

## Rafael Furtado Fonseca

Marketing Director, COOMAP coffee co-operative, Minas Gervais region, Brazil



Rafael is responsible for COOMAP's international sales and marketing and this requires him to travel to Europe and the US on an annual basis in order to liaise with customers and to attend coffee conferences.

As well as the marketing and sales work he does for COOMAP, Rafael has conducted a series of projects linked to sustainability. These include working with the Members on improving the traceability of their coffee, reducing soil erosion and in meeting EU regulations in relation to deforestation.

This focus on the environment is best described as an agroecological approach to growing coffee. Rafael says *'A holistic sustainability vision addresses concerns like deforestation, soil erosion, and water usage. We believe that implementing eco-friendly practices, such as regenerative agriculture, preserves biodiversity and safeguards the delicate ecosystems where coffee is cultivated. This not only preserves the environment but also contributes to increased yields per hectare and production of high-quality coffee beans.'*

Rafael and COOMAP have a particular focus on water quality. This includes in Members home and quality improvement work to ensure that the water people are drinking is safe. They provide Members with ways of treating grey water and also with septic tanks. On the farms COOMAP help Members with ensuring the protection of water springs and the recovery and treatment of water used in processing coffee.



Rafael believes that co-ops might have a key role regarding empowering growers by means of education and fair commercialization conditions.

Economically, COOMAP promotes fair trade principles, ensuring that producers receive more equitable compensation for their efforts. Investing in sustainable practices can lead to cost savings over the long term, promoting conditions good enough to convince next generations to keep living at their families' farms and also become coffee growers. 86% of COOMAP members believe their economic circumstances have improved since they joined Fairtrade in 2014.