

# Entering the Belgian coffee market

Belgium sourced 98% of its imports in 2018 directly from producing countries. The three main green coffee suppliers were Brazil, Vietnam and Honduras, accounting for about 58% of total supplies. The increasing interest in high-quality and certified coffees in Belgium underlines the growing importance of origin, traceability and social impact of coffee. This makes storytelling an increasingly important aspect for every actor along the value chain in the coffee sector.

## Contents of this page

1. [What are the requirements for coffee to enter the Belgian market?](#)
2. [Through what channels can you get coffee on the Belgian market?](#)
3. [What is the competition like in the Belgian coffee market?](#)

## 1. What are the requirements for coffee to enter the Belgian market?

You can only export coffee to Belgium if you comply with strict European Union requirements. For a complete overview of these standards, refer to [our study on buyer requirements for coffee](#) or consult the specific requirements for coffee in the [EU Trade Helpdesk](#).

Buyer requirements can be divided into:

1. Musts: legal and non-legal requirements you must meet to enter the market;
2. Additional requirements: those you need to comply with to stay relevant in the market;
3. Niche requirements: applying to specific niche markets.

The highlights for these requirements are given below, specified for the Belgian market where relevant.

## Legal and non-legal requirements you must comply with

### Legal requirements

You must follow the European Union legal requirements applicable to coffee. These rules mainly deal with food safety, where traceability and hygiene are the most important themes. Special attention should be given to specific sources of contamination, of which the most common are:

- Pesticides — consult the [EU pesticide database](#) for an overview of the maximum residue levels (MRLs) for each pesticide;
- Mycotoxins (fungi);
- Salmonella (although coffee is considered low-risk).

Belgium applies the same legal requirements as other European Union countries, but industry sources indicate that import controls for factors such as pesticides and moulds are very strict in the country.

### Quality requirements

Green coffee is graded and classified for quality before export. There is no universal grading and classification system for coffee. The Specialty Coffee Association's [standards for green coffee grading](#) are often used as a point of reference. However, most producing countries have and use their own [grading systems](#).

According to the International Trade Centre, grading is usually based on the following criteria:

- altitude and region;

- botanical variety;
- preparation — wet or dry process, washed or natural;
- bean size or screen size, sometimes also bean shape and colour;
- number of defects or imperfections;
- roast appearance and cup quality in relation to flavour, characteristics and cleanliness;
- bean density.

Specialty coffee is graded according to its cupping profile. Fragrance, flavour, aftertaste, balance, acidity, sweetness, uniformity and cleanliness are important topics in the grading process. If you sell specialty coffee, it is important for buyers to know what the cupping score of your coffee is. Although not mandatory, it could be relevant to add this information to the documentation of the coffee you are exporting.

Note that there is no exact definition of specialty coffee within the coffee industry. The [Coffee Quality Institute](#) and the cupping protocols of the [Specialty Coffee Association](#) consider that coffees graded and cupped with scores below 80 are considered standard quality and not specialty. Nevertheless, the exact minimum scores defining specialty coffee differ per country and per buyer. Some buyers consider 80 too low and demand a cupping score of 85 or higher.

## Labelling requirements

Labels of green coffee exported to Belgium should comply with the general food labelling requirements of the European Union. The label should be written in English and should include the following information to ensure traceability of individual batches:

- product name
- [International Coffee Organisation \(ICO\) identification code](#)
- country of origin
- grade
- net weight in kilograms
- for certified coffee: name and code of the inspection body and certification number

Figure 1: Examples of green coffee labelling



Source: commodity.com

## Packaging requirements

Green coffee beans are traditionally shipped in woven bags made from jute or hessian natural fibre. Jute bags are strong and robust. Other materials, such as [Grainpro](#) or other innovative material like [Videplast](#) liners, are often used to pack specialty coffees inside jute bags.

Most green coffee beans of standard quality imported into Belgium are packed in container-sized bulk flexi-bags that hold roughly 20 tonnes of green coffee beans each. The rest of the green coffee is transported in traditional 60 kg or 70 kg jute sacks, each with a net volume of 17 tonnes to 19 tonnes of coffee.

Other packaging used in transporting coffee includes polypropylene super sacks for 1 tonne of coffee, polyethylene liners for 21.6 tonnes and vacuum-packed coffee. These techniques provide two advantages in the coffee trade, namely increasing efficiency and maintaining or preserving quality.

Figure 2: Examples of coffee packing: jute bag, container-sized flexi bag, GrainPro and Videplast liner



## Tips:

For the full buyer requirements, read the CBI study on [buyer requirements](#) for coffee in Europe.

