



TRAIDCRAFT
Fighting poverty through trade

POLICY AND PROCEDURE

OPEN INFORMATION POLICY

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Traidcraft Exchange Policy and Procedure

Open Information Policy

Policy Statement

Traidcraft Exchange is committed to being transparent in its work and accountable to its stakeholders. We share information with beneficiaries, partner organisations and the general public, and are also accountable to our staff, supporters and donors.

The information we publish and how we respond to requests for information are important aspects of accountability. We proactively publish a range of information. We will disclose other information on request and will give reasons for any decision not to disclose information (for example, to ensure security and safety, to respect privacy or confidentiality, or to protect our commercial interests).

The key criterion for deciding what to publish is the impact on our mission, to fight poverty through trade.

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1. How to make a request for information

Requests for information can be made in writing to:

Company Secretary
Traidcraft Exchange
Kingsway North
Team Valley Trading Estate
Gateshead
NE11 0NE

or by e-mail to companysecretary@traidcraft.org.uk

2. Timescale for responding to requests for information

We will respond promptly to any request for information. We will aim to respond to any request made to the Company Secretary within 20 days, although there may be times when this is not practical.

3. Freedom of information legislation

Traidcraft Exchange is registered in the UK as a charitable company limited by guarantee (registered in England 3031674 and registered charity number 1048752). However, Traidcraft Exchange is not a public body and so is not subject to the United Kingdom Freedom of Information Act 2000. Nevertheless, we have kept in mind the policy aims behind the Freedom of Information Act, and our general approach is in keeping with the Act's assumption that information should be disclosed unless there is a good reason for withholding it, or the cost of disclosure would be disproportionate.

4. Data protection and privacy legislation

This policy is subject to United Kingdom and European Union data protection and privacy legislation. Accordingly we will not disclose data about living individuals where this is prohibited under applicable law. For more information please see Traidcraft Exchange's Data Protection and Privacy Statement (available here www.traidcraft.org.uk/information).

5. What information we publish

We proactively publish a large amount of information on our website (www.traidcraft.org.uk) and in various other publications (for example, our annual reports). However it is not practical for us to publish all information for reasons of economy.

We also disclose other information on request. However there may be times when we are unable to disclose information. In these cases we will explain our reasons for the decision not to disclose. The most frequent reasons are:

- *Security and safety.* The security and safety of our staff, partner organisations and beneficiaries is a primary concern. We will not disclose information where we consider it could jeopardise our ability to operate or the safety of our staff, our partners and our beneficiaries.
- *Privacy and confidentiality.* Some information is by its nature private to the individuals concerned. Information may also be confidential because of legal, commercial or contractual reasons.

- *Harm to commercial or charitable operations.* There will be occasions where we do not disclose information because we consider that the disclosure could harm our work, whether in UK or in our international operations. An example could be information about a campaign, where a premature disclosure could jeopardise the effectiveness of that campaign.
- *Copyright limitations.* In some cases we do not have the right to disclose information because it is someone else's copyright, and while we have the right to make internal use of it this does not extend to publishing it.
- *Cost.* There will be times when the costs of disclosure, whether in terms of staff time or financial, are disproportionate to the request. We will generally not disclose internal working papers that address future plans or drafts of work, or other information where the costs involved in disclosure is in our view disproportionate.

6. Where we publish information

- *Website (www.traidcraft.org.uk) and other publications.*
A large amount of information is published on our website. Other information is published in other publications (such as our annual development review, annual report, magazines, bulletins etc.)
- *Combined Financial and Social Report*
In order to aid transparency and accountability, we publish an annual combined Financial and Social Report, which show both what we are achieving, our impact on our stakeholders, and what they think about the way we work with them.

We are proud that our sister organisation, Traidcraft plc, was the first public limited company in the UK to publish audited Social Accounts. We believe that this transparency in reporting is an important way of assessing our impact on our stakeholders as well as influencing the way other organisations behave.
- *International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI)*
Traidcraft Exchange is working towards the transparency standards of the International Aid Transparency Initiative (<http://iatistandard.org>). Some data necessary to meet the advanced stages of the standard is not currently captured in our systems. We will review this in the future subject to a cost/benefit analysis.

7. Language and translation

This policy applies primarily to information requests in English addressed to Traidcraft Exchange's head office in the UK. Our staff in our overseas offices may respond to relevant requests for information, but time and resource constraints will not always make it practical to respond, whether providing information or giving reasons for not disclosing.

Most of our information is published in English. The main barrier to producing more information in other languages is cost.

8. How can I use the information that Traidcraft Exchange discloses?

Most of our publications are copyright, but may be reproduced without fee for advocacy, campaigning and non-commercial teaching (but not for resale) as long as you credit Traidcraft Exchange when you use the information. Any request to reproduce copyrighted material should be referred to the Head of Communications at comms@traidcraft.org.uk.

9. Historic information

This policy addresses information which has come into being since 2009. While we will make reasonable efforts to deal with requests for information, it is more likely that we will decide not to disclose historic information.

10. Multiple requests and requests with no discernible public benefit

Where a person makes multiple requests for information, or we consider that the work involved in dealing with the request has no discernible public benefit, we may decide not to spend time in dealing with the request. Such decision will be taken by the head of the relevant department. If any person makes a request in an offensive manner, or has otherwise been abusive to staff, we may decline to engage in correspondence with that person.

11. Appeals and complaints

You may request a review of any decision to withhold information by writing to:

Company Secretary
Traidcraft
Kingsway North
Team Valley Trading Estate
Gateshead
NE11 0NE

or by e-mail to companysecretary@traidcraft.org.uk

As Traidcraft Exchange is not a public body, there is no right of appeal to the Information Commission. If you consider Traidcraft Exchange is acting illegally, you may complain to the Charity Commission of England and Wales (<http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk>).

More information on how to make a complaint to Traidcraft can be found in Traidcraft's Formal Complaints Policy (http://www.traidcraft.co.uk/Resources/Traidcraft/Documents/PDF/General/policies_complaints_policy.pdf).

12. Contractual rights

This policy is not a binding contract and does not confer legal rights on any person. Individuals may however have rights concerning their personal data held by Traidcraft Exchange under applicable law.

If you have any questions, concerns or comments about this policy please write to:

Company Secretary
Traidcraft Exchange
Kingsway North
Team Valley Trading Estate
Gateshead
NE11 0NE

or send an e-mail to companysecretary@traidcraft.org.uk