

FNET Skills Share: Responsible Business Practices; Managing Issues

February 2024



This is a summary of a discussion at the November FNET All Member Day in 2023. The focus of this document is on incidents and responses to crises, conflicts and how members can prepare for, respond to and follow-up in a systematic (and potentially collaborative) way.

Action	Why	How
Pre-incident: Ongoing engagement with a range of colleagues including commercial teams.	<p>Keeps issues on human rights live so when there are crises, or NGO reports to respond to, the organisation is already aware of some of the issues. Ongoing communication helps to activate opportunities for influencing purchasing practices.</p> <p>Often buyers may own commercial relationships where issues may have occurred, so they need to understand the context.</p>	<p>Maintain good and regular communication across teams, and take opportunities to share work in cross-team meetings.</p> <p>Use follow-up after an incident to create regular opportunities for communication.</p> <p>Use stories to help people connect to the issues.</p>
Pre-incident tools: Conduct supplier mapping & create response scenario templates	Collect geographical data to show locations of farms and businesses. This will help if you are trying to assess whether your supply chain is involved in incidents such as conflict and extreme weather events.	<p>Open Supply Hub is useful mapping tool that is used by service sector as well. https://opensupplyhub.org/</p> <p>Create a standardised response checklist for different scenarios – this could be based on an existing Health & Safety decision tree.</p>
During incident: Communicate internally.	It is not always known who within the company might be affected by an issue/conflict, so transparency across teams is key to explain the issue and response.	<p>Engage everyone in business, commercial, procurement with contingency plans.</p> <p>Use regular meetings to share info on issue to explain what's going on and any company action taken.</p>
During incident: Timely and appropriate communication with the customer and across the supply chain	<p>Customers and suppliers may be affected by the incident and may want to understand impact and what action is being taken.</p> <p>Sometimes issues can be about timing or processes that are unaligned e.g. policy change and good communication can create opportunities for flexibility on closing reported issues.</p> <p>Gain clarity in complex supply chains to determine whether any operations, customers, suppliers and workers are affected.</p>	<p>Work with people on the ground – growers and workers who are directly involved to ensure frameworks are correct and joined-up.</p> <p>Use standardised format for suppliers to complete to understand detail of incident and keep information brief and concise, with the opportunity to add more information as needed.</p> <p>Agree on level/timeline of communication required. Can be iterative process.</p> <p>Engage third parties where required to help support issue resolution.</p> <p>AI can potentially be used to summarise reports that might implicate supply chain.</p>

FNET Skills Share: Responsible Business Practices; Managing Issues February 2024

Action	Why	How
During incident: Collaborate with other companies	Different approaches on same issue with suppliers may lead to confusion and businesses completing multiple forms on the same issue.	Liaise with FNET and other relevant networks to harmonise action wherever possible. Participation in a range of networks can also lead to confusion, so essential for networks to respond quickly and agree standardised approach.
During incident: Assess the impact of action before you take any.	Action may have unintended impacts, so consider all actions carefully.	Conduct research on similar incidents, responses and impacts. Use network organisations to reach out to other companies and organisations where relevant to learn from similar incidents
After incident: Follow-up with all people involved; customer, suppliers, internal teams	Ensures that people are fully aware of the incident, action and impact. Helps to maintain understanding and buy-in on the issue.	Use meetings and regular communications to close the incident. Use an incident log to record the process, tools, communications, actions that were taken/used and comment on effectiveness.
After incident: Conduct a review of your response	Helps to prepare for future incidents and to develop and share learning.	Adapt internal processes to better meet your needs for future incidents.

Further reading:

[BHRRRC Operating in conflict-affected contexts: An introduction to good practice](#)

[Business in Conflict-Affected and High-Risk Contexts | Reports | Sustainable Business Network and Consultancy | BSR](#)

[Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights](#)