Check [EURLex](#) for more information on limits for different contaminants and read more about contaminants in coffee on the [EU Trade Helpdesk](#). For specific information on the prevention and reduction of Ochratoxin A contamination, refer to the [Codex Alimentarius CXC 692009](#).

For information on safe storage and transport of coffee, refer to [the website of the Transport Information Service](#).

Read more about quality requirements for coffee on [the website of the Coffee Quality Institute](#).

## Additional requirements

### Additional food safety requirements

Expect buyers in Belgium to request extra food safety guarantees from you. Regarding production and handling processes, you should think of:

- Implementation of good agricultural practices (GAP): The main standard for good agricultural practices is [GLOBALG.A.P.](#), a voluntary standard for certification of agricultural production processes that provide safe and traceable products. Certification organisations, such as Rainforest Alliance-UTZ, often incorporate GAP in their standards.
- Implementation of a quality management system (QMS): A system based on [Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points](#) (HACCP) is often a minimum standard for green coffee storage and handling.

It is good to keep in mind that your Belgian importer might re-export green coffee to other destinations in Europe. Those other buyers push their requirements forward to other players in the supply chain, which might increase the need for you to adopt other specific certifications or standards. This will depend on the final market and market channel used.

### Additional sustainability requirements

Corporate responsibility and sustainability are growing in importance in the coffee sector. Adopting codes of conduct or sustainability policies related to environmental and social impacts of your company will give you a competitive advantage. The leading companies in the Belgian coffee market, such as trader [Efico](#), have sustainability policies in place so they are able to supply roasters that require socially and environmentally responsible coffee, such as the Netherlands' [Peeze](#).

Certification standards like Rainforest Alliance-UTZ have also become important in the mainstream coffee market. These certification standards are usually part of the sustainability strategy of traders, roasters and



retailers. Large Belgian trader [Supremo](#) handles a wide range of coffees of various origins and certifications. Roaster [Beyers](#) also cooperates with all main certification schemes for coffee (Fairtrade, Rainforest Alliance-UTZ, organic and 4C) to achieve its sustainability mission. Large Belgian retailers, such as Colruyt and Delhaize, also have certified roasted coffee in their assortments.

The market for fair trade coffee is growing in Belgium, offering interesting opportunities in this niche segment. The most common fair trade standard in the Belgian market is [Fairtrade](#).

Another niche segment is organic certification. In order to market your coffee as organic in the Belgian market, it must comply with [the regulations of the European Union for organic production and labelling](#). Obtaining the [EU organic logo](#) is the minimum legislative requirement for marketing organic coffee in the European Union. Belgium has one private organic label: [Biogarantie](#).

Before you can market your coffee beans as fair trade or organic, an accredited certifier must audit your growing and processing facilities. Examples of accredited certifiers are [Control Union](#), [Ecocert](#), [FLOCERT](#), [ProCert](#) and [SGS](#).

### Tip:

Refer to the [International Trade Centre Standards Map](#) or the [Global Food Safety Initiative website](#) to learn about the different food safety management systems, hygiene standards and certification schemes.

Find out which standards or certifications potential buyers in your target segment prefer. Buyers may have preferences for a certain food safety management system or sustainability label depending on their end clients and distribution channels.

- See the [list of Rainforest AllianceUTZ registered coffee actors in Belgium](#) to identify interesting players. Learn which ones are certified to buy your Rainforest AllianceUTZ certified coffee.
- See our [study on sustainable coffee](#) for more information about the demand on the European market, trends and specific trade channels.

## Niche requirements

Direct trade relations, and high transparency and traceability from source to consumer, characterise the high-end specialty coffee segment. This means that buyers of these types of coffees ask for requirements that go far beyond certification. These buyers will visit your coffee farm, evaluate your product, and try to establish a relationship with you. Besides high-quality, these buyers are interested in your stories from origin. This implies that you should know the specifics of your coffee, and be willing to honestly share this.

### Tips:

Learn more about opportunities for organic coffee in the Belgian market on [the website of the Belgian organic certification organisation Bioforum](#).

Learn more about organic farming and European organic guidelines on the [European Commission website](#) and the [Organic Export Info website](#).

Find importers that specialise in organic products on the [website Organicbio](#).

Try to visit trade fairs for organic products, like [Biofach](#) in Germany. Check out their website for a list of exhibitors, seminars and other events at this trade fair.

