# A System to Assess Coffee Value (June 2024): Summary of Changes

## ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

The SCA has released *A System to Assess Coffee Value: Understanding the Specialty Coffee Association's Value Assessment (June 2024)*, a revision of the previously released *A New System to Assess Coffee Value*, which introduced the SCA's Coffee Value Assessment in April 2023. After a period of early adopter feedback (April 2023 – February 2024), the SCA integrated feedback from CVA Early Adopters, CVA Ambassadors, and participants in the CVA for Cuppers course during its revision process. Several substantial amendments or additions to the text, forms, and references were incorporated into *A System to Assess Coffee Value (June 2024)*, which are outlined below. Other smaller amends (punctuation, updates to internal reference numbers, etc.) were also made, but are not captured here.



## KEY

Highlighted text: Text which has been amended or otherwise changed during the revision process.
*Italicized text*: New text which was added during the revision process.

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| **Part 1: About the System** | | |
| **About this Document**<br><br>(Text Amendment) | *This document was originally conceived as the "beta version" of what will eventually become the new coffee value assessment protocol, anticipated to replace the 2004 SCA Cupping Form and Protocol in 2024 after a broader testing during the 2023 early-adopter program. However, given that some assessments have progressed through the development process more quickly than others—and that this is such a long document—the assessments and the protocols outlining their use will become a series of separate provisional standards for ratification by the SCA's Standards Development Panel.*[1]<br><br>As this document will become a series of future SCA standards, the way in which it is organized and written adheres to some of the guidelines set out by the International Standards Organization (ISO), which includes the early establishment of terms and definitions (sections 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3). It also applies a particular sentence structure logic, where "shall," "should," and "may" all have distinct meanings: "Shall" indicates a statement is mandatory and must be followed exactly as prescribed; "should" indicates a recommendation; and "may" indicates the existence of an option.<br><br>*However, the SCA recognizes that these future standards—by nature of the same guidelines set by the ISO—will not contain any additional context around their development history or their underpinning logic. To this end, the SCA will continue to revise and adapt this longer and overarching version of the system's emerging protocols as a key contextual document. It is anticipated that the contents of this document will eventually be integrated into a second edition of the SCA's Coffee Sensory and Cupping Handbook.* | **Reason for Change:** Basic explanation of the terminology for this document used to live under Section 3 (Definitions), but with the additional context added around the role of this document in the standards development process, this was amended and moved to a new "About this Document" section.<br><br>**Impact on User:** No direct impact, provides additional context around the role of this document and the ongoing standards development process.<br><br>**Further Reading:**<br>SCA – Coffee Standards |

[1] "Coffee Standards," Specialty Coffee Association, accessed March 20, 2023, https://sca.coffee/research/coffee-standards.

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| **1.1 The Evolution of Cupping**<br><br>(Addition) | *After producing alpha and beta versions of the new system's various assessments, the SCA released these versions for piloting in prototype testing with several groups of cuppers as well as broad early adopter feedback through the use of a perpetually open survey tool. Additionally, a group of trainers and ambassadors joined staff in hosting training and informational sessions in different locations, collecting insights, feedback, and questions from prospective users about each of the assessments in the process. This provisional version of the Coffee Value Assessment protocol, released in June 2024, reflects amends integrating this broad review process of the beta version (released in April 2023).* | **Reason for Change:** The SCA has made progress on the overall Coffee Value Assessment project that needed to be addressed in the timeline of activities.<br><br>**Impact on User:** No direct impact.<br><br>**Further Reading:**<br>SCA – Coffee Value Assessment |
| **2.1 Using the Assessments**<br><br>(Amendment) | … The physical assessment is still currently in research and development, but this document outlines a basic approach to this type of assessment, including an alpha version of the associated form (Appendix 12.5).<br><br>… The provisional form of the descriptive assessment (Appendix 12.1), which has been submitted to the SCA's Standards Development Panel (SDP) for ratification, is available for use. This version is anticipated to be adopted as the SCA Standard in 2024-2025, replacing the 2004 SCA Cupping Form.<br><br>… The provisional form of the affective assessment (Appendix 12.2), which has been submitted to the SCA's SDP for ratification, is available for use. This version is anticipated to be adopted as the SCA Standard in 2024-2025, replacing the 2004 SCA Cupping Form.<br><br>… A beta form of the extrinsic assessment (see Appendix 12.4) is now available for use following a period of research and development on an alpha version in 2023. | **Reason for Change:** The SCA has made progress on the overall Coffee Value Assessment project that needed to be addressed in the section outlining the status of each individual assessment.<br><br>**Impact on User:** No direct impact, provides additional context around where the SCA is in the process of developing and adopting the CVA as a standard.<br><br>**Further Reading:**<br>SCA – Coffee Value Assessment |

