



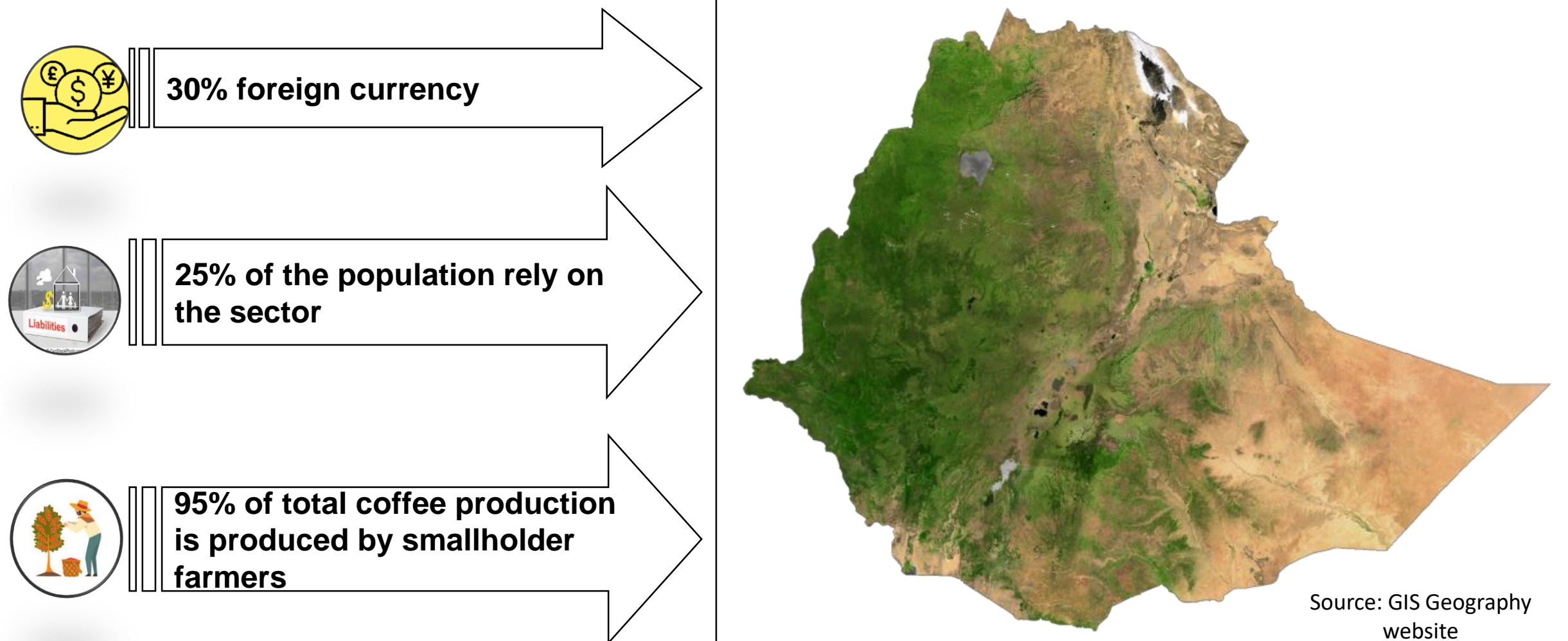
Voluntary Sustainability Standards and Social Sustainability Outcomes among Ethiopia's smallholder coffee farmers: A systematic review



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Introduction

- **Voluntary sustainability standards (VSS)** are private standards that require products to meet specific economic, social, and environmental sustainability metrics (UNCTAD, 2022).
- Concerns for producers' income, social injustice & environmental destruction led to a global movement for sustainability standards.
- The demand for VSS-certified commodities – including coffee has taken off globally (Minten et al., 2018).
- Ethiopia – Africa's top producer and exporter of coffee, adopted VSS in early 2000 and since then such initiatives have expanded across the country (Stellmacher and Grote, Ulrike, 2011).



- The effectiveness of VSS has attracted wider scientific attention.
- Much of the impact studies conducted thus far had limitations in relation to, at least:
 - a) geographic concentration- (countries in Latin America and Asia are mostly targeted)
 - b) the scope of research themes- (often focused on economic sustainability and partly on the environmental aspect).
- This systematic review is thus conducted to review, summarize and synthesize previous research works focusing on Ethiopian smallholder coffee farmers.

