



# Grievance mechanisms at Fairtrade



## Our commitment

Fairtrade is committed to advancing access to **remedy**<sup>1</sup>. We operate robust grievance mechanisms to allow farmers, workers, and other stakeholders to express their concerns about the actions or inactions of Fairtrade or any Fairtrade certified organisation.

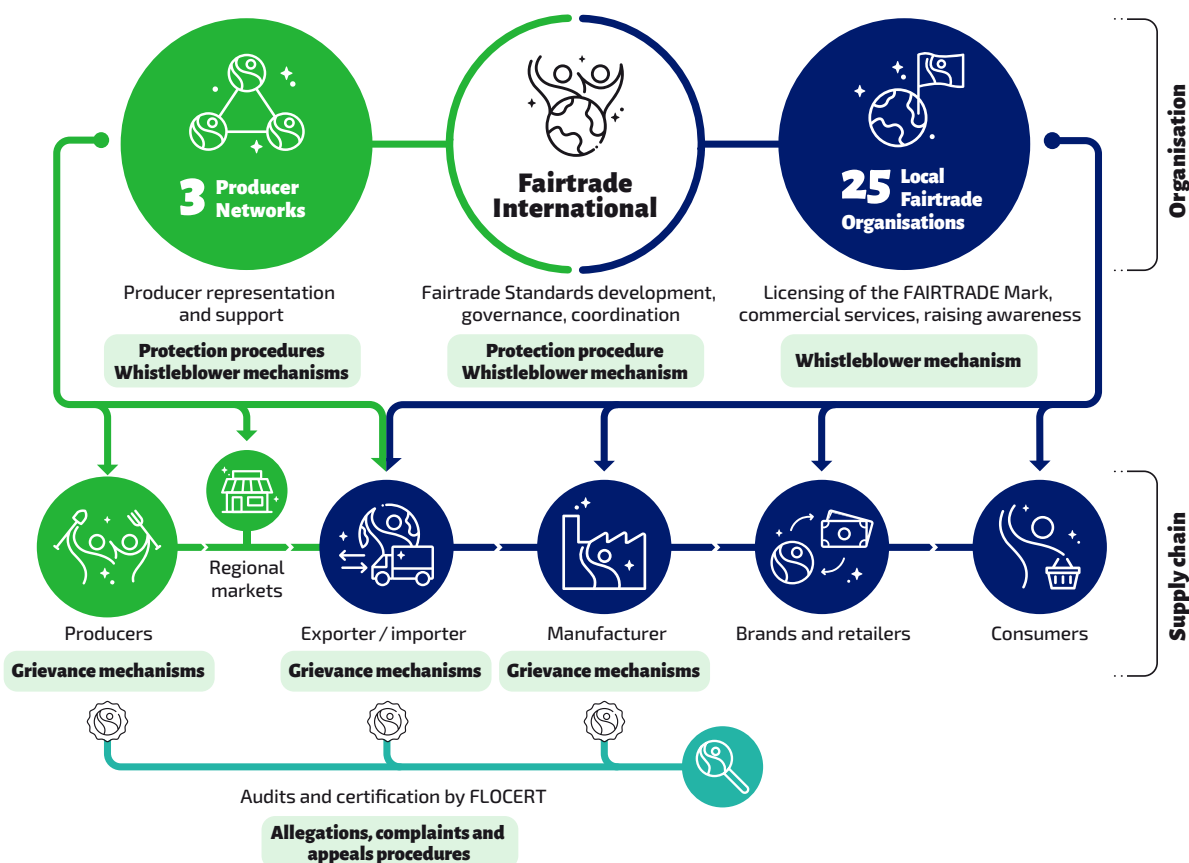
Where these actions or inactions have caused harm to an individual, community, or the environment, Fairtrade seeks to support both the affected person and the responsible organisation's remediation work. Where harm is caused by Fairtrade, we have the responsibility to provide remedies<sup>2</sup>.

## Strong ecosystem of grievance mechanisms

Grievance mechanisms exist at each Fairtrade organisation. Further, Fairtrade Standards require the development and operation of grievance mechanisms from all certified manufacturers, traders, plantations, and other producer organisations that rely on hired labour.

We also advance access to remedy at smallholder farmer organisations. Currently, we focus our hands-on grievance-management support on cocoa farmer organisations and leverage the insights generated to identify the best approach to strengthening access to remedy across Fairtrade-certified smallholder organisations.

**Grievance mechanism refers to any routinized process that allows individuals and groups to raise concerns and seek remedies to an impact or risk that an organisation causes.**



This ecosystem offers individuals and groups the flexibility to choose the grievance mechanism that best meets their needs. While concerns can often be most effectively addressed at workplace-level, individuals or groups may prefer other grievance mechanisms when violations are systemic or there are concerns about confidentiality or retaliation.

## Taking responsibility

Fairtrade takes responsibility beyond robust standards and fair prices. Well-functioning grievance mechanisms allow us to recognise failings in our operations early, enable access to remedies, and strengthen our policies and processes to prevent similar problems in future.

Fairtrade and FLOCERT operated grievance channels are publicly available. Grievances can be reported to any Fairtrade organisation and, on permission from the complainant, we transfer each case to the appropriate channel or organisation.

Fairtrade International and its member organisations maintain a human rights-based approach to remediation. We listen to and respect the views of the affected person(s) and place top priority on their protection and best interests. We also engage in dialogue, advocacy and awareness raising campaigns to support duty bearers – states and companies – to recognise and shoulder their responsibilities.



