



**ORGANISATION  
INTERNATIONALE  
DU CAFÉ**

**FGSC** 08/26

24 septembre 2026

Original : anglais

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**Rapport de la 5e réunion du Groupe de  
discussion sur le café de spécialité tenue  
le 22 septembre 2026**

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## **RAPPORT DE LA 5<sup>e</sup> RÉUNION DU GROUPE DE DISCUSSION SUR LE CAFÉ DE SPÉCIALITÉ TENUE LE 22 SEPTEMBRE 2026**

1. Le présent rapport rend compte des discussions qui ont eu lieu lors de la 5<sup>e</sup> réunion du Groupe de discussion sur le café de spécialité (GDCS), présidée par la Directrice exécutive, Mme Vanúsia Nogueira, et tenue le 22 septembre 2026.

2. Les représentants des pays membres suivants étaient présents en ligne via le logiciel Zoom : l'Angola, le Brésil, le Cameroun, l'Inde, la Norvège, le Salvador, le Togo et l'Union européenne (notamment l'Allemagne, la France et l'Italie). Des représentants de l'Association des Cafés de Spécialité (*Specialty Coffee Association* ; SCA) ont également participé.

### **Point 1 :                   Ordre du jour provisoire**

3. La Directrice exécutive a présenté l'ordre du jour provisoire, figurant dans le document [FGSC-07/26](#), qui a été adopté par le Groupe de discussion sans observation.

### **Point 2 :                   Rapport de la 4<sup>e</sup> réunion du Groupe de discussion sur le café de spécialité**

4. La Directrice exécutive a présenté le rapport de la 4<sup>e</sup> réunion du GDCS, qui s'est tenue à San Pedro Sula, au Honduras, le 13 octobre 2025, tel qu'il figure dans le document [FGSC-06/26](#). Le Groupe de discussion a approuvé le rapport sans observation.

### **Point 3 :                   Proposition de norme pour le café vert**

5. La Directrice exécutive a rappelé que, comme indiqué aux paragraphes 20 et 24 du document [FGSC-06/26](#), le Groupe de discussion avait convenu d'inviter la SCA à participer officiellement à ses travaux. Elle a informé les participants que la SCA avait commencé à travailler sur une définition commune du café de spécialité ainsi que sur un projet de norme pour le café vert, qui avait depuis été discuté en 2026 au siège de l'Organisation internationale du café (OIC) à Londres (février) ; lors du salon World of Coffee de San Diego (avril) ; avec les membres de la Fédération du café de l'ASEAN lors du salon World of Coffee de Bangkok (mai) ; et lors du salon World of Coffee de Bruxelles (juin), ainsi que lors d'échanges virtuels avec les Membres.

6. Mme Kim Elena Ionescu, Directrice du développement stratégique de la SCA, a expliqué que cette proposition consistait en une norme de classement du café vert fondée sur l'évaluation de la valeur du café (*Coffee Value Assessment* ; CVA), adoptée par la SCA en 2024 pour remplacer des normes datant pour la plupart de 2004 environ, et sur la définition du café de spécialité basée sur les attributs, établie par la SCA en 2021.<sup>1</sup> Elle a fait remarquer que les grades nationaux

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<sup>1</sup> La norme en question figure à l'annexe I.

mesuraient des attributs différents et ne pouvaient donc pas être comparées. Elle a déclaré qu'une norme unique offrirait aux acheteurs et aux vendeurs un langage commun, tout en ne modifiant qu'un seul élément des contrats de café vert – la désignation nationale –, qui serait remplacée par un grade de la SCA.

7. Mme Ionescu a ajouté que la CVA évaluait la qualité à travers quatre composantes : physique (telles que l'humidité et la taille des grains), descriptive et affective (toutes deux évaluées lors de la dégustation professionnelle (*cupping*)) et extrinsèque (telles que l'origine, la plantation, la variété et le traitement).<sup>2</sup>

8. M. Mario Fernández-Alduenda, Vice-président technique de la SCA, a indiqué que, lors de la réunion qui s'est tenue à Londres en février 2026 avec l'Association africaine des cafés fins (AFCA), l'Association brésilienne du café de spécialité (BSCA), le Coffee Board of India, la Fédération colombienne des caféiculteurs (FNC), l'Association indonésienne du café de spécialité (SCAI), l'Association vietnamienne du café et du cacao (VICOFA) et l'OIC, les participants avaient adapté la définition du café de spécialité donnée par la SCA, qui était descriptive plutôt que normative, au cas du café vert et avaient commencé à rédiger des spécifications techniques. Il a présenté la définition qui en a résulté :

*Le café vert de spécialité désigne les grains entiers séchés du genre Coffea. Il se distingue par ses attributs caractéristiques, identifiés à l'aide de l'évaluation de la valeur du café, et, à cause de ces attributs, il présente une valeur ajoutée significative sur le marché.*

9. M. Fernández-Alduenda a expliqué que cette définition excluait les autres parties du caféier ainsi que le café sans grains, tel que celui produit par culture cellulaire, et qu'elle couvrait toutes les espèces du genre *Coffea*. Il a précisé que la norme divisait le continuum allant du produit de base au café de spécialité en six grades, du grade 6, ne comportant pratiquement aucune spécification, au grade 1, soumis aux exigences les plus strictes parmi les quatre évaluations du CVA, telles qu'une teneur en humidité comprise entre 10 et 12 %, l'absence de défauts de catégorie 1 et un maximum de 10 défauts de catégorie 2, une tasse propre exempte de défauts sensoriels présentant au moins deux attributs sensoriels souhaitables, ainsi que l'accès aux informations relatives à l'exploitation et à la transformation. Il a souligné que tous les grades ne correspondaient pas à des grades de café de spécialité et que la plus-value attendue

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<sup>2</sup> La présentation de la SCA figure à l'annexe II.

franco à bord (FAB) augmenterait du grade 6 au grade 1, le « point zéro » étant fixé au grade 5, correspondant à un café de bonne qualité courante, de type boursier.

10. M. Fernández-Alduenda a indiqué que les organisations locales du café dans les pays producteurs établiraient les listes des attributs sensoriels souhaitables et indésirables, qui seraient rendues publiques pendant au moins trois ans, et décideraient quels grades constituaient du café de spécialité dans leur pays. Il a informé les participants que la SCA prévoyait de publier la norme d'ici mi-2027, en collaboration étroite avec le GDCS et l'OIC, et que d'autres échanges auraient lieu lors des réunions du Conseil international du Café (CIC) à Genève le 29 septembre 2026, de la conférence de l'Association suisse des négociants en café (SCTA) à Montreux le 2 octobre 2026 et du salon World of Coffee Panama le 22 octobre 2026. Il a invité le Secrétariat à diffuser la dernière version du projet de norme.

11. La Directrice exécutive a souligné que la proposition était un travail en cours, ouvert à la consultation et au dialogue, et a donné la parole aux participants pour qu'ils puissent formuler leurs commentaires.

