



NKG Verified Partner Guidance on Human Rights

April 2026 – Version 1.0



1 About this Guidance

This NKG Verified Partner Guidance on human rights is intended for NKG Verified partners, including producers (smallholders and estates), farmer groups, workers (permanent and temporary), and independent operators involved in the production, processing, or handling of coffee within the NKG Verified value chain. It supports the understanding and implementation of the NKG Verified Sustainability Criteria relating to human rights in practice by providing practical guidance on how the requirements can be applied in daily operations.

The guidance is designed to be applicable across different origins and operating contexts. It recognizes that implementation may differ depending on the role, size, and local context of the supply chain partner, while the underlying expectations of NKG Verified remain the same.

This document is a guidance document on NKG Verified Sustainability Criteria related to human rights. It does not cover the full set of criteria, nor does it replace, amend, or restate the NKG Verified Sustainability Criteria or introduce additional requirements. In case of inconsistencies, the NKG Verified Sustainability Criteria prevail. The full list of NKG Verified Sustainability Criteria can be found on our website at [Responsibly Sourced Coffees - Neumann Kaffee Gruppe \(NKG\)](#).

2 Relationship to NKG Verified Sustainability Criteria

The NKG Verified Sustainability Criteria (in the following “Sustainability Criteria”) define the requirements that are assessed as part of the verification process, including critical and improvement criteria across social, environmental, and economic topics. Critical criteria must be met to become part of NKG Verified. This guidance complements the Sustainability Criteria by explaining how relevant requirements can be implemented in practice and how common risks may be addressed.

Each thematic chapter in this document focuses on a specific human rights topic covered by the Sustainability Criteria and provides practical guidance, examples, and clarification to support consistent implementation.

3 Guidance and Expectations

Under NKG Verified, partners are expected to engage actively with the requirements of the NKG Verified Sustainability Criteria and to apply them in their day-to-day operations.

This includes understanding their own rights and responsibilities when participating in the NKG Verified supply chain. Partners are expected to implement the Sustainability Criteria in a manner that is appropriate to their role, scale, and local operating context, while meeting the underlying expectations of NKG Verified. Where requirements or expectations are unclear, partners are encouraged to seek clarification from the NKG exporter at an early stage, in order to address questions and challenges in a timely manner.

Partners are also expected to use available grievance mechanisms to raise concerns, complaints, or suggestions related to NKG Verified, and to work collaboratively on improvement actions or plans agreed with the NKG exporter. This includes supporting verification and monitoring activities by sharing relevant information on progress and improvements and, where applicable, by providing information to the NKG exporter and third-party auditors.

The following sections set out topic-specific guidance and expectations to support consistent implementation of the Sustainability Criteria across NKG Verified supply chains.

3.1 Right to Childhood

Protecting children’s rights and supporting their healthy development is a core expectation of NKG Verified. Coffee production often takes place in family-based and rural settings, where children may be present or help with certain tasks. NKG Verified therefore distinguishes clearly between unacceptable child labor and acceptable activities, while placing strong emphasis on children’s safety, wellbeing, and access to education. To support the right to childhood, NKG Verified partners should be aware of the ages of children present on their farms or in their operations and understand which tasks are appropriate and which are not.

The following guidance explains what partners are expected to do in practice to meet the NKG Verified requirements related to the Right to Childhood.