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| **3.1 General Terms**<br><br>(Amendments) | **Attribute(s).** A property that is characteristic of something; a quality or feature regarded as a characteristic or inherent part of a coffee. A product (or coffee) can be thought of as a collection of attributes. Well-defined attributes can be identified using a variety of methods.<br><br>**Affective assessment.** For the case of this protocol, a sensory assessment that focuses on discovering the impression of quality of a coffee, for the various sections of the coffee cupping and as an overall. It responds to questions such as "how much do I like this coffee?" and "does this sensory profile match the preferences of a market segment known to me (or for another person)?"<br><br>**Descriptive assessment.** A sensory assessment that focuses on profiling and characterizing the sensory attributes of coffee objectively. It responds to questions such as "what does this coffee taste like?" or "what is the sensory profile of this coffee?"<br><br>**Extrinsic attribute.** Also known as "informational" or "symbolic" attributes, extrinsic attributes are qualities or features *about* a coffee. For example, this includes a coffee's place of origin, the name of the producer, or any certifications it might carry as well as branding, stories, or claims.<br><br>**Extrinsic assessment.** A descriptive activity that focuses on profiling and characterizing the informational or symbolic attributes of coffee objectively. It responds to questions like "what information do I know about this coffee, beyond its physical and sensory information?" | **Reason for Change:** Clarification of concept (extrinsic attribute, extrinsic assessment) or providing additional context (attribute, affective assessment, descriptive assessment). In the case of the extrinsic attribute and assessment definitions, this stems predominately from the work to move the CVA Extrinsic Assessment from an alpha to a beta phase, following user research.<br><br>**Impact on User:** Enhanced clarity and context of key system terms, including the new beta Extrinsic Assessment.<br><br>**Further Reading:**<br>Evolving the Extrinsic Assessment: Literature Review, Survey Results, and Beta Proposal |
| **3.2 Cupping Terms**<br><br>(Concept, Terminology Update) | ***Alignment.*** *When a group of tasters agrees on the affective "impression of quality" score within a cupping section, attribute, or total impression. Since "alignment" is used in an affective context, and affective scores are subjective, affective alignment reflects a concept called "inter-subjectivity." See 8.2, 11.4.* | **Reason for Change:** Introduce definitions for terms previously undefined, but important to the understanding of the CVA's concept (alignment, intensity); update definitions to reflect ongoing research (physical defect, sensory defect, roasting problem). |

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| **3.2 Cupping Terms – *Continued***<br><br>(Concept, Terminology Update) | ***Intensity.*** *The perceived strength of a sensory stimulus in a descriptive category or cupping section. Intensity does not imply quality or desirability. For example, fragrance intensity is the perceived strength of the odor of the dry coffee grounds, as a single perception.*<br><br>***Physical Defect.*** *A material property of the green or roasted coffee beans that is broadly seen as negative. Physical defects are perceived visually in the "Physical Assessment" of the CVA. See 2.1.*<br><br>**Sensory Defect.** An aromatic or gustatory property of the coffee that is broadly seen as negative. Sensory defects are evaluated through tasting in the "Affective Assessment" of the CVA. See 8.4.1.<br><br>**Note:** This change in terminology and definition reflects a conceptual update to the use of the term "defects" based on the development of a forthcoming research project to develop the CVA Physical Assessment.<br><br>**Roasting problem.** A deviation from the protocol which happens when roast batches do not fall in the desired roast level range or present underdeveloped, burnt, or baked characteristics. The presence of roasting problems has a potential sensory impact on the coffee's flavor and impression of quality, thus introducing noise to the test. | **Impact on User:** Changes to "sensory defect" and "physical defect": the use of "defect" throughout the protocol has since been amended to specify either "physical defects" or "sensory defects" where relevant.<br><br>"Roasting problem": This change in terminology and definition also impacts section 5.1.1. – Roasting Problems, where all instances of "roast defect" are replaced with "roast problem" or equivalent.<br><br>**Further Reading:**<br>CSF – Understanding Green Coffee "Defects" and Their Effects<br><br>CSF – Request for Proposals for Defects Research<br><br>"What Color is Your Coffee?" Issue 21 of *25* |