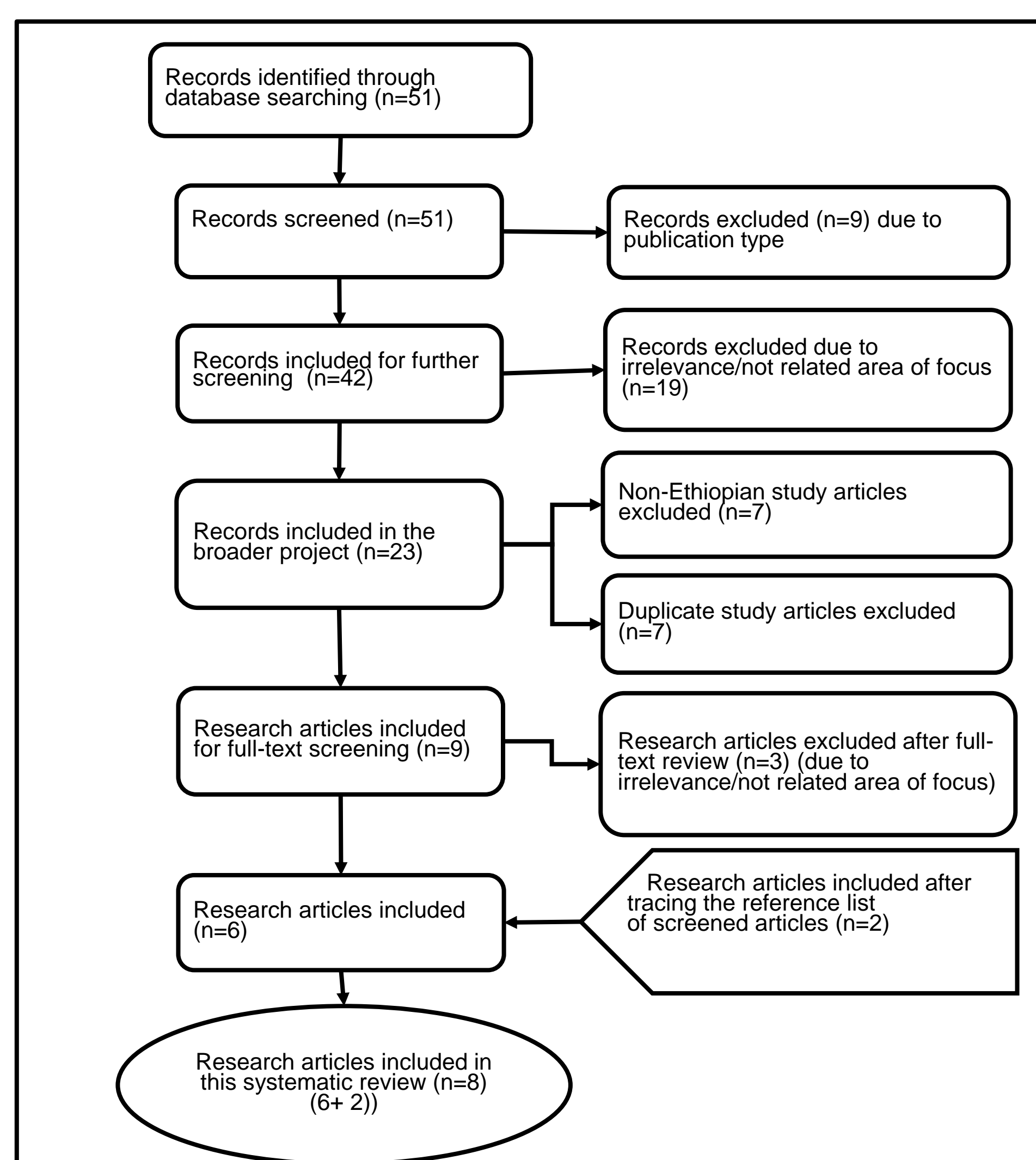
Methods

- We conducted a systematic review to consolidate results from original published articles.
- It used a wide range of sources and followed a systematic literature review known as the step-by-step PRISMA procedure.