| Sustainability Criteria | Guidance |
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| <p>No Worst Forms of Child Labor</p> <p><i>This is a critical criterion. Compliance is mandatory to participate in NKG Verified.</i></p> | <p>Children and young people under the age of 18 must not be engaged in work that could harm their health, safety, or morals. This includes any work that is dangerous, hazardous, or inappropriate for a child’s age.</p> <p>In practice, this means that children must never carry out tasks that expose them to serious risks, such as handling chemicals or pesticides, working with dangerous machinery or sharp tools, carrying heavy loads, working at dangerous heights, or being exposed to extreme heat. Work at night or for long hours that could affect a child’s physical or mental wellbeing is also not acceptable.</p> <p>NKG Verified partners should pay particular attention during busy periods such as harvest time, when additional help may be needed. Even during these periods, children must not be involved in hazardous or harmful activities. If children are present on farms or processing sites, partners should ensure that they are kept away from dangerous work areas and equipment.</p> |
| <p>No Child Labor</p> <p><i>This is a critical criterion. Compliance is mandatory to participate in NKG Verified.</i></p> | <p>Children’s participation in work is only acceptable under very limited conditions. In NKG Verified, children below the age of 15 may only take part in light family work, and only outside of school hours. Where applicable, partners are expected to follow any higher minimum working age requirements set out in local legislation.</p> <p>Light family work refers to simple tasks that are part of family life and do not harm the child’s health or development. Such activities must be appropriate to the child’s age and must not involve hazardous work. Importantly, this work must never interfere with the child’s ability to attend school, rest, or take part in normal childhood activities.</p> <p>Partners should be aware that employing children under the age of 15 as workers, whether paid or unpaid, is not allowed. Children should not be hired to work on farms, in processing facilities, or in other parts of the coffee supply chain. Where family members help occasionally, partners should ensure that this remains limited, safe, and appropriate, and that local laws on minimum working age and working hours are respected.</p> |
| <p>School Attendance</p> <p><i>This is a critical criterion. Compliance is mandatory to</i></p> | <p>Education is essential for children’s development and future opportunities. Children under the age of 15, or under the legal school leaving age as defined by national law, must attend compulsory school.</p> <p>NKG Verified partners are expected to ensure that children are not prevented from going to school because of work. This means that children should not be asked to work during school hours or in a way that makes school attendance difficult, for example due to exhaustion or</p> |

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| <i>participate in NKG Verified.</i> | <p>long travel times.</p> <p>In practice, partners should be attentive to school calendars and daily schedules in their local context and ensure that any acceptable family activities take place outside of school hours. Where challenges exist, such as limited access to schools or seasonal pressures, partners are encouraged to discuss these openly with the NKG exporter to find appropriate solutions.</p> |
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3.2 No forced labor

All work within NKG Verified supply chains must be voluntary. Forced labor occurs when a person is made to work against their will through pressure, threats, coercion, or abuse of power. This can happen in different ways and is not always obvious. NKG Verified therefore places strong emphasis on ensuring that workers are free to choose their work and can leave employment without penalty.

To prevent forced labor, partners should ensure that employment relationships are based on free choice, transparency, and respect, that workers are treated fairly and with dignity, and are free to leave employment. Open communication, clear agreements, and respectful treatment help reduce risks and misunderstandings.

| Sustainability Criteria | Guidance |
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| <p>No Forced Labor</p> <p><i>This is a critical criterion. Compliance is mandatory to participate in NKG Verified.</i></p> | <p>Workers must not be forced to work through physical, psychological, or financial pressure. This means that workers must be free to accept or refuse work and must be able to leave their job after giving reasonable notice, in line with local law or agreed conditions.</p> <p>In practice, this means that workers must not be threatened, intimidated, or punished for refusing work or for leaving employment. Workers must not be confined to the workplace or to employer-provided housing, and their movement must not be restricted. Any form of violence, harassment, or abuse to make someone work is strictly unacceptable.</p> <p>Partners should pay particular attention to situations where workers depend heavily on the employer, such as seasonal workers, migrant workers, or workers living on site. In such situations, it is especially important to ensure that work remains voluntary and that workers feel safe to raise concerns.</p> |
| <p>No Debt Bondage</p> <p><i>This is a critical criterion. Compliance is mandatory to participate in NKG Verified.</i></p> | <p>Workers must not be forced to work in order to repay debts or advances. While advances or loans may be common in some contexts, they must not be used to trap workers in employment or to prevent them from leaving.</p> <p>In practice, this means that workers should clearly understand any repayment arrangements, and repayments must be reasonable and fair. Workers must not be required to continue working against their will to repay a debt.</p> |
| <p>No Retention of Documents, Salary/Money or other Assets</p> <p><i>This is a critical criterion. Compliance is</i></p> | <p>Partners must ensure that workers keep control of their own identity documents, such as passports, identity cards, or work permits. Documents must not be taken away, withheld, or stored by the employer as a condition of employment. The same applies to wages, savings, or other personal belongings.</p> |

