

ETHICAL TRADE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Ensuring that the people behind our products are respected, protected and treated fairly is a key value of the Co-op. To do this, we work closely with our suppliers and key partners to protect vulnerable workers and support resilient livelihoods across our supply chain. We're committed to ensuring that everyone involved in producing our own-brand products is treated fairly and that their fundamental human rights are upheld. This includes fair pay, safe and decent working conditions, and protection from forced labour, modern slavery and inhumane treatment.

This section is structured around our five strategic priorities, which we continued to focus our work around in 2025.

OUR TARGET:

We will support our suppliers in improving human rights across our supply chains through the delivery of our global supplier engagement programme, reaching over 2,500 delegates in 50 events in 2025.

OUR PROGRESS:

In 2025 we reached 3,717 delegates in 155 events.

DRIVING INNOVATION IN DUE DILIGENCE AND TRANSPARENCY

Our Food business has a robust programme of assessing and monitoring high-risk labour and human rights issues across our supply chain. In 2025, our programme covered 2,988 sites (676 Tier 1 and 2,312 Tier 2¹ supplier sites), across 66 countries, employing 784,657 workers. Our expectations are outlined in our [Human Rights Position Statement](#) and our [Sound Sourcing Code of Conduct](#).

All Co-op own-brand food suppliers must join [Sedex](#) (Supplier Ethical Data Exchange²), and Tier 1 sites in high-risk countries require an independent audit before approval. We are committed to working collaboratively with our suppliers to address the root causes of issues.

We actively use insights from workers through grievance mechanisms and whistleblowing channels such as [Unseen](#), alongside information from suppliers and independent sources to guide our due diligence. Over the past year, we've contributed to collaborative independent human rights investigations into issues raised in our supply chain alongside a range of enhanced due diligence assessments that support effective remediation for workers. We report on issues found in our supply chains in our [Modern Slavery Statement](#).



¹ A Tier 1 site is a production site where goods are finished, ready for supply to, or sale by, the end company. A Tier 2 site is a production site that supplies goods or materials to a Tier 1 site for incorporation into the finished product.

² Sedex is a global technology company that specialises in data, insights and professional services to empower supply chain sustainability. Sedex provides practical tools, services and a community network to help companies improve their responsible and sustainable business practices and source responsibly.

Source responsibly and build resilient, inclusive supply chains

To drive greater transparency, we're ensuring more high-risk supply chains share disaggregated, beyond Tier 1¹ data - covering sites, workers and freedom of association - via [Open Supply Hub](#).

EMBEDDING ETHICAL TRADE INTO CORE BUSINESS ACTIVITIES AND WINNING HEARTS AND MINDS

We work closely with colleagues with key human rights responsibilities through specialist training. The training shows how everyday decisions impact supply chain workers - from inductions to workshops - to help embed ethical trade into decision-making. To support this, we have updated our Technical Guide to Ethical Trade for colleagues and collaborated with commercial teams to manage human rights risks in supply chains and through our tender processes.

In July, we launched a Pan-Co-op Ethical Trade and Human Rights Working Group. The group is responsible for delivering actions that were developed through a Pan-Co-op Human Rights Risk assessment in 2024 to address ethical trade, human rights and modern slavery risks across our Co-op.

Our commercial processes, including tenders, assess suppliers' human rights capabilities, embedding ethics into supply chain relationships. We hold regular review meetings and annual cross-functional ethical trade reviews, fostering open dialogue and collaboration to address issues and advance human rights strategies together.

¹ Sites 'beyond Tier 1' include sites at Tier 2 and further down the supply chain, depending on the nature and complexity of the supply chain.



CASE STUDY

Driving impact through collaboration and capacity building

We believe everyone has a role in upholding human rights and ethical trade standards, and that involving a wide range of stakeholders is essential to preventing human rights abuses. This is why we support collaborative capacity-building initiatives in high-risk sourcing areas and in sectors where multi-industry action can be most effective.

2025 marked milestone anniversaries for two ethical trade forums we helped establish.

Spanish Ethical Trade Forum: 180 delegates met in Murcia for the forum's 10th anniversary. Co-op spoke at the event, which focused on corporate social responsibility (CSR) collaboration, labour legislation progress and impacts delivered by specialist working groups.

