

SERRV PRODUCER PARTNER GUIDELINES

Serrv's mission is to eradicate poverty wherever it resides by providing opportunity and support to artisans and farmers worldwide. Serrv does this by:

- Purchasing and marketing handcrafts and some food products
- Promoting sustainable development within our producer partner organizations

Our model of working involves developing relationships with organizations that go beyond just purchasing products. As a development organization, we are interested in partnering to support organizational growth and to build the skills and capacity that will enable the organization to work into the future. We are also interested in seeing artisans and farmers gain skills that will increase their independence, empower them, and give them tools for their futures.

When deciding whether to partner, Serrv looks not just at products, but at an organization's goals, commitment to fair trade, impact on artisans and farmers in need, working methodology, and more. The primary avenues for obtaining this information are our Producer Questionnaire, other written correspondence, web sites, referrals from other trade organizations, and personal discussion.

Following are the criteria which Serrv uses to select and determine compatibility for trading partnerships:

1. Mission

The primary goal of the organization should be to provide social and economic benefits to low-income people within developing counties and communities. Beyond generating income for artisans and farmers, the organization should bring social change to these beneficiaries and their families and in some cases to their broader communities. This may be through programs such as:

- Training to develop and strengthen the skills of artisans and farmers, for instance in developing new products or techniques, improving business skills, etc.
- An emphasis on community programs focusing on areas such as education, health, housing, and cultural heritage.

The mission of the organization should be aligned with Serrv's mission.

2. Commitment to Fair Trade

The organization must be committed to each of the 10 Standards of Fair Trade as defined by the World Fair Trade Organization (more information at www.wfto.com). Membership in a local, regional, national, or international fair trade organization is preferred, but not essential.

Producers should be paid a fair and adequate wage or compensation for the work that they do, within the context of the local economy. We require that the artisans and farmers receive compensation for their work at a minimum equal to that country's legal minimum wage, and expect organizations to be working toward providing producers with a living wage.

For larger organizations working with a number of small workshops, we expect that a system is in place to monitor that each workshop is providing fair wages, good working conditions, and is in compliance with fair trade standards.

3. Beneficiaries

The organization must directly benefit economically disadvantaged, low-income small-scale producers. Serrv assists groups working with those who are marginalized by gender, ethnicity, caste, physical disability, or those who, for circumstances beyond their control, are deprived of opportunities for gainful employment. Organizations must be open to the inclusion of new beneficiaries on a non-discriminatory basis. Serrv does not directly work with individuals or family workshops.

4. Impact

The work of the organization must have a measurable, proven impact on beneficiaries not only in income/employment, but in two or more of the following areas: income/employment, quality of life, training/capacity building, leadership development, political and/or societal economic or social changes.

5. Leadership & Resources

The applicant must be an established, organized group with the ability to export. There must be effective leadership, and, in the case of an organization run by an expatriate, a plan to develop local leadership. The organization must have sufficient people, skills, resources, and connections to carry out their mission. The producer group must have basic knowledge of the aspects of exporting and exhibit the ability to carry them out. These include, but are not limited to, costing and pricing, production, quality control, documentation, packing, invoicing, delivery, buyer communication, financial management, and accounting. The group should, within one year of partnering with Serrv, show progress and forward movement during each year of the partnership.

6. Opportunities for Growth

The work environment should be one of mutual respect--cooperative, non-exploitative, and non-paternalistic. There must be opportunities for artisan, farmer, and employee stakeholders to have a voice in the organization. These stakeholders should be represented in management decisions which may seriously affect them. The organization must be contributing to artisan, farmer, and employee empowerment and personal growth.

7. Organizational Size & Level of Need

The organization must be of a size that Serrv's work with them can have an impact. The organization should be at a stage at which it can take advantage of Serrv's work with them to grow.

8. Profit Distribution

Any profits should go back into the program, fund social programs, or be shared with artisans and farmers. Reasonable compensation commensurate with salaries in the local context can be paid to management, owner(s) and staff. Shareholders are entitled to a reasonable return on their investments; however, we expect that profits benefit the organization, producers, employees, and the community.

9. Products

The products which are produced by the group must be saleable through Serrv's marketing channels. The organization must be able to make products identical to samples. We encourage environmentally sustainable utilization of raw materials and production processes. Agricultural products must meet USDA labeling and food safety requirements, foster sustainability, and be grown using limited amounts of agrochemicals.

Selection process

When choosing new groups, we evaluate all of these criteria within the local and regional context, as well as assess whether we can establish a relationship that is sustainable in the long term. Because of our own limited resources, there are always projects doing very good work which we will be unable to support because of our own capacity.

Groups which believe they meet the above criteria and are interested in pursuing a potential partnership with Serrv can submit an application which consists of a completed Producer Questionnaire, photographs of products, and wholesale FOB prices.

Within 60 days of receipt of this necessary information, a committee at Serrv will evaluate the compatibility of the producer organization with Serrv's criteria and a written response will be provided. Please do not send unsolicited samples. Note that we partner with a very limited number of new groups each year and often have to turn down groups that are doing good work in their communities.

WFTO 10 Standards of Fair Trade

WFTO prescribes 10 Standards that Fair Trade Organizations must follow in their day-to-day work and carries out monitoring to ensure these principles are upheld:

Standard One: Creating Opportunities for Economically Disadvantaged Producers

Poverty reduction through trade forms a key part of the organization's aims. The organization supports marginalized small producers, whether these are independent family businesses, or grouped in associations or co-operatives. It seeks to enable them to move from income insecurity and poverty to economic self-sufficiency and ownership. The trade supports community development. The organization has a plan of action to carry this out.