S/No	Eligibility criteria	Description
1	Publication status (study/article type)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full-length published research article or review article, • Language: English
2	Research area focus and relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studies VSS in the coffee sector and their effect on sustainability outcomes (either one or all of the three sustainability outcomes) • targeting the Ethiopian coffee sector and its smallholder coffee farmers. (also multi-country studies/Ethiopia)
3	Study publication period/years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2000 – July 2022
4	Keywords/Search term:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "sustainability standards", coffee and Ethiopia

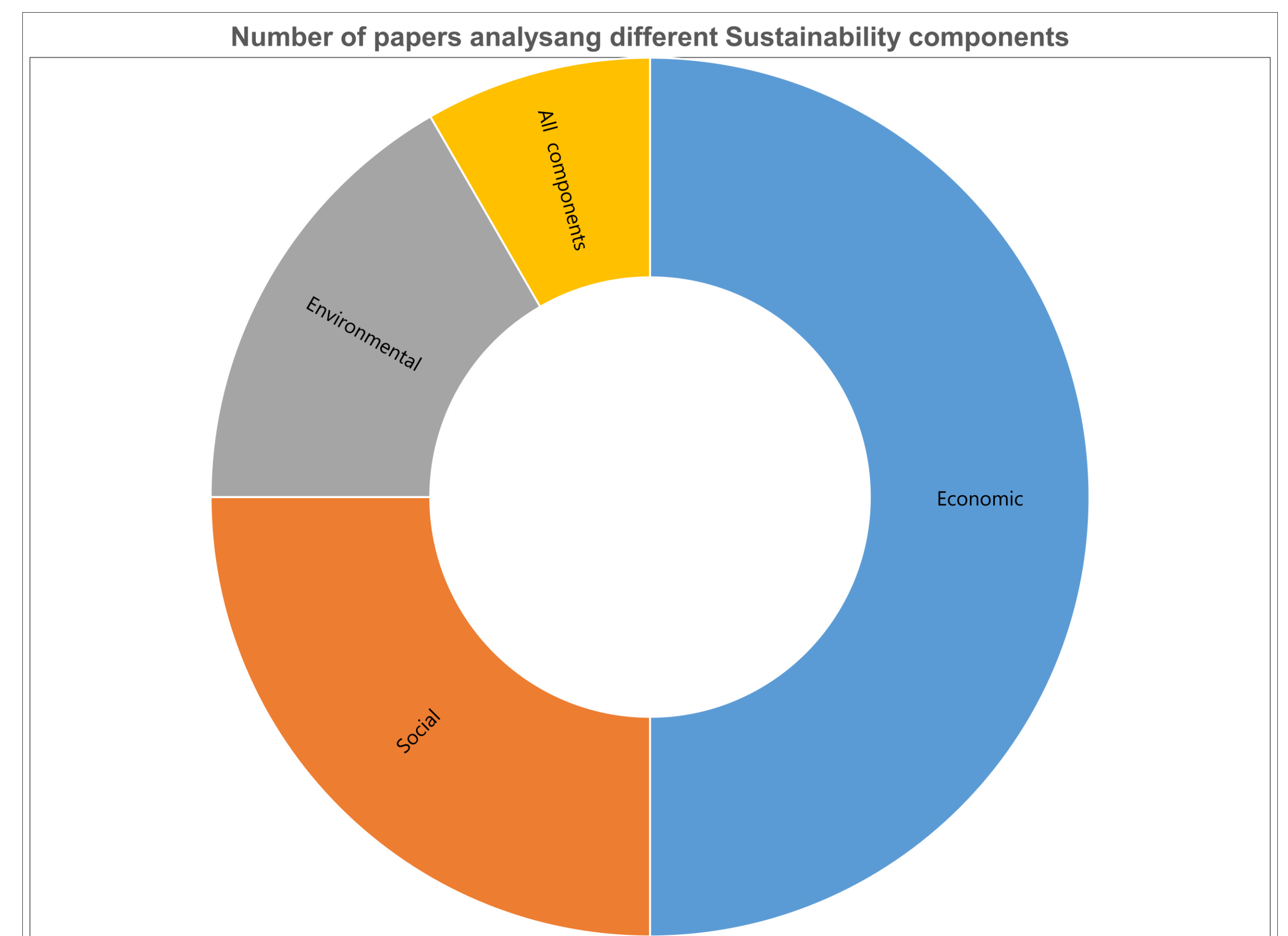
- five databases were accessed: ScienceDirect, Scopus, Web of science, Wiley Online Library, and AgEcon search.