If you produce coffee according to a fair trade scheme, find a specialised Belgian buyer that is familiar with sustainable or fair trade products, for instance via the [FLOCERT customer database](#).

Try to combine audits in case you have more than one certification, saving time and money. Also investigate the possibilities for group certification with other producers and exporters in your region.

## 2. Through what channels can you get coffee on the Belgian market?

The Belgian coffee end market can be divided into in-home and out-of-home consumption. Specialty coffee represents a growing niche market in both segments, as consumers demand high quality and are willing to pay high prices for it. Suppliers in producing countries mainly enter the European market through an importer, but there has been an increase in direct trade.

### How is the end market segmented?

The Belgian coffee end market can be segmented as follows:

Figure 3: Coffee end market segmentation by quality



Low end: These are mainstream low-quality, mainly blended coffees. Approximately 40% to 100% of the beans in these blends are Robusta. Most coffee pads, ground coffee and instant coffee belong to this low-end segment. This market is in decline. Product and price examples in the low-end segment, based on [Delhaize's retail prices](#) in 2019, include:

	Product	Price (€/kg)
--	---------	--------------

Low end	<a href="#">Delhaize</a> (Espresso whole bean, UTZ certified, 250 g package)	9.56
	<a href="#">Douwe Egberts</a> (Dessert, whole bean, 500 g package)	13.50
	<a href="#">Jacqmotte</a> (Delice, whole bean, 500 g package)	14.38

Coffees in the low end of the market are mainly sold in supermarkets and through service channels, such as offices and universities. The largest retailer groups in Belgium are:

- Colruyt Group, which includes supermarkets [Colruyt](#), [Okay](#), [Cru](#), [Spar](#) and [Bio Planet](#), had a [market share of approximately 32% in 2018](#);
- Ahold Delhaize ([Delhaize](#) and [Albert Heijn](#)), [market share of 25%](#);
- [Carrefour](#), [market share of 18%](#);
- Discounters [Aldi](#) (9%) and [Lidl](#) (5%) follow.

Mid range: Good commercial quality coffee. Mid-range coffees typically consist of Arabica and Robusta varieties in blends, such as high-quality espresso. Sustainability certifications are important. The mid-range segment represents a stable coffee market. Mid-range coffees are often sold in supermarkets and by the food service industry. Examples of products and prices in this segment, based on [Delhaize's retail prices](#) in 2019, include:

	Product	Price (€/kg)
Mid range	<a href="#">Café Liégeois – Mano Mano</a> (organic and Fairtrade certified, whole bean, 250 g package)	15.96
	<a href="#">Starbucks</a> (Pike place, whole bean, 200 g package)	19.45
	<a href="#">Illy</a> (Classico espresso, whole bean, 250 g package)	27.96

High and upper ends: High-quality coffee mainly consists of washed Arabicas. These coffees are often single origin and coffees with a background story. The upper end of this segment consists of specialty coffees of excellent quality, often from micro or nano lots that go through innovative processing such as naturals and honeys. These are mainly fully traceable and single origin Arabica beans with a cupping score of 85 and above. Long-term contracts between suppliers and buyers characterise this segment, as well as higher paid prices. Buyer's direct involvement makes sustainability certification uncommon. Buyer and supplier usually agree on projects for communities and distribution of money to farmers. The high or upper end segment is a small market but is growing.

These coffees are mainly sold directly by specialty roasters and specialised coffee houses, at their physical or web shops and at coffee events, such as the [Brussels Coffee Week](#). An example of a specialised Belgian coffee web shop is [Bob Plaza](#). For examples of Belgian specialty roasters and cafés, see the [website European Coffee Trip](#).

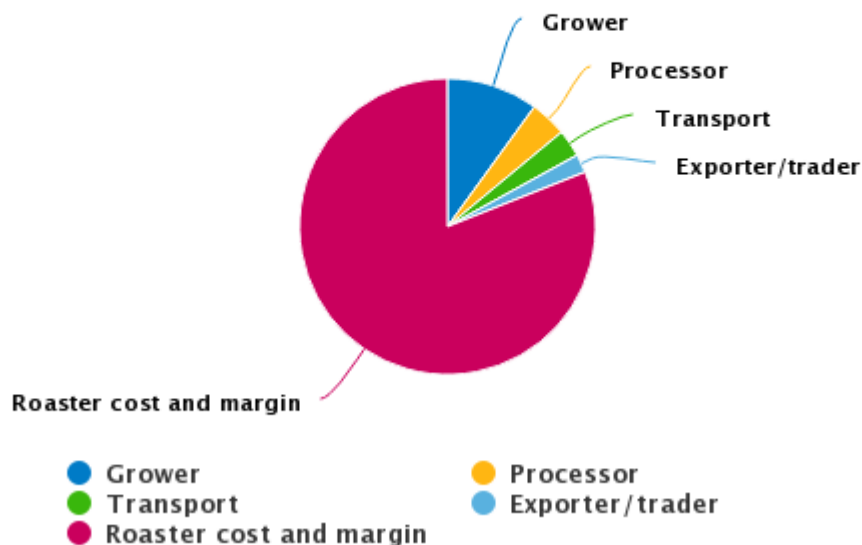
Examples of coffees in the high and upper end market segments include:

