



**ICO Award for Excellence in
Coffee-Related Research**

Call for papers

Introduction

The coffee sector is a business with an annual turnover that exceeds US\$200 billion. At the same time, coffee is an important agent of development, providing a livelihood for millions of people around the world, generating cash returns in subsistence economies and, since coffee production and harvesting are labour-intensive, providing an important source of rural employment for both men and women. Working towards securing a healthy world coffee economy is therefore important economically and politically, as well as being desirable from the viewpoint of encouraging sustainable socio-economic development, both to improve living standards in producing countries and to increase markets for goods produced in consuming countries.

However, coffee growers face a number of challenges, including the long-term cyclical behaviour of prices and a high degree of price volatility, as well as increasing costs of production, all of which affect the product's profitability and future sustainability. Moreover, ongoing changes in weather patterns, due mainly to climate change, represent another threat to the future sustainability of the coffee industry. The challenge is therefore to ensure a healthy and competitive trading environment in which the interests of the commercial sectors of the global industry are in line with the needs of the less advantaged developing countries, in order to achieve sustainability over time.

The International Coffee Organization (ICO) is the main intergovernmental organization for coffee, bringing together exporting and importing countries to tackle the challenges facing the world coffee sector through international cooperation. In this regard, the ICO provides a convergence platform for all initiatives promoting the development of the world coffee economy, particularly encouraging initiatives with a positive impact on sustainable development of the coffee sector.

Against this background and within the framework of its Five-Year Action Plan, namely Strategic Goal II (B) “**Priority actions to strengthen engagement with third parties**”, the International Coffee Council approved the ICO Award for Excellence in Coffee-related Research.

Therefore, the ICO calls for papers for the 2019 ICO Essay competition for coffee-related economic research. This Award aims to promote high-quality research on emerging issues in the global coffee sector. More specifically, the ICO Award seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- Promote high quality economic research on coffee-related issues with emphasis on the ICO yearly thematic focus and the Five-Year Action Plan. The ICO thematic focus for the current coffee year 2018/19 is “**Profitability: consumption and productivity**”.
- Engage young economists and researchers in the assessment of economics-related issues affecting the coffee sector.
- Generate innovative approaches to address development-related issues in coffee-producing countries and the contribution of the coffee sector to the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Stimulate debate in the area of ‘sustainable coffee value chain and international development’.

The research paper should cover a relevant topic related to the sustainable development of the coffee sector. Some ideas for particular topics could include improving the contribution of the coffee sector to attaining the Sustainable Development Goals and/or the importance of coffee in social and economic development. While candidates have freedom to choose their own topics, provided they are relevant to the coffee sector, preference will be given to those papers addressing research questions that fall under the ICO thematic focus for coffee year 2018/19.

Eligibility

The competition is open to all economists and researchers in social sciences who are in the process of completing a PhD or who have completed their degree in the last five years, are citizens of an ICO Member country or affiliated to an institution based in an ICO Member country, and have a proven interest in the area of coffee economics.

To enter the competition, the candidate should submit an essay, thesis work or journal article, in an official language of the ICO (English, French, Portuguese and Spanish), preferably English, which should not exceed 15,000 words.

Selection panel

The selection panel will comprise three university professors of economics, one editor of a specialized magazine and two senior officers of the Organization. The Head of Operations will coordinate the work of the panel.

Award

The winner of the award will be presented with £2,000. In the case of a co-authored paper, the prize will be equally divided among the authors. The prize is awarded annually during the autumn session of the International Coffee Council, usually held in London, United Kingdom. To enable the winner to attend, the award ceremony in person, travel costs of up to £800 shall be covered by the ICO¹. An award certificate will be presented to the winner and the winning essay will be published in specialized magazines, on the ICO website and social media channels, in addition to being circulated among ICO Member countries.

Deadline for submission

All submissions should be sent to essay.award@ico.org not later than **30 June 2019**. Submissions should include as separate attachments in PDF format:

- (a) The essay.
- (b) The curriculum vitae of the author(s), specifying:
 - i. Current affiliation(s).
 - ii. The academic institution awarding the PhD and the year (or expected year) of completion of the degree.
 - iii. The date of birth of the author(s).

Only papers tailored to address the specific research topics relevant to the ICO will be considered by the selection panel.

¹ *The ICO is not in a position to provide assistance with regards to visa, travel insurance and other matters related to attending the award ceremony.*