

FAQs - Coronavirus-related changes in FLOCERT's operations.

Please note, as of March 16th, 2020, FLOCERT has changed its operations due to the pandemic COVID19. The following FAQ document aims to offers further information.

I am a Fairtrade certified organisation and have an upcoming audit scheduled. What should I do?

Nothing. Our certification analysts will get in touch with you to propose either remote auditing or defer the audit, depending on whether you are a considered a Fairtrade trader or a Fairtrade producer organisation.

If you are a certified producer organisation with an audit scheduled before the 22nd of April, your certification analyst will get in touch with you to postpone it. If your audit is scheduled after the 22nd of April, there is no need to plan any changes for the time being. We will get in touch with you, in case there is a need to change the audit plan concerning your organisation.

If you are a Fairtrade Trader, any scheduled audit before June 30th, 2020 will be performed remotely. We will get in touch with you to coordinate. We will also explain everything you need to know about how the remote audit will work. If your audit is scheduled after the 30th of June, there is no need to plan any changes for the time being. We will get in touch with you, in case there is a need to change the audit plan concerning your organisation.

Will this change in operations affect the validity of my Fairtrade certificate?

The validity of your Fairtrade certificate will not be affected. In case your certificate warrants a renewal audit, your FLOCERT certification analyst will contact you to make sure that your certificate remains valid while the renewal process is ongoing.

I have already agreed for an audit with a FLOCERT auditor. However, because of Coronavirus safety concerns, I don't want this to go ahead. What should I do?

In case you haven't already been contacted, please contact your FLOCERT certification analyst in order to officially cancel the audit, providing the reasons for this cancellation. Your certification analyst will give you more details about next steps, which may involve conducting the audit remotely.

Currently, my organisations' Fairtrade certification is suspended. A verification of our Fairtrade compliance is planned to be done through a follow-up audit. What happens now?

If you are suspended due to major non-conformities and are ready to prove compliance, FLOCERT will allow you to demonstrate compliance through specific documentary evidence. Upon examination and adequacy, FLOCERT will then lift the suspension. A follow-up audit will be scheduled at a later date (where compliance with these major non-conformities will be double-checked and verified).

We are a certified Fairtrade producer organisation and we cannot hold our General Assembly, as local public health officials have restricted any group meetings due to the pandemic. Will this be a non-compliance in the next audit, if the audit is performed before we hold the Assembly?

No, but you must provide all relevant evidence to the auditor, to demonstrate the reasons for the cancellation and rescheduling of the meeting.

Why is there such a big difference in FLOCERT's change of operations for Fairtrade certified producer organisations and trader organisations?

The requirements of the Fairtrade standards are different depending on your role in the Fairtrade system. The Trader Standard typically hones in on payments of a fair price and the premium – things we may be able to check remotely under the circumstances. The Fairtrade Producer Standard however, with its strong social & environmental components, does not allow for quick substitution using remote auditing. Of course, we will stay flexible and come up with alternatives for producer organisations as well, if the pandemic doesn't ease up.

I have sent a complaint against a certified organisation for human rights violations. What about this investigation?

FLOCERT needs to regulate any travel of its personnel and auditors in order to limit physical interactions and the aggressive spread of COVID19. Therefore, any investigation that needs physical auditing will be on hold until further notice. Please check with allegations@flocert.net for an update in your specific case.