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| <i>mandatory to participate in NKG Verified.</i> | |
| Fair and Transparent Employment Conditions | <p>Workers should understand the terms and conditions of their employment. This includes the type of work they will do, their working hours, and how and when they will be paid. Conditions should be explained in a language and manner that workers can understand.</p> <p>Employment agreements should be documented in writing, and oral agreements are only acceptable where this is permitted under applicable national law.</p> <p>Changes to working conditions should not be imposed without the worker’s knowledge or agreement. Partners should avoid informal practices that could create pressure on workers, such as unclear payment arrangements or sudden changes in tasks or hours that workers cannot reasonably refuse.</p> |

3.3 Decent Work

Decent work means that workers are treated fairly and with dignity and that working and living conditions meet basic standards. NKG Verified expects partners to provide fair and transparent working conditions, prevent discrimination, violence and harassment, and ensure that workers have access to essential needs such as drinking water, sanitation, and, where provided, adequate housing. Partners should communicate working conditions clearly, pay wages on time, and create a workplace where concerns can be raised safely.

The following guidance explains what partners are expected to do in practice to meet the NKG Verified requirements related to Decent Work.

| Sustainability Criteria | Guidance |
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| Equal treatment | <p>In NKG Verified, partners are expected to treat all workers equally and with respect. Decisions on hiring, tasks, pay, benefits, access to training, and promotion should be based on objective work-related criteria and must not be influenced by personal characteristics or social group membership.</p> <p>In practice, partners should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use clear, consistent criteria for hiring, task allocation and promotion (e.g., skills, experience, availability) and apply them in the same way for all workers. • Communicate wages and piece rates in advance and ensure equal pay for equal work (same rate for the same task and output, regardless of gender, ethnicity, nationality, religion, or other status). • Ensure that access to benefits and services is fair (e.g., drinking water, toilets, PPE, tools, transport, meals, and housing where provided), including for seasonal and temporary workers. • Prevent discrimination by supervisors and labor contractors: provide a simple briefing at the start of the season on respectful behavior and non-discrimination, and address inappropriate language or unequal treatment immediately. • Keep basic records where feasible (e.g., worker lists, tasks, hours/days, and wages paid) to help demonstrate that decisions and pay are applied consistently. |

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| <p>Freedom from Violence and Harassment</p> | <p>NKG Verified partners should create a workplace that is safe and respectful. Workers must be free from any form of violence, harassment, intimidation, bullying, or abusive treatment, including gender-based violence and harassment (such as unwanted touching, sexual comments, coercion, or threats).</p> <p>NKG Verified partners should pay particular attention to higher-risk situations, such as isolated work areas, commuting to and from the farm, shared accommodation, and late working hours.</p> |
| <p>Minimum Wage</p> | <p>NKG Verified expects that all workers are paid at least the applicable national minimum wage and/or sector agreement wage, including seasonal and piece rate workers (temporary and permanent workers).</p> <p>Where workers are paid per kilogram, bag, or task, the piece rate must be set so that a worker performing at an average pace can earn at least the minimum wage for the hours worked.</p> <p>NKG Verified partners are expected to know the legal minimum wage and any sector agreements that apply in your location and update pay rates when these change.</p> <p>For piece rate work, agree the rate in advance, explain it clearly to workers, and check regularly that typical daily earnings meet or exceed the minimum wage (taking into account realistic yields, weather conditions, and field conditions).</p> <p>Pay wages on time and provide workers with a clear explanation of how pay was calculated (hours/days worked, piece rate quantity, and any lawful deductions).</p> <p>Beyond legal compliance, NKG Verified expects partners to work towards closing the gap to a living wage over time. This can include planning gradual wage improvements, increasing wage rates where possible, improving productivity in ways that do not increase working hours or risks, and discussing improvement options with the NKG exporter.</p> |
| <p>Working Hours</p> | <p>Working hours should be reasonable and in line with national law. Regular working hours must not exceed 48 hours per week, or less where national law provides a lower limit.</p> <p>Overtime must be voluntary and based on the worker’s consent, and it must be paid at the applicable overtime rate according to national law. Required overtime should only occur under extraordinary conditions (for example, during peak harvest season, unexpected weather events, time-critical harvest or processing needs) and only where it is allowed by law and agreed and/or negotiated through a Collective Bargaining Agreement (where applicable).</p> <p>Workers must have adequate rest. Partners should ensure that workers receive at least one free day after six consecutive days worked, as well as access to public holidays and annual leave in line with national law and applicable agreements.</p> <p>To meet this criterion, partners should plan labor needs in advance for peak periods, rotate tasks and teams to avoid excessive daily hours, and agree working hours and rest days clearly before work starts (including for seasonal workers). Where piece rate arrangements are used, partners should ensure that productivity expectations do not indirectly push working hours beyond legal limits.</p> |
| <p>Adequate Housing</p> | <p>Where partners provide housing to workers, this housing should be clean and safe, meeting workers’ basic needs and dignity.</p> |