12. Le délégué du Salvador a déclaré que les producteurs étaient le seul maillon de la chaîne de valeur soumis à des pressions, en raison de leur manque de rentabilité, et que les normes de qualité du café étaient déjà définies à l'échelle mondiale. Il a estimé que l'ajout de spécifications tout en laissant à chaque pays le soin de décider quels grades constituaient du café de spécialité présentait un risque de difficultés similaires à celles rencontrées avec le Règlement de l'UE sur les produits zéro déforestation (RDUE), ajoutant que la proposition ne traitait pas du café ayant subi une fermentation prolongée ou auxquels des arômes avaient été ajoutés, ce qui alourdissait la charge pesant sur les producteurs. Il a noté qu'il existait un large consensus sur ce point dans toute la région PROMECAFE, y compris en Jamaïque, au Panama et en République dominicaine.

13. M. Fernández-Alduenda a répondu que, si les normes existantes étaient suffisamment claires, le segment du café de spécialité pourrait déjà être évalué. Cependant, le GDCS avait déjà établi qu'il n'existait aucune définition exploitable permettant à l'OIC de le quantifier, ce qui avait motivé les travaux de la SCA.

14. Le délégué du Salvador s'est interrogé sur le degré d'adoption de la CVA, soulignant que peu de dégustateurs l'utilisaient.

15. Mme Ionescu a reconnu que l'adoption prenait du temps et a indiqué que, suite à son partenariat avec le *Coffee Quality Institute* (CQI) en 2025, la SCA avait commencé à gérer le programme *Q Grader*, ce qui contribuerait à favoriser son adoption à l'échelle mondiale.

16. Le délégué de l'UE-Italie a rappelé qu'un des principaux objectifs de la définition était de permettre l'élaboration de statistiques sur les volumes de café de spécialité commercialisés et consommés, ce que l'ancien seuil de 80 points aurait facilité. Il a demandé comment cela pourrait être réalisé dans le cadre de la CVA, par exemple si cela pouvait se faire au moyen d'une case à cocher sur les certificats d'origine.

17. Mme Ionescu a déclaré que la SCA collaborerait avec les institutions des pays exportateurs de café afin de comprendre comment le classement fonctionnait dans la pratique. Elle a expliqué que la norme proposée éliminait la subjectivité des scores en s'appuyant sur des attributs descriptifs identifiés par des dégustateurs formés, des spécifications physiques telles que l'humidité, et des informations extrinsèques telles que les données relatives aux exploitations agricoles. Elle a reconnu qu'un système plus objectif était nécessaire pour mesurer le marché du café de spécialité.

18. Le délégué de l'UE-Italie a suggéré qu'une analyse statistique des résultats attribués par différents dégustateurs sur un même échantillon pourrait faciliter l'étalonnage. Tout en reconnaissant la valeur de la classification « *Q grading* » et du CVA, il s'est dit pas entièrement convaincu que le CVA puisse être harmonisé partout et estimait qu'un système aussi objectif que possible était nécessaire.

19. M. Fernández-Alduenda a expliqué qu'après 20 ans d'expérience avec son ancien protocole de dégustation, la SCA avait constaté que l'étalonnage ne fonctionnait qu'au sein de chaînes d'approvisionnement individuelles ou de marchés présentant des préférences claires, et que la diversité croissante des marchés, des méthodes de transformation, des variétés et des espèces rendait impossible tout étalonnage universel ainsi qu'un accord mondial sur la signification d'un score de 80 points.

20. Le délégué du Salvador a déclaré que le café ne pouvait se réduire à quelques caractéristiques, car les préférences variaient. À titre d'exemple, il a évoqué la variété *Pacamara*, que certains consommateurs appréciaient et d'autres non, et a suggéré que le GDSCS identifie d'autres moyens de mesurer le marché du café de spécialité.

21. La Directrice exécutive a déclaré qu'il n'y avait pas d'urgence, rappelant que les travaux du Groupe de discussion avaient été motivés par la volonté des Membres de mesurer la taille du marché du café de spécialité, et que cela avait mis en évidence l'absence d'une définition commune. Elle a souligné que l'OIC ne pouvait adopter une définition ou une norme qu'avec le consensus des Membres, y compris quant à son utilisation à des fins statistiques, et qu'il n'y avait

pas de délai fixe. Elle s'est félicitée de la participation de pays consommateurs, tels que la Norvège.

22. Le directeur exécutif de la BSCA, M. Vinicius Estrela, a indiqué que le programme « *Cup of Excellence* » avait introduit cette année une approche demandant aux dégustateurs professionnels d'identifier les profils de café, ce qui avait amélioré l'harmonisation et l'étalonnage, notamment en matière de notation. Il a estimé que, d'après l'expérience de la BSCA, la définition du café vert de spécialité contribuait à rapprocher les pays producteurs des consommateurs et facilitait la communication tout au long de la chaîne de valeur.

**Point 4 : Questions diverses**

23. Aucune question n'a été soulevée au titre de ce point de l'ordre du jour. La Directrice exécutive a noté que la SCA participerait aux réunions du CIC à Genève la semaine suivante, ce qui offrirait de nouvelles occasions de discussion.

**Point 5 : Date de la prochaine réunion**

24. La Directrice exécutive a informé les participants que la prochaine réunion du GDSCS serait organisée après les réunions de Genève et qu'il serait envisagé de tenir les futures réunions en présentiel.

# **SCA Standard 110-2026**

## **Green Coffee: Grading, Specifications, and Test Methods (for the Purpose of Trading)**

## Green Coffee: Grading, Specifications, and Test methods (for the Purpose of Trading)

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## Green Coffee: Grading, Specifications, and Test Methods (for the Purpose of Trading)

### 1. Preface

The objective of this Specialty Coffee Association (SCA) standard is to classify green coffee by grade for trading purposes. To this end, green coffee is classified into six grades. Green coffee grades shall meet defined specifications across the four assessments of the SCA's Coffee Value Assessment: Physical, Descriptive, Affective, and Extrinsic.

Accordingly, for test methods, this standard refers to the existing CVA standards (SCA-102, SCA-103, SCA-104, and SCA-105). In the case of the Physical Assessment, for which an SCA standard has not yet been published, this standard refers to the legacy *Washed Arabica Green Coffee Defect Guide*.

### 2. Scope

This standard classifies green coffee by grade for trading purposes, establishes the specifications for each grade, and references the Coffee Value Assessment (CVA) as test method, with the Descriptive Assessment being mainly considered. Although this standard provides a definition of green specialty coffee, the determination of which grades meet that definition within each producing country is the responsibility of the respective producing-country specialty coffee organization (PC-SCO).

The procedure for an organization to be recognized as a PC-SCO is outside the scope of this standard. Additionally, the procedures that a PC-SCO may follow to further define in-country quality specifications, and potentially to verify, test, or certify coffees, are outside the scope of this standard. The appeal and arbitration procedures are also outside the scope of this standard. This standard specifies that Q Graders shall be used for sensory assessment; however, the training, testing, certification, and quality control of Q Graders are outside the scope of this standard.