	Product	Retail price (€/kg)
--	---------	---------------------

High and upper ends	Washed Arabica beans from Kamwangi, Kirinyaga, Kenya, roasted by <a href="#">Parlor Coffee Roasters</a> , 250 g package	42.00
	Natural Anaerobic, from Tarazzu, Luis Campos, Costa Rica, roasted by <a href="#">OR Coffee</a> , 350 g package	47.71
	Macerated Yellow Honey, from Las Lajas, Central Valley, Costa Rica, roasted by <a href="#">MOK Specialty Coffee Roastery</a> , 250 g package	72.00

Value distribution: As per the above examples, end-market prices for coffee vary depending on the targeted market segment. Green coffee export prices typically amount to only 5% to 25% of the end-market prices, depending on the coffee quality, the size of the lot and the supplier's relationship with the buyer. Figure 5 below shows the value distribution of wholesale coffee. Roasters end up taking more than 80% of the wholesale coffee price. A coffee farmer takes about 10%.

**Figure 4: Value distribution per actor in % for wholesale coffee**



Source: Financial Times, 2019

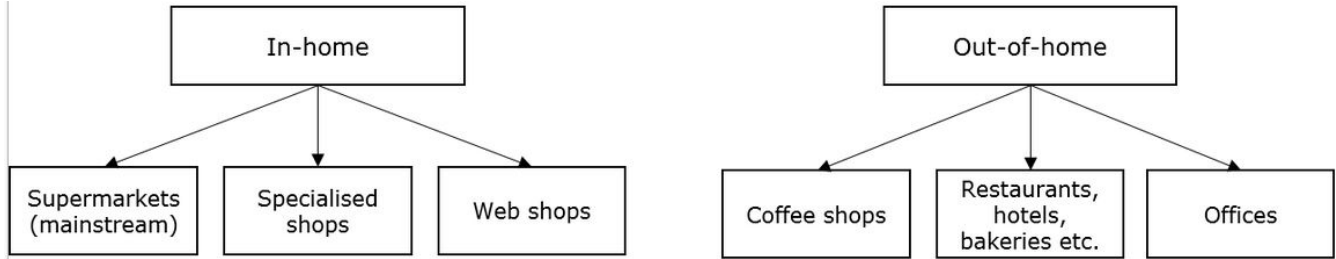
In addition to the market segmentation by quality, the Belgian coffee sector can also be segmented into in-home and out-of-home consumption:

- In-home consumption: Most coffee consumption in Belgium takes place at home. In 2018, retail sales in Belgium accounted for [approximately 79% of the country's total coffee volume sales](#). Home consumption is becoming increasingly diverse because of different qualities and the use of coffee pods and capsules. Belgians consume a relatively large share of their coffee from pods: 27%. The other 73% prefer whole beans or ground coffee. In Europe, only France (32%) and the Netherlands (31%) have higher market shares for coffee pods.
- Out-of-home consumption: Belgium's out-of-home consumption reached an estimated 11 thousand tonnes of green and instant coffee in 2018, [accounting for 21%](#) of all Belgian coffee volume sales, growing just one



percentage point since 2016.

Figure 5: Belgian coffee sector segmentation by in-home and out-of-home consumption



### Tips:

Learn more about mainstream Belgian supermarkets', such as [Colruyt](#), promoting of standard quality and highquality coffees. Compare their product assortment and price levels with specialised stores, such as the Belgian web shop [Bob Plaza](#).

Refer to our study on [trends in the coffee sector](#) to learn more about developments within different market segments.