## Learning from grievances

We continue to strengthen the effectiveness of our grievance mechanisms and their alignment with the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. Currently, we are improving our process of collecting and analysing grievance information, to strengthen our ways of learning and deriving follow-up measures for the whole Fairtrade system.

Key statistics on FLOCERT's complaint channels are available in the annual [Complaints Reports](#). Importantly, the statistics show that these channels work: In 2024 alone, stakeholders reported 176 allegations on Fairtrade certified organisations. Most allegations were reported by workers, farmers, and Fairtrade Producer Networks, and top issues were discrimination/harassment, price and Fairtrade Premium payment, organisational issues and democracy, and working conditions.

**Fairtrade's grievance ecosystem complements commercial partners' efforts in addressing grievances and enabling remediation.**

## Holding Fairtrade certified organisations accountable

Grievance mechanisms also help to advance compliance with Fairtrade Standards throughout certified supply chains, by bringing us information about the concerns of farmers, workers, and other stakeholders. This is an important complement to auditing.

At the same time, it is important to recognise that grievance mechanisms are not a standalone solution. Fairtrade identifies human rights risks, abuses and vulnerable individuals through a range of channels, including discussions and observations during ongoing producer support and programme activities, and works to advance remediation of all cases, regardless of how they come to light.

**Grievance mechanisms are not useful if people are afraid to use them. At millions of workplaces and communities, it is essential to strengthen the position and voice of vulnerable and marginalised groups, so they are increasingly able to voice their grievances.**

**Fairtrade works to raise human rights awareness, and support organising and collective action among farmers and workers.**

**Further, Fairtrade only certifies small farmers that are democratically organised into cooperatives, and plantations that allow their workers to join trade unions.**

## Adding value to commercial partners

Through Fairtrade sourcing, retailers, manufacturers, and traders support Fairtrade to operate grievance mechanisms and enable remediation in certified supply chains<sup>3</sup>. However, companies cannot outsource their duty to establish a grievance mechanism: Companies still need to operate or participate in a grievance mechanism where stakeholders can file grievances and spur changes in the company policies, practices, and actions.

Fairtrade also recommends that retailers, manufacturers, and traders support their suppliers in developing robust grievance mechanisms and remediating violations. This support can be offered for example in the form of technical assistance or funding to suppliers, funding for Fairtrade's programmatic work, or wider multistakeholder collaboration in establishing industry or country-wide grievance mechanisms.

**Learn more about Fairtrade's support for producers' and companies' due diligence work**



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	Organisation	Grievance mechanism	Scope
1.	Fairtrade International (FI), Producer Networks, Local Fairtrade Organisations	<b>Whistleblower mechanisms</b>  Further information on the website of <a href="#">Fairtrade International</a> , each <a href="#">network</a> and <a href="#">organisation</a> .	Grievances on each organisation's services, actions, and representatives.
2.	Fairtrade International	Procedure for Complaints against Fairtrade Standard Setting (see <a href="#">operating procedure</a> ).	Complaints on Fairtrade Standard setting
3.	FI, Producer Networks, some Local Fairtrade Organisations	<b>Protection procedures</b> to protect children and vulnerable adults from child labour, forced labour, and gender-based violence.  Concerns can be reported to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FI: <a href="mailto:socialcompliance@fairtrade.net">socialcompliance@fairtrade.net</a></li> <li>• Fairtrade Africa: <a href="mailto:protection@fairtradeafrica.net">protection@fairtradeafrica.net</a></li> <li>• Network of Asia and Pacific Producers (NAPP): <a href="mailto:compliance@fairtradenapp.org">compliance@fairtradenapp.org</a></li> <li>• The Latin American and Caribbean Network of Fair Trade Small Producers and Workers (CLAC): <a href="mailto:proteccion@clac-comerciojusto.org">proteccion@clac-comerciojusto.org</a></li> </ul>	Violations in and beyond Fairtrade certified supply chains
4.	FLOCERT, the independent auditing company	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Allegations</b> procedure: Cases of non-compliance by Fairtrade certified organisations</li> <li>2. <b>Complaints</b> procedure: Cases on FLOCERT services, actions &amp; representatives</li> <li>3. <b>Appeals</b> procedure: Contesting FLOCERT certification and evaluation decisions</li> </ol> Further information on <a href="#">FLOCERT website</a> .	Grievances on Fairtrade certified organisations. Grievances on FLOCERT services, representatives, and decisions
5.	Certified organisations	<b>Grievance mechanisms at</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fairtrade certified plantations and other "Hired Labour Organisations"</li> <li>• Traders by January 2026</li> <li>• Cocoa farmer organisations</li> </ul> <a href="#">Further information</a> in Fairtrade Standards.	Grievances on each certified organisation's actions and representatives.

<sup>1</sup> The key policies that show Fairtrade's commitment to remedy are [Fairtrade Organization Code \(2019\)](#), [Human Rights Commitment \(2020\)](#); [Act to Protect Policy \(2024\)](#) and [Global Complaints and Allegation Policy \(2024\)](#).

<sup>2</sup> Further information on Fairtrade's approach to remediation is available from [How does Fairtrade respond to human rights violations?](#) brochure.

<sup>3</sup> Please note that where national or regional regulations require companies to establish grievance mechanisms for their supply chains, Fairtrade certified companies should check whether Fairtrade mechanisms are in full alignment with those regulations. As a global system, Fairtrade cannot guarantee full alignment with all laws and regulations.

Learn more about  
Fairtrade's support  
for producers'  
and companies'  
due diligence work

