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**Relatório da 5ª reunião do Grupo de
Discussão sobre Cafés Especiais,
realizada em 22 de setembro de 2026**

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RELATÓRIO DA 5ª REUNIÃO DO GRUPO DE DISCUSSÃO SOBRE CAFÉS ESPECIAIS REALIZADA EM 22 DE SETEMBRO DE 2026

1. Este relatório apresenta as deliberações da 5ª reunião do Grupo de Discussão sobre Cafés Especiais (GDCE), presidida pela Diretora Executiva, Dra. Vanúsia Nogueira, e realizada em 22 de setembro de 2026.

2. Estiveram presentes online, por meio do software Zoom, representantes dos seguintes países-membros: Angola, Brasil, Camarões, El Salvador, Índia, Noruega, Togo e União Europeia (incluindo Alemanha, França e Itália). Também participaram representantes da Associação de Cafés Especiais (*Specialty Coffee Association* - SCA).

Item 1: Ordem do dia provisória

3. A Diretora Executiva apresentou a ordem do dia provisória, contida no documento [FGSC-07/26](#), que foi aprovada pelo Grupo de Discussão sem observações.

Item 2: Relatório da 4ª reunião do Grupo de Discussão sobre Cafés Especiais

4. A Diretora Executiva apresentou o relatório da 4ª reunião do GDCE, realizada em San Pedro Sula, Honduras, em 13 de outubro de 2025, conforme consta no documento [FGSC-06/26](#). O Grupo de Discussão aprovou o relatório sem observações.

Item 3: Proposta de norma para o café verde

5. A Diretora Executiva lembrou que, conforme consta nos parágrafos 20 e 24 do documento [FGSC-06/26](#), o Grupo de Discussão havia concordado em convidar a SCA para participar formalmente de seus trabalhos. Ela informou aos participantes que a SCA havia começado a trabalhar em uma definição comum para o café especial e também em uma proposta de norma para o café verde, que, desde então, havia sido discutida em 2026 na sede da Organização Internacional do Café (OIC) em Londres (fevereiro); no World of Coffee de San Diego (abril); com os membros da Federação de Café da ASEAN no World of Coffee de Bangcoc (maio); e no World of Coffee de Bruxelas (junho), bem como durante intercâmbios virtuais com os Membros.

6. A Sra. Kim Elena Ionescu, Diretora de Desenvolvimento Estratégico da SCA, explicou que a proposta consistia em um padrão de classificação para o café verde baseado na Avaliação do Valor do Café (*Coffee Value Assessment* – CVA), adotada pela SCA em 2024 para substituir padrões que, em sua maioria, datavam de 2004, tendo também como base a definição de café especial baseada em atributos adotada pela SCA em 2021.¹ Ela observou que os graus nacionais mediam atributos diferentes e não podiam ser comparados. Ela afirmou que um padrão único

¹ A norma pertinente está anexada como Anexo I.

proporcionaria a compradores e vendedores uma linguagem comum, ao mesmo tempo em que alteraria apenas um elemento dos contratos de café verde — a designação nacional —, que seria substituída por um grau da SCA.

7. A Sra. Ionescu acrescentou que a CVA avalia a qualidade por meio de quatro componentes: físico (como umidade e tamanho do grão), descritivo e afetivo (ambos realizados durante a prova (*cupping*)) e extrínseco (como origem, fazenda, variedade e processamento).²

8. O Sr. Mario Fernández-Alduenda, Vice-Presidente Técnico da SCA, relatou que, na reunião realizada em Londres em fevereiro de 2026 entre a Associação dos Cafés Finos da África (AFCA), a Associação Brasileira de Cafés Especiais (BSCA), o Coffee Board of India, a Federação Nacional de Cafeicultores (FNC) da Colômbia, a Associação de Cafés Especiais da Indonésia (SCAI), a Associação de Café e Cacau do Vietnã (VICOFA) e a OIC, os participantes haviam adaptado a definição de café especial da SCA — que era descritiva, e não prescritiva — ao caso do café verde e haviam começado a elaborar especificações técnicas. Ele apresentou a definição resultante:

O café verde especial consiste nos grãos inteiros secos do gênero Coffea. É reconhecido por seus atributos distintivos, identificados por meio da Avaliação do Valor do Café, e, devido a esses atributos, possui um valor agregado significativo no mercado.

