



How does Fairtrade respond to human rights violations?



Our commitment

Fairtrade is committed to enabling remedies that correct or counteract human rights violations and environmental harms that arise in Fairtrade certified supply chains and Fairtrade operations.

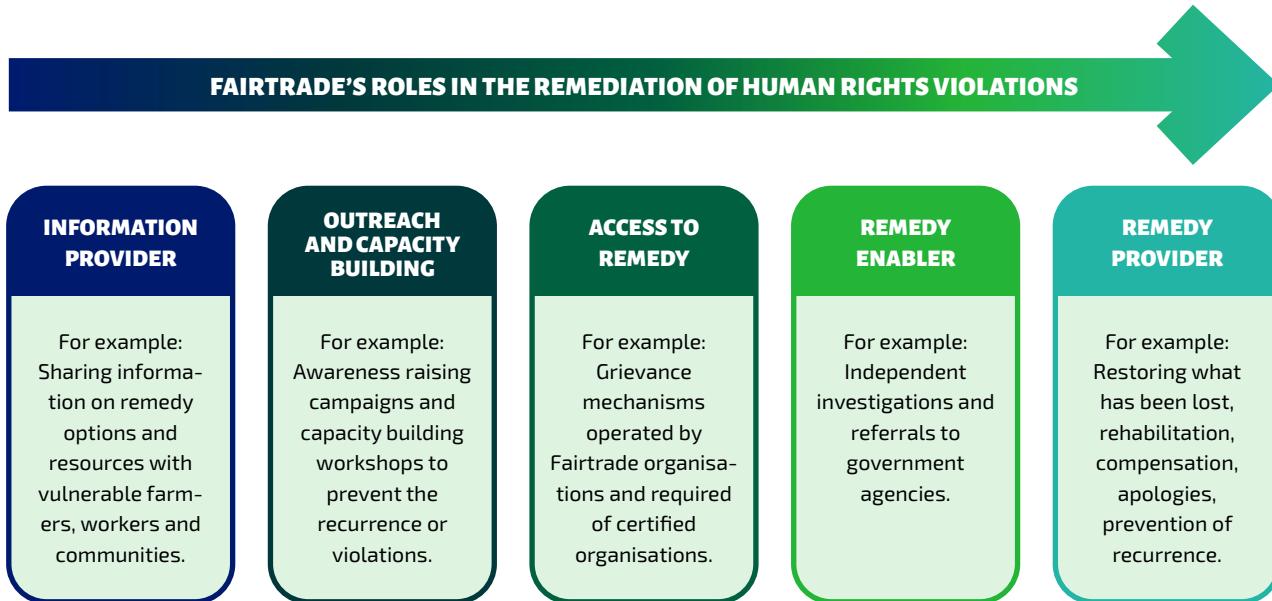
Our remediation work is integrated in our holistic efforts to identify, prevent, and mitigate risks and harms, in alignment with the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs).

Remediation counteracts or makes good a human rights harm that has occurred. It may include apologies, restitution, rehabilitation, compensation, punitive sanctions, and measures to prevent recurrence of the harm.

Fairtrade's role in remediation

Fairtrade's approach to remediation is human rights-based. Our top priority is always the protection and best interest of the impacted person. We listen to and respect the impacted persons' views and avoid actions that put the persons at further risk.

Whenever violations are identified, Fairtrade advances remediation through a combination of measures. The following graphic summarises our roles¹:



Fairtrade supports remediation of a wide range of harms by **providing information** and **building capacities** among affected persons and companies, and operating **grievance mechanisms**. In the graphic, this is depicted by the first three pillars.

Fairtrade also acts as a **remedy enabler** (fourth pillar), by supporting and undertaking independent investigations and referrals to government agencies. Where our resources allow, we may also mediate between victims and companies and engage local civil society organisations. To make a difference, we focus these efforts on violations faced by the most vulnerable people: child labour, forced labour, as well as gender-based and other workplace violence. This aligns with the UN Guiding Principles, which call on organisations to prioritise the most severe violations when not all can be remedied at once.

Where a Fairtrade representative or decision has caused the harm (fifth pillar), we have the responsibility to **provide remedies**.

Remediation is not just about responding after harm has occurred; it requires clear policies, roles, and processes for identifying and responding to harms. We utilise insights gained from remediation cases to refine our policies and programmes and reduce the likelihood of similar problems in future.

Fairtrade's strengths

Fairtrade has four key strengths in remediation work:



1. Local presence: Fairtrade's extensive presence across Africa, Asia, and Latin America allows ongoing engagement with farmers, workers, other rightsholders, companies and relevant government agencies, as well as insight into ongoing remediation efforts.



2. Trust: Fairtrade's long-running collaborative relationships with companies from end-to-end in supply chains – from primary producers to retailers – help us in fostering collaboration and co-investment needed to remediate wide-spread harms.



3. Hands-on remediation work: The human rights-based, ongoing remediation work by Fairtrade Producer Networks is exceptional among Standard schemes and makes a strong contribution in enabling remediation.



4. Ecosystem of grievance mechanisms: Fairtrade operates grievance mechanisms at global and regional levels and requires them at farm level. This robust ecosystem offers individuals and groups the flexibility to choose the mechanism that best meets their needs².

Our role as remedy enabler

Despite of our holistic work and strong capacity across Africa, Asia, and Latin America, **Fairtrade cannot ensure full remediation of all harms**. Most violations and harms in certified supply chains are neither caused nor contributed to by Fairtrade, and the duty to provide remediation lies with states and companies. Fairtrade's role is to support the affected persons, and the corporate and governmental remediation work.

