

Standards Committee
Minutes
Meeting 122: 21 May 2026 (Extraordinary)
(Zoom)

SC members: Stijn Decoene (Chair), Emilie Sarrazin (Vice-Chair), Ben Huyghe, Gustavo Lopez, Silvia Herrera Hernández, Kalindi Lorenzo, Arun Ambatipudi and Nicholas Kadiri

Observers: Fairtrade International and FLOCERT staff members have permanent observer status.

Other Observers: We do not display the full names of observers and contributing observers to comply with 'The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)'. If you need additional information about the observers or contributing observers of this meeting, please contact standards-pricing@fairtrade.net

Disclaimer:

The Fairtrade International Standards Committee (SC) aims to reach consensus, but decisions may not always reflect the opinions of all people.

The section to introduce the topic (background information) has been written by the Standards & Pricing and may not have been discussed by the SC in full. Sections listing action points are an outcome of discussions of the SC but are not part of the decisions made.

Abbreviations

CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CLAC	The Latin American and Caribbean Network of Fairtrade Small Producers and Workers
CoE	Centre of Excellence
COSP	Cost of Sustainable Production
DRC	The Democratic Republic of the Congo
EC	Exceptions Committee
EMT	Executive Management Team
EmpCo	EU Empowerment Consumers Directive
FET	Fairtrade Executive Team
FTO	Fairtrade Organizations
FI	Fairtrade International
FMP	Fairtrade Minimum Price
FOB	Free on Board
FP	Fairtrade Premium
FPC	Fairtrade Premium Committee
FSI	Fairtrade Sourcing Ingredient
FBW	Fairtrade Base Wage

¹ Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation). <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2016/679/oj>



GA	General Assembly
GOTS	Global Organic Textile Standard
GPM	Global Product Manager
GPPP	Global Products, Programs & Policy
HL	Hired Labour
HML	Hazardous Materials List
HOC	Head of Oversight and Compliance
HREDD	Human Rights and Environmental Due Diligence
IDH	The Sustainable Trade Initiative
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
LB	Licensing Bodies
LI	Living Income
LIRP	Living Income Reference Price
LW	Living Wage
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
NAPP	Network of Asia & Pacific Producers
NEM	New Economic Mechanism
OC	Oversight Committee
O2B	Offer to Business
PC	People's Committee
PB	Producer Body
PEB	Producer Executive Body
PM	Project Manager
PN	Producer Networks
PT	Project Team
SA	Senior Advisor
S&P	Standards and Pricing Unit
SC	Standards Committee
SM	Salary Matrix
SOP	Standards Operating Procedure
SPO	Small-scale Producer Organizations
StEP	Standard Evolution Project
ToR	Terms of Reference
WRAC	Workers Rights Advisory Committee

Item 1 – Opening

The Standard committee meeting commenced at 13:00 GMT.

Agenda: Chair officially opened, the agenda read, ground rules and confidentiality rules were re-announced. All approved by the SC members.

Declaration of conflict of interests: There was conflict of interest on Item 2 - Hazardous Materials List, there was also conflict of interest on Item 3 - HREDD Standard requirements (Trader/HLO).

Item 2 – Way forward on hazardous materials (HML) exceptions

Introduction

The PM took the SC through key elements of the approach to Fairtrade Hazardous Materials List, including the recent temporary permission to apply for exceptions that was in the scope of the Oversight Committee decisions and the way forward. Recommendations to SC were developed based on the outcome of research and analysis of non-conformities, information provided during the application for exceptions and input provided in Flowers & Plants HML consultation. This was complemented by presented views from producer networks and market teams perspectives on the need for long term solution in tea and wine production.

The Support Centre Climate & Environment lead's recommendations included for proposed solutions in Flowers. It is important to factor in concerns regarding workers health and reputational risk and in Tea a need for evidence that alternative control measures have been tested before producer organizations are allowed to use Glyphosate. This is particularly important due to potential legal risk at least in EU markets (EU: EmpCo). In case of wine, the condition should factor in for situations where alternatives exist, permanent use of the Glyphosate should not be permitted.

Four decisions were presented for decision to allow Flowers & Plants, Tea and Wine producers to use some of the materials after granted exception term expires.

Proposals 1 and 2: For Flowers & Plants producers to use of Abamectin and Lambda-cyhalothrin under specific restricted conditions (e.g. frequency of use) in addition to those outlined for materials in Orange List of HML); and to use of Glyphosate as a post-harvest treatment to meet compliance with import market regulations. These proposals are based on the outcomes of exceptions and Flowers & Plants HML consultation.