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| **Part 2: Tests and Mechanics** | | |
| **4.3 Physical Defects**<br><br>(Amendment) | The full defect equivalents of each defect type are calculated based on the number of beans of each defect per full defect equivalent, as described on the table of defect equivalents (Table 2). Full defect equivalents of each type are rounded down to the nearest integer. The full defect equivalents of each category (category 1 and category 2) are added up and reported by category. | **Reason for Change:** Defect calculation was not included in prior protocols.<br><br>**Impact on User:** Adjustment for clarity, no impact on the calculation of defects. This rounding approach was customary. |
| **6.2 Olfactory Category Examples**<br><br>(Amendment) | **Olfactory Category Examples**<br><br>The descriptive assessment includes the use of olfactory category example references meant to illustrate the CATA descriptors used in the protocol. Each of these descriptors are examples of a larger group of descriptors in the Coffee Taster's Flavor Wheel, built upon the World Coffee Research Sensory Lexicon (WCR Sensory Lexicon). For example, "floral" is exemplified by Le Nez du Café #12 – "Coffee Blossom" (among other suggested examples), but the Flavor Wheel includes Black Tea, Chamomile, Rose, and Jasmin as the notes belonging to the "Floral" category. The user would use the reference as an example of the whole category, so that the CATA selection is accurate.<br><br>If the user wishes to further train their descriptive skills in order to elicit the most accurate note, we recommend the references listed in the WCR Sensory Lexicon or similar references available in the user's country. As not all lexicon sensory references are readily available in some areas of the world, we have taken care to compile a broader set of category examples that could be used to represent each larger group of descriptors in the wheel. At any rate, the idea is it is not necessary for all tasters to use exactly the same reference, but for them to get a general idea or representative example of each Coffee Taster's Flavor Wheel category. The category examples are conceived to be used orthonasally, for training and alignment purposes. | **Reason for Change:** Clarification of concept by using new terminology, based on early adopter feedback. Although the CVA uses the WCR's Sensory Lexicon as a base for its sensory references, they are not used in the same manner (i.e., to describe a specific reference, or in a sensory science panel for training). In this case, the CVA sensory references are "category examples," which—although articulated in the explanation of the previous version, caused some confusion. The terminology has been changed across the document. |

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| **6.2 Olfactory Category Examples - *Continued***<br><br>(Amendment) | For a full list of category examples, please see Appendix 15.<br><br>**Note:** This change in terminology is to distinguish between "sensory lexicon references" (used in sensory science panels in a very clear, and precise, manner) and CVA "category example references," which serve only as examples rather than specific references. This change in terminology extends to Appendix 15. | **Impact on User:** Enhanced understanding of the purpose of CVA sensory aids.<br><br>**Further Reading:**<br>CVA Olfactory Category Examples – Digital List |
| **6.4 Acidity Terms**<br><br>(Concept, Terminology Update; Addition) | *The beta version of the CVA's Descriptive Assessment (April 2023) introduced two CATA boxes for "Dry acidity" and "Sweet acidity." Although this worked well for a fraction of the early users, the lack of sensory references grounding these new terms caused some confusion for others. With very little scientific research to offer sensory references for these terms, or to generally support the inclusion of these specific descriptors in an acidity CATA, the provisional standard (June 2024) removes them. Therefore, cuppers shall use this section to describe the character of a sample's acidity using only freely elicited descriptors.*<br><br>*Some descriptors recommended, although not scientifically proven, include: juicy, fruit-like, bright, tart, sharp, winey, vinegary, herbal, grassy, dry, etc. Some of these terms, although common in certain cupping traditions, do not translate to other languages.* | **Reason for Change:** Early-adopter feedback.<br><br>**Impact on User:** There is no longer CATA for Acidity in the descriptive assessment. Binary categorization of a coffee's acidity is no longer possible. |

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| **Part 3: Assessments** | | |
| **7.1 Descriptive Assessment – Overview**<br><br>(Amendment, Addition) | … Descriptive assessment follows the steps outlined in 6.1. Before starting, the roast level of the sample is estimated visually, when applicable, and recorded. Next, in the first step of the assessment…<br><br>… The acidity intensity is rated, and its characteristics are described through freely elicited terms. The same is done for sweetness, while mouthfeel is rated in intensity, and its characteristics checked in the mouthfeel CATA list. In all sections, cuppers are free to elicit descriptors to better describe the checked terms or, in rare cases, to describe characteristics that are not covered in the CATA lists.<br><br>*Most cuppers have received some kind of descriptive training, which usually includes training in intensity rating of some characteristics such as acidity, and the use of both sensory references and a lexicon to describe the coffee's sensory characteristics qualitatively. The signs of a high-performing descriptive cupper are, thus, consistency with their own intensity ratings and accuracy in the use of descriptors. When cupping in a panel or group, the group's results serve as a frame of reference for individual cuppers' performance. A given cupper's individual results may be compared to the group's or to other cuppers' performance. With increased training, a cupping group may achieve higher levels of consistency and agreement on both intensity ratings and the qualitative descriptors that best represent a coffee.* | **Reason for Change:** Early-adopter feedback.<br><br>In some instances, visual assessment of a coffee's roast level is a valuable piece of information which can be easily included in the descriptive assessment.<br><br>The general steps in the overview had to be adjusted to reflect the absence of an acidity CATA.<br><br>General guidelines to gauge an individual cupper's and a panel's performance have been added. |