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| | <p>Housing should provide adequate shelter from rain, wind, cold/heat, and pests, and it must not expose workers to hazards, pollution, or unsafe structures.</p> <p>In practice, partners should</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use appropriate construction materials and keep structures stable and weatherproof (roof, walls, and floor in good condition, e.g., no major holes or leaks). • Maintain basic cleanliness and hygiene in sleeping areas and common areas. • Provide adequate sleeping space, ventilation, and lighting, and avoid overcrowding so workers can rest properly. • Ensure the housing area is safe from common hazards (for example, exposed wiring, unsafe fuel storage, or proximity to pesticide storage or other pollution sources). • Support basic privacy and dignity, especially where housing is shared (for example, separate sleeping arrangements and clear rules for respectful conduct). • Keep housing in good repair throughout the season and address issues promptly (e.g., leaks, broken doors/windows, pest infestations). |
| <p>Drinking Water</p> | <p>Workers should have access to potable drinking water during working hours, including in the field where work is carried out. Farmers and their families should also have access to safe drinking water at home.</p> <p>Drinking water is considered potable when it is clean and suitable to drink, meaning it is not contaminated (for example by human or animal waste, chemicals, pesticides, fuel, or other pollutants) and does not cause illness when consumed.</p> <p>In practice, partners should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide enough drinking water for the working day and make it easy to access (e.g., water points at the farm/processing site and safe containers carried to more remote plots). • Use clean, food-grade containers with lids, keep them in the shade where possible, and clean/refill them regularly to prevent contamination. • Keep drinking water and containers away from pesticide storage, chemical mixing areas, fuel, and waste, and never reuse chemical containers for water. • Where the water source may be unsafe, take appropriate measures to make it safe (for example, boiling, filtration, chlorination, or use of treated/community water sources, depending on local context). • Encourage good hygiene practices, including handwashing before handling drinking water and using clean cups where shared cups are used. <p>For farmers and their families at home (where access to safe water is currently limited), practical steps can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the safest available source for drinking water (e.g., protected spring/well or treated/community water) and avoid collection points that are close to latrines, livestock areas, chemical storage, or visible pollution. • Store water in clean, food-grade containers with lids (do not use pesticide/chemical containers), keep containers off the ground and covered, and clean them regularly. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treat drinking water when there is a risk of contamination (e.g., boiling, filtration, or chlorination using locally approved products and correct dosing). • Reduce contamination risks around the household and water source: keep animals away where possible, manage waste safely, and store fuel and agrochemicals separately and away from water. • Where safe water cannot be ensured immediately, raise the need with the farmer group/cooperative or NKG exporter to explore practical support (e.g., shared protected water points, bulk purchase of filters/chlorine, or interim delivery during dry periods). |
| <p>Access to Facilities</p> | <p>Workers should have access to clean and accessible toilets and handwashing facilities. Facilities should be usable in practice (not locked, too far away, or unsafe to reach), provide basic privacy and dignity, and support good hygiene.</p> <p>In practice, partners should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep toilets clean, functional, and maintained (e.g., doors that close, no major leaks, safe flooring), with a clear routine for cleaning. • Provide handwashing facilities near toilets (and where relevant near eating areas), with water and soap. Where soap is not available, provide an effective alternative (e.g., coffee grounds, ash from clean and non-toxic sources, salt, sand) and promote thorough handwashing. • Manage wastewater and waste in a hygienic way so it does not contaminate water sources or living/working areas. • Where workers of different genders are present, provide appropriate privacy and separate facilities or arrangements that ensure dignity and safety. |