Remediation requires strong collaboration. Many harms are widespread, rooted in poverty and inequality, and remediation takes cooperation between companies, states and civil society.

To shoulder their responsibilities, retailers, manufacturers and trading companies can a) set up a robust remediation process, b) establish a company level grievance mechanism and participate in collective ones, c) invest in remediation, prevention and mitigation initiatives, and d) use their leverage to encourage cooperation and co-investment by all supply chain actors.

When a retailer, manufacturer or trading company co-invests in a Fairtrade remediation programme, Fairtrade shares information about the harms and progress with the company. Otherwise, Fairtrade does not currently involve buying companies in the remediation of individual cases.



Global, regional and local efforts

Fairtrade advances remediation at global, regional, and farm level, so that harms would be addressed quickly, safely, and as close to the affected person/community as appropriate.

The work is guided by Fairtrade's global and regional protection policies and committees. The policies define our practices for safe and effective grievance handling, while the committees lead implementation and oversee the handling of each case. These committees are comprised of diverse actors, including protection experts and management/board members of Fairtrade Producer Networks and Fairtrade International.

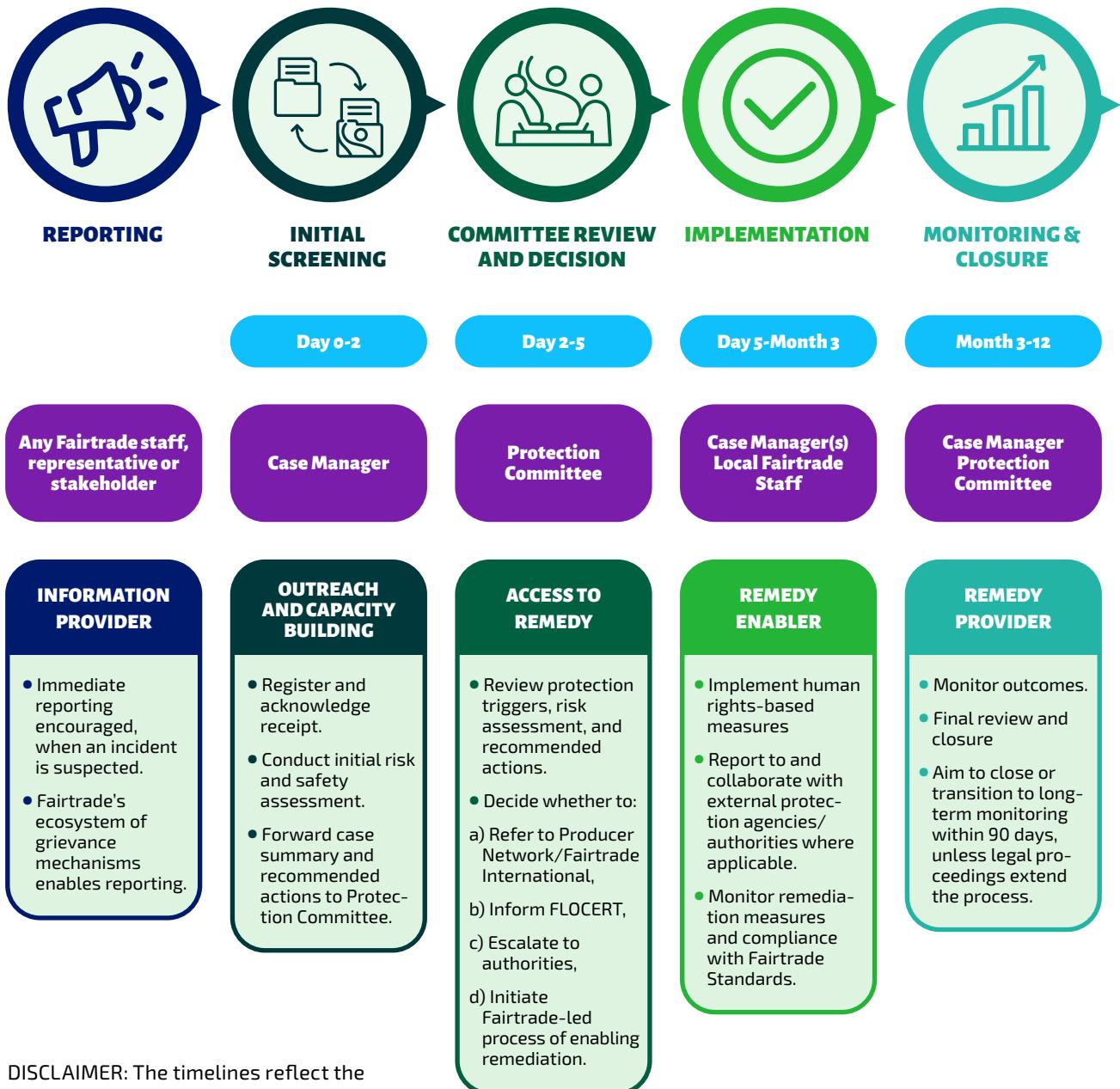
¹ The graphic is based on ISEAL, 2024. *Remedying Human Rights Abuses in Supply Chains: The Role of Sustainability Standards*. Page 23.

² Further information is available from *Grievance mechanisms at Fairtrade* brochure.



Fairtrade's remediation process

Fairtrade International and Fairtrade Producer Networks in Africa, Asia, and Latin America follow a five-step process when responding to an allegation of child labour, forced labour, or gender-based or other workplace violence. These steps are summarised in the below graphic.



DISCLAIMER: The timelines reflect the expectation established in Fairtrade policies. However, in individual cases timelines vary depending on the complexity of the case and circumstances.