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| **7.3. Descriptive Assessment – Choosing Descriptors**<br><br>(Amendment) | **Fragrance and aroma box.** This box is located below the intensity scales for fragrance and aroma. It includes a single list meant to encompass both orthonasal[2] sections (fragrance and aroma). The list includes the nine categories in the inner circle of the flavor wheel (floral, fruity, sweet, sour/fermented, green/vegetative, nutty/cocoa, spicy, roasted, and other). In addition, several second-tier options from the middle ring of the wheel are included in the CATA list. For example, the berry, dried fruit, and citrus fruit subcategories from the "fruity" category have been included in the list. Up to five descriptors that best represent the coffee should be selected in this list, encompassing both fragrance and aroma.<br><br>**Flavor and aftertaste box.** This box contains two lists. One is for the retronasal perceptions and the other is for the gustatory perceptions. As the retronasal list (on the left-hand side) refers to the olfactory dimension of coffee, the descriptors used are the same as for the fragrance and aroma CATA list, and the way to use it is the same (up to five options that best represent the coffee). The main tastes list, on the right-hand side, is meant to record up to two main tastes that best represent the coffee from both the flavor and aftertaste sections…<br><br>**Mouthfeel box.** This box includes one CATA list, from which up to two options should be selected. Note these options describe the mouthfeel quality, as its intensity (in the form of body level or thickness, for example) has been rated on the corresponding scale.<br><br>**Freely elicited descriptors.** All the descriptive sections, including acidity and sweetness, allow cuppers to write down freely elicited descriptors. There are three situations when a written descriptor is in order:<br><br>• When there are no CATA boxes to check (i.e., in acidity and sweetness).<br>• When there is a very precise… | **Reason for Change:** The cap of five descriptors in the Fragrance/Aroma and Flavor/Aftertaste nexted CATA lists was confusing for some users. Other users observed that some very complex coffees may show more than five important characters. Here, the cap of five descriptors in these sections has been made optional ("should").<br><br>**Impact on User:** Users no longer need to count the descriptors they have marked in these sections, which allows more focus and freedom. However, users should take care to mark significant descriptors only, to avoid all coffees having been understood as "very complex." |

[2] Orthonasal: a smell perceived through the nostrils, as opposed to retronasal (a smell perceived from the back of the palate, and fused with other stimuli to produce the sensation of flavor).

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| **8.1. Affective Assessment – Overview**<br><br>(Amendment) | 3. Sweetness is now rated along a scale, as this was identified as a necessary revision by most respondents in a 2021 survey about the strengths and weaknesses of the 2004 protocol.<br>4. …<br>5. There is no space for calculating the cupping score on the form. The formula is best calculated using a computer, an online tool, or a mobile app, though a two-way table can also be used. See Appendix 12.2.<br><br>**Note:** The new "two-way table" to translate a final affective form score into the 100-point CVA score is also referenced in additional areas of the document, including the section explaining the cupping score calculation (8.5) as well as on the affective form itself (Appendix 12.2). | **Reason for Change:** A manual calculation method was needed for cases where there is no internet access.<br><br>**Impact on User:** Option to calculate score using table, rather than web calculator or cupping apps using CVA scoring, although the use of CVA cupping apps and platforms is strongly encouraged. |
| **8.3. Affective Assessment – Affective Notetaking**<br><br>(Concept Update, Addition) | *An assessor completing a full descriptive assessment of a coffee will use freely elicited descriptors to be very precise about the coffee's sensory characteristics; there is no need to repeat the descriptive notes in the affective assessment. Instead, affective notetaking should reflect a judgement about the coffee's impression of quality and how it results from sensory characteristics. It may help to think of affective notetaking as a justification of a section's score: other parties along the chain will want to know what was so good in the coffee to deserve a very high score, what was so bad about it to deserve a low score, or even what was so nondescript in a coffee to deserve a neutral score.*<br><br>*Some types of affective notetaking include the following:*<br><br>1. *Just about right (JAR) ratings. A JAR rating is an appraisal of whether there is too much, too little or "just about right" of a certain character. Examples: "too acidic," "too fermented," "not sweet enough," "lacks body," "well balanced."*<br>2. *A judgement of how well a coffee fits a purpose or a character. For example: "great for our coffee of the month," "prototypical Yirgacheffe," or "I don't taste the Gesha."* | **Reason for Change:** There was confusion around what "affective notetaking" could look like, especially when compared to descriptive notes.<br><br>**Impact on User:** Enhanced clarity around affective notetaking practice. |

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| **8.3. Affective Assessment – Affective Notetaking – *Continued***<br><br>(Concept Update, Addition) | 3. *A note about what a coffee's sensory attributes represent to us, even if vague. For example: "the floral flavor makes it very elegant," "the ashy aftertaste is disappointing," "the silky body is its best quality." Note that, although some descriptive aspects are included in this note, they are used to support an impression of quality. In other words, notes that reference sensory descriptors should also indicate the desirability or undesirability of such characteristic.*<br>4. *A general, intuitive, or symbolic representation of the coffee. For example: "elegant," "wild," "exotic," "powerful," etc. As this type of note often does not translate across languages or cultures, assessors should take care that these notes—if included—either include additional context or are supported with other types of affective notes. In other words, assessors should exercise caution when including these kinds of comments. For example, "funky" is a vague word which is untranslatable to any language other than English. Beyond this, it also represents something very desirable for some people and something to be completely avoided for some other people.*<br><br>*Note the subjectivity implicit in all affective notes. While descriptive notetaking should be objective, the purpose of affective notetaking is to justify an assessor's impression of quality: these notes should explain an assessor's subjective impression. Assessors are not expected to be objective in their affective notetaking, but they should be serious and professional.* | |