### 3. Normative References

The following are normative references for this standard:

- *SCA Standard 102 (2024) – Coffee Value Assessment: Sample Preparation and Tasting Mechanics*
- *SCA Standard 103 (2024) – Coffee Value Assessment: Descriptive Assessment*
- *SCA Standard 104 (2024) – Coffee Value Assessment: Affective Assessment*
- *SCA Standard 105 (2025) – Coffee Value Assessment: Extrinsic Assessment*
- *The Washed Arabica Green Coffee Defect Guide: SCA Handbook (Edition 3)*. Specialty Coffee Association. 2017 (temporary, until the publication of *SCA-107 Coffee Value Assessment: Physical Assessment*)
- *ISO 24115:2012 – Green coffee: Procedure for calibration of moisture meters (Routine method)*

### 4. Terms and Definitions

#### 4.1 General

**Green coffee.** A raw material constituted by the hulled, dried beans of the genus *Coffea*.

**Green specialty coffee.** Green coffee that is recognized for its distinctive attributes, which are identified using Coffee Value Assessment, and because of these attributes, it has significant extra value in the marketplace.

**Coffee Value Assessment (CVA).** A holistic evaluation system that assesses a coffee's value through

multiple dimensions of attributes—physical, sensory (descriptive and affective), and extrinsic—as described in the SCA standards 102, 103, 104, and 105 (see section 3).

**Producing-country specialty coffee organization (PC-SCO).** The entity in each producing country responsible for defining the country-specific attributes for those specifications in this standard that are explicitly left open to geographic definition.

**Q Grader.** A licensed coffee professional who has been certified by the Specialty Coffee Association (SCA) to evaluate and communicate coffee quality with a high degree of sensory accuracy, consistency, and shared language using the Coffee Value Assessment.

## 4.2 Physical Assessment

**Moisture.** The water content of green coffee, expressed as wet basis (w/b), and determined using an instrument calibrated according to ISO 24115:2012.

## 4.3 Descriptive Assessment

**Cup cleanliness.** The extent to which a cup is free of undesirable flavors ("clean"). Undesirable flavors are origin-specific, measured through the CVA Descriptive Assessment, and defined by the local PC-SCO. Cup Cleanliness may affect the impression of quality in the Affective Assessment of the coffee, especially regarding the sections of Fragrance, Aroma, Flavor, and/or Aftertaste (see 7.2.2).

**Flavor contamination.** An unwanted alteration of a coffee's sensory profile caused by exposure to external odors, chemicals, microorganisms, packaging materials, or cross contact with other foods. In coffee, such contamination is commonly perceived either as a flavor note outside the *SCA/WCR/UC Davis Cup Tasters Flavor Wheel* (such as "detergent" or "blue cheese") or as an excessively intense, unwanted flavor note within the Wheel (e.g., petroleum, animalic, isovaleric acid, pepper). Flavor contamination may affect the impression of quality in the Affective Assessment of the coffee, especially regarding the sections of Flavor, and Aftertaste (see 7.2.3).

**Desirable Sensory Attributes.** Sensory attributes considered desirable in coffee from a specific origin. Desirable sensory attributes are measured through the CVA Descriptive Assessment, and defined by the local PC-SCO.

**High -intensity attributes.** The count of cupping sections—fragrance, aroma, flavor, aftertaste, acidity, sweetness, and mouthfeel—with a mean intensity greater than 10.0, as measured in the CVA Descriptive Assessment. See SCA 103 (2024).

**Astringency.** A mouth-drying mouthfeel. A drying, puckering, or tingling sensation on the surface and/or edge of the tongue and mouth. Exemplified by alum solution.

## 4.4 Affective Assessment

**Sensory defect.** An olfactory or gustatory property of the coffee that is broadly seen as negative. SCA 104 (2024) limits the options for sensory defects to phenolic, moldy, and potato.

## 4.5 Extrinsic Assessment

**Farming information.** Information related to the planting, cultivation, and harvesting of coffee fruits. Within the extrinsic assessment in SCA 105 (2025), the *Farming* category includes the following attributes: country, region, name of farm or cooperative, name of producer(s), species, variety or blend of varieties, harvest date/year, and other.

**Processing Information.** Information related to how green coffee beans are prepared for stable transportation and storage from the coffee fruit. Within the extrinsic assessment in SCA-105 (2025), the *Processing* category includes the following attributes: name of processor(s) (wet mill/processing station, dry mill, other), process type (washed, natural, other), process description, and decaffeinated.

## 4.6 Temporary definitions (see Section 8)

**Physical defects.** The number of full defects, as per *The Washed Arabica Green Coffee Defect Guide*.

**Category 1 defects.** As per *The Washed Arabica Green Coffee Defect Guide*, full black, full sour, dried cherry, fungus damage, foreign matter, and severe insect damage.

**Category 2 defects.** As per *The Washed Arabica Green Coffee Defect Guide*, partial black, partial sour, parchment, floater, immature / unripe, withered, shell, broken / chipped / cut, hull / husk, and slight insect damage.

## 5. Classification

Depending on the attributes it presents across the different CVA assessments, green coffee is classified in six grades. Each grade is indicated by a number: 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, or 1.

## 6. Specifications

Each grade of green coffee shall meet a different set of specifications across the different CVA assessments. The specifications for each grade of green coffee are summarized in Table 1 (which is split into two parts below).

*Table 1 Specifications of green coffee by grade, and test methods for each specification (Part 1, grades 6, 5, and 4)*

| Specification                                        | Grade 6        | Grade 5 | Grade 4             | Test Method       |
|------------------------------------------------------|----------------|---------|---------------------|-------------------|
| <i>6.1 Physical</i>                                  |                |         |                     |                   |
| Moisture                                             | - <sup>a</sup> | -       | 10-12% <sup>b</sup> | 7.1               |
| Physical defects                                     | -              | -       | -                   | 8 (Temporary)     |
| <i>6.2. Descriptive</i>                              |                |         |                     |                   |
| Cup cleanliness                                      | -              | -       | Clean cup           | 7.2.2             |
| Flavor contamination                                 | -              | Free    | Free                | 7.2.3             |
| Desirable sensory attributes                         | -              | -       | -                   | 7.2.4             |
| High-intensity attributes                            | -              | -       | -                   | 7.3               |
| Astringency                                          | -              | -       | -                   | 7.2.5             |
| <i>6.3 Affective</i>                                 |                |         |                     |                   |
| Sensory defects                                      | -              | Free    | Free                | 7.4               |
| <i>6.4 Extrinsic</i>                                 |                |         |                     |                   |
| Farming information                                  | -              | -       | -                   | 7.5.1             |
| Processing information                               | -              | -       | -                   | 7.5.2             |
| <i>Expected FOB extra value addition<sup>c</sup></i> | (-)            | 0       | (+)                 | <i>Not tested</i> |

