

Fyffes Human Rights Impact Assessment & Mitigation Plan



Who is Fyffes?

Fyffes is a global business, supplying tropical produce for over 130 years. With over 5,400 permanent employees and between 11,000 and 16,500 seasonal workers across 15 countries, they aim to nurture their growers and serve each link in the chain: production, procurement, shipping, ripening, distribution, and marketing. This approach has earned Fyffes leadership across multiple markets, including being the largest banana importer in Europe and the number one offshore importer of melons in North America. Fyffes supplies to a number of major supermarkets in the UK and US.

Summary

As part of their ongoing commitment to respect human rights, Fyffes completed their first ever corporate-wide Human Rights Impact Assessment (HRIA) in the second half of 2019 and published it in 2020. Business for Social Responsibility (BSR) conducted the assessment using the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights as a basis, including an in-depth analysis of five countries (Belize, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, and Honduras) and highlighting the 13 most relevant human rights risks for Fyffes. In response to the HRIA findings, they have developed and endorsed a Prevention and Mitigation Plan which provides a framework to manage, mitigate and help resolve identified human rights risks.

What prompted the action?

Fyffes wanted to have a picture of what its salient human rights risks were and also an evaluation of how the company was managing these risks. Following a series of stakeholder trust issues in their management of ethical issues, the company needed to take a proactive approach in dealing with human rights issues.



Understanding impacts & risks

Human rights impact assessment

Fyffes partnered with Business for Social Responsibility (BSR) to conduct the Human Rights Impact Assessment and the methodology consisted of four main phases: (1) Scoping, (2) Mapping, (3) Prioritisation, and (4) Management Review and Recommendations. BSR used information provided by Fyffes, as well as employee and stakeholder interviews and desktop research.

The Assessment highlights the 13 most relevant/salient human rights risks for Fyffes, which reflect the challenges and realities of where they do business but also how they are managing or mitigating their response to those challenges.

The diagram below lists Fyffes' 13 salient risks, the risk level and the Company's level of management for each risk. This diagram represents the company's assessment in 2021, which was based on the BSR original baseline assessment and updated with the results of an internal Human Rights impact assessment, described under 'Moving Forward' on the next page.

RISK	RESIDUAL RISKS	COMPANY MANAGEMENT			
		NONE	LITTLE	GOOD	STRONG
Migrant workers labour violations	Medium			Good	
Child labour	Low		Little	Good	
Gender discrimination and gender-based violence	Medium			Good	
Freedom of association and right to CB	Medium			Good	
Workplace discrimination	Low		Little		
Health and safety	Medium			Good	Strong
Working hours, wages and benefits	Medium			Good	
Security threats	High	None	Little		
Access to grievance mechanism	Medium		Little		
Communities' environment and health	Medium		Little	Good	
Land rights	Low		Little		
Right to livelihood	Medium		Little	Good	
Food safety and consumer health	Low				Strong

● High ● Medium ● Low ▬ 2020 ▬ 2021

Taking action

Human rights prevention & mitigation plan

In response to the HRIA findings, Fyffes Global Sustainability Steering Committee endorsed a Human Rights Prevention and Mitigation Plan which provides a framework to manage, mitigate and help resolve identified human rights risks. Three priority areas emerged from the report where they have taken immediate action:

- (1) access to a grievance mechanism
- (2) child labour
- (3) migrant workers labour violations and forced labour

Fyffes Human Rights Prevention and Mitigation Plan aims to improve the management of its salient human right risks, including to:

- Establish and circulate Fyffes Global Child Labour Remediation Protocol
- Continue to engage with existing trade unions and workers committees in good faith and train all managers on freedom of association
- Implement Fyffes Gender Equality Programme, targets, and gender-related training in collaboration with third-party partners such as Bananalink and BSR
- Provide training on security and community programmes to reduce security threats
- Conduct community needs assessments to identify environment and health-related issues and solutions
- Facilitate capacity-building in smallholder and own farm climate resilience (in collaboration with Co-op, Fairtrade and CLAC (Latin American and Caribbean Network of Fairtrade Small Producers and Workers))
- Continue to engage with and support the Living Wage initiative (in collaboration with IDH (The Sustainable Trade Initiative), Rainforest Alliance and customers)
- Extend grievance mechanism to suppliers and communities; increase worker training and awareness of the Fyffes Ethics Hotline
- Partner with non-governmental organisations to reduce Haitian migrant worker vulnerability in the Dominican Republic (in collaboration with Fairtrade and the Roundtable for migrant workers in the DR).

“Fyffes is leading the way by bringing forward a deep knowledge of its salient human rights risks and has established a detailed action plan to mitigate residual risks and prevent human rights violations related to its activities.”