3.4 Occupational Health and Safety

Coffee farming and processing can involve hazards such as sharp tools, heavy loads, machinery, vehicles, heat and sun exposure, and the handling of agrochemicals. NKG Verified partners are therefore expected to identify the main risks in their operations and take practical measures to prevent accidents, injuries, and illness, including by providing appropriate protective equipment and ensuring that workers understand and follow safe working procedures. Particular attention should be paid to vulnerable groups, including but not limited to younger workers, seasonal and temporary workers, who may be less familiar with tasks and risks.

| Sustainability Criteria | Guidance |
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| <p>Occupational Health and Safety</p> | <p>Working conditions are expected to be safe and not impair workers' health. Procedures to identify and minimize risks (e.g., in relation to pesticides, machinery and heavy loads) should be known by farmers, supervisors, and workers, implemented in daily operations, and supported with appropriate equipment.</p> <p>In practice, partners and workers should:</p> |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the main safety hazards on the farm and in processing (e.g., sharp tools, machinery, lifting and carrying, working on slopes, heat and sun exposure, vehicles, and agrochemicals) and agree simple rules for safe work. • Organize work to reduce risks (e.g., safe lifting practices, task rotation to reduce repetitive strain, shade and water breaks, and safe transport arrangements). • Use suitable personal protective equipment (PPE) for the tasks performed (e.g., gloves, boots, eye protection, masks/respirators, protective clothing) and replace damaged PPE. • Handle agrochemicals safely: follow label instructions, keep chemicals in original containers, store them securely away from living areas and water sources, and ensure only trained persons mix and apply them. • Keep tools, machines, and equipment in safe working condition (e.g., guards in place, maintained pulpers/dryers, safe electrical wiring) and do not allow unsafe improvisations. • Provide access to basic first aid and ensure someone on site knows how to respond to common incidents (cuts, falls, heat stress, and chemical exposure). Have emergency contact information available. <p>Partners should encourage workers to report hazards, near-misses, and injuries and ensure concerns can be raised without retaliation.</p> <p>Workers should be trained regularly on Occupational Health and Safety practices, so they understand the procedures and how to use equipment safely. NKG Verified expects OHS training at least once per year. Additional brief instructions should be given for seasonal and temporary workers at the start of employment and whenever new tasks, machinery, or chemicals are introduced.</p> |
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3.5 Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining

NKG Verified recognizes that respect for freedom of association and collective bargaining are important human rights. Workers and producers should be able to organize, choose representatives, and engage in dialogue about working conditions without fear of discrimination, intimidation, or retaliation. Where local law restricts these rights, partners are expected to enable alternative forms of worker representation and consultation.

| Sustainability Criteria | Guidance |
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| Freedom of Association | <p>In NKG Verified, producers and workers should be free to form and join independent organizations of their choice to protect their interests. This can include federations, associations, farmer groups, cooperatives, trade unions, and other worker organizations, where these exist in the local context.</p> <p>Employers should respect this freedom in practice by allowing workers and producers to meet, elect representatives, and communicate with their organizations without interference.</p> <p>Worker and producer representatives should have reasonable access to the information and resources they need to carry out their functions (for example, being able to share information with members, access relevant workplace policies and agreements that affect them, and have</p> |

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| | <p>a suitable time and place to discuss issues).</p> <p>Representatives and members must not be discriminated against or face adverse actions because of their membership, activities, or roles (for example, dismissal, reduced hours, exclusion from work opportunities, intimidation, or threats).</p> <p>In NKG Verified, partners are expected to handle disagreements through respectful dialogue and to ensure that raising concerns collectively does not lead to retaliation.</p> |
| Collective Bargaining | <p>Employers and authorized workers' representatives should engage in regular, constructive consultations on matters that affect workers. This includes working conditions, remuneration, dispute resolution, internal relations, and other issues of mutual concern.</p> <p>Partners should support meaningful dialogue by recognizing legitimate representatives chosen by workers, sharing relevant information in an understandable way, and allowing reasonable time and space for representatives to consult with workers. Consultations and negotiations should be conducted in good faith and without intimidation, interference, or retaliation.</p> <p>Where collective bargaining takes place and agreements are reached, partners are expected to apply the results consistently to all workers covered by the agreement. This includes ensuring that agreed wage rates, working hours, benefits, and dispute resolution arrangements are implemented in practice, including for seasonal and temporary workers where they fall within the scope of the agreement.</p> |

