



**FLOCERT**  
assuring fairness

# Annual Complaints Statistics 2024

**April 2024**

FLOCERT's Credibility Assurance Unit

# Introduction

The Annual Complaints Statistics 2024 provides an overview of requests handled by FLOCERT's Credibility Assurance Unit, following the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for Allegations, Appeals, Reviews, and Complaints. This report encompasses all cases submitted and resolved between January 1<sup>st</sup> and December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024.

## 2024 figures in brief

- From 2020 to 2024, the number of allegations steadily increased each year, with a notable 33% rise from 2023 to 2024 alone. Our efforts to raise awareness and improve accessibility through various channels have shown positive results. We're proud that people trust us to thoroughly investigate and handle each case with care.
- Although the number of appeals and review requests regarding certification and evaluation decisions stayed nearly the same, the rate of acceptable cases dropped significantly. It seems customers are having trouble understanding the information we need to accept a case. To improve this, we will publish a Q&A to make the process clearer and more accessible.
- On a positive note, the total number of complaints decreased, although one key focus remains auditors. We've noticed that audit results often tie closely to customer satisfaction levels. While we understand this connection, we work with customers to ensure every case is fully understood. This is especially important since auditor competence is the foundation of any certification or assurance work.



FLOCERT values feedback, recognising that complaints play a crucial role in enhancing our assurance maturity and customer compliance