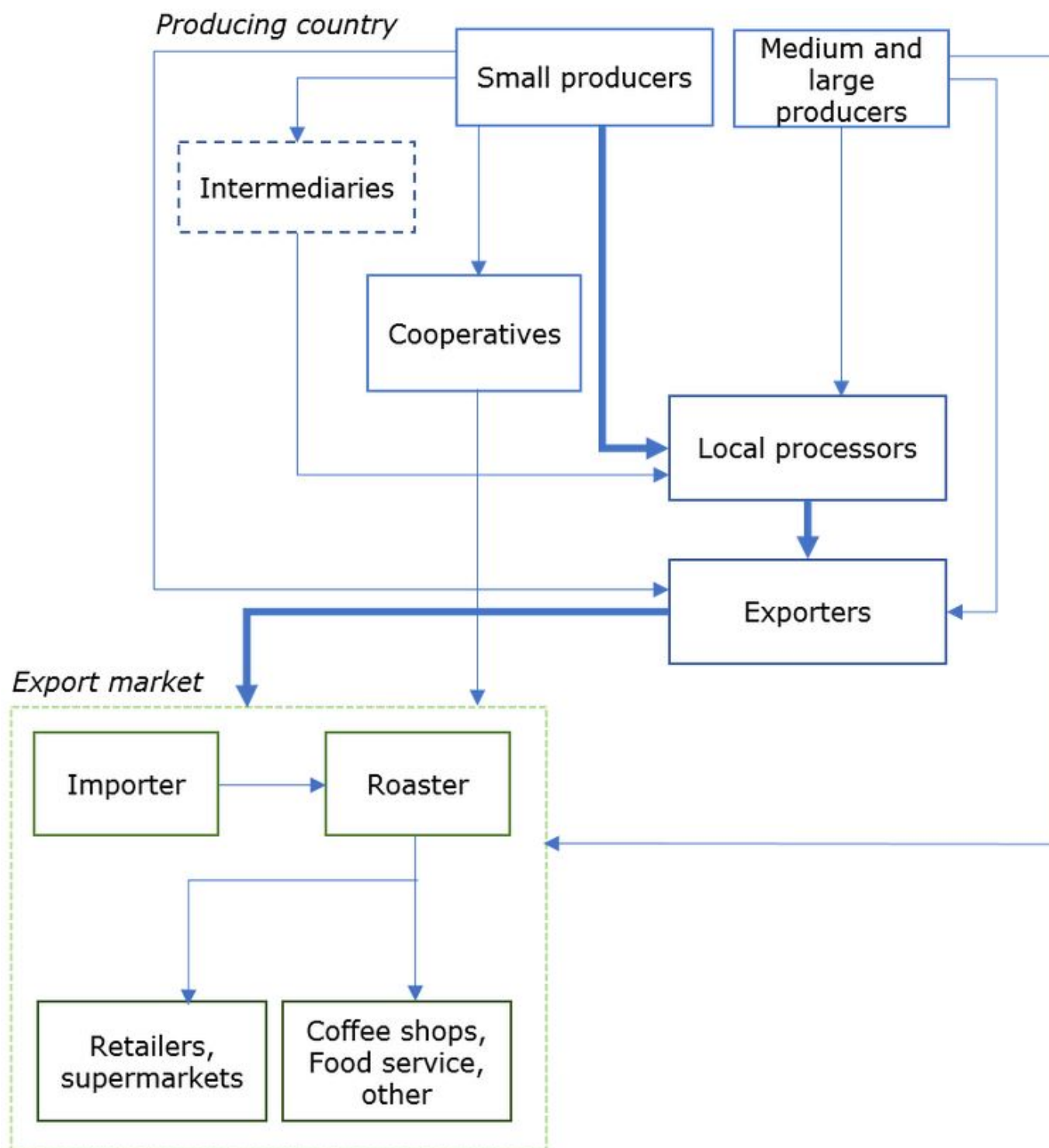
Check [the website of the Specialty Coffee Association \(SCA\)](#) to learn more about the highend coffee segment, market trends and main players.

## Through what channels does coffee reach the end market?

As an exporter, you can use different channels to bring your coffee to the Belgian market. Entering the market will vary according to the quality of your coffee and your supplying capacity. Bear in mind that shortened supply chains are a general trend in Europe. This means that retailers and coffee roasting companies are increasingly sourcing their green coffee directly.

In Belgium, [approximately 94% of end-market consumption consisted of roasted coffee in 2018](#), while the remaining 6% related to instant coffee and extracts. Hence, the trade channels discussed here relate to roasted coffee, particularly specialty coffee. Figure 7 below shows the most important channels for your green coffee beans in Belgium.

