

# PRODUCER PROFILE



**Name:** Coopérative des Producteurs de Café du Plateau des Bolovens (CPC)

**Products:** Coffee

**Country:** Laos

FLO ID 19646  
Fairtrade certified since 2009  
Number of members 1540



@Google maps

## Introduction

Coopérative des Producteurs de Café du Plateau des Bolovens (CPC) is a 1st grade cooperative union based on the Bolovens Plateau in the Champasak, Xekong and Attapeu provinces of southern Laos. The group was set up in 2007, and Fairtrade certified in 2009. CPC was originally founded as a collaborative French-Laotian development project to improve the quality of the local coffee for international marketing. CPC is now a thriving business aiming to increase the income of coffee producers and promote environmentally friendly growing practices. The organization is 100% Fairtrade and organic. It has 116 female members.

The Bolovens Plateau is known as the Pupiang Bolovens by the local people. This means the areas inhabited by the Laven, the Mon-Khmer ethnic minority groups. Bolovens is especially good for coffee cultivation, due to its high elevation, plentiful rainfall and cool temperatures. CPC's membership and coffee production have been growing steadily every year. They were awarded 'Lao Best Coffee Exporter' by the Laotian government in 2012.

## Coffee growing and processing

The Bolovens Plateau is a pristine environment with an altitude of up to 1,350 metres above sea level. It is situated on an ancient volcano, making it ideal for coffee growing. Coffee was first grown in this region by the French in the 1920s. The communist government then controlled the coffee market from 1975 onwards, which focused on high volume but lower quality coffee. Nowadays the market is opening up. Over 90% of Laos' coffee is produced in southern Laos.

Farmers pick their cherries, which are then processed and dried by each subgroup of CPC. The working committee divides the members into groups who work communally on different parts of the coffee process. The roles rotate daily so everyone gets the chance to work on a different part of the coffee process. Dry parchment is then sent to the mill to be processed and sorted for export.



Technical manager Bounmee Signavong checking coffee beans for quality. ©CPC

## Coffee profile

**Altitude** 900-1200m  
**Smallholders** 3.2 ha on average  
**Total area under production** 5,699 ha  
**Growing practices** 100% Fairtrade and organic  
**Coffee variety** Arabica: Catimor, Typica. Robusta: Natural and others  
**Coffee quality** Grade A for export, Grade B and C for domestic consumption  
**Harvest** Oct – Dec (Arabica), Dec to Feb (Robusta)  
**Other certifications** ACT (Organic)

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## Benefits of Fairtrade

CPC manages the entire coffee-making process from growing to cupping, export and marketing. The organization has a monthly board meeting and a yearly general assembly. Delegates are democratically elected by each subgroup of the cooperative. CPC is well organized and has invested the Fairtrade premium in a number of productivity and community development projects to support farm productivity, as well as the broader community.

### Quality and productivity

Technical experts support producers to ensure CPC grows the best possible quality coffee. They visit the villages every day to act as a point of contact for members and troubleshoot, which helps communication flow.

### Coffee/cooperative infrastructure

Thanks to the Fairtrade premium, CPC has significantly improved its infrastructure. They recently invested in a car, motorbike, and a truck. A central coffee mill and warehouse has been built, as well as a dormitory and kitchen for the members. Other improvements have been made such as new offices, better fencing, and enhanced storage facilities.

### Training

English and computer lessons are available to farmers.

### Capability Enhancement and Support funds

A number of funds have been set up to benefit the members and their local communities. These include an Emergency Fund, a Research and Development Fund, and a Cultural and Association Development Fund.

### Challenges

- For historical and cultural reasons, women (especially older women) are not yet used to participating in meetings or taking official positions in the organization.
- The area is underdeveloped and people experience high levels of poverty, living in poor conditions. Members hope this will change as their Fairtrade coffee sales increase.

## Contact:

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[www.cpc-laos.org](http://www.cpc-laos.org)



*A member of CPC holding coffee cherries.*  
©CPC



*Coffee is packaged by CPC prior to export.*  
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