Discussion

One SC member noted that not all flower farms face the same situation: farms at higher altitudes may not have the same pest pressures and therefore may not need to use these materials at all. This is worth keeping in mind when thinking about how the restricted use conditions will play out on the ground.

A broader concern was also raised about consistency with Fairtrade's own public commitments. Fairtrade has backed the reduction and elimination of chemical pesticide use and has supported positions such as advocacy for an EU export ban on hazardous chemicals. Continuing to grant exceptions results in contradictory message both internally and externally. Overall SC members supported the idea to further assess alternatives that are already working within the Fairtrade system.

Decisions

Decision 1: Use of Abamectin and Lambda-cyhalothrin in Flowers & Plants

Do you approve to introduce changes for Flowers & Plants producers on applicability of Abamectin and Lambda-cyhalothrin, moving them from the Prohibited (Red) list to the Restricted (Orange) list with strictly limited frequency and mode of use, and until January 2029?

The SC Vote: 5 votes in favour. 1 member was absent.

Decision 2: Post-harvest treatment in Flowers & Plants

Do you approve to introduce a new Core Year 0 requirement on post-harvest phytosanitary treatment in the Flowers & Plants standard?

The SC Vote: 5 votes in favour. 1 member was absent.

Proposal 3: For Tea and Wine grape producers to allow use of Glyphosate and its salts material under restricted conditions (i.e. outlined for use of orange list materials in HML)

Discussion

SC members debated and expressed concerns, highlighting importance of finding an immediate solution that does not require further reconsiderations after transition time has run out. This is also based on the learning from last SC decision on prohibiting use of Glyphosate as of 2022 and after 4 years the material was still needed for use, because producers could not phase it out.

One SC member was strongly concerned that proposals cover solutions only for HLOs, and Oranges producers who were also granted the exception were not included in proposals. PM clarified that based on analysis of submitted applications for exceptions and those that were granted, the main challenge was seen only in wine and tea, who in some cases applied for exceptions twice in the past four years.

Another SC member shared experience on use of Glyphosate in India and Sri Lanka, flagging the challenge which is not just about switching products but the need to change wide scale approach to weed management, which takes time, knowledge, and investments.

All members agreed that reopening glyphosate use to all products would pose an unacceptable market risk, particularly for Fairtrade's organic coffee market.

There was broad agreement that restricted use of Glyphosate should be limited by the date but also by the application, e.g. limited to some crops/regions and only as part of a broader weed management that includes spot application. This was understood as a credible exit path as opposed to exceptions.

Decision 3: Do you approve to allow glyphosate and its salts to be used on wine and tea as a Restricted (Orange) list material until 1 January 2031, with following additional restrictions:

- applicable for wine grapes in South Africa and for tea in India, Malawi, Sri Lanka and Kenya.
- can be used only as part of an Integrated Weed Management and as a spot application.

The SC Vote: 5 votes in favour. 2 members abstained.

Decision 4: Do you agree to the delegation of approval of non-substantive changes and final wording to the Director of S&P?

The SC Vote: 7 votes in favour.

Next Steps

- Publish the revised HML list and implement the decisions with FLOCERT.
- Publish the revised Flowers & Plants standard with the new requirement on post-harvest treatment.

Item 3 – HREDD standard requirements (Trader/HLO)

2 SC members stated a conflict of interest as affected traders and will abstain from voting for this agenda item.

PM presented the topic highlighting the latest discussions on this matter in the 121st SC meeting in March, where a recommendation was to run a short consultation with marketing team/national fairtrade organizations to confirm the challenges with HREDD implementation by traders. The outcome of brief consultation was presented with key findings highlighting where challenges with implementation were either in relation to lack of guidance, or lack of practicality in required measures specifically for traders that are not sourcing directly from producer. The result of all conversations was reflected in proposals on modifications of five HREDD requirements: written commitment and its internal alignment, risk assessment, action plan and support to producers.

The HREDD lead endorsed proposed modifications to current requirements and found that adjustment was relatively small but relevant. It was recognized that following the introduction of requirement, the implementation resulted in some findings that adjustments are needed to assure requirements are not misinterpreted and clearer to audit.