Table 24 Specifications of green coffee by grade, and test methods for each specification (part 2, grades 3, 2, and 1)

| Specification                                        | Grade 3                      | Grade 2                           | Grade 1                                                       | Test Method       |
|------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| <i>6.1 Physical</i>                                  |                              |                                   |                                                               |                   |
| Moisture                                             | 10-12% <sup>b</sup>          | 10-12% <sup>b</sup>               | 10-12% <sup>b</sup>                                           | 7.1               |
| Physical defects                                     | Free from Category 1 defects | Free from Category 1 defects      | Free from Category 1 defects, and up to 10 Category 2 defects | 8 (Temporary)     |
| <i>6.2. Descriptive</i>                              |                              |                                   |                                                               |                   |
| Cup cleanliness                                      | Clean cup                    | Clean cup                         | Clean cup                                                     | 7.2.2             |
| Flavor contamination                                 | Free                         | Free                              | Free                                                          | 7.2.3             |
| Desirable sensory attributes                         | -                            | At least one                      | At least two                                                  | 7.2.4             |
| High-intensity attributes                            | At least one                 | At least two                      | At least two                                                  | 7.3               |
| Astringency                                          | -                            | Not allowed                       | Not allowed                                                   | 7.2.5             |
| <i>6.3 Affective</i>                                 |                              |                                   |                                                               |                   |
| Sensory defects                                      | Free                         | Free                              | Free                                                          | 7.4               |
| <i>6.4 Extrinsic</i>                                 |                              |                                   |                                                               |                   |
| Farming information                                  | At least one (general)       | At least two, including farm name | At least three, including farm name                           | 7.5.1             |
| Processing information                               | Required                     | Required                          | Required                                                      | 7.5.2             |
| <i>Expected FOB extra value addition<sup>c</sup></i> | (++)                         | (+++)                             | (++++)                                                        | <i>Not tested</i> |

**Notes:**

(a) The dash, "-", denotes no specification.

(b) Moisture content is expressed in wet basis.

(c) The expected FOB extra value is not prescriptive and is given for indicative purposes. The (-), 0, (+), (++) , (+++) , and (++++ ) signs are given to express the magnitude of extra value (free on board – FOB) relative to the local FOB value of commodity coffee, and range from below the commodity coffee value, in the case of Grade 6 to several times the value of commodity coffee, in the case of Grade 1.

## 6.1 Physical specifications

6.1.1 **Moisture.** Grades 1, 2, 3, and 4 shall have moisture between 10.0 and 12.0%.

6.1.2 **Physical defects.** Grades 1, 2, and 3 shall have 0 (zero) full Category 1 defects. In addition, grade 1 shall have up to ten full Category 2 defects. See section 8.

## 6.2 Descriptive sensory specifications

6.2.1 **Cup cleanliness.** Grades 1, 2, 3, and 4 shall present a clean cup.

**6.2.2 Flavor contamination.** Grades 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 shall be free of flavor contamination.

**6.2.3 Desirable sensory attributes.** Grade 2 shall present at least one desirable attribute, and grade 1 shall present at least two desirable attributes.

**6.2.4 High-intensity attributes.** Grade 3 shall present at least one high-intensity attribute; grade 2 and grade 1 shall present at least two high-intensity attributes.

### 6.3 Affective sensory specifications

**6.3.1 Sensory defects.** Grades 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 shall be free of sensory defects (moldy, phenolic, and potato).

### 6.4 Extrinsic specifications

**6.4.1 Farming information.** This refers to the number of non-confidential fields that shall be available for each grade among the following farming information fields: *region, name of farm or cooperative, name of producers, and variety or varieties*. For grade 3, at least one field of farming information shall be available; for grade 2, at least two fields shall be available, including the name of farm or cooperative, and for grade 1, at least three fields of information shall be available, including the name of farm or cooperative.

**6.4.2 Processing information.** For the grades where it is required, processing information shall include process type and may additionally include the name of processor(s), and the process description. For grades 1, 2, and 3 the availability of processing information is required.

## 7. Test Methods

### 7.1 Moisture

A moisture-content measuring instrument based on capacitance shall be used to test moisture in green beans. The instrument shall be calibrated against moisture data obtained using the method in ISO 24115:2012. The sample used shall depend on the type of instrument. Replicate measurements (3–5) should be performed. The results are reported in percentage of moisture in wet basis.

### 7.2 Descriptive qualitative attributes

**7.2.1 General procedure.** The cup cleanliness, absence of flavor contamination, desirable sensory attributes, and absence of astringency are tested through CVA Descriptive Assessment. A minimum of 3 Q Graders shall assess the coffee, using the CVA Descriptive Assessment (see SCA-103), though the Q Graders may assess the same coffee asynchronously and at separate locations. A descriptor is considered *present* in a coffee if it is reported by a majority of the participating Q Graders. See the Appendix for examples.

**7.2.2 Cup cleanliness.** Each PC-SCO shall define the descriptors that cause a *lack* of cup cleanliness in coffees produced in that PC-SCO's country. Those descriptors shall be selected from the CVA Descriptive Assessment and may be complemented with specific descriptors from *the SCA/WCR/UC Davis Coffee Tasters Flavor Wheel*. The list of descriptors that cause the cup to become unclean shall be published by the PC-SCO, shall be publicly available, and shall remain stable for at least 3 years after each amendment to the list. For a coffee to express cup cleanliness,

the selected descriptors shall not be present (see 7.2.1). The PC-SCO may also provide guidelines on how the impression of quality is affected by a lack of cup cleanliness under the Affective Assessment.

**7.2.3 Flavor contamination.** Each PC-SCO shall define the descriptors from within *the SCA/WCR/UC Davis Coffee Tasters Flavor Wheel* that may indicate a flavor contamination in coffees produced in that PC-SCO's country, whenever the sensory note is unwanted and excessive. The list of Flavor Wheel descriptors that are common expressions of flavor contamination shall be published by the PC-SCO, shall be publicly available, and shall remain stable for at least 3 years after each amendment to the list. The absence or presence of these descriptors shall be tested as described in 7.2.1. The PC-SCO may also provide guidelines on how the impression of quality is affected by a lack of cup cleanliness under the Affective Assessment.

A different case is that of flavor contaminations expressed as flavor notes from outside the *Flavor Wheel*, for they cannot be foreseen. If a majority of the Q Graders report a descriptor from outside the *Wheel* in the CVA Descriptive Assessment of a coffee, no matter if their freely elicited descriptors are different, the coffee shall be treated as potentially contaminated, and a confirmatory descriptive assessment shall be done by a different group of Q Graders. If descriptors from outside the *Wheel* are reported by at least two thirds of cuppers in the confirmatory session, the coffee shall be considered contaminated.

**7.2.4 Desirable sensory attributes.** Each PC-SCO shall define the descriptors that represent desirable sensory attributes in coffees produced in that PC-SCO's country. Those descriptors shall be selected from the CVA Descriptive Assessment and may be complemented with specific descriptors from *the SCA/WCR/UC Davis Coffee Tasters Flavor Wheel*. The list of descriptors that represent desirable sensory attributes shall be published by the PC-SCO, shall be publicly available, and shall remain stable for at least 3 years after each amendment to the list.