Figure 6: Market channels for green coffee in Belgium



## Importers

Importers play a vital role in the coffee market, functioning as supply chain managers. They maintain wide portfolios from various origins, pre finance operations, perform quality control, manage price fluctuations and establish contact between producers and end buyers, such as roasters. In most cases, importers have long-standing relationships with their suppliers and customers.

Green coffee beans mainly enter Belgium via the [Port of Antwerp](#) and the [Port of Zeebrugge](#). Most green coffee traders in Belgium are located near these ports. In general, importers either sell the green beans to roasting companies in Belgium or re-export them to other European buyers.

Large-scale importers usually have minimum quantity requirements starting at around 10 containers, covering a wide ranges of qualities, varieties and certifications. At the same time, they provide strong support on logistics,

marketing and financial operations. Examples of large-scale importers in Belgium include [Efico](#), [Supremo](#) and [Coffeeteam](#).

Specialised importers are able to buy small volumes of high-quality and single origin coffees. Examples of specialised importers in Belgium are: [32Cup](#) and [Rucquoy Frères](#), both focusing on specialty and high-quality coffees. They sell their coffees to specialty coffee shops, such as [Caffènation](#).

Agents, which act as intermediaries between you and coffee importers or roasters, are not as common in Belgium as in other European markets, such as Germany and the United Kingdom. An agent usually has the knowledge to evaluate and select interesting buyers for you.

Who may find this an interesting channel? The most interesting channel for you will depend on the quality of your coffee and your supply capacity in terms of volume. If you are an exporter of green coffee beans and can you offer high volumes (10 containers or more), you should look into entering the Belgian market through large importing companies. These companies usually have agents or representative offices in producing countries, which can be your first point of contact.

Specialised traders can be interesting if you have evidence of high cupping scores at least 80 or higher, although some buyers may require scores higher than 85, plus sustainability certification, such as organic or fair trade, or you are selling single origin coffee. Keep in mind that many specialised importers prefer to work directly with producers or cooperatives.

## Large roasters and private labels

Most large roasters buy their own coffee beans at the country of origin, although they might also source through importers. Roasters usually perform analysis and cup testing to check the evenness of the roast and to identify any defects that can occur in post-harvest processes, such as fermentation, drying and storage. Large roasters usually blend different qualities of green coffees to maintain quality constant. The final product is distributed to retailers and the food service industry.

Roasters can operate under their own brands or private labels. Examples of large roasters operating under their own brands in Belgium include [Rombouts](#), [Sas Coffee](#) and [Miko Koffie](#). In addition to roasting under its own brand, [Beyers](#) also roasts for retailers' private label brands.

Who may find this an interesting channel? Supplying to large-scale roasters is only interesting if you are able to supply large volumes at consistent quality. If you work with bulk coffees, discuss minimum quality and other requirements, such as certification, with your potential buyer.

## Small roasters

Even though small roasters mostly source their green coffee from importers that also help with finance services, quality control and logistics, a growing number of small roasters import green coffee directly from origin. Small roasters are often specialised in certain high-quality blends and single origins. However, not all small roasters are able to sustain direct trade relations, since they have to take on additional responsibilities which are usually outsourced to traders, such as logistics, documentation and pre financing. Therefore, many small roasters continue to buy via importers, but still maintain direct connection with their producers.

Examples of small roasters in Belgium directly importing coffee include: [Aksum Coffee House](#), [MOK coffee](#) and [OR coffee](#).

Who may find this an interesting channel? Supplying to small roasters is interesting if you have high-quality coffees, micro lots, sustainability certification or if you are willing to engage in long-term partnerships. So if you have very high-quality coffees and are working through an importer, for example, you could explore direct trade possibilities and connect with specialised roasters. In addition, if you are a farmer that has the financial means

and technical know-how to organise export activities, then you can offer your coffee directly to specialised coffee importers and small coffee roasters.

### Tips:

Find buyers that match your business philosophy and export capacities in terms of quality, volume and certifications. For more tips on finding the right buyer for you, see our study on [finding buyers in Europe](#).

Attend trade fairs to meet potential Belgian buyers. Interesting trade fairs in Europe include SCA's [World of Coffee](#) (every year in a different European city), [Biofach](#) (organic) and [COTECA](#) (both in Germany), and the [Brussels Coffee Week](#). Attending such events can provide you with additional insight into the preferences of Belgian buyers with regard to origin, flavour and sustainability certification.

Check [this list on the website of the Belgian Coffee Roaster Association](#) highlighting several coffee roasters in Belgium. It will help you find potential partners and learn more about the Belgian market.