Egyptian Ethical Trade Forum: 48 organisations gathered in Cairo for the forum's 15th

anniversary, with multi-stakeholder discussions on youth employment and gender.

We also continued to create trusted spaces for engagement, including convening more than 60 strategic suppliers and colleague leaders at our Human Rights & Ethical Trade Forum to discuss worker safeguarding across our supply chain.

We also contributed to global thought leadership by speaking at an AIM-Progress panel at the UN Forum on Business and Human Rights, sharing best practice on building supplier ownership of human rights and environmental due diligence. Recognising our responsibility within our home community, we collaborated to re-launch the Greater Manchester Modern Slavery Business Network in 2025, helping local businesses work together to tackle modern slavery.

BUILDING CAPACITY AND RESILIENCE IN OUR SUPPLY BASE

Collaboration is essential to tackling the root causes of human rights issues in our supply chain. In 2025, we continued to work with partners including Food Network for Ethical Trade ([FNET](#)), [Stronger Together](#), the Modern Slavery Intelligence Network ([MSIN](#)), [Unseen](#), and Seafood Ethics Action Alliance ([SEAA](#)).

Through working in partnership with global and local stakeholders we build capacity and knowledge by supporting events that embed human rights and ethical trade practices across supply chains. In 2025 we trained over 3,717 delegates from 2,288 businesses, many of which are suppliers, in five countries. These efforts are building capability and driving systemic change and supplier ownership.

TACKLING MODERN SLAVERY AND MITIGATING HUMAN RIGHTS RISKS

This year, we've continued to review and prioritise activity addressing labour rights risks across our eight priority areas¹. See our [website](#) for detail on what the priorities are, the supply chain and products, and how we're responding to the issues.

In addition, we have strengthened our commitment to eliminating illegal and unfair recruitment fees across our global supply chains. Through the [Seasonal Workers Scheme Taskforce](#), we worked collaboratively to deliver grower roadshow events to 426 delegates, rolled out an independent worker survey, began development of a multi-lingual

support line for workers, launched the Employer Pays Principle ([EPP](#)) Feasibility Study and roundtables to address the risk of workers taking on debt to migrate for work, while considering food security and the sector's long-term sustainability.

In May, a new [report](#) on responsible recruitment in tuna processing was launched that was co-funded by Co-op along with other industry bodies, buyers and suppliers. The study focuses on migrant labour used in tuna processing plants in five countries and provides practical recommendations so the industry can work together to implement best practice on responsible recruitment.

To tackle modern slavery, we provided free modern slavery and responsible recruitment training to suppliers and labour providers in our supply chain, through our sponsorship of [Stronger Together Consumer Goods Programme](#), reaching 1,624 delegates across 94 training courses.

EMPOWERING WORKERS AND ENHANCING LIVELIHOODS

In partnership with our flower supplier Flamingo, we continued our support for the [Inua Dada Gender Empowerment Project](#) and commissioned an [endline report](#) and [learning paper](#), which was published in April. The report summarises key lessons, successes and challenges from our work. [Along with eight other retailers](#), Co-op provided funding for the Gender Action in Agriculture Initiative (GAIA) to develop a set of Gender Based Violence and Harassment principles to enable aligned and co-ordinated action in commercial agriculture and

fisheries. Over 90 organisations from Kenyan tea and flower and South African citrus sectors and the business and human rights field participated in series of roundtable events to develop the principles, which were launched in November.

In 2023, we joined other major UK retailers in signing [IDH's Living Wage Commitment](#) to close the living wage gap in international banana supply chains by 2027. As a leading Fairtrade retailer selling 100% Fairtrade bananas, we've taken significant steps toward this goal but recognise industry-wide collaboration is essential. We have continued to work with UK retailers, our supplier, Fairtrade and IDH on a living wage roadmap. Additionally, along with three other UK retailers, we've co-funded a two-year Banana Link-led project with producers, trade unions and governments in Ghana to establish collective bargaining agreements, securing living wages, decent work and improved living standards for banana workers.

More details about our Ethical Trade and Human Rights programme can be found in our [Modern Slavery Statements](#).

OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE FUTURE

In 2026, we will continue to strengthen due diligence in high-risk supply chains, support suppliers through our global engagement programme and advance women's rights by piloting GAIA-aligned projects to address gender-based violence and harassment. We will also continue collaborating to eliminate illegal and unfair recruitment fees across our global supply chains.

