

**Business & Human Rights Resource Centre – Co-op response**  
**April 2023**

The safety and welfare of those who work within our supply chain is a priority and we are taking an active role in working collaboratively with our industry to increase transparency and strengthen due diligence processes to support growers and their workers. We genuinely believe no one should feel unsafe or persecuted in their workplace, or made to work in unreasonable conditions.

To ensure that working conditions meet our standards and are inline with our aims and objectives we have a [Sound Sourcing Code of Conduct](#) which is based on the [Ethical Trading Initiative \(ETI\)](#) Base Code and core international labour standards. Our [Human Rights & Ethical Trade Position Statement](#) shares our approach to protecting the fundamental rights of workers in our supply chains. Our suppliers are required to demonstrate compliance against these Codes and to provide evidence of active and continuous improvement in worker welfare. We are committed to greater transparency in our supply chain and we have published our eight [priority human rights](#) focus areas with includes Spain, shared details of sites we are sourcing from at [tier 1 and beyond](#), disclosed details of how we are managing issues raised in audits through our [Co-operate Report](#) for over 15 years and finally shared details of issues identified through non-audit channels in our [Modern Slavery Statement](#).

Since 2012, Co-op has played a pivotal role in developing supplier-led regional forums in Spain to drive improvements in working conditions which evolved in the [Ethical Trade Forums](#) in 2015. These forums are co-ordinated by a team of specialists in Spain, and they exist with one primary goal; to transform the sector. They provide a safe space for suppliers to share experiences and good practices, openly discuss challenges and work collaboratively to improve working conditions, through collaborative events and joint working groups, underpinned by capacity building. In 2018, the Forums launched working groups across the key sourcing regions of Murcia, Almeria and Huelva with the aim of collaborating with stakeholders in the design of sustainable solutions to the labour challenges of the industry. The Working Groups focus on regional specific issues such as worker accommodation, transport, recruitment of temporary workers, embedding effective workplace communication and grievance mechanisms and traceability of smallholder labour practices. In 2019 we also worked collaboratively with other retailers and Stronger Together to develop a toolkit for suppliers in Spain to reduce the risk of modern slavery.

We know that the most effective way we can drive change and continuous improvements in working conditions in a global supply chain is through a shared responsibility. Co-operation and collaboration between ourselves, our suppliers, key partners and member groups is vital because we know we can't act on our own. It's important to recognise that issues can be systematic and require long-term sustainable improvements to address root causes and drive change. Unfortunately, there is no 'quick fix' but we firmly believe that collective effort will lead to significant and impactful results.