9. O Sr. Fernández-Alduenda explicou que a definição excluía outras partes da planta do café e o café sem grãos, como o produzido por meio de cultura celular, e abrangia todas as espécies do gênero *Coffea*. Ele afirmou que a norma dividia o continuum entre a commodity e o café especial em seis graus, do Grau 6 — praticamente sem especificações — ao Grau 1, com os requisitos mais rigorosos nas quatro avaliações da CVA, tais como umidade de 10 a 12%, ausência de defeitos da Categoria 1 e até 10 defeitos da Categoria 2, uma xícara limpa, livre de defeitos sensoriais, com pelo menos dois atributos sensoriais desejáveis, e acesso a informações sobre a fazenda e o processamento. Ele ressaltou que nem todos os graus eram de cafés especiais e que o valor agregado esperado no sistema *free-on-board* (FOB aumentaria do Grau 6 ao Grau 1, com o “ponto zero” definido no Grau 5, correspondente ao café de boa qualidade comum, do tipo comercializável em bolsa..

10. O Sr. Fernández-Alduenda indicou que as organizações locais de café nos países produtores estabeleceriam as listas de atributos sensoriais desejáveis e indesejáveis, a serem divulgadas por pelo menos três anos, e decidiriam quais graus constituíam café especial em seu

² A apresentação da SCA encontra-se em anexo como Anexo II.

país. Ele informou aos participantes que a SCA planejava publicar a norma até meados de 2027, trabalhando em conjunto com o GDCE e a OIC, e que novas discussões ocorreriam nas reuniões do Conselho Internacional do Café (CIC) em Genebra, em 29 de setembro de 2026, na conferência da Associação Suíça de Comércio de Café (*Swiss Coffee Trade Association – SCTA*) em Montreux, em 2 de outubro de 2026, e no World of Coffee Panamá, em 22 de outubro de 2026. Ele convidou a Secretaria a divulgar a versão preliminar mais recente da norma.

11. A Diretora Executiva ressaltou que a proposta era um trabalho em andamento, aberto à consulta e ao diálogo, e abriu a palavra para comentários.

12. O delegado de El Salvador afirmou que os produtores eram o único elo da cadeia de valor sob pressão, devido à falta de rentabilidade, e que os padrões de qualidade do café já estavam definidos globalmente. Ele considerou que acrescentar especificações, deixando que cada país decida quais graus constituem o café especial, apresentava o risco de dificuldades semelhantes às encontradas com o Regulamento da UE sobre produtos livres de desmatamento (EUDR), acrescentando que a proposta não abordava o café com fermentação prolongada ou com adição de aromas, o que resultaria em um aumento da carga sobre os produtores. Ele observou que havia amplo consenso em relação a essa visão em toda a região do PROMECAFE, incluindo na Jamaica, no Panamá e na República Dominicana.

13. O Sr. Fernández-Alduenda respondeu que, se os padrões existentes fossem suficientemente claros, o segmento de café especial já poderia ser mensurado. No entanto, o GDCE já havia estabelecido que não havia uma definição viável que permitisse à OIC quantificá-lo, o que motivou o trabalho da SCA.

14. O delegado de El Salvador questionou até que ponto a CVA havia sido adotada, observando que poucos provadores o utilizavam.

15. A Sra. Ionescu reconheceu que a adoção levava tempo e observou que, após sua parceria com o *Coffee Quality Institute (CQI)* em 2025, a SCA havia começado a administrar o programa *Q Grader*, o que ajudaria a impulsionar a adoção em todo o mundo.

16. O delegado da UE-Itália lembrou que um dos principais objetivos da definição era possibilitar a produção de estatísticas sobre os volumes de café especial comercializados e consumidos, o que o antigo limite de 80 pontos teria facilitado. Ele perguntou como isso poderia ser alcançado no âmbito da CVA, por exemplo, se seria possível por meio de uma opção a ser marcada nos certificados de origem.

17. A Sra. Ionescu afirmou que a SCA trabalharia com instituições nos países exportadores de café para compreender como a classificação funcionava na prática. Ela explicou que o padrão proposto eliminava a subjetividade das pontuações ao basear-se em atributos descritivos identificados por provadores treinados, especificações físicas, como umidade, e informações extrínsecas, como dados da fazenda. Ela concordou que era necessário um sistema mais objetivo para medir o mercado de café especial.