¹ These priorities are reviewed annually using insights from trusted partners and external sources to ensure they remain fit for purpose.

Source responsibly and build resilient, inclusive supply chains

FAIRTRADE

Around a third of the world's food is produced by 570 million small-scale family farms, many in regions facing the most extreme poverty. Driven by our passionate members, we've championed the Fairtrade movement for over 30 years, supporting through fairer prices, working conditions and terms of trade. Fairtrade is more than a label - it is a movement for trade justice.

Our objective is to be the UK's leading supporter of Fairtrade

Our work is grounded in a three-pillar approach: sourcing Fairtrade ingredients, delivering impactful programmes and championing producer voices through advocacy. Through this approach, we support farmers and workers to build more resilient livelihoods.

SOURCING

We are continuing to drive impact through strong Fairtrade sourcing commitments.

- 100% of our Co-op own-brand bananas, tea, coffee, bagged sugar, roses, South African wine and cocoa (including as an ingredient) are sourced on Fairtrade terms, and we are the world's biggest seller of Fairtrade wine.
- In 2025, we continued to be a Fairtrade leader in the UK. We sell more Fairtrade flowers and wine than any other UK grocery retailer.



CO-OP'S FAIRTRADE LEADERSHIP

At Co-op, we have been championing Fairtrade for over 30 years.

<p>1992</p> <p>We were the first major retailer to start selling ethically traded Cafédirect coffee, which became one of the world's first Fairtrade certified products in 1994</p> <p>1st</p>	<p>2000</p> <p>We were the first retailer to bring Fairtrade bananas to the UK, and to launch an own-brand Fairtrade product; our milk chocolate bar</p> <p>1st</p>	<p>2003</p> <p>We were the first UK retailer to make all of our coffee Fairtrade</p> <p>1st</p>	
<p>2017</p> <p>We were the first UK retailer to commit to sourcing all of the cocoa used as an ingredient on Fairtrade terms</p> <p>1st</p>	<p>2016</p> <p>We were the first UK retailer to make all of our own-brand chocolate Easter eggs Fairtrade (excluding Free From)</p> <p>1st</p>	<p>2008</p> <p>We were the first UK retailer to switch all Co-op own-brand hot drinks, bagged sugar and cotton wool to Fairtrade</p> <p>1st</p>	<p>2004</p> <p>We partnered with Traidcraft to launch the first fairly traded wine in 2001, which became the world's first Fairtrade wine in 2004</p> <p>1st</p>
<p>2018</p> <p>We were the first UK retailer to commit to sourcing all African roses on Fairtrade terms</p> <p>1st</p>	<p>2022</p> <p>We were the first retailer to move all own-brand and branded South African wine to Fairtrade</p> <p>1st</p>	<p>2024</p> <p>We became the first UK retailer to extend our commitment to sourcing 100% Fairtrade roses</p> <p>1st</p>	<p>2025</p> <p>We were the first UK retailer to launch a Fairtrade own-brand beer</p> <p>1st</p>

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- The Co-op’s Fairtrade sourcing supports 178 producer organisations across 28 countries, reaching over 400,000 farmers and workers.
- Despite another volatile year for global supply chains, overall in 2025, we maintained steady volumes of Fairtrade ingredients sold, despite some drops in categories caused by availability issues.



OWNED BY YOU
Fairtrade Fortnight – our Member Activation team held 180 local events across the UK, bringing Fairtrade supporters together within communities and engaging with over 9,000 of our members. 36,900 members joined in through our online Fairtrade events with 21,000 members pledging to swap to Fairtrade through the activation. We developed a Fairtrade App game which attracted over 174,000 members to win money off Fairtrade products.

¹ The Latin American and Caribbean Fairtrade Producer Network.
² Through our support to the WSOL.

PROGRAMMES

Farmers and workers are facing increasing challenges – from unfair and unjust trading practices to escalating impacts of climate change which impact supply chains, food systems and livelihoods. We put people and planet at the heart of our [Climate Justice campaign](#) and are standing with farmers by investing in strategies that support them to adapt, mitigate and build their resilience to climate change.