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| **9.1. Extrinsic Assessment – Overview**<br><br>(Concept Update, Amendment, Addition) | The SCA's definition of specialty coffee is based on the idea that coffee's value is based on distinctive attributes, which in their totality make a coffee "special."[3] In this value assessment paradigm, coffee's intrinsic attributes—its physical and sensory properties—are evaluated during the physical, descriptive, and affective assessments, respectively. The next step is identifying and evaluating a coffee's extrinsic attributes—those informational or symbolic attributes that also contribute to specialty coffee's value.[4] To date, studies on the value of different extrinsic attributes have either focused on understanding a single attribute, like Fair Trade certification, or on ranking the importance of a series of attributes. Without a way to record attributes in the coffee evaluation process, it has been impossible to collect and compare data from a wide range of sources about which attributes drive purchasing decisions.<br><br>The extrinsic assessment of a coffee seeks to document as many of these informational details as possible. Just as the descriptive sensory assessment seeks to list significant sensory attributes of the coffee, the extrinsic assessment is a similar activity aimed at listing any extrinsic attributes that may make the coffee interesting to buyers in the marketplace. As repeated studies have shown that any kind of extrinsic information about a coffee—from a cue about its origin to the color of its packaging—can (and does) influence a coffee taster's sensory perception as well as their perception of quality and/or value, any assessment of extrinsic information should be kept wholly separate from the other sensory assessments.[5]<br><br>*There are many different potential extrinsic attributes in a complex product like coffee. After much discussion and review of the April 2023 "alpha" version of the assessment, the 2024 "beta" version of the extrinsic assessment introduces categories more closely aligned with the language and logic of the SCA Coffee System's Map—a similar relationship to that found between the SCA Coffee Taster's Flavor Wheel and the CVA Descriptive Assessment. Outlining the relationship between key actors and actions in the specialty coffee industry, the SCA Coffee Systems Map arose from the* | **Reason for Change:** Complete update of this section based on the findings of the alpha extrinsic assessment survey and focus group activities that took place across 2023.<br><br>**Impact on User:** Users now have a much more clear explanation and structure to the extrinsic assessment, although it is anticipated that the SCA will continue to refine the new beta form as additional feedback is offered by early adopters.<br><br>**Further Reading:**<br>Evolving the Extrinsic Assessment: Literature Review, Survey Results, and Beta Proposal<br><br>The SCA Coffee Systems Map |

[3] SCA, *Towards a Definition of Specialty Coffee.*
[4] SCA, *Towards a Definition of Specialty Coffee.*
[5] SCA, *The CVA Extrinsic Assessment: Literature Review, Survey Results, and Proposal*, Published April 2024.

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| **9.1. Extrinsic Assessment – Overview – *Continued***<br><br>(Concept Update, Amendment, Addition) | *SCA's Price Crisis Response Initiative as a way to shift the focus from the individual parts of a system to how the system operates as a whole. By adopting the same language and logic as the Systems Map, it is hoped that the extrinsic assessment will help the SCA understand in greater detail how extrinsic attributes affect value.*<br><br>*Like the descriptive assessment, the extrinsic assessment will focus on a few widely used attributes within each category, rather than a long list of possible attributes, with assessors strongly encouraged to add their own freely elicited descriptors. To this end, in addition to outlining the categories and attributes contained in the extrinsic assessment below, this document also includes a list of additional potential attributes which may be captured as freely elicited descriptors on the assessment.*<br><br>*The presence of an attribute on the assessment will not necessarily mean that it is more important or more valuable than attributes that are not listed—rather, these attributes will appear because they have been demonstrated to generate value and are recognizable to cuppers working anywhere in the coffee system. In digital applications, this list can feed a database that can be queried to determine which informational attributes correlate to higher value in the marketplace and desirability in different consuming regions.* | |
| **9.2. Extrinsic Assessment – Farming Information**<br><br>(Concept Update, Amendment, Addition) | Farming is described in the *SCA Coffee Systems Map* as "planting, tending, and harvesting coffee seeds from coffee trees."[6] The specialty coffee marketplace values traceability and unique identities, and many specialty coffee buyers and sellers emphasize information about a coffee's place of origin—i.e., where it was farmed and by whom—with variable granularity. This information…<br><br>In the extrinsic assessment, the "Farming Information" category encompasses the following list of extrinsic attributes:<br><br>• Country<br>• Region, or other sub-national geographical information such as state, province, municipality, village, etc. | **Reason for Change:** Complete update of this section based on the findings of the alpha extrinsic assessment survey and focus group activities that took place across 2023. For impact and additional resources, see first entry for Section 9 changes. |

[6] SCA, *Coffee Systems Map*.