3.6 Business Integrity

NKG Verified expects partners to comply with applicable laws, act transparently, and avoid corruption, fraud, and unethical business practices in their operations and business relationships. Strong integrity practices also support respect for human rights by helping prevent abuse of power, illegal land acquisition, and other forms of misconduct.

| Sustainability Criteria | Guidance |
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| Regulatory Requirements | <p>NKG Verified expects producers to comply with relevant legal and regulatory requirements in their area of operation. This includes permits and rules that apply to coffee farming and processing, and it includes having a legitimate right to use the land where coffee is produced or processed.</p> <p>Producers should have legal or customary rights to the land (and, where relevant, water) that are consistent with national law and local practice. This can include ownership/title, recognized customary tenure, lease or rental agreements, community allocations, or other government or customary permissions that establish a legitimate right to use the land.</p> <p>Land and water rights acquisition must be carried out with free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) of affected people who have legal land use rights, including those who claim traditional land use rights, especially indigenous peoples. In practice this means that land or water use must not be expanded or changed in a way that displaces, restricts access, or creates harm for communities without a process that is voluntary (free of coercion), happens before decisions are finalized (prior), is based on full information (informed), and reflects genuine agreement (consent).</p> |

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| | <p>In practice, partners should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand what legal permits, registrations, and local rules apply to the farm or processing site and keep these up to date. • Clarify and document the basis on which the land is used (e.g., title, lease/rental, community permission, or customary rights recognized locally) and ensure agreements are understood by the parties involved. • Before acquiring, leasing, expanding, or changing land or water use, engage early with affected neighbors and communities, share relevant information in an understandable way, and allow time for questions and internal community decision-making. • Respect the rights of indigenous peoples and traditional users, including seasonal or shared use (e.g., access paths, water points, grazing, forest use), and avoid actions that restrict access without agreement. • Where land disputes exist, do not use violence, threats, or intimidation. Seek documented, good-faith remediation or conflict resolution processes and only proceed where affected parties accept the resolution. <p>Actions should be proportionate to local context and size of (planned) acquisitions. NKG Verified recognizes that in some origins land and property rights are weakly governed and documentation may be limited. In such contexts, partners are still expected to act responsibly, avoid land grabbing and respect customary and traditional rights.</p> |
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4 Due diligence, monitoring, and response

NKG applies a risk based human rights due diligence (HRDD) approach across its supply chains, in line with internationally recognized standards. This approach is designed to identify, prevent, mitigate, and, where necessary, remediate adverse human rights impacts linked to NKG’s business activities and relationships. NKG Verified represents an important element of NKG’s overall HRDD approach. Through NKG Verified, NKG is able to engage directly with suppliers and farmers, define clear sustainability requirements, assess compliance against these requirements, and support continuous improvement over time. While HRDD at NKG extends beyond any single tool or program, NKG Verified plays a key role in translating human rights expectations into practice at farm and supply chain level.

4.1 Prevention and continuous improvement

Prevention of adverse human rights impacts is a key objective of NKG’s engagement with partners under NKG Verified. Within NKG Verified supply chains, prevention is supported through clearly defined Sustainability Criteria, regular interaction with suppliers and producers, and the expectation that risks are identified and addressed at an early stage. Partners are expected to take appropriate measures to prevent human rights risks relevant to their operations and supply chains, including through adequate management systems, awareness raising, and responsible business practices.

Continuous improvement is a core principle of NKG Verified. Where gaps are identified, partners are expected to work on corrective actions and improvements over time, rather than focusing solely on short term compliance.