– Jenny Vaughan, Human Rights Director at BSR

Taking action

Human Rights Policy

Fyffes also published their [Global Human Rights Policy and Statement in 2020](#), setting out their commitment to protecting the human rights of all their stakeholders, including our employees and workers and temporary workers in their supply chains

Gender equality

- Fyffes has targets of 100% of their own sites in Latin America to benefit from Gender Equality Programmes by 2025 and 50% of suppliers by 2030.
- BSR developed a digital training tool called ‘HERessentials’, with IDH and Lidl UK (a Fyffes customer) as founding partners. The training covers various topics with a gender lens including hygiene and health, family planning and health, how to manage money, stress management and building harmonious relationships. Fyffes adapted this digital training tool for workers and for managers, to be appropriate for the Latin American region, both in terms of language and culture. In 2021, they began the roll out in Costa Rica, Belize, Ecuador and Honduras and at the end of December 2021, a total of 148 employees had been trained.
- Fyffes has partnered with [Bananalink](#), [Tesco](#), the Cultural Research and Support Centre (CIAC) and Sindicato Único de Trabajadores y Productores de Banano de Montecristi (SIUTRAPBAM) on a six month women’s empowerment and leadership training in the banana industry in the Dominican Republic. It is an initiative designed to empower rural women in banana exporting areas and increase their participation in the leadership of workers’ and producers’ organisations.

Grievance mechanism

- In April 2019 Fyffes had implemented a global, independent grievance mechanism, available in the language of their employees via telephone or online.
- As part of the mitigation plan, they agreed to run a broader campaign internally to make sure all employees are aware of the hotline. They also tested the numbers in all their markets and changed the numbers in three countries where the phone operator network was unstable.



Site level risk assessments and training

Fyffes has developed a tool to evaluate human rights risks at site level, as part of their ongoing internal processes. They provided interactive training to the management teams in all their sites to help them conduct local assessments with the assistance of their partner AED (Alianza Empresarial para el Desarrollo). Additional support was provided by their sustainability and compliance teams who were extensively trained on human rights and the new due diligence tool in 2020. A total of 170 employees from the human resources, compliance and management teams of their farms, ripening centres and suppliers have been trained so far. Fyffes has a target to train 100% of their workers and supply chain on human rights by 2030, 100% of managers and employees by 2025.

Moving forward

Updating the assessment and plan

In 2021, Fyffes completed an internal annual update of their HRIA, which included checking the identified impacts and risks against information they held internally, namely the results of the site level risk assessments, open non-compliances from SMETA audits (Sedex Members Ethical Trade Audit) and also complaints lodged through the Fyffes Ethics Hotline. The updated assessment is summarised in the diagram on the previous page. Their updated report was published in early 2022 along with a detailed update of the progress made on their original Human Rights Prevention and Mitigation Plan and new actions to be taken to continue to improve their approach. In some areas, they have made progress and their risk level has decreased. For example, completing the roll-out of their Child Labour Policy and Remediation Protocol. In other areas, they made progress with the action plan but have not completed the projects sufficiently in order to yet see an impact. They have also identified additional areas of improvements required and agreed to modify the risk level to reflect that in some instances (eg: Health and Safety).

Community engagement

A key learning for Fyffes has been the importance of including employees and communities in their due diligence process. In July and August 2021, they completed a community needs assessment in Honduras where a total of 900 community members, employees and non-employees, were interviewed by independent consultants. Community members were surveyed on their economic, environmental and social concerns, as well as how Fyffes subsidiary SOL impacts them. The purpose of the community needs assessment is to inform their approach to community engagement and investment in the region, as well as to inform their local environmental and labour policies and practices in order to mitigate any salient human rights concerns and prevent any negative impacts on the environment and health of Fyffes neighbouring communities.

As part of this ongoing engagement plan, Fyffes are now in the process of completing such community needs assessments and surveys in the other countries where they operate, to ensure relevant stakeholders are consulted and engaged, concerns and interests are acknowledged and perspectives can be used to shape further action and other potential collaborative projects to mitigate key risks.

What makes this a leadership approach?*

Proactivity

Fyffes is the first of its peer companies to conduct a full human rights due diligence assessment into its own operations and supply chain. Although the European Commission is currently considering mandatory human rights due diligence for all large companies with an EU footprint, Fyffes took a proactive approach and will already have published its third human rights impact assessment before the legislation is enacted.

Ownership

It’s important to be aware of the realities of the challenges faced in global sourcing regions, in order to be able to move forward in making improvements. This takes courage to look at the risks and potential issues and not ignore them.

Partnership

One of the UN Sustainable Development Goals that Fyffes emphasises is UN SDG17 ‘Partnership for the Goals’. Fyffes collaborates with customers, non-governmental organisations and not-for-profits on the delivery of its sustainability targets and human rights mitigation actions.

Lessons learnt

- Local community engagement is of central importance to get an accurate picture of issues, impact and needs.
- In many situations, partnership with other companies and NGOs in collaborative projects means that more impact and improvement can be leveraged, especially where issues are widespread/endemic in a country or product’s supply chain.
- The risks associated with human rights are not static and so the approach to human rights due diligence needs to be ongoing, regularly updated and adapted to mitigate the risks.

* Key behaviours that Co-op champion are proactivity, ownership and partnership. Click [here](#) to learn more about Co-op’s supplier engagement programme. Co-op’s ‘Supplier’s Guide to Ethical Trade’ sets out the standards suppliers are expected to meet.