When a coffee is assessed, descriptors that belong to the same category on the middle ring of *the SCA/WCR/UC Davis Coffee Tasters Flavor Wheel* are considered equivalent (e.g., "orange" and "lime" are both classified under "citrus"). To determine the presence of a desirable sensory attribute as per 7.2.1, equivalent descriptors reported by different Q Graders shall be aggregated under the same category. To assess compliance with 6.2.3, the number of desirable sensory attributes in a coffee shall be counted. For this count, equivalent descriptors shall be considered a single desirable attribute.

**7.2.5 Astringency.** The absence of astringency will be tested following the procedure in 7.2.1.

### 7.3 High intensity attributes

The attributes' intensity is tested through CVA Descriptive Assessment. A minimum of 3 Q Graders shall assess the coffee, using the CVA Descriptive Assessment (see SCA-103), though the Q Graders may assess the same coffee asynchronously and at separate locations. The mean intensity of each attribute (fragrance, aroma, flavor, aftertaste, acidity, sweetness, and mouthfeel) shall be calculated, taking into accounts all the Q Graders' results. Attributes showing a mean intensity above 10.0 shall be counted as high-intensity attributes.

### 7.4 Affective Assessment (Sensory defects)

The absence of sensory defects is tested through CVA Affective Assessment. A minimum of 3 Q Graders shall assess the coffee, using the CVA Affective Assessment (see SCA-104), though the Q Graders may assess the same coffee asynchronously and at separate locations. A defect is considered *present* in a coffee if it is reported by a majority of the participating Q Graders, even if the reported defect type is not the same for all of these Q Graders.

The local PC-SCA may provide guidelines on how a lack of Cup Cleanliness or the presence of Flavor Contamination in the cup should impact the impression of quality in the Affective Assessment, under the sections of Flavor and Aftertaste, as well as under the sections of Fragrance and Aroma, if detected.

### 7.5 Extrinsic attributes

A coffee's extrinsic attributes shall be compiled through Extrinsic Assessment (see SCA-105).

**7.5.1 Farming information.** A farming information field shall be counted whenever non-confidential information is available for each of the following fields: *region*, *name of farm or cooperative*, *name of producers*, and *variety or varieties*. When the coffee lot is a blend from several farms, the *name of farm or cooperative* field and the *name of producers* field may be counted as present, as long as the names of all the sourced farms or all the lot's producers are available and non-confidential. In the case of multiple varieties or variety blends, the names of all the varieties in the blend shall be available and non-confidential. In other words, a "variety mix" or "variety blend" shall not count as variety information, unless all the varieties in the blend are known. Unofficial variety names (heirloom, landraces, farm mutations, farmer's selection, family or farm-named, and marketing or trade variety names) are permitted but not recommended.

**7.5.2 Processing information.** For processing information to be counted as present, the processing type shall be available and non-confidential. This requires for the coffee to be classified as washed, natural, or "other," for the processing information field to be counted. However, in the case of "other" processing type, the type shall be further specified for the processing information field to be counted. The "other" processing type may be specified, for example, as "honey," "wet-hulled," "mechanically demucilaged," etc. The availability of other types of processing information, such as the name of processor(s), or the process description, is recommended but not required.

## 8. Temporary Provisions

The CVA Physical assessment is undergoing research phase at the time this standard is under development. Once ready, it will be published as *SCA-107 Coffee Value Assessment: Physical Assessment*. Until it is published, the definition, testing, and calculation of physical defects in green coffee refers to those in *The Washed Arabica Green Coffee Defect Guide: SCA Handbook (Edition 3)*. Specialty Coffee Association. 2017, as follows:

A 350 g sample of green coffee shall be used. All the beans in the sample shall be visually examined, one by one. The beans meeting the criteria in the *Defect Guide* (pages 6–35) shall be separated and grouped by defect type. The full defect equivalents of each physical defect type are calculated based on the number of beans of each defect per full defect equivalent, as described on the table of defect equivalents (Table 2). Full defect equivalents of each type are rounded down to the nearest integer. The full defect equivalents of each category (category 1 and category 2) are added up and reported by category.

Table 2 Defect Equivalents

| Category 1 Defective Beans | Full Defect Equivalent | Category 2 Defective Beans | Full Defect Equivalent |
|----------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|
| Full black                 | 1                      | Partial black              | 3                      |

| <b>Category 1 Defective Beans</b> | <b>Full Defect Equivalent</b> | <b>Category 2 Defective Beans</b> | <b>Full Defect Equivalent</b> |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Full sour                         | 1                             | Partial sour                      | 3                             |
| Dried cherry / pod                | 1                             | Parchment / pergamino             | 5                             |
| Fungus damaged                    | 1                             | Floater                           | 5                             |
| Foreign matter                    | 1                             | Immature / unripe                 | 5                             |
| Severe insect damage              | 5                             | Withered                          | 5                             |
|                                   |                               | Shell                             | 5                             |
|                                   |                               | Broken / chipped / cut            | 5                             |
|                                   |                               | Hull / husk                       | 5                             |
|                                   |                               | Slight insect damage              | 10                            |

## Appendix (Informative): Examples of Descriptive Qualitative Attributes Measurement

This appendix illustrates the measurement of descriptive qualitative attributes, such as cup cleanliness, flavor contamination, and desirable sensory attributes, through a few examples.

### A.1 Cup Cleanliness

A PC-SCO has established the following list of descriptors that cause a lack of cup cleanliness:

- Papery/Musty (entire subcategory)
- Isovaleric acid
- Hay-like
- Peapod
- Beany
- Under-ripe

**A.1.1 Example 1.** In an assessment conducted by three Q Graders, one cupper reported "under-ripe", and another reported "musty/earthy". Outcome: there are insufficient mentions of undesirable descriptors; therefore, the coffee is reported as having a "clean cup".

**A.1.2 Example 2.** In an assessment conducted by three Q Graders, two cuppers reported "under-ripe", while one reported "musty/earthy". Outcome: since a majority (2/3) identified an undesirable descriptor (under-ripe), the coffee is reported as having an "unclean cup".

**A.1.3 Example 3.** In an assessment conducted by three Q Graders, one cupper reported "under-ripe", another reported "musty/earthy", and a third reported "moldy/damp". Outcome: since a majority (2/3) of cuppers identified descriptors within the papery/musty subcategory – classified entirely as undesirable – the coffee is reported as having an "unclean cup".

### A.2 Flavor Contamination

A PC-SCO has established the following list of descriptors that may indicate flavor contamination, whenever the sensory note is unwanted and excessive:

- Unwanted, excessive fruit flavors: cherry, grape, peach.
- Chemical (entire subcategory)
- Unwanted, excessive whiskey flavor

**A.2.1 Example 4.** In an assessment conducted by three Q Graders, one cupper reported "peach", while another reported "salty". Outcome: there are insufficient mentions of undesirable descriptors; therefore, the coffee is reported as being "free of flavor contamination".