4.2 Monitoring and audits

Monitoring of human rights performance within NKG Verified is carried out through regular sample-based internal and external audits against the applicable Sustainability Criteria. Internal audits take place annually. External audits are conducted every three years. Audits are an important tool to verify implementation, identify risks or non-conformities, and assess progress. The audit results are reviewed and followed up as part of NKG's broader due diligence processes and inform further engagement, support, or escalation where needed.

Internal and external audits are complemented by close relationships between NKG Verified partners and our NKG exporter teams working on the ground. Through regular contact and visits, we know and work with farmers and farmer groups directly, enabling early identification of risks, open discussion of challenges, and practical follow-up on improvement actions.

4.3 Mitigation and remediation

Where risks or non-conformities are identified, mitigation measures are required. These measures are proportionate to the severity and nature of the issue and take into account the partner's role, capacity, and influence. Mitigation may include corrective action plans, changes to practices, targeted support, or enhanced monitoring.

In cases where adverse human rights impacts have occurred, remediation is a key component of NKG's approach. Findings on critical Sustainability Criteria must be remediated within 60 days to become and stay part of NKG Verified. Remediation aims to address harm in a timely and appropriate manner, with a focus on the needs and rights of affected individuals. Depending on the circumstances, remediation may involve corrective actions, restitution, compensation, access to services, or cooperation with relevant authorities or other stakeholders.

5 Grievance mechanisms

Providing the means to raise concerns early and safely is an essential part of respecting human rights and preventing harm. NKG therefore expects suppliers to ensure that workers, farmers, and other affected stakeholders are able to raise concerns or complaints without fear of retaliation, discrimination, or negative consequences. Partners in NKG Verified are encouraged to provide appropriate grievance mechanisms at their own operations and supply chains that are accessible, confidential, and fair. These mechanisms should allow concerns to be raised in good faith and should support timely and appropriate follow-up.

In addition, concerns related to NKG supply chains can be reported directly to NKG through its global grievance mechanism. NKG's Integrity Reporting Platform is available to employees, suppliers, business partners, and other external stakeholders worldwide and can be accessed online at <https://integrity.nkg.net/>.

Reports submitted through NKG's grievance channels are handled in line with NKG's established procedures and applicable legal requirements. All reports are treated with confidentiality and assessed in a fair and impartial manner. Retaliation against individuals who raise concerns in good faith is not tolerated.

Information from grievances is an important source of insight for NKG's human rights due diligence. Reported concerns help identify risks, recurring issues, and areas for improvement, and to inform monitoring activities, engagement with suppliers, as well as continuous improvement efforts across NKG supply chains.

6 Glossary

This glossary provides explanations of key terms used in this guidance. It is included to help readers better understand how these terms are applied in the context of NKG’s human rights expectations and engagement with suppliers.

| Term | Definition |
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| (NKG Verified) Partner | Producers (smallholders and estates), farmer groups, workers (permanent and temporary), and independent operators involved in the production, processing, or handling of coffee within the NKG Verified value chain |
| Supplier (coffee/non-coffee) | Any external party providing goods or services to NKG Group Companies, including coffee and non-coffee suppliers based on the nature of the supplied goods or services as well as NKG Verified partners |
| Smallholder | In NKG Verified, smallholders are farms with 30 ha or less of planted coffee. |
| Estate | In NKG Verified, estates are farms with more than 30 ha of planted coffee. |
| Farmer group | Legalized entities or informal groupings of farmers brought together by an NKG export company which have a defined governance structure and provide extension services to its members. |
| Independent operator | Entities in the NKG Verified supply chain that bulk or process coffee. |
| Temporary workers | In NKG Verified, temporary workers are employees whose expected duration of job is less than a year. |
| Permanent workers | In NKG Verified, permanent workers are employees with paid leave entitlements in jobs or work contracts of unlimited duration, including regular workers whose contract last for 12 months and over. |
| Internal audit | Internal audits are conducted by the NKG exporter annually against the NKG Verified Sustainability Criteria on a square root sample as a minimum. |
| External audit | Third-party audits that are conducted every three years or as supplementary audits against the NKG Verified Sustainability Criteria on a square root sample as a minimum. |