Quality Policy

Explanatory Document

Valid from: 07/03/2024

Distribution: External

Certifier for

FAIRTRADE

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1 Purpose

This quality policy provides a framework to establish FLOCERT´s associated quality objectives. It defines and declares what FLOCERT considers 'Quality' and outlines the systems and processes in place to ensure that we meet this definition. It has been developed in compliance with the requirements of ISO 17065 and covers all services provided by FLOCERT.

2 Application

This policy applies to all FLOCERT employees, freelance auditors, the FLOCERT Supervisory Board and the FLOCERT Impartiality Committee.

All employee areas are individually involved in complying with this guideline and are responsible for the quality of their work.

3 FLOCERT´s mission

Our primary mission is to provide assurance and certification for Fairtrade. In addition, FLOCERT also offers services to other organisations committed to sustainable development.

We prioritise integrity, credibility, and efficiency, earning the trust of stakeholders, customers and the public through impartial assessments and high-quality services. The following principles guide our mission:

- Build mutually enriching relationships with our customers, understanding their needs and supporting long-term success.

- Collaborate with like-minded customers to improve the livelihoods of farmers and workers, combat poverty, and ensure fair working conditions.

- Uphold our commitment to impartiality and transparency, providing accessible information with diligence, efficiency, and speed.

- Empower and hold our staff accountable, fostering continual service improvement, system enhancement, and the use of best practices.

To achieve our mission, FLOCERT has set quality objectives in seven areas that we further describe with their specific activities below:

3.1 Competences

We do not only carefully select and hire staff based on a core competency model but also ensure that staff competencies are retained, built upon, and enhanced.

A dedicated Competence Management team establishes and maintains auditor and operational staff training to allow consistent and reliable delivery of assurance services. Established procedures measure staff performance and progress annually against KPIs and, together with feedback procedures, will also enable us to ensure our staff is fully competent in their respective job roles.

3.2 Impartiality

Our certification decisions are based on objective criteria and treat all customers alike.

We live impartiality by following strict rules and procedures in our auditing services, which leads to impartial decisions as we triangulate, evaluate, certify, or verify. An Impartiality Committee, which is an independent body and, therefore, does not report to any governance structures within FLOCERT / Fairtrade International, further monitors that commercial, financial, or other pressures do not compromise FLOCERT's impartiality in line with its ISO 17065 accreditation.

3.3 Confidentiality

We make sure that the data our customers share with us is in good hands.

Our customers may entrust us with personal data, confidential information, and business secrets for certification purposes. We fully understand our liability and obligation: FLOCERT has developed and implemented data governance and sharing rules and procedures. In addition, staff is regularly trained so they understand this responsibility. Furthermore, dedicated staff for assessing and periodically monitoring data governance exist, closely working with the FLOCERT Data Protection Officer.

In case of appeals, allegations, or complaints, feedback is carefully investigated. All information is kept strictly confidential, and all sources are protected.

3.4 Transparency

We transparently inform our new customers about any procedures or requirements they need to fulfil and about changes. Any information about the assurance journey of organisations certified or verified by FLOCERT, such as updated procedures, new assurance and compliance measures and further relevant topics, is communicated to all customers in an accessible and proactive way.

FLOCERT's compliance criteria for the Fairtrade Standard - verifiable control points that translate requirements into action points evaluated during the certification process - are always publicly available on our website.

Our Fairtrade Customer Search Tool makes information about Fairtrade-certified customers, including their current certification status, always publicly available on our website.

3.5 System calibration

We regularly revise and update processes. Record keeping and system documentation are highly valued and regular practices. Our feedback culture and open systems of complaints, appeals, and allegations enable continuous system and procedure improvement. We have a quality management system in place.

3.6 Customer service

We follow customer service principles and have transparent, timely and honest customer communication and information. Our dedicated team is the focal point for customer relations and is trained regularly.

FLOCERT operates in an environment that requires thorough and constant communication with multiple target groups. The complexity of our work and the fact that our communication is often aimed at audiences who are not experts in assurance make it necessary to use clear, consistent, and understandable language in process and procedure explanations, in our materials, and in any emails.

We evaluate customer satisfaction regularly to improve our services.

3.7 Data-driven

We use data to enrich and complement our audit and certification scheme to sharpen our ability to certify efficiently and competently. We operate dedicated software tools that support our certification work. In addition, we use and analyse transactional data to highlight supply chain trends and help us to identify and mitigate supply chain risks.