**A.2.2 Example 5.** In an assessment conducted by three Q Graders, all cuppers reported an excessive "peach" flavor, overshadowing all other coffee flavors. Outcome: this is taken as a flavor contamination in the coffee.

**A.2.3 Example 6.** In an assessment conducted by three Q Graders, one cupper reported "detergent", while another reported "fabric softener". Neither descriptor belongs to the Flavor Wheel. Thus, as per 7.2.3, the coffee was treated as potentially contaminated, and a confirmatory descriptive assessment was conducted by a different group of three Q Graders. In this second session, one cupper reported "soap" and another reported "bleach". Therefore, the coffee is reported as "presenting a flavor contamination", as two thirds of the second panel reported

descriptors outside the Flavor Wheel.

#### A.3 Desirable Sensory Attributes

A PC-SCO has established the following list of desirable sensory attributes:

- Floral category
- Berry subcategory.
- Brown spice subcategory

**A.3.1 Example 7.** In an assessment conducted by three Q Graders, one cupper reported "jasmine", while another reported "strawberry". Outcome: there are insufficient mentions of desirable sensory attributes from the same category. Therefore, the count of desirable sensory descriptors in this coffee is reported as zero.

**A.3.2 Example 8.** In an assessment conducted by three Q Graders, one cupper reported "jasmine" and another reported "rose". Outcome: both descriptors are categorized as "floral", and are counted as a single desirable sensory attribute for that coffee.

**A.3.3 Example 9.** In an assessment conducted by three Q Graders, one cupper reported "floral", another reported "jasmine", and 1a third cupper reported both "raspberry" and "blackberry". Outcome: the two berry descriptors by the third cupper are not counted, as the berry category was reported by just one cupper. The "jasmine" and "floral" descriptors are treated as equivalent; therefore, the count of desirable sensory attributes for this coffee is reported as 1 (floral).



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2026

# GREEN COFFEE GRADING STANDARD

What it means for coffee trade and quality.

*September 2026*

## INTRODUCTION

## Background: Specialty Coffee Association

- The SCA sets voluntary standards for the global coffee industry with the aim of facilitating trade.
- As of 2024, the SCAA's *Specialty Grade Standard* has been superseded by the SCA's Coffee Value Assessment (CVA).
- The foundation of the CVA is an attribute-based, descriptive definition of specialty coffee published in 2021.



## INTRODUCTION

Many exporting countries use grading systems for their coffee

Kenya AA

Brazil Soft

Green coffee trading contracts likely include the green coffee grade as a specification.

Mexico High Grown



## INTRODUCTION

# These grades measure different attributes

Some are based on cup quality, others are based on bean size, and others on farm elevation!

The complexity of 21<sup>st</sup> Century green coffee grading has made these grades obsolete.

For that reason, specialty coffee contracts today include other specifications, such as the cupping score.



## INTRODUCTION

# A shared system could be simpler

Coffee trading would be simpler if producing countries used the same grading system, and if traders didn't need to learn multiple grading systems.

Coffee-producing member countries of the International Coffee Organization

42 exporting members



## LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

- Mexico
- Colombia
- Cuba
- Venezuela
- Honduras
- Ecuador
- El Salvador
- Peru
- Nicaragua
- Bolivia
- Costa Rica
- Brazil
- Panama

## AFRICA

- Cote d'Ivoire
- Angola
- Sierra Leone
- Zambia
- Liberia
- Zimbabwe
- Ghana
- Malawi
- Togo
- Rwanda
- Nigeria
- Burundi
- Cameroon
- Tanzania
- Gabon
- Kenya
- Central African Rep.
- Ethiopia
- DR Congo
- Madagascar

## ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

- Yemen
- Philippines
- India
- Indonesia
- Nepal
- Timor-Leste
- Thailand
- Papua New Guinea
- Vietnam



## INTRODUCTION

# The coffee grade could be more useful

The coffee grade would be meaningful for the 21st Century industry if it captured a coffee's attributes across all the relevant dimensions.



## Physical

Moisture,  
size, etc.



## Descriptive

Sensory attributes



## Affective

Impression  
of quality



## Extrinsic

Information  
attributes



## INTRODUCTION

# A common language could benefit both sellers and buyers

A well-designed coffee grading system could support producers to position their coffees for specialty markets, while still allowing traders to retain the decisions on each coffee's value.



## INTRODUCTION

# The grade is only one component of a green coffee contract

## Current:

“**High Grown EP** Arabica coffee, cupping score 84.5+, maximum 8 secondary defects, zero primary defects, moisture 10-12%, screen 16+, crop current harvest.”

## Future:

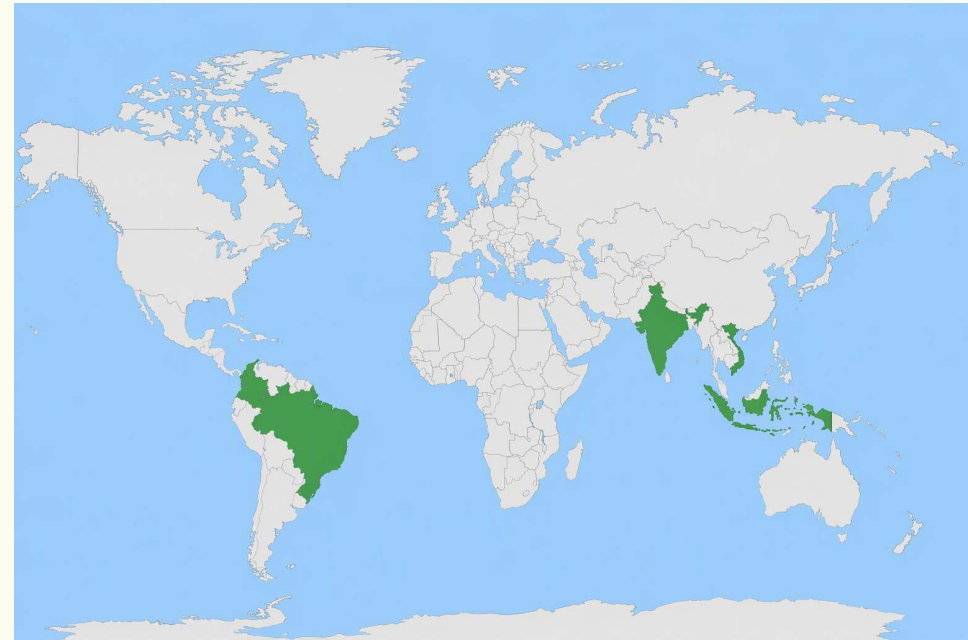
“**Grade SCA 2** Arabica coffee, cupping score 84.5+, maximum 8 secondary defects, zero primary defects, moisture 10-12%, screen 16+, crop current harvest.”