18. O delegado da UE-Itália sugeriu que a análise estatística dos resultados fornecidos por diferentes provadores na mesma amostra poderia apoiar a calibração. Embora reconhecesse o valor da classificação “*Q grading*” e da CVA, ele não estava totalmente convencido de que a CVA pudesse ser alinhada em todos os lugares e considerou que era necessário um sistema que fosse o mais objetivo possível.

19. O Sr. Fernández-Alduenda explicou que, após 20 anos de experiência com seu antigo protocolo de prova, a SCA havia constatado que a calibração funcionava apenas dentro de cadeias de abastecimento individuais ou mercados com preferências claras, e que a crescente diversidade de mercados, métodos de processamento, variedades e espécies tornava impossível uma calibração universal e um acordo global sobre o significado de uma pontuação de 80 pontos.

20. O delegado de El Salvador afirmou que o café não poderia ser reduzido a poucas características, já que as preferências variavam. A título de exemplo, ele citou a variedade *Pacamara*, que agradava a alguns consumidores e a outros não, e sugeriu que o GDCE identificasse outras formas de medir o mercado de café especial.

21. A Diretora Executiva afirmou que não havia pressa, lembrando que o trabalho do Grupo de Discussão havia partido da ambição dos Membros de medir o tamanho do mercado de café especial, e que isso havia revelado a ausência de uma definição comum. Ela ressaltou que a OIC só poderia incorporar uma definição ou norma com o consenso dos Membros, inclusive quanto ao seu uso para fins estatísticos, e que não havia prazo fixo. Ela acolheu com satisfação a participação de países consumidores, como a Noruega.

22. O Diretor Executivo da BSCA, Sr. Vinicius Estrela, relatou que o programa *Cup of Excellence* havia introduzido este ano uma abordagem na qual se pedia aos provadores que identificassem perfis de café, o que havia melhorado o alinhamento e a calibração, inclusive na pontuação. Ele considerou que, na experiência da BSCA, a definição de café verde especial ajudava a conectar os países produtores aos consumidores e facilitava a comunicação ao longo da cadeia de valor.

Item 4: Outros assuntos

23. Nenhuma solicitação de inclusão de tópicos no item “Outros assuntos” fora recebida. A Diretora Executiva observou que a SCA participaria das reuniões do CICem Genebra na semana seguinte, proporcionando novas oportunidades para discussão.

Item 5: Data da próxima reunião

24. A Diretora Executiva informou aos participantes que a próxima reunião do GDCE seria organizada após as reuniões em Genebra e que seria considerada a possibilidade de realizar futuras reuniões presencialmente.

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	- ^a	-	10-12% ^b	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^c</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% ^b	10-12% ^b	10-12% ^b	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^c</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

Category 1 Defective Beans	Full Defect Equivalent	Category 2 Defective Beans	Full Defect Equivalent
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

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

Kenya AA

Brazil Soft

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 21st 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:

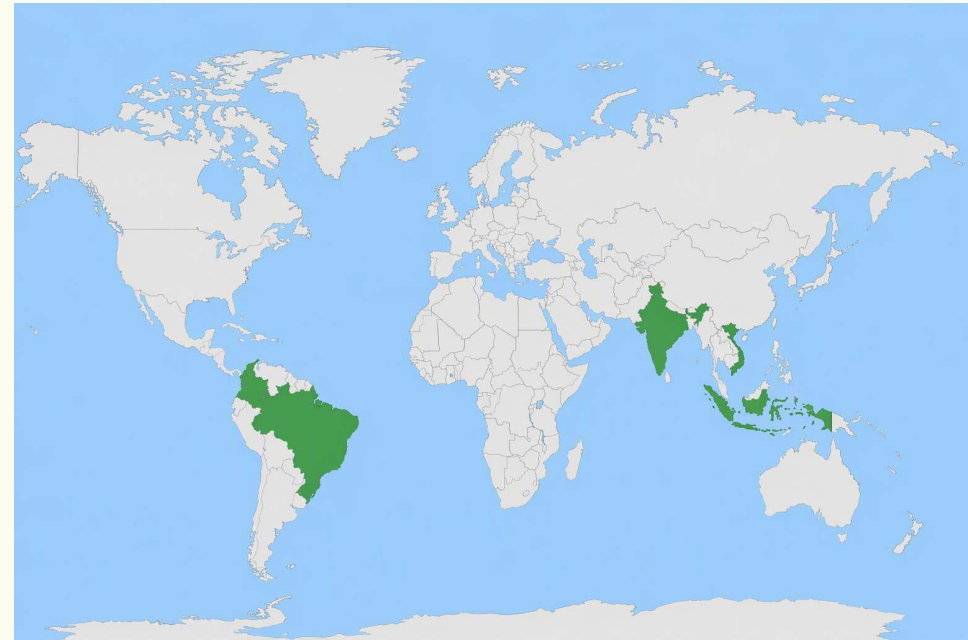
“**Grade SCA 2** Arabica coffee, cupping score 84.5+, maximum 8 secondary defects, zero primary defects, moisture 10-12%, screen 16+, crop current harvest.”



