

Understanding Smallholder Farmer Access to Voluntary Sustainable Standards VSS-Compliant Markets

Date: 10 May 2022

Time: 14:00 – 15:30 (CET)

Registration Link: <https://unctad.org/meeting/understanding-smallholder-farmer-access-voluntary-sustainability-standards-vss-compliant>

Key issues

There are an estimated 500 million smallholder farmer families globally, many of whom make up a large proportion of the world's poor. These farmers work small plots of land, often earning and producing enough to survive but not enough to rise out of poverty.

Voluntary Sustainability Standards (VSS) are instruments to influence how global value chains operate, strengthen farmer's market access and an alignment towards the sustainable development outcomes - economic, social and environment.

Findings from the [SSI Review: Standards and Poverty Reduction](#) suggest that VSS compliance can contribute to poverty alleviation in important ways, such as supporting skills training for farmers, that can support better practices, producer knowledge and capacity to grow higher-quality and more sustainable products.

This webinar aims to shed light on the factors that influence smallholder farmer participation in VSS-compliant markets, in order to understand how limitations can be addressed and enabling factors harnessed.

Through presenting a study by UNCTAD and IISD that collected data from the field on factors that affect smallholders access to VSS compliant markets in six developing countries and six value chains, the webinar aims to:

- Understand the conditions that enable (or limit) smallholder farmer access to Voluntary Sustainability Standard (VSS)-compliant markets
- Identify best practices for creating an enabling environment for sustainable production and trade
- Provides inputs on the way forward to better harness the advantages of VSS by smallholders and producers in developing countries.

Proposed Agenda (90 Mins)

5 Mins	<p>Welcome and Opening Remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Santiago Fernandez de Cordoba, Senior Economist and UNFSS Coordinator, UNCTAD • Sara Elder, Policy Advisor, Sustainability Standards, IISD
15 Mins	<p>Setting-the-Scene</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of Study Findings by Niematallah E.A Elamin, Associate Economic Affairs Officer, UNCTAD
50 Mins	<p>Discussants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hermogene Nsengimana, Secretary-General of the African Organization for Standardization (ARSO) • Rukiayah Rafik, Indonesian Sustainable Palm Oil Farmers Forum (Fortasbi) • Ron Van Meer, Senior Advisor Corporate Social Responsibility at CBI • Yolanda Mayora de Gavidia, Corporate Sustainability Manager at Guatemalan Exports Association, AGEXPORT <p>Moderated by: Sara Elder, Policy Advisor, Sustainability Standards, IISD</p>
15 Mins	Q&A
5 Mins	<p>Summary of discussion and Closing Remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cristina Larrea, Lead, Sustainability Standards, IISD • Santiago Fernandez de Cordoba, Senior Economist and UNFSS Coordinator, UNCTAD