FEBRUARY 17-18, 2026, MEETING AT ICO OFFICE IN LONDON, AND SEVERAL MEETINGS SINCE

## We met to discuss the meaning of specialty coffee in commerce and explore the potential for a grading standard for green coffee

- African Fine Coffees Association (AFCA)
- Brazilian Specialty Coffee Association (BSCA)
- Coffee Board of India
- Colombian Coffee Growers Federation (FNC)
- International Coffee Organization (ICO)
- Specialty Coffee Association (SCA)
- Specialty Coffee Association of Indonesia (SCAI)
- Vietnamese Cocoa and Coffee Association (VICOFA)

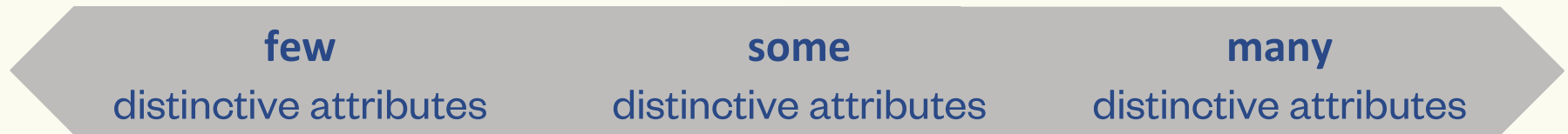


## THE SCA DEFINITION OF SPECIALTY COFFEE

Specialty coffee is a coffee or coffee experience that is recognized for its distinctive **attributes**, and because of these attributes, it has significant extra **value** in the marketplace.



# Attributes Continuum

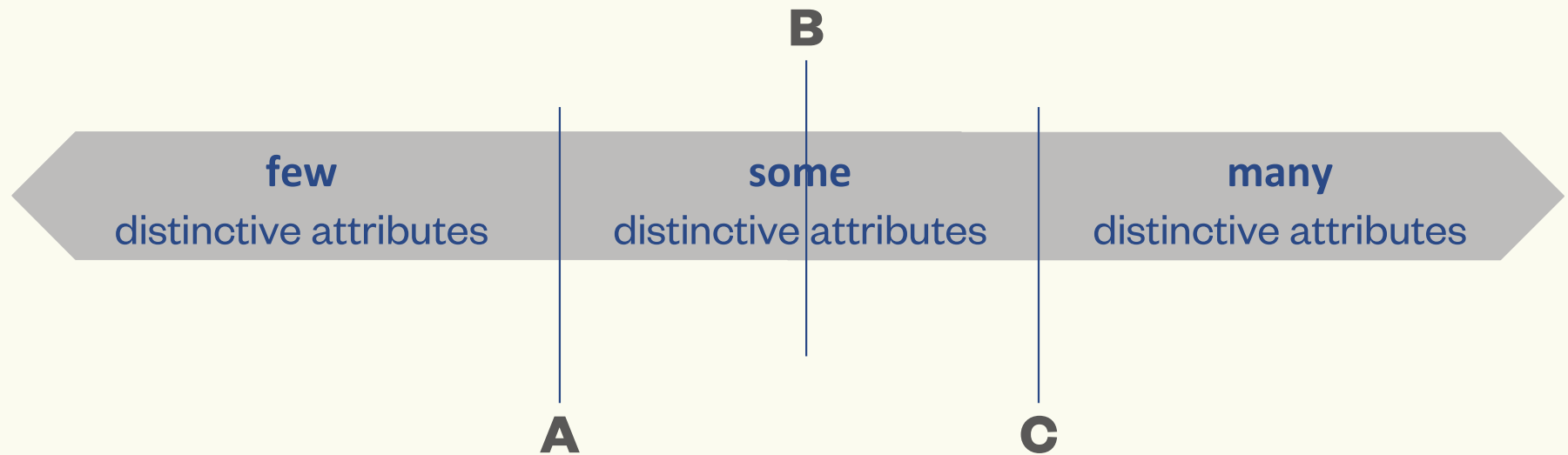


**Commodity**

**Specialty**



# Attributes Continuum



## DEFINING GREEN SPECIALTY COFFEE GLOBALLY

Green specialty coffee is the hulled, dried beans of the genus *Coffea*. It is recognized by its distinctive attributes, which are identified using the Coffee Value Assessment, and because of these attributes, it has significant extra value in the marketplace.



## DEFINING GREEN SPECIALTY COFFEE GLOBALLY

Green specialty coffee is the hulled, dried beans of the genus *Coffea*. It is recognized by its distinctive attributes, which are identified using the Coffee Value Assessment, and because of these attributes, it has significant extra value in the marketplace.

Other parts of the coffee plant are not green coffee. Bean-less coffee is not green coffee.



## DEFINING GREEN SPECIALTY COFFEE GLOBALLY

Green specialty coffee is the hulled, dried beans of the genus *Coffea*. It is recognized by its distinctive attributes, which are identified using the Coffee Value Assessment, and because of these attributes, it has significant extra value in the marketplace.

Includes Arabica, Canephora, Liberica, Eugenoides, and other species with potential commercial value.



