

Members' Operating Covenant

Cooperative Coffees is comprised of small-scale, Fair Trade roasters who are building their businesses upon the ideals of alternative trade. We came together to form a legally structured buying cooperative, because the volumes we need as small-scale roasters would have made it impossible to import directly (one of the main tenants of fair trade) from a variety of coffee farmer cooperatives. Collectively as Cooperative Coffees, we have established commercial relationships with over twenty cooperatives based in democratic and participatory development models in producer countries throughout the world.

As members of Cooperative Coffees, we strive to purchase all of our coffees from our partner cooperatives or from other like-minded producer cooperatives in strict adherence to the following fair-trade criteria:

- Paying fair prices to the producers
- Offering support for cooperative workplaces
- Promoting greater consumer consciousness
- Encouraging environmental sustainability
- Providing financial and technical support
- Respecting cultural identity

However, our intentions as fair trade coffee traders go beyond the simple act of buying and selling excellent quality coffees. We also unite under the common desire to demonstrate through our own example that alternative rules to trade are possible both at home and abroad.

We understand that to speak of a collaborative spirit within our cooperative, we must make an ongoing effort to maintain mutually beneficial relationships and a sense of collectivity amongst the roaster/members within the cooperative. Meanwhile internationally, we strive to maintain open, two-way communication and to build “partnerships in development” with the farmers who supply us with the coffee we roast and sell. Individually, we agree to:

- Disseminate honest and accurate information amongst the members and to the greater consuming public about our business' fair trade activities;
- Respect the general operating norms of Cooperative Coffees, including adherence to each of our purchasing agreements, and refraining from becoming a green bean reseller to non-member roasters;
- Be respectful of other Cooperative Coffees roasteries and agree not to seek out new clients in the obvious and apparent territory of a fellow member;
- Become an active voice in one of more of Cooperative Coffees working committees and/or projects to make our organization as representative and participative as possible, and to help our associated producer partners thrive and develop as functioning fair trade cooperatives.