2025 was a reset year for our programme work – some of our flagship and longstanding programmes concluded and we commenced new and innovative programmes supporting Fairtrade producers.

Bananas:

- Our five-year Productivity Improvement Programme (PIP) concluded in 2024, having strengthened soil health and productivity in the Dominican Republic and Colombia, and supported smallholder resilience and livelihoods. In 2025, we began working with CLAC¹, Fairtrade Foundation and Fyffes to explore a new phase of this programme, building on the success of the PIP programme and supporting the evolving needs of smallholder farmers.

Cocoa:

- In partnership with CLAC, the Fairtrade Foundation and our supplier [ICAM](#), we have taken learnings from the successful banana PIP programme and launched a cocoa PIP programme in key cocoa-growing communities in Peru (see case study on the next page).

We also maintained our longstanding commitment to the Women’s School of Leadership (WSOL) – Fairtrade

Africa’s flagship gender empowerment programme. First launched in 2017, WSOL works to address gender-based challenges within the cocoa sector by supporting women (and some men) with the skills and confidence to take leadership roles, influence decision-making and drive community development.

New WSOL student cohorts were introduced across Côte d’Ivoire and Ghana in 2025, reaching a total of 79 beneficiaries (70 women and nine men) from 20 small-scale cocoa producer organisations. Through the support of Co-op and other international funding partners, these 79 beneficiaries are now receiving a range of training and mentoring on topics such as human rights, income diversification and influencing, which graduates can then cascade among their wider communities.



ADVOCACY

Through our strong relationships with producer organisations, we campaign on the issues that matter most to them and amplify their voices:

- We delivered another successful Fairtrade Fortnight campaign, educating our customers and increasing awareness on why action is needed. We also supported Fairtrade Foundation’s “Brew It Fair” campaign, asking MPs to pledge their support.

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CASE
STUDY



Cocoa Productivity Improvement Programme

At Co-op, we're proud of our legacy in pioneering Fairtrade cocoa in the UK. We were the first UK supermarket to sell own-brand Fairtrade chocolate in 2000, and in 2017 we became the first UK retailer to source all our cocoa on Fairtrade terms. This means every cocoa ingredient in our products - from the chocolate sprinkles on our doughnuts, to our own-brand hot chocolate and Easter Eggs - supports Fairtrade cocoa farmers. In 2024, our commitment generated £465,987 in Fairtrade Premium for cocoa farmers across West Africa, Central and South America. However, we also recognise that farmers need additional support to strengthen resilience and secure sustainable livelihoods.

In response, and in collaboration with the CLAC, Fairtrade Foundation and our supplier ICAM, we launched a programme to support two key co-operatives within our cocoa supply chain in Peru,

producing the cocoa used in our Irresistible single origin chocolate bar range.

- Cuencas Del Huallaga Association of Agricultural Producers.
- Cooperativa Agraria Sonomoro del VRAEM Ltd.

This two-year project aims to reach at least 1,100 farmers and address the significant needs of cocoa producers in Peru, focusing on sustainable cocoa cultivation and ensuring that cocoa co-operatives involved can supply EUDR-compliant cocoa to the UK and EU. Through hands-on training and workshops, the programme will work with farmers and workers to improve soil fertility, enhance productivity, increase the use of natural fertilisers and reduce incidence of pests and diseases. CLAC will also be providing deforestation training, georeferencing and risk assessment support.

- Advocating for global Justice: Since 2021, we have led the call for climate justice, advocating for farmer-focused climate action. In 2025, we co-signed the Statement on Gaza from Fairtrade Leaders alongside other Fairtrade organisations, calling for urgent humanitarian access and the safeguarding of farmers and workers whose livelihoods have been disrupted by the conflict. This forms part of our wider commitment to Fairtrade communities across our supply chains and to uphold peace and co-operation.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE FUTURE

In 2026, we will begin implementing our five-year strategy focusing on strengthening farmer and worker resilience, and deepening our impact across priority Fairtrade supply chains, while maintaining our industry-leading [Core 7 Fairtrade ingredient approach](#).

Advocacy for farmers and workers will remain central to our approach - building on our partnerships and leveraging our voice to promote Fairtrade, better labour standards and more resilient livelihoods across our supply chains. Together, these steps will guide our efforts to deliver long-term, sustainable change for farmers and workers, and their communities.