Green Coffee Grading Standard – June 2026 Draft

# DRAFT SPECIFICATIONS

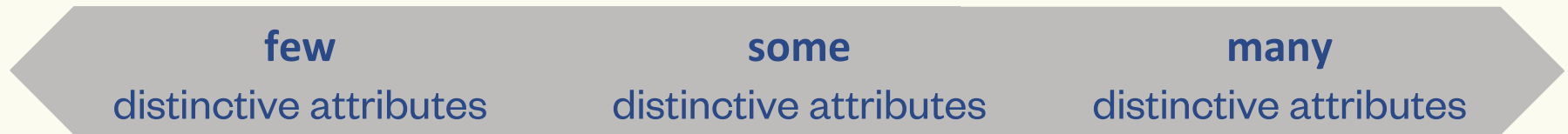


Private & Confidential

Specialty Coffee Association

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# Attributes Continuum

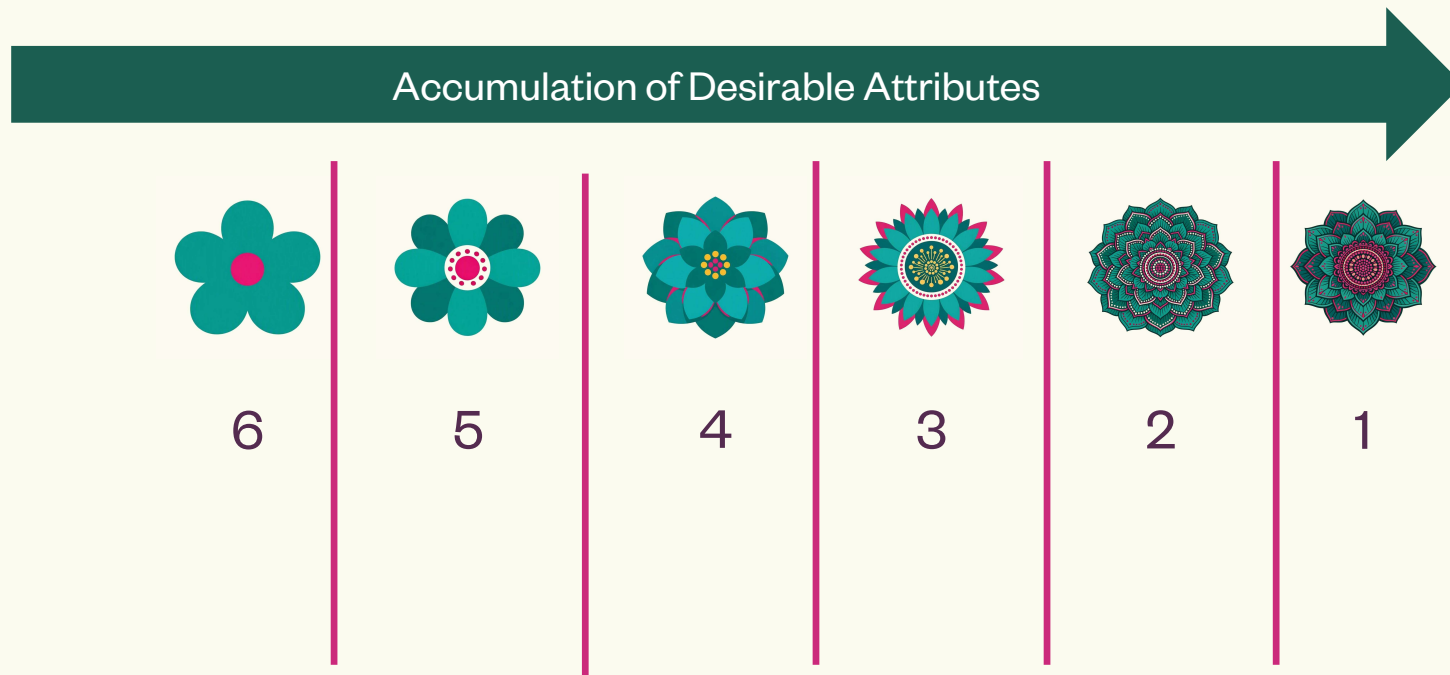


**Commodity**

**Specialty**



## SIX GRADES FOR GREEN COFFEE





6



5



4



3



2



1

**few**

distinctive attributes

**some**

distinctive attributes

**many**

distinctive attributes

**Commodity**

**Specialty**



| Specification                                        | Grade 6    | Grade 5  | Grade 4             |
|------------------------------------------------------|------------|----------|---------------------|
| <b>6.1 Physical</b>                                  |            |          |                     |
| Moisture                                             | -          | -        | 10-12% <sup>a</sup> |
| Physical defects                                     | -          | -        | -                   |
| <b>6.2. Descriptive</b>                              |            |          |                     |
| Cup cleanliness                                      | -          | -        | Clean cup           |
| Flavor contamination                                 | -          | Free     | Free                |
| Desirable Sensory Attributes                         | -          | -        | -                   |
| High-intensity attributes                            | -          | -        | -                   |
| Astringency                                          | -          | -        | -                   |
| <b>6.3 Affective</b>                                 |            |          |                     |
| Sensory defects                                      | -          | Free     | Free                |
| <b>6.4 Extrinsic</b>                                 |            |          |                     |
| Farming information                                  | -          | -        | -                   |
| Processing information                               | -          | -        | -                   |
| <i>Expected FOB extra value addition<sup>b</sup></i> | <i>(-)</i> | <i>0</i> | <i>(+)</i>          |



Accumulation of Desirable Attributes

| Specification                                         | Grade 3                      | Grade 2                           | Grade 1                                                       |
|-------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>6.1 Physical</b>                                   |                              |                                   |                                                               |
| Moisture                                              | 10-12% <sup>a</sup>          | 10-12% <sup>a</sup>               | 10-12% <sup>a</sup>                                           |
| Physical defects                                      | Free from Category 1 defects | Free from Category 1 defects      | Free from Category 1 defects, and up to 10 Category 2 defects |
| <b>6.2. Descriptive</b>                               |                              |                                   |                                                               |
| Cup cleanliness                                       | Clean cup                    | Clean cup                         | Clean cup                                                     |
| Flavor contamination                                  | Free                         | Free                              | Free                                                          |
| Desirable Sensory Attributes                          | -                            | At least one                      | At least two                                                  |
| High-intensity attributes                             | At least one                 | At least two                      | At least two                                                  |
| Astringency                                           | -                            | Not allowed                       | Not allowed                                                   |
| <b>6.3 Affective</b>                                  |                              |                                   |                                                               |
| Sensory defects                                       | Free                         | Free                              | Free                                                          |
| <b>6.4 Extrinsic</b>                                  |                              |                                   |                                                               |
| Farming information                                   | At least one (general)       | At least two, including farm name | At least three, including farm name                           |
| Processing information                                | Required                     | Required                          | Required                                                      |
| <i>Expected FOB extra value addition <sup>b</sup></i> | <b>(++)</b>                  | <b>(+++)</b>                      | <b>(++++)</b>                                                 |

Accumulation of Desirable Attributes




**Flavor contamination.** An unwanted alteration of a coffee's sensory profile caused by exposure to external odors, chemicals, microorganisms, packaging materials, or cross contact with other foods. In coffee, such contamination is commonly perceived either as a flavor note outside the *SCA/WCR/UC Davis Cup Tasters Flavor Wheel* (such as “detergent” or “blue cheese”) or as an excessively intense, unwanted flavor note within the *Wheel* (e.g., petroleum, animalic, isovaleric acid, pepper).



## DEFINING DESIRABLE ATTRIBUTES NATIONALLY

# Local Coffee Organizations Classify Attributes

## Cup Cleanliness

The extent to which a cup is free of undesirable flavors (“clean”). Undesirable flavors are origin-specific, measured through the CVA Descriptive Assessment, and **defined by the local coffee organization.**

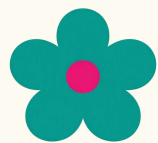
## Desirable Sensory Attributes

Sensory attributes considered desirable in coffee from a specific origin. Desirable sensory attributes are measured through the CVA Descriptive Assessment, and **defined by the local coffee organization.**

**These attributes will be publicly available and remain stable for at least 3 years before being revised in each country**



## DEFINING SPECIALTY COFFEE GRADES NATIONALLY



6



5



4



3

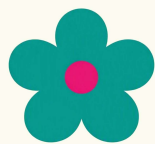


2



1

Specialty Coffee for  
Country A



6



5



4



3



2



1

Specialty Coffee for  
Country B



Green Coffee Grading Standard – June 2026 Draft

# NEXT STEP:

To publish the standard by mid-year 2027.



## ONGOING FEEDBACK AND DISCUSSION SESSIONS

September 29: International Coffee Council in Geneva, Switzerland

October 2: Swiss Coffee Trade Association in Montreux, Switzerland

October 24: World of Coffee in Panama City, Panama

SCA is available for other meetings and presentations – please reach out



# THANK YOU



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Specialty Coffee Association

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