

Complaints, Allegations and Appeals Operating Procedure

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**Please submit complaints and appeals to
licensing@fairtrade.ie.**



1. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to describe Fairtrade Ireland's procedure for dealing with complaints, allegations and appeals in relation to licensing procedures with Fairtrade Ireland. This procedure reflects Fairtrade Ireland's commitment to transparency, oversight and compliance with Fairtrade International's Requirements for Licensing Bodies and Standards.

2. Scope

In order for Fairtrade Ireland to review a complaint, allegation or appeal, the subject of the complaint must fall within in Fairtrade Ireland's scope, such as:

- Complaints regarding the conduct of personnel, including all staff, Board members, volunteers and contractors in relation to licensing issues;
- Complaints regarding confidentiality, conflict of interest and non-discrimination;
- Complaints or allegations regarding Fairtrade Ireland's licensees;
- Complaints or appeals regarding Fairtrade Ireland's licensing decisions.

Complaints and appeals are reviewed and processed according to the procedure outlined below. All personnel investigating a complaint or appeal must be free from any conflict of interest that may influence the outcome of the complaints and appeals process.

Complaints may be lodged by any interested party that is not satisfied with operations or decisions pertaining to licensing by Fairtrade Ireland.

Appeals may only be brought forward by a party about which a licensing decision was made. All decisions related to the status of the applicant operator or licensee remain in force until the complaint is settled.

Allegations may be submitted by a third party, claiming that a Fairtrade operator is violating Fairtrade Ireland's policies and procedures, is damaging Fairtrade Ireland's reputation or is misusing the Fairtrade Mark.

3. Submission

Complaints, allegations and appeals must be submitted in writing to Fairtrade Ireland's Licensing Department, clearly stating that a complaint, allegation or appeal is being lodged, explaining the nature of the complaint, allegation or appeal and accompanied by documented evidence to support the claim and the signature of the complainant. A complaint or appeal must also contain a full explanation of the perceived problem including dates of events associated with the complaint, allegation or appeal and the names of the involved parties. Complaints, allegations and appeals must be submitted by email to licensing@fairtrade.ie.

Once the complaint, allegation or appeal has been submitted, a case file of the complaint, allegation or appeal, will be opened by Fairtrade Ireland to evaluate whether the complaint, allegation or appeal meets the criteria described above. The Licensing Officer submits the complaint or appeal case file for preliminary review by the Executive Director before moving forward.

- If a complaint or appeal is accepted for review, the Licensing Officer notifies the claimant within 10 working days, outlines the next steps of the process and may request additional information from the claimant.
- If a complaint or appeal is rejected for review, the claimant is informed within 10 working days and provided with an explanation of the rejection. The claimant may amend their complaint or appeal and resubmit. In this case, the Licensing Department will appoint alternative personnel to review the complaint or appeal.

4. Decision

Once a complaint, allegation has been determined to have merit, the Licensing Officer determines what further action and/or decision-making is needed to address the complaint or allegation,. The Licensing Officer or appointed personnel may also request additional information, collate data from other sources or commission an investigation. A corrective action plan for the complaint allegation is devised by the Licensing Department.

In cases of appeals, the Licensing Department will submit the appeal and all relevant documentation to Fairtrade Ireland's Licensing Appeals Committee.

Once a decision has been made and verified by the Licensing Department, the claimant is informed of the final decision and, if applicable, steps for remediation within 10 working days. The decision is final and no further complaint against the decision is possible.

5. Documentation

Fairtrade Ireland reserves the right to inform certifiers (FLOCERT), authorities, licensees and the general public of the outcome of complaint, allegation or appeal.

A log of complaint, allegation or appeal, including all related records, and their outcomes are maintained by the Licensing Department for at least five years.