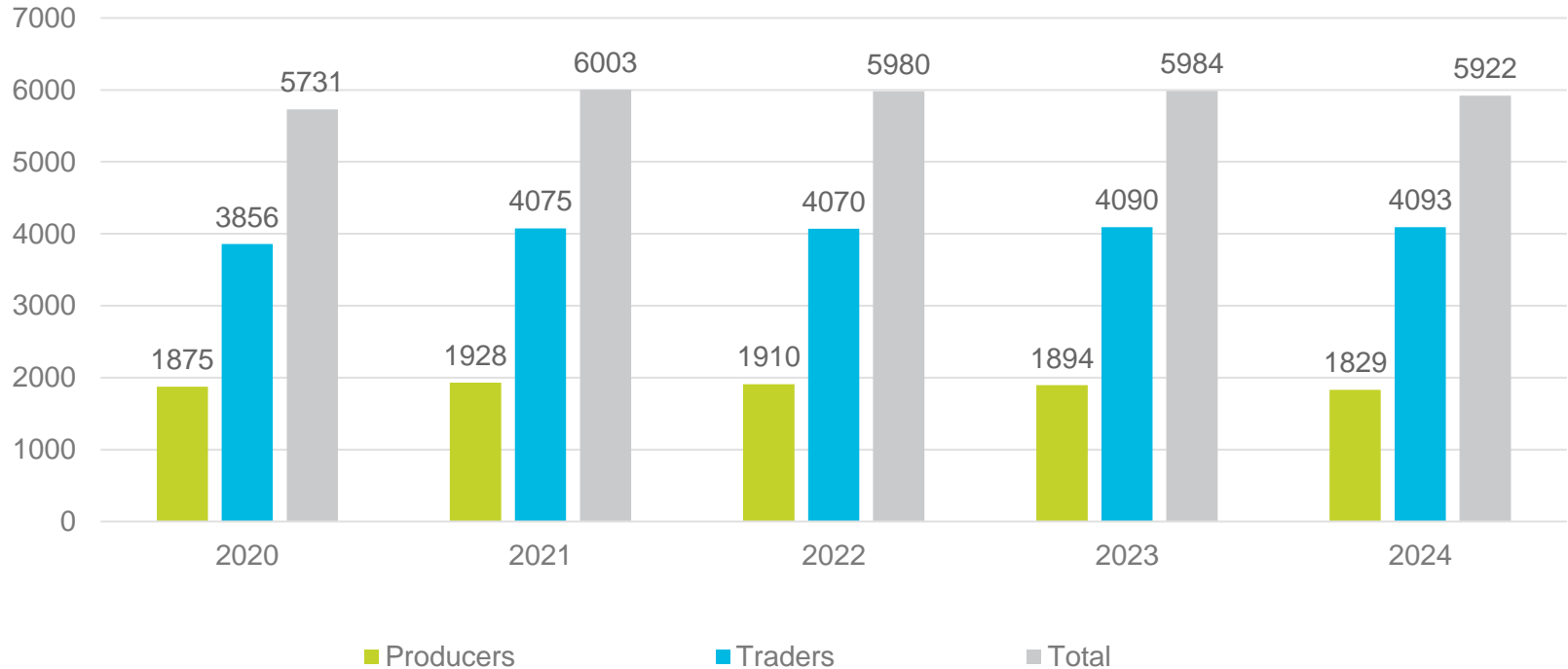
# Definitions

## What types of complaints does the Credibility Assurance Unit manage?

- **Allegation:** a statement of assertion or assertions by a third party against a customer holding a Fairtrade certificate or being in the process of applying for a certificate (applicant) claiming that this customer is non-compliant with applicable Fairtrade Standards or is in breach of policies or other contractual obligations with FLOCERT.
- **Appeal:** An official request by the customer to revoke or reverse a Certification Decision, such as decertification or suspension. The appeals procedure would apply to EDGE customers wanting to challenge the audit findings.
- **Review:** An official request by the customer to review an Evaluation Decision, such as a review of non-conformities, corrective measures, or objective evidence.
- **Complaint:** related to the manner in which FLOCERT provides services, including but not limited to failure to respond to certification-relevant correspondence within a reasonable amount of time and unprofessional behaviour by a FLOCERT staff member or auditor.

For more details, please consult the [Standard Operating Procedures](#) on the FLOCERT website.

# Number of Fairtrade certified organisations



# Five-year overview

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
<b>Allegations</b>	110	113	115	132	176
<b>Appeals</b>	18	17	33	34	28
<b>Reviews</b>	9	15	15	20	20
<b>Complaints</b>	47	33	44	30	27
<b>Customers</b>	5.731	6.003	6.003	5.984	5.922

# Status overview 2024

	Total received	Accepted	Closed	Open	Rejected, stalled, withdrawn	Decision re-confirmed	Decision overturned	Decision partly confirmed
Allegations	176	115	119	40	61	N/A	N/A	N/A
Appeals	28	3	3	0	25	2	0	1
Reviews	20	7	7	0	13	2	1	4
Complaints	27	22	22	0	4	N/A	N/A	N/A

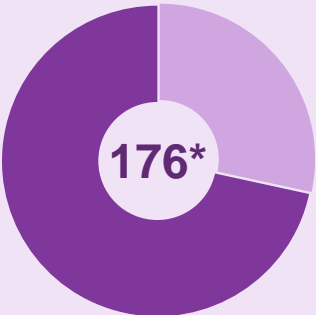
# Allegations 2024



The number of allegations increased by 33% from 2023 to 2024.

Allegations affected 113 different customers. This represents 1,9% of customers certified in 2024.