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)

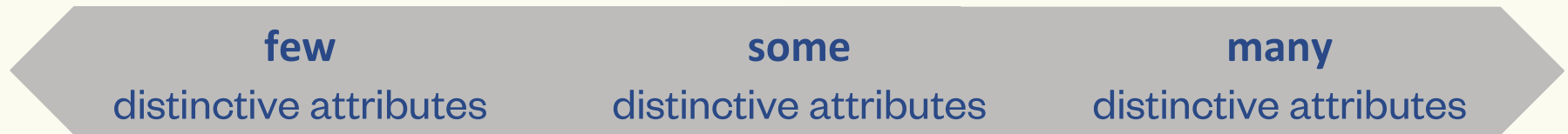


THE SCA DEFINITION OF SPECIALTY COFFEE

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

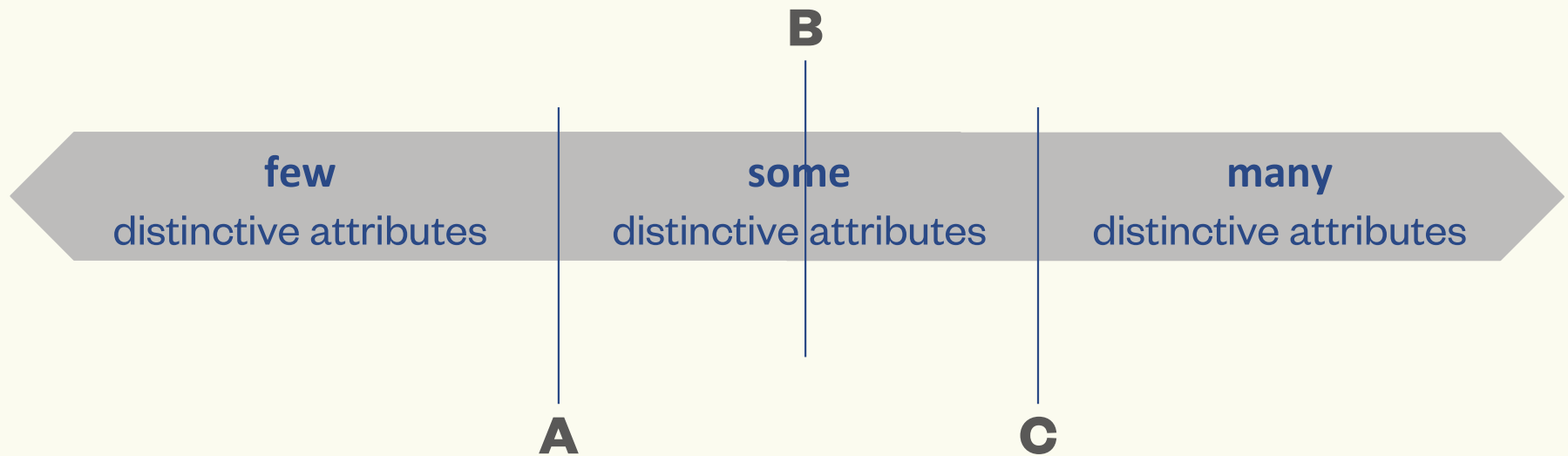


Commodity

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

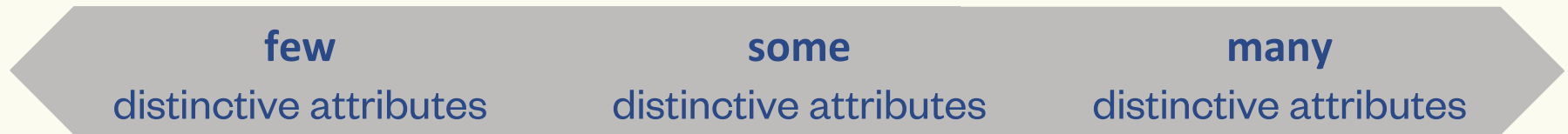


Private & Confidential

Specialty Coffee Association

18

Attributes Continuum

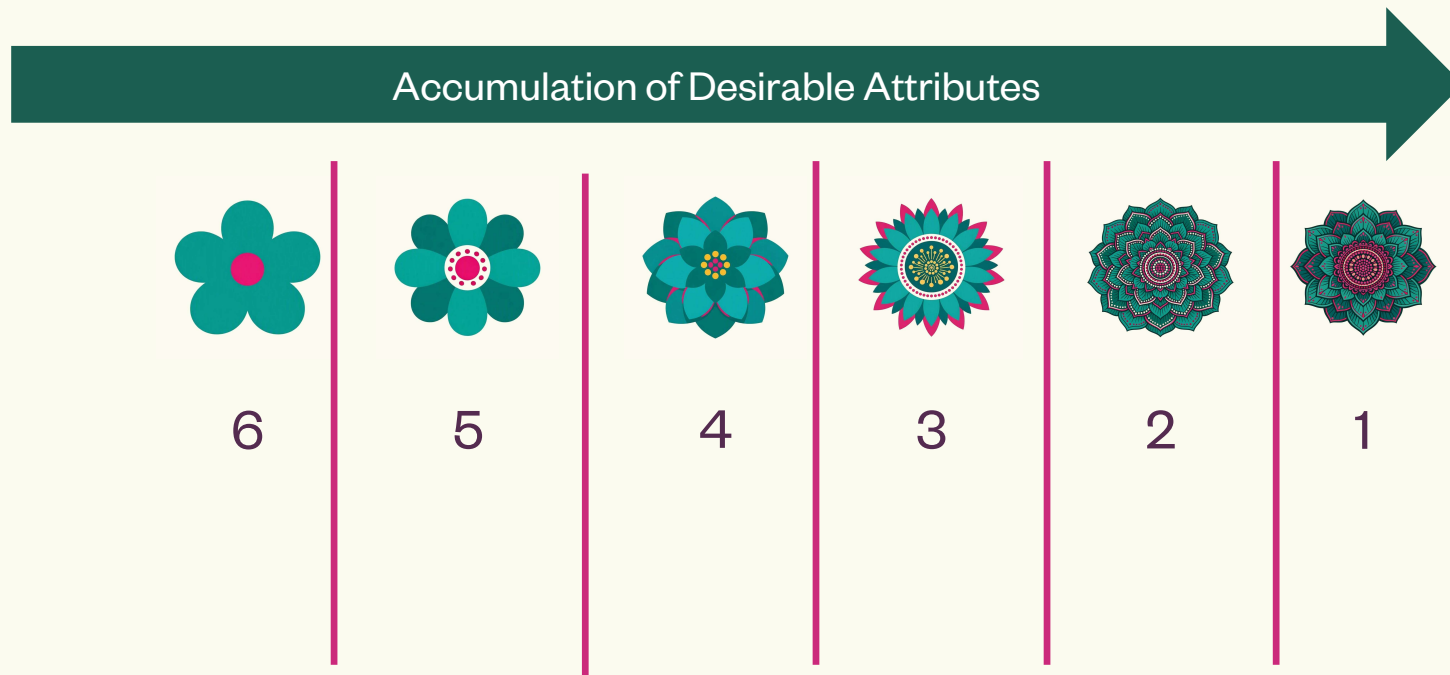


Commodity

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



Accumulation of Desirable Attributes

Specification	Grade 3	Grade 2	Grade 1
6.1 Physical			
Moisture	10-12% ^a	10-12% ^a	10-12% ^a
Physical defects	Free from Category 1 defects	Free from Category 1 defects	Free from Category 1 defects, and up to 10 Category 2 defects
6.2. Descriptive			
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
6.3 Affective			
Sensory defects	Free	Free	Free
6.4 Extrinsic			
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 ^b</i>	(++)	(+++)	(++++)

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.**

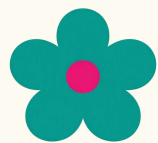
Desirable Sensory Attributes

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

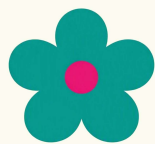


2



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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