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| **9.2. Extrinsic Assessment – Farming Information – *Continued***<br><br>(Concept Update, Amendment, Addition) | • Name of farm or co-op<br>• Name of producer(s)<br>• Species<br>• Variety or blend of varieties<br>• Harvest date/year<br>• Other<br><br>*In this case, users could populate the "other" category in this section with similar or related information as freely elicited descriptors:*<br>• *Other geographical information, which includes:*<br>  ○ *Altitude*<br>  ○ *Latitude*<br>  ○ *Longitude*<br>  ○ *GPS Coordinates/Polygon*<br>• *Other botanical, cultivation, or picking information, which includes:*<br>  ○ *Pruning*<br>  ○ *Fertilizing*<br>  ○ *Shading*<br>  ○ *Other growing conditions*<br>  ○ *Harvesting approach* | |
| **9.3. Extrinsic Assessment – Processing Information**<br><br>(Concept Update, Amendment, Addition) | *Processing is described in the SCA Coffee Systems Map as "preparing coffee seeds for stable transportation and storage." In recent decades, specialty coffee has experienced a "revolution" in this area: the speed of new method development only continues to increase. Driven by the success of honey and natural processes in the early 2000s, new approaches—particularly those merging the fermentation practices of other industries outside of coffee—have emerged, including extended fermentation periods, carbonic maceration, and "co-fermentation" (i.e., the introduction of other organic products, like fruit, to a fermentation tank).*[7] | **Reason for Change:** Complete update of this section based on the findings of the alpha extrinsic assessment survey and focus group activities that took place across 2023. For impact and additional resources, see first entry for Section 9 changes. |

[7] Joel Schuler, "Paradigm Shift: The Post-Harvest Processing Revolution," presented at Re:co Symposium in April 2022, released as a video recording on SCA News on October 15, 2022: https://sca.coffee/sca-news/watch/video/paradigm-shift-the-post-harvest-processing-revolution.

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| **9.3. Extrinsic Assessment – Processing Information - *Continued***<br><br>(Concept Update, Amendment, Addition) | *This revolution brings opportunities for technical progress in processing and for leading processors to add value to their coffee, but it can also be difficult to navigate for professionals and consumers alike. As the "processing revolution" continues, extrinsic attributes linked to processing information will likely continue to evolve, but two key categories of processing information are likely to remain constant: processor information and process type. In the "Processing" category of the extrinsic assessment, users will have space to note the following attributes:*<br><br>• *Name of Processor(s)*<br>  ○ *Wet Mill/Processing Station*<br>  ○ *Dry Mill*<br>  ○ *Other, which could include the name of the lead processor(s) if key individuals are known*<br>• *Process Type*<br>  ○ *Washed*<br>  ○ *Natural*<br>  ○ *Other*<br><br>*With the broad range of names and descriptions used in processing, the SCA anticipates that the "Other" section for "Process Type" could include a wide range of information. For example, it may be a good practice to also include some basic descriptive information about the process type. Some terminology the SCA is currently exploring as a part of an emerging green coffee identity standard includes:*<br><br>• *Fruit-dried (dry process, natural)*<br>• *Mucilage-dried (honey, semi-dry)*<br>• *Parchment-dried (washed, wet process, semi-washed, demucilaged)*<br>• *Seed-dried (wet hulled)*<br><br>*The type of fermentation, as described by the processor, may be a valuable extrinsic attribute for many people. Although there are no standard definitions of any of those methods, popular terms to describe the type of fermentation include:* | |

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| **9.3. Extrinsic Assessment – Processing Information - *Continued***<br><br>(Concept Update, Amendment, Addition) | • *Lactic*<br>• *Anaerobic*<br>• *Carbonic maceration*<br>• *Multiple fermentations*<br>• *Co-fermentation*<br>*Additionally, it may be worthwhile to note where on the continuum of "nothing added during processing" to "something added during processing" a particular sample exists.[8] This includes:*<br><br>• *Microbial starters, like a proprietary strain of yeast*<br>• *Fermentation adjuncts, like flowers, herbs, or fruit*<br>• *Flavoring agents, applied before drying (natural or artificial)*<br>• *Flavoring agents, applied during or after drying (natural or artificial; for example, a natural "flavoring agent" applied after drying might be the practice of storing green coffee in a bourbon barrel)* | |