Producer  
**126**



Trader  
**50**



\*Total number of allegations by service



Americas  
**87**



Africa  
**48**

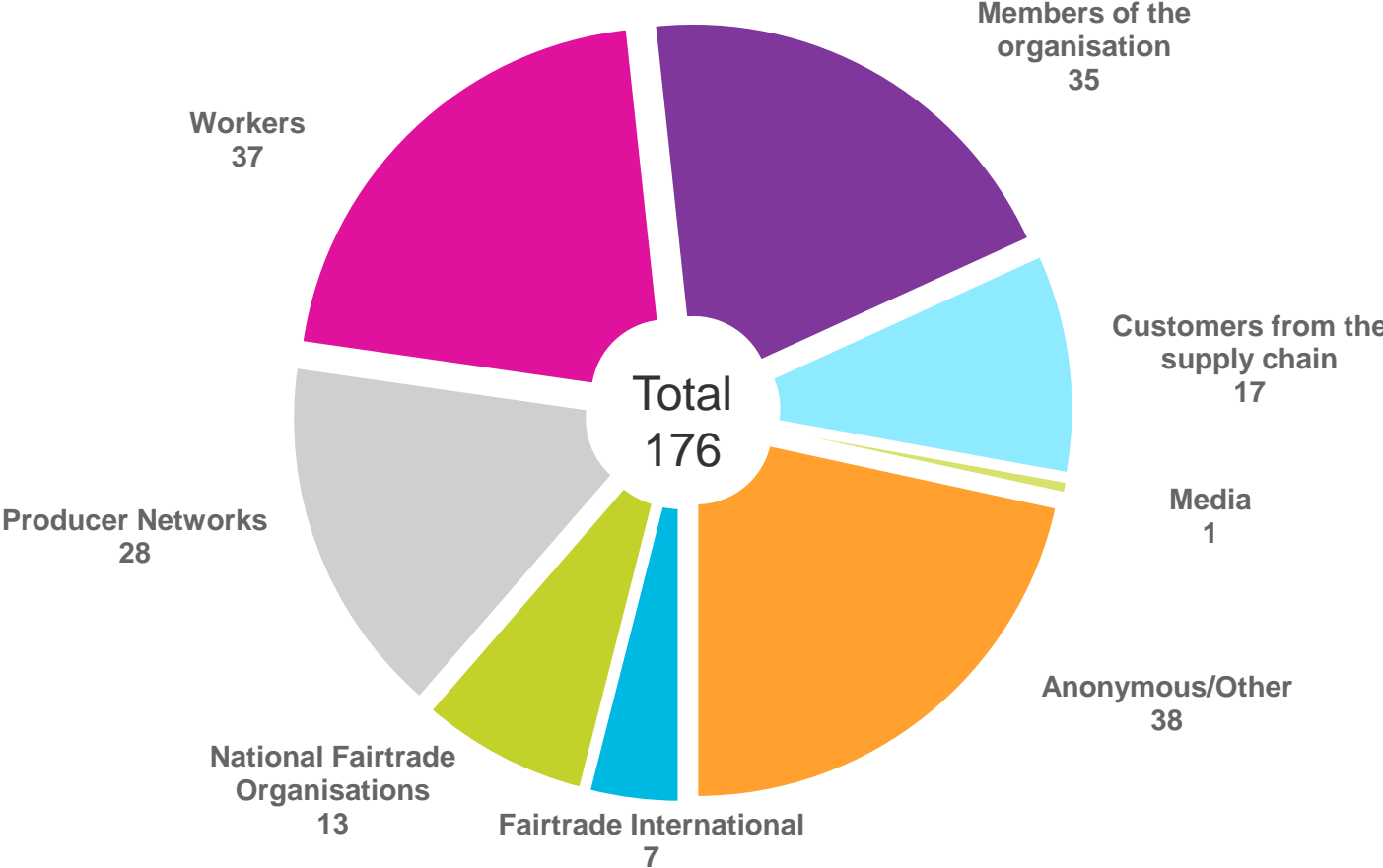


Asia  
**31**



Europe  
**10**

# Allegation sources in 2024





# Allegations: focus topics & focus products

## Top 4 topics

- Harassment/discrimination
- Price and Premium payment
- Organisational issues/ democracy
- Working conditions



52

Banana



35

Flowers and plants



28

Coffee



24

Cane Sugar



12

Cocoa



6

Honey

# Investigated allegations

## Method of investigation

Unannounced + remote unannounced audit

29+ 5

Focused + remote focused audit

47+5

Renewal audit

26

## Result of investigation

Not substantiated

45 = 38%

Substantiated

37 = 31%

Partly substantiated

27 = 27%

Not investigated\*

5 = 4%

Average  
processing time

5.5  
months

to close an allegation  
(max. 6 months allowed)

**\*Reason:** The customer is no longer certified, or the required onsite audit was not possible as the region could not be visited.

# Appeals 2024



The number of received appeals decreased by 18%. The number of acceptable appeals decreased unfortunately significantly.\*

\*Appeals must be submitted within the timeline outlining fact-based reasons for disagreement. The Appeals Committee evaluates against procedures but cannot grant exceptions.

