brazil explained that, for the Brazilian coffee chain, a differentiated coffee was one that pleased the consumer's palette, providing satisfaction either due to its sensory qualities or another attribute. He continued that it was therefore up to the market to determine what constituted a specialty coffee. Furthermore, he added that, for the Brazilian coffee value chain, environmental and sustainable agricultural and human aspects should not be a unique characteristic of specialty coffees.

8. The CEO of CECAFÉ-Brazil shared that, in their monthly coffee export report, on average 20% of all exports were differentiated coffees. Of these, he explained that 60% were classified as special quality coffees, while 40% had environmental certifications. The delegate explained that it would now be a mandatory requirement for exporters to declare the special qualities of coffees, increasing the quality of the statistics.

9. The delegate of El Salvador highlighted that a common denominator should be identified in order to establish a definition. He added that this could be based on preparation, but that the score of the coffee should not necessarily be used as a reference, as that depended on the consumer.

10. The delegate of the EU-Italy highlighted that it may not be feasible to have a single common definition. However, for the purpose of collecting statistics on specialty coffee, a common definition should still be established.

11. The delegate of Indonesia proposed increasing the number of allowable defects from 5 to 11, and advocated for the standardization of the roasting process to ensure consistency in coffee grading. Furthermore, he added that the minimum score for specialty coffee should remain at 80 points, and that coffees scoring above 90 points could be classified as premium coffees. The delegate also emphasized that traceability should form part of a certification system to enhance consumer trust and open up new markets for Indonesian coffees. He argued that, if these standards were adopted, the changes would benefit not only the farmers producing the coffee, but also support broader efforts to improve quality.

12. The delegate of Papua New Guinea supported the Brazilian delegate's position of moving away from the term "specialty" and adopting a "differentiated" definition instead. While acknowledging the difficulty of standardizing the definitions of specialty coffee, he suggested using a price premium on world markets as the basis for defining specialty coffee, rather than linking the definition to socio-economic or environmental factors. Finally, the delegate emphasized that the purpose of the Focus Group was to quantify the specialty coffee market.

13. The delegate of El Salvador proposed using a cupping protocol to distinguish between standard and specialty coffees.

14. The delegate of Brazil acknowledged that specialty coffee commands a premium over conventional coffee. However, he clarified that this was not the priority of the Brazilian coffee value chain, which was more focused on the market's ability to meet the demand for differentiated coffees, regardless of their definition. He suggested that the FGSC might be giving too much attention to complex elements such as price, and noted that the definition of specialty coffee was subjective. This perspective aligns with the earlier definition provided by the Specialty Coffee Association of Japan (SCAJ), i.e. "Coffee that consumers evaluate and are satisfied with".

15. The delegate of Brazil highlighted the complexity of the definition, due to the subjectivity of differentiated coffees. As such, he suggested that a general and broad definition be adopted.

16. The Board President of CECAFÉ, supported Indonesia's suggestion of increasing the total number of defects from 5 to 11, while stressing the importance of the different types of defects. For example, he explained that broken beans would not affect the quality of the cup and that the procedure for eliminating defects mechanically was not only very time consuming, but also labour and cost intensive. Finally, he added that multiple high-quality beans were also discarded mechanically, therefore decreasing the revenue for the producer.

17. The delegate of Brazil inquired about the final output of the FGSC, again expressing concern that it might be placing too much emphasis on complex aspects such as price fluctuations and definitions. Instead, he suggested a stronger focus on promoting specialty coffees, sharing experiences, stimulating consumption, and exploring opportunities for cooperation with research institutes dealing with specialty coffee.

18. The FGSC agreed that the Secretariat should consolidate the additional definitions of specialty coffee submitted by Members in preparation for the next meeting, as published in document [FGSC-3/24 Rev. 1](#).