[8] Mario Fernández Alduenda, "Understanding Shifting Coffee Identity Standards," SCA News, published July 26, 2020. https://sca.coffee/sca-news/read/understanding-shifting-coffee-identity-standards

| Section (Type) | 2024 Protocol Document – Provisional Text | Context |
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| **9.4. Extrinsic Assessment – Trading Information**<br><br>(Concept Update, Amendment, Addition) | Although the *SCA Coffee Systems Map* distinguishes between the activities of "Exporting" (described as "arranging a coffee's departure from its country of origin, including coordinating logistics and absorbing financial risk") and "Importing" (described as "receiving coffee in its destination country, including coordinating logistics and absorbing financial risk"), the extrinsic attributes which are likely arise from these activities are captured in the single category of "Trading Information" in the extrinsic assessment.<br><br>Like the other categories within the extrinsic assessment, the attributes listed within this section appear because they have been demonstrated to generate value and are recognizable to cuppers working anywhere in the coffee system. Data from the physical assessment, as well as farm and process information, might result in a coffee receiving a grade within a classification system. Some of these systems are international, while others have been developed and governed by individual producing countries. In many cases, this was for the purpose of signaling to buyers what to expect in the cup before cupping became common practice in coffee supply chains. In this category, assessors shall note any grades the coffee might qualify for, such as:<br><br>• Size grade (AA, Supremo, etc.)<br>• Other grade (EP, SHG, SHB, etc.)<br>• ICO Number<br>• Other<br><br>*However, there is—as within all categories of the extrinsic assessment—the opportunity for assessors to include the wide variety of information a coffee may accrue during the trading process, like:*<br><br>• *Trading model, for example "direct trade," "spot purchase," etc.*<br>• *Farmgate price*<br>• *FOB price*<br>• *Price premium* | **Reason for Change:** Complete update of this section based on the findings of the alpha extrinsic assessment survey and focus group activities that took place across 2023. For impact and additional resources, see first entry for Section 9 changes. |

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| **9.5. Extrinsic Assessment – Certification Information**<br><br>(Concept Update, Amendment, Addition) | Many coffees carry product certifications or verifications, which can be very important to commercial buyers and consumers. Conducted by a third-party, certifications occupy a unique space in that they guarantee information across multiple extrinsic attribute categories (i.e., farming, processing, grading, and/or trading information). In a study from 2022, coffee drinkers report that product claims about fair prices paid to farmers, good labor practices, thriving communities, environmental sustainability, and support for coffee communities are key drivers of their purchasing decisions, alongside intrinsic attribute information like roast level.[9] These programs typically ensure that certain environmental, ethical, and economic qualifications have been met using standards and independent, on-farm verification of compliance with the practices and norms stipulated by the standard.<br><br>Some globally recognized, third-party product certifications include:<br><br>• 4C<br>• Fair Trade<br>• Organic<br>• Rainforest Alliance<br>• Other<br><br>*Other information which could be captured here, as freely elicited descriptors, includes:*<br><br>• *Other third-party certification schemes, like SMBC Bird Friendly or Regenerative Organic, which may be slightly less well known or studied than those listed above;*<br>• *Second-party verification schemes, developed by companies rather than in collectives (for example, Nespresso AAA or Starbucks C.A.F. Practices);*<br>• *Geographical Indication, an intellectual property right used on products that have characteristics attributable to a specific geographical origin (for example, Café de Colombia, Café Veracruz, Café Genuino Antigua).* | **Reason for Change:** Complete update of this section based on the findings of the alpha extrinsic assessment survey and focus group activities that took place across 2023. For impact and additional resources, see first entry for Section 9 changes. |

[9] Jenn Rugolo and Peter Giuliano, "Discussing Key Findings: National Coffee Data Trends Specialty Coffee Report," *SCA News*, June 13, 2022, https://sca.coffee/sca-news/discussing-key-findings-2022-national-coffee-data-trends-report.

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| **11.4. Frequently Asked Questions – Using the Assessment**<br><br>(Concept Update, Addition) | **Is cupper calibration still required, or is this all based on preference now?**<br>*In sensory science, "calibration" refers to the training of sensory panelists to accurately use a set of sensory references in a very specific testing environment and protocol. Although the specialty coffee industry has adopted this term widely, particularly in coffee competitions, the SCA suggests that instead, the practice the industry commonly refers to as "calibration" be better understood as "alignment." This is because groups of assessors (i.e., a cupping group) are not being asked to perform in the specific manner of a trained sensory panel.*<br><br>Regarding the descriptive assessment… | **Reason for Change:** Many questions were received about whether a cupper "calibration" is needed to use the CVA (and why or why not this was the case). |