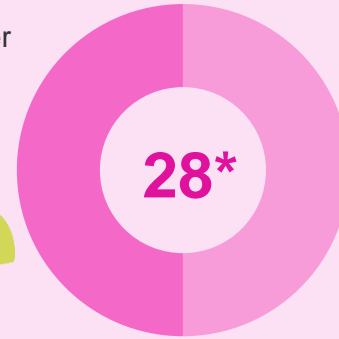
Producer

14



Trader

14



\*Total number of appeals by service



Americas

13



Africa

8



Asia

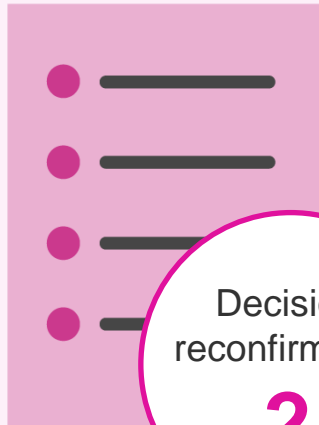
6



Europe

1

# Appeals decisions



Decision reconfirmed\*  
**2** ✓



Decision partly confirmed\*  
**1** ✓



to close an appeal  
(max. 35 days allowed)

\*Only considered the 3 accepted cases

# Reviews 2024



The number of reviews received increased by 5%. The number of acceptable reviews unfortunately decreased by 36%.\*

\*Reviews must be submitted within the timeline outlining fact-based reasons for disagreement. The Review Committee evaluates against procedures but cannot grant exceptions.