Invest in longterm relationships. Whether you are working through importers or roasters, it is important to establish strategic and sustainable relationships with them. This will help you manage market risks, improve the quality of your product and reach a fair quality-price balance.

See our study on [buyer requirements for coffee](#) to learn about which European market standards and requirements you need to comply with when supplying to Europe.

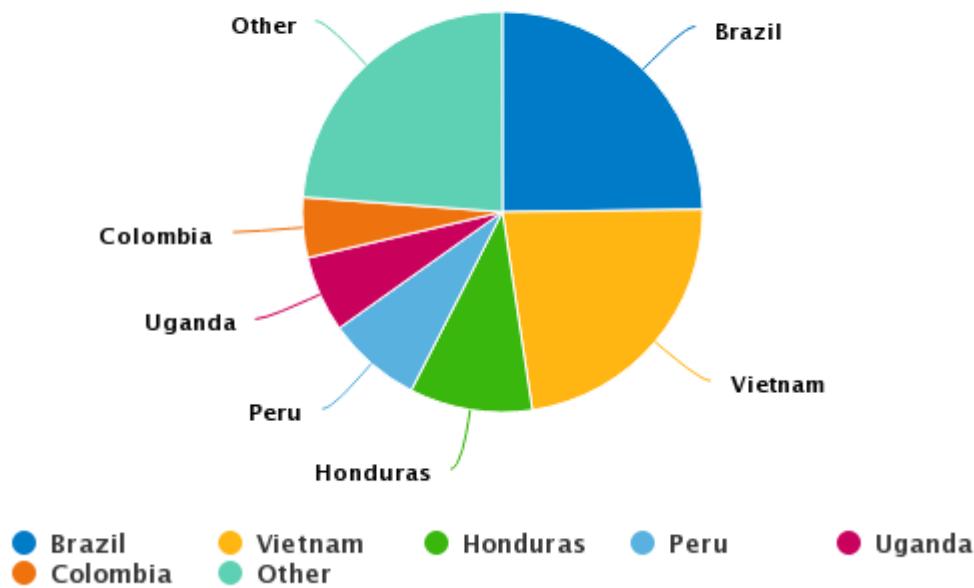
See our study on [how to do business with European buyers](#) for more information about complying with buyer requirements, how to send samples and how to draw up contracts.

## 3. What is the competition like in the Belgian coffee market?

In general, competition is higher for mainstream coffee with low added value. This segment is mainly dominated by major suppliers and cooperatives which are able to deliver large quantities so they can compete on price. It is difficult for small and medium-sized companies to compete in this segment. The level of competition is generally lower in the specialty coffee market, where volumes are smaller and the focus is more on quality, origin and sustainability. However, the entry point into this segment is much higher and may require larger investments.

New entrants to the market may face some extra competition from already successful coffee exporters, especially so because of their already established long-term relationships with buyers. Entering the market as a newcomer requires you to have extensive knowledge of your product assortment, stable quality and volumes, and open and honest communication to start building your own new relationships with buyers.

Figure 7: Main green coffee suppliers to Belgium in 2018



Source: Eurostat, 2019

### Latin American countries are Belgium's main Arabica coffee suppliers

Brazil is the world's largest coffee producer and Belgium's largest supplier. Brazilian supplies to Belgium reached 69 thousand tonnes in 2018, registering a slight decrease of -3.7% on average annually since 2014. Brazil produces both Arabica (75%) and Robusta (25%), but [exports 95% Arabica](#).

Brazil's coffee producing areas are relatively flat, which has [intensified the use of mechanical pickers in the industry](#). This has drastically reduced labour costs in Brazil's coffee production, but also resulting in lower quality, as machines do not distinguish between ripe and unripe cherries. Coffee prices in Brazil went down, especially in relation to other coffee producing countries. Low-grade Brazilian Arabica is mostly used in blends.

Other large Arabica suppliers to Belgium are Honduras (28 thousand tonnes in 2018) and Peru (22 thousand tonnes). Honduras registered an average annual increase of 14% in coffee exports to Belgium between 2014 and 2018. The introduction of more disease-resistant varieties in Honduras, after a severe coffee rust outbreak, [is perceived to have lowered the cup quality](#), but production volumes have increased. Honduras is Central America's largest coffee producer, of which a large share is organic. [Approximately 28% of total Honduran coffee exports](#) consist of [sustainably produced coffee](#).