Proposals 1 & 2: to modify Trader Standard requirement 3.1.1 deleting the reference to four areas specific to Fairtrade and to modify requirement 3.1.2 deleting the part ‘embed commitment into existing management systems’

Rationale to modify 3.1.1:

- Challenge to operationalize incl. reference to four Fairtrade specific goals
- The requirement is seen as overly prescriptive; companies typically use one company-wide sustainability commitment rather than Fairtrade-specific commitments
- Removing the four specific goals would make compliance more practical while still achieving the intended outcome and closer to StEP objective to reduce ineffective prescriptiveness

Rationale to modify 3.2.1:

- due to limited implementation value
- a simplified written commitment, combined with alignment of operational policies and procedures, could improve practicality and implementation clarity
- text of requirement would make it like HL standard requirement

Discussion – No points were raised.

Decision 1: Do you agree to modify 3.1.1 requirement scope for written commitment to not include reference to four Fairtrade specific goals?

Decision 2: Do you agree to modify 3.1.2 requirement for internal alignment to not require that commitment is embedded into existing management systems?

The SC Vote: 5 votes in favour, 2 abstained

Proposal 3: to modify Trader Standard requirement 3.2.1 deleting the line that refers to Fairtrade supplier and include 'Fairtrade sourcing' as the overall scope for risk assessment and deleting the measure 'to strengthen your assessment methods over time'.

Rationale to modify:

- to restore the intended scope and reduce confusion with implementation; the original intention was a company-wide/corporate-level risk scoping across operations while reference to 'Fairtrade suppliers' created misunderstanding that traders must assess risks at the level of individual Fairtrade suppliers; supplier-level assessments may be conducted for high-risk commodities or regions but should not be limited to Fairtrade supplier.
- Introduction of reference to Fairtrade sourcing clarifies the scope that companies should assess whether identified risks are linked to their Fairtrade activities
- Current measure to 'strengthen your assessment methods' is not feasible at the start of risk assessment and is not practical to keep in this requirement. Same requirement in HL standard will have to be modified on this measure as well.

Discussion – No points were raised.

Decision 3: Do you agree to modify the 3.2.1 requirement as proposed, deleting the point on Fairtrade suppliers, adding that assessment must include Fairtrade sourcing, and to remove the required measure 'to strengthen assessment methods over time' also in HL standard requirement 4.2.1?

The SC Vote: 5 votes in favour, 2 abstained

Proposal 4 to modify Trader Standard requirement 3.3.2 to remove reference to requirement for Supply chain dialogue on HREDD and add further clarity via the Interpretation Note

Rationale:

- Medium traders face uncertainty about how extensive or ambitious action plans are expected to be
- Some traders were confused by references to producer support activities that do not apply to them
- In addition to proposed requirement changes:
 - improve clarity and consistency in understanding the measures for compliance with Action Plan through the Interpretation Note
 - Further alignment between Action Plan, Supply Chain Dialogue and Producer Support requirements will be considered in StEP

Proposal 5 to modify Trader Standard requirement 3.3.6 to replace reference 'support at least one producer' with 'implement at least one measure'

Rationale:

- "Large traders" do not source directly from producers, making the current requirement difficult to implement
- to improve feasibility with implementation
- additional options in the Interpretation Note would broaden recognized support measures (e.g. long-term sourcing commitments or increased Fairtrade sourcing)

Discussion

SC chair questioned whether modified elements are realistically auditable, e.g. dialogue with other companies and awareness-raising.

HREDD-CoE Director responded that awareness-raising is already widely used in standards and is generally auditable, however, it is acknowledged that auditors can only verify based on the evidence of activity but not verify the impact and suggested for the SU to continue monitoring how the requirement is working.

One of the contributing observers expressed concerns about timing for publication of modified interpretation notes flagging that companies are already investing time and resources in preparation for upcoming check on compliance in 2027. The interpretation note is helpful, but it would not fully address the challenges that supply chain actors face in understanding and applying the requirements.

The SU Head and HREDD-CoE Director said the interpretation note is intended to address many of the current questions and will be updated after decisions are made. The updated note is expected to include additional examples of support measures, such as long-term sourcing commitments while further changes require a formal consultation process and will be addressed in upcoming StEP consultation.

One of the SC members expressed concern regarding the feasibility of a support measure ‘to increase Fairtrade sourcing’, noting that sales volumes limit what is realistic, but recognized it as a potential support measure.