- Flow of the research selection process:

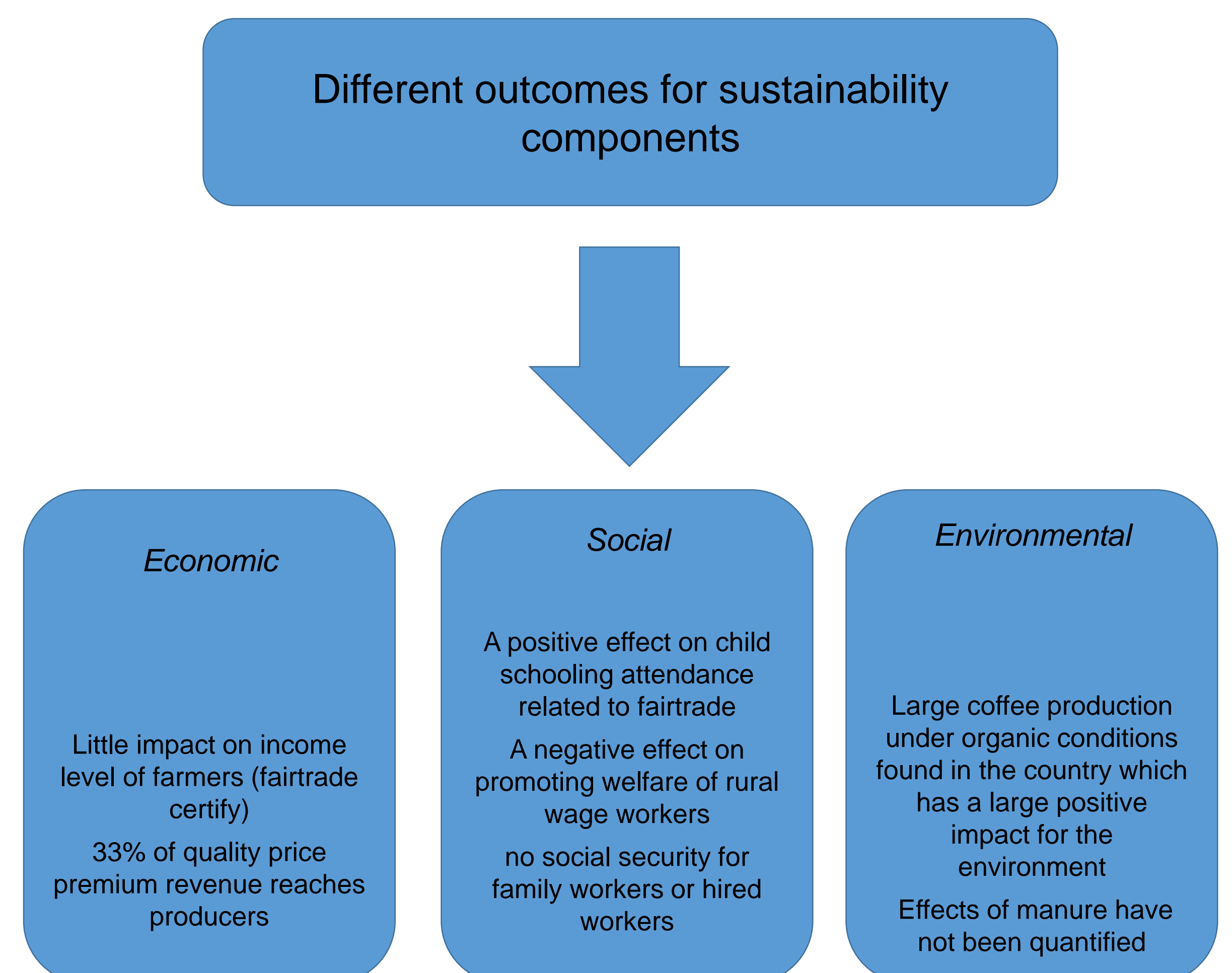


Results

- From a total of 51 papers found we filtered out to 8 relevant articles (see flow).
- Regional coverage: 7 out of 8 articles focused on the southwest part of the country. One study covered additionally other important coffee producing areas.
- Types VSS addressed: Fairtrade, Organic, Fairtrade-Organic (FT-Org), Rainforest Alliance, Utz and 4C. All reviewed articles comply with the Fairtrade certification scheme: while Organic and FT-Org are covered in 5 articles. Three articles comply with Rainforest Alliance certification. Only single one article addressed Utz and 4C certification schemes.



- There are manifold findings on the effects of VSS on each of the sustainability parameters:



Conclusions

- The studies measuring the effectiveness of VSS are scarce for countries like Ethiopia.
- The existing studies had given higher attention to economic aspects of sustainability rather than to the social sustainability aspect. Only three were found in 5 search engines for a period of 20 years.
- Due to methodological variations depicted in the reviewed articles, the replicability, and generalization of VSS impact studies for Ethiopia continue to be under question.
- Compliance with VSS is mainly determined by the local context: access to microfinance, the structure of the agricultural sector, and the organization of primary cooperatives.
- More research should be done on the impact of VSS on smallholder farmer's welfare, addressing dimensions of sustainability, especially on the social dimension.

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