Standard Two: Transparency and Accountability

The organization is transparent in its management and commercial relations. It is accountable to all its stakeholders and respects the sensitivity and confidentiality of commercial information supplied. The organization finds appropriate, participatory ways to involve employees, members and producers in its decision-making processes. It ensures that relevant information is provided to all its trading partners. The communication channels are good and open at all levels of the supply chain.

Standard Three: Trading Practices

The organization trades with concern for the social, economic and environmental well-being of marginalized small producers and does not maximize profit at their expense. It is responsible and professional in meeting its commitments in a timely manner. Suppliers respect contracts and deliver products on time and to the desired quality and specifications.

Fair Trade buyers, recognising the financial disadvantages producers and suppliers face, ensure orders are paid on receipt of documents and according to the attached guidelines. An interest free pre payment of at least 50% is made if requested.

Where southern Fair Trade suppliers receive a pre payment from buyers, they ensure that this payment is passed on to the producers or farmers who make or grow their Fair Trade products.

Buyers consult with suppliers before canceling or rejecting orders. Where orders are cancelled through no fault of producers or suppliers, adequate compensation is guaranteed for work already done. Suppliers and producers consult with buyers if there is a problem with delivery, and ensure compensation is provided when delivered quantities and qualities do not match those invoiced.

The organization maintains long term relationships based on solidarity, trust and mutual respect that contribute to the promotion and growth of Fair Trade. It maintains effective communication with its trading partners. Parties involved in a trading relationship seek to increase the volume of the trade between them and the value and diversity of their product offer as a means of growing Fair Trade for the producers in order to increase their incomes. The organization works cooperatively with the other Fair Trade Organizations in country and

avoids unfair competition. It avoids duplicating the designs or patterns of other organizations without permission.

Standard Four: Payment of a Fair Price

A fair price is one that has been mutually agreed by all through dialogue and participation, which provides fair pay to the producers and can also be sustained by the market. Where Fair Trade pricing structures exist, these are used as a minimum. Fair pay means provision of socially acceptable remuneration (in the local context) considered by producers themselves to be fair and which takes into account the principle of equal pay for equal work by women and men. Fair Trade marketing and importing organizations support capacity building as required to producers, to enable them to set a fair price.

Standard Five: Child Labour and Forced Labour

The organization adheres to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and national / local law on the employment of children. The organization ensures that there is no forced labour in its workforce and / or members or homeworkers.

Organizations who buy Fair Trade products from producer groups either directly or through intermediaries ensure that no forced labour is used in production and the producer complies with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and national / local law on the employment of children. Any involvement of children in the production of Fair Trade products (including learning a traditional art or craft) is always disclosed and monitored and does not adversely affect the children's well-being, security, educational requirements and need for play.

Standard Six: Non Discrimination, Gender Equity and Freedom of Association

The organization does not discriminate in hiring, remuneration, access to training, promotion, termination or retirement based on race, caste, national origin, religion, disability, gender, sexual orientation, union membership, political affiliation, HIV/Aids status or age.

The organization provides opportunities for women and men to develop their skills and actively promotes applications from women for job vacancies and for leadership positions in the organization. The organization takes into account the special health and safety needs of pregnant women and breast-feeding mothers. Women fully participate in decisions concerning the use of benefits accruing from the production process. The organization respects the right of all employees to form and join trade unions of their choice and to bargain collectively. Where the right to join trade unions and bargain collectively is restricted by law and/or political environment, the organization will enable means of independent and free association and bargaining for employees. The organization ensures that representatives of employees are not subject to discrimination in the workplace.

Organizations working directly with producers ensure that women are always paid for their contribution to the production process, and when women do the same work as men they are paid at the same rates as men. Organizations also seek to ensure that in production situations where women's work is valued less highly than men's work, women's work is re-valued to equalize pay rates and women are allowed to undertake work according to their capacities.

Standard Seven: Working Conditions

The organization provides a safe and healthy working environment for employees and / or members. It complies, at a minimum, with national and local laws and ILO conventions on health and safety.

Working hours and conditions for employees and / or members (and any homeworkers) comply with conditions established by national and local laws and ILO conventions.

Fair Trade Organizations are aware of the health and safety conditions in the producer groups they buy from. They seek, on an ongoing basis, to raise awareness of health and safety issues and improve health and safety practices in producer groups.

Standard Eight: Capacity Building

The organization seeks to increase positive developmental impacts for small, marginalised producers through Fair Trade.

The organization develops the skills and capabilities of its own employees or members. Organizations working directly with small producers develop specific activities to help these producers improve their management skills, production capabilities and access to markets – local / regional / international / Fair Trade and mainstream as appropriate. Organizations which buy Fair Trade products through Fair Trade intermediaries in the South assist these organizations to develop their capacity to support the marginalized producer groups that they work with.

Standard Nine: Promotion of Fair Trade

The organization raises awareness of the aim of Fair Trade and of the need for greater justice in world trade through Fair Trade. It advocates for the objectives and activities of Fair Trade according to the scope of the organization. The organization provides its customers with information about itself, the products it markets, and the producer organizations or members that make or harvest the products. Honest advertising and marketing techniques are always used.

Standard Ten: Environment

Organizations which produce Fair Trade products maximize the use of raw materials from sustainably managed sources in their ranges, buying locally when possible. They use production technologies that seek to reduce energy consumption and where possible use renewable energy technologies that minimize greenhouse gas emissions. They seek to minimize the impact of their waste stream on the environment. Fair Trade agricultural commodity producers minimize their environmental impacts, by using organic or low pesticide use production methods wherever possible.

Buyers and importers of Fair Trade products give priority to buying products made from raw materials that originate from sustainably managed sources, and have the least overall impact on the environment.

All organizations use recycled or easily biodegradable materials for packing to the extent possible, and goods are dispatched by sea wherever possible.