A SC member acknowledged the efforts made to engage stakeholders between March and May. However, various views on the proposal makes it challenging for SC members to have clarity on whether the proposed changes addressed stakeholder needs or not.

The S&P Director explained that StEP changes will follow the SC’s decisions by end of 2026, with the general one-year implementation timeline. Also, that updates to interpretation notes will involve consultations with NFOs, PNs, and certification body to ensure measures are clear, implementable and auditable.

The S&P Director also added that the Trader Standard will be shared with the EMT the next week. If the SC does not hear back from SU, it would mean the EMT had approved the standards.

Decision in block:

Decision 4: Do you agree to modify the 3.3.2 requirement as proposed, and to expand the interpretation note with more practical examples for medium traders or traders that do not source directly from producers on how to implement the requirement in a practical way?

Decision 5: Do you agree to replace the reference in the requirement ‘at least one producer’ with ‘implement at least one measure’, and to expand the interpretation note with more practical examples how to implement the requirement?

The SC votes: 5 votes in favour, 2 abstained, 1 member absent.

Decision 6 Do you agree to the delegation of approval of non-substantive changes and final wording to the director of S&P?

The SC votes: 5 votes in favour, 2 abstained, 1 member absent

Final remarks: SC member expressed concern whether modifications approved allow for an easier compliance for traders. The S&P Director suggested addressing the perceived imbalance in the STEP consultation, engaging PNs for practical proposals to restore balance.

Another SC member noted their experience piloting HREDD in a vertically integrated supply chain, supporting measures on the first slide of the introduction as alternatives to postponement and encouraging implementation in 2026.

Next Steps

- May 2026, to update FLOCERT on feasible changes in the Compliance Criteria list that would be applicable as of July.
- May-June 2026, to reflect any relevant recommendations from SC in StEP consultation proposals (e.g. on risk approach and role of the trader).
- June 2026, to publish the Trader Standard

Item 4 – StEP

Following a review of the project, the activities are proceeding as planned. It should be noted, however, that the public consultation is due to take place in mid-June 2026.

Key takeaways:

Fewer criteria to make orientation easier. The aim is to reduce the number of standards from 23 to 6 by 2028. To achieve this, some criteria are being grouped together, and duplication is being reduced. Specific product requirements have been moved into the Annexes for easy reference, making them easier to find and use.

In regard to HREDD, there are no longer separate criteria requiring additional action - all HREDD steps are covered by existing standard requirements (the grievance mechanism is new for SPOs).

For High risk (HR) topics, producers comply with the same number of criteria as they do now, and Development Requirements applied for HR will be consulted to ensure feasible level of effort. This will only apply when problems are identified that need to be addressed and implemented from Year 3.

Hired labor organizations are automatically HR for core labor topics.

It is important to bear in mind and remember that everything described here is still at the proposal stage and will be subject to consultation before a final decision is made.

Consultation processes:

The consultation period runs from mid of June to August, and the analysis of feedback received is expected to begin in August 2026.

It is hoped that this will make it more appealing, with a view to improving the overall presentation and increasing the chances of receiving high-quality feedback. Additional step-Producer Networks (PNs) to receive PO feedback from the survey and run a contextualization process on their end. There will be a brand-new website to manage all future consultation processes; it will be easy to access and will allow users to work both online and offline.

The two types of questions in the consultation relate to: 1. Structure and approach of the revised standards (e.g. the principles-based framework); and 2. Specific issues relating to content (e.g. changes to the scope of application, improvements to the wording, etc.).

Q&A:

The discussion led to the following clarifications:

The number of criteria will be reduced by grouping and merging them to ensure greater consistency; no criteria or content will be removed.

The Development Requirements are so broad that they cannot be made mandatory. To address a specific risk, it is necessary to clearly define which measures can be taken. For this reason, the Development Requirements applicable to HR topics will be subject to consultation and will only be applied where problems are identified.

In regard to the consultation process, it is mentioned that work is underway to make the surveys available in both offline and online formats, although an internet connection will be required to download and upload the survey.

The surveys will be available in FI's four official languages (English, Spanish, French and Brazilian Portuguese). In addition, the platform will provide users with support materials that they can access and consult to offer more constructive feedback. It is important to evaluate the technology and how it works in practice, to ensure that everything is going according to plan.

Item 5 – AOB

The Chair officially closed the session and announced the 123rd SC meeting dates for 14th–15th July 2026.