Supplies from Peru to Belgium increased at an average 3.8% between 2014 and 2018. A large share of Peruvian coffee is organically produced; [Peru is the world's third largest producer of organic coffee](#). The Andean country takes [fourth place for coffee production with sustainable certification](#), which gives Peru a competitive advantage to promote its specialty coffees. Peru actively promotes its unique origin and high-quality coffees, having recently introduced a national coffee brand, [Cafés del Peru](#), to the international market.

Colombia is a smaller supplier of green coffee to Belgium: 14 thousand tonnes in 2018. Colombia is the world's largest producer of washed Arabica, home to a strong national coffee industry offering technical assistance, research and quality development. The [Colombian Coffee Growers Federation](#) strategically promotes and markets Colombian coffee, solidifying the country's established image and brand for high-quality coffees. The Café de Colombia trademark is a [registered protected geographical indication \(PGI\)](#) in Europe, which is unique among coffee producing countries.



## Vietnam is Belgium's largest Robusta supplier

Asia is mainly known for its Robusta production, particularly Vietnam, which is the world's second largest coffee producer. Approximately 95% of Vietnamese coffee exports consist of Robusta coffees. Vietnam's total coffee exports reached approximately [1.59 thousand tonnes between October 2018 and September 2019](#), of which 64 thousand tonnes went to Belgium in 2018. Between 2014 and 2018, Vietnamese export volumes to Belgium increased at an average annual rate of 10%.

Vietnam's coffee production is strongly focused on creating large volumes of standard quality coffees mostly directed to the instant coffee market. Large coffee players, such as [Nestlé](#), own multiple factories in Vietnam, where it produces its Nescafé soluble coffee brand. Meanwhile, as high-quality Robusta gains interest in consumer markets, [Vietnam's specialty coffee industry is slowly developing](#).

[Sustainability issues are a major concern in Vietnam](#). Climate change poses a serious threat to the country's coffee sector, while poor farming practices cause environmental degradation. [Sustainable coffee makes up an estimated 9% of Vietnam's coffee exports](#).

## Belgium's trade with Central African countries

Before the third wave arrived (see our [coffee trends study](#) to read more about the different waves in the coffee market), Belgium used to import a large share of its coffee beans from Central African countries, [perhaps influenced by preferences in those countries](#). Nowadays, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda together sourced only 1.3% of total Belgian imports at 3.7 thousand tonnes of green coffee.

The current relationship between Belgium and its former colonies, in the realm of coffee, now takes shape through Belgian organisations and their projects in Africa, like [Belgian NGO Rikolto setting up a project to assist coffee cooperatives in Congo](#) while linking them to Belgian buyers, such as retailer [Colruyt](#).

### Tips:

Identify your potential competitors. To be successful as an exporter, it is important to learn from them too. Look into their marketing strategies, the product characteristics they highlight and their value addition approaches. Successful companies that already export to the European market from which you can learn include, for example, [Aicasa](#) (Peru), [Bourbon Specialty Coffees](#) (Brazil) and [La Meseta](#) (Colombia). Another interesting exporting company to learn from is [Caravela Coffee](#), which has a wide portfolio of specialty coffees from Latin America, facilitates contact between roasters and producers, and sets up representative offices in destination markets.

Identify and promote your unique selling points. Give detailed information about your coffee growing region or origin, the varieties, qualities, postharvesting techniques and certification of the coffee you offer. You can also tell the history of your organisation, your coffee growing farm and the passion and dedication of the people working there. These are all elements that make your company unique.

Actively promote your company on your website and trade fairs. Flavour quality competitions also provide good opportunities to share your story. See [this list of competitions and awards](#) provided by the SCA.

Are you interested in exporting highquality coffee? Learn more about cupping scores on [the website of the Specialty Coffee Association](#) (SCA). You can also consider getting a [Q Arabica or Q Robusta Grader certificate](#) to be able to cup and score your coffee through smell and taste according to international standards.

Work with other coffee producers and exporters in your region if you company size or product volume are too small. As a group, you can promote goodquality coffee from your region and be more attractive and more competitive in the European market.


Develop longterm partnerships with your buyers, including always complying with their requirements

and keeping your promises. This will give you a competitive advantage, more knowledge and stability in the Belgian market. See our [tips for doing business with European coffee buyers](#) for more information.


This study has been carried out on behalf of CBI by [ProFound – Advisers In Development](#).

Please review our [market information disclaimer](#).

Follow us for the latest updates

(opens in a new tab)  Twitter

(opens in a new tab)  Facebook

(opens in a new tab)  LinkedIn



[RSS](#)