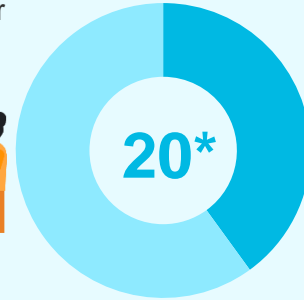
Trader

12



Producer

8



\*Total number of reviews by service



Americas

8



Africa

5



Asia

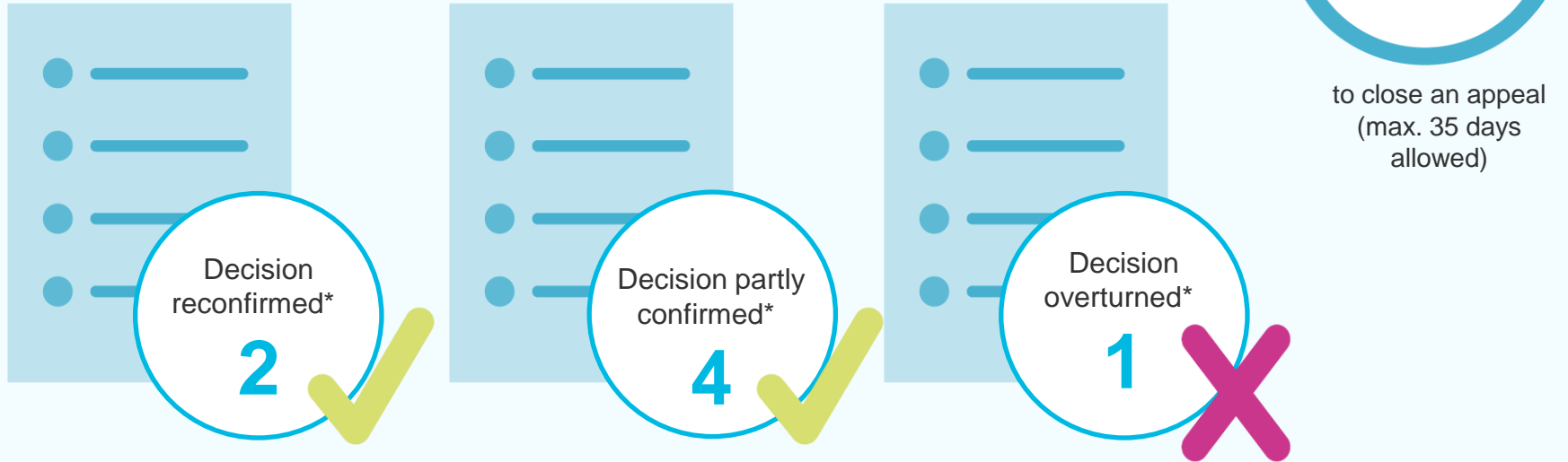
4



Europe

3

# Review decisions

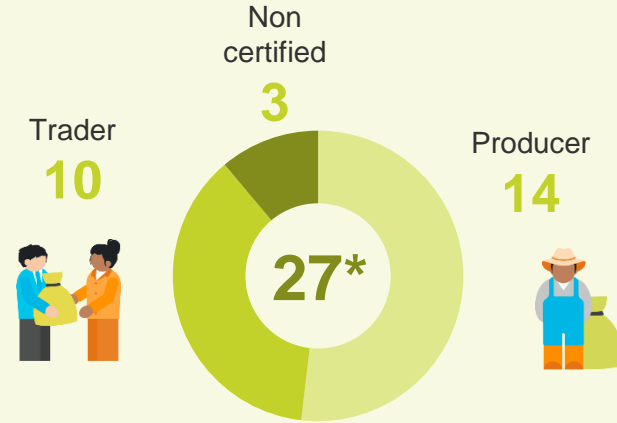


\*Only considered the 7 accepted cases

# Complaints 2024



The number of complaints decreased by 10%.



\*Total number of complaints by service



Americas  
**10**



Africa  
**5**



Asia  
**4**

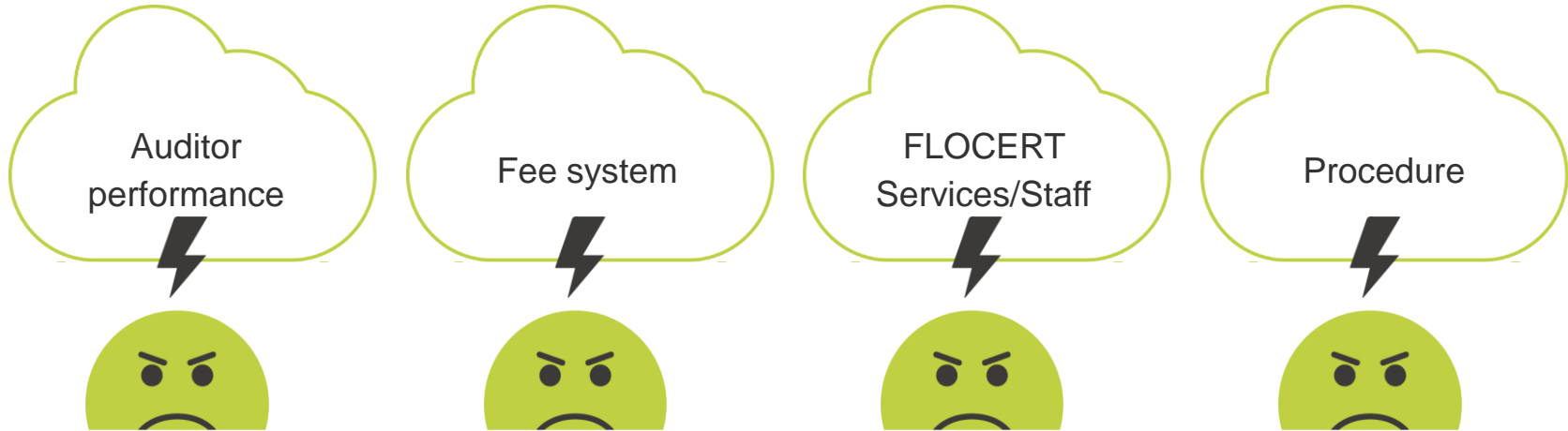


Europe  
**8**

# Complaints: focus topics

Average  
processing time  
**21 days**

to close a complaint  
(max. 35 days  
allowed)





# THANK YOU

[credibility@flocert.net](mailto:credibility@flocert.net)

<https://www.flocert.net/submit-an-allegation-appeal-or-complaint/>