| Section (Type) | 2024 Protocol Document – Provisional Text | Context |
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| **Part 4: Appendices** | | |
| **Appendix 12 – Coffee Value Assessment Forms**<br><br>(Concept Update, Amendment, Addition) | **12.1. Descriptive Form (Version 2, Provisional Standard)**<br>• Removed the nesting CATA boxes (i.e., removing the parenthesis) for Fragrance/Aroma and Flavor/Aftertaste<br>• Removed the CATA boxes under the Acidity section<br>• Removed "check up to X" sections everywhere except "Main Tastes (2)"<br>• Added new descriptors for "Roasted" section: Cereal, Burnt, Tobacco/Pipe Tobacco (all instances)<br>• Changed "Spicy" to "Spice" (all instances)<br>• Changed "Papery" to "Woody" (all instances)<br>• Added "roast level" indicator per sample<br>• Added indications for freely elicited descriptor notes<br>• Added more distinction between Sample A (top) and Sample B (bottom)<br><br>**12.2. Affective Form (Version 2, Provisional Standard)**<br>• Removed one sample (so only two samples on each sheet, like the Descriptive Form)<br>• Added scoring table<br><br>**12.3. Combined Form (Version 2)**<br>• Integrated relevant changes from 12.1 and 12.2 into the Combined Form<br>• *Note: The SCA does not intend to update the Combined Form beyond this release as a part of the Standards Development Process.*<br><br>**12.4. Extrinsic Form (Version 1, Beta)**<br>• Entirely new version of the Extrinsic form based on the proposal outlined in the protocol document (see section 9), including new categories and attribute lists. | **Reason for Change:** Most of these changes have already been explained elsewhere in this document.<br><br>The additions and changes to the CATA lists reflect some of the needs expressed by users. For example, it is not intuitive for a user who does not know the Flavor Wheel by heart that "Cereal" belongs in "roasted." The English term "Spicy" implies a trigeminal sensation (that of chili peppers), when this category actually refers to the aroma of spices. The "Papery" category was not easy to exemplify, whereas it is easier to find sensory examples for "Woody."<br><br>**Impact on User:** Users will need to familiarize themselves with the updated forms, which were designed to be easier to use.<br><br>When printing on non-A4 paper, users will need to select "fit to page" in the printer dialogue. |

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| **Appendix 12 – Coffee Value Assessment Forms – *Continued***<br><br>(Concept Update, Amendment, Addition) | **12.5. Physical Form (Alpha)**<br>• Addition of the alpha version of the Physical Form, based on washed arabica green grading, released in late 2023 after the original version of this document was published.<br><br>**Note:** All CVA forms are currently designed in paper size A4 as the most widely used paper size (globally). To print in another paper size specific to a region (i.e., US Letter) without having some sections of the form(s) missing, users will need to select "fit to page" under sizing in their printer dialog. | |
| **Appendix 14 – SCA *Coffee Systems Map***<br>(Addition) | *Addition of the SCA Coffee Systems Map as a reference, based on its use in the Extrinsic Assessment (section 9).* | **Reason for Change:** Addition of the Systems Map reference as it underpins the update extrinsic assessment. |
| **Appendix 15 – Olfactory Category Examples**<br><br>(Concept Update, Amendment, Addition) | All category examples are indicated in order of most to least recommended. Please note this list is still in development/ratification and is expected to function as a "living document," where additional examples may be added over time as the use of the value assessment system indicates new descriptors are becoming increasingly important or valuable. For the latest full list of category examples, please see the digital version of the reference list here.<br><br>**SUMMARY OF CHANGES**<br><br>**New, Additional Examples in Some Categories**<br>• Fruity: *Kiwi and apple syrups*<br>• Berry: *Strawberry syrup, Blackberry syrup, Raspberry syrup*<br>• Citrus fruit: *Lemon syrup, lime syrup*<br>• Vanilla/Vanillin: *Vanilla syrup*<br>• Brown sugar: *Caramel syrup*<br>• Nutty (Nutty/Cocoa): *Almond syrup*<br>• Fermented: *Fermented grass* | **Reason for Change:** As explained before in the relevant protocol section, "references" have been changed to "examples" as a better word to describe the use of these sensory aids.<br><br>Newly added sensory examples reflect those used successfully in CVA courses worldwide.<br><br>The gelatine examples were removed as some gelatines had a "meaty" odor. |

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| **Appendix 15 – Olfactory Category Examples - *Continued***<br><br>(Concept Update, Amendment, Addition) | **Amended Categories (and Examples)**<br>• Spicy > Spice: Spices; Pumpkin spice syrup; Le Nez du Vin – Vial #41 (Cinnamon) or Vial #42 (Clove); Scentone T100 – Vial #76 (Cinnamon) or Vial #79 (Clove)<br><br>**New Categories (and Examples)**<br>• *Cereal (Roasted): Mix of Breakfast Cereals; Le Nez du Café – Vial #22 (Toast); Le Nez du Café – Vial #23 (Malt); Scentone T100 – Vial #48 (Malt)*<br>• *Burnt (Roasted): Burnt peanuts; Scentone T100 – Vial #49 (Burnt rice)*<br>• *Tobacco/Pipe tobacco (Roasted): Cigarettes, Le Nez du Café – Vial #33 (Pipe tobacco)*<br>• *Woody (Other): Popsicle sticks; Le Nez du Café – Vial #6 (Cedar)*<br><br>**Removed**<br>• Entire category: Papery (Other)<br>• Citrus fruit: Lemon gelatine<br>• Berry: Berry gelatine | |