

# 2026 REVISION PRELIMINARY CONSULTATION

## CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES OF THE 2026 REVISION

The 2026 revision is a key step in strengthening the relevance, impact, and effectiveness of the Fair for Life and For Life standards.

Based on their theories of change and terms of reference, these two standards complement each other in their vision and mission to promote fairer trade and more responsible sourcing, while fully integrating current social, economic, and environmental challenges.

**Fair for Life**, which focuses specifically on **fair trade**, aims to bring about concrete improvements in the economic and social conditions of producers and workers in supply chains.

**For Life**, meanwhile, is aimed at companies wishing to demonstrate their concrete commitment to **corporate social responsibility** (CSR) through **responsible corporate governance and sustainable management of their supply chains**.

The revision has **four main objectives**:

- Enhance the **clarity, accessibility, and consistency of the standards**,
- Better **adapt standards to real-world conditions**,
- Ensure optimal compatibility with evolving national and international **regulatory frameworks**,
- Strengthen **methodological tools** in order to better measure and promote the positive impact of practices within companies and supply-chains.

This approach is part of a **collaborative process involving our stakeholders** (certified operators, NGOs, institutional partners, forward-looking companies, etc.) in order to guarantee standards that are both ambitious and realistic.

Two intentions guide the entire revision process: firstly, strengthening the **riskbased approach**; and secondly, developing standards as strategic tools for management, **impact monitoring, and change**.

## **PRELIMINARY CONSULTATION METHODOLOGY**

The preliminary consultation is an essential step aimed at **gathering feedback, expectations, and recommendations from stakeholders** before the actual revision of the standards. The contributions gathered will **enrich the work** to come and **refine certain structural guidelines** that will be included in the revised version submitted for consultation in Q1 2026.

### **GENERAL CONSULTATION VIA QUESTIONNAIRE**

All stakeholders are invited to participate in this preliminary consultation by completing an **online questionnaire**. This questionnaire is divided into **three main sections**, presented in order from the most open-ended to the most specific:

- 1. General feedback:** these questions aim to gather your overall perceptions of the standards, your understanding of them, their applicability, your expectations regarding their development, etc.
- 2. Focus on specific topics:** particular subjects of interest where your opinions, experiences, and proposals can inform and guide the collective discussion.
- 3. Proposals for change :** more concrete proposals, based on feedback, for which your opinions and experiences will be decisive in consolidating the terms of their application.

## INTERVIEWS FOCUSING ON PRIORITY ISSUES

The ***Focus on specific topics*** section will cover four subjects:

- the **role and requirements associated with the various stakeholders** involved in the Fair for Life / For Life standards,
- the **ambition and requirements of the environmental pillar** of the standards,
- the development of economic guarantees reinforcing the concept of **remunerative prices**,
- the **management and impact of the Development Fund**.

On these points, **additional** individual or group **discussions** will be offered to interested stakeholders. The **format and nature of these discussions will be adapted** according to the topic, availability, and profiles of participants, in order to encourage in-depth discussions and directly incorporate your contributions into the review process.

## TIMELINE AND NEXT STEPS

Schedule and next steps:

- **October 17 2025:** Close of preliminary consultation (30 days)
- **Q1 2026:** Communication of the draft of the revised version of the standards.
- **Q1 2026:** Final public consultation and definitive validation of the standards.

Your active participation is critical. We thank you in advance for your support and constructive comments to bring our standards to even greater heights, ensuring they are relevant, effective, and tailored to your realities and challenges.

If you have any questions or require further information, please contact us at: **revision@fairforlife.org**.

# PART 1: GENERAL FEEDBACK

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## Standards concerned: Fair for Life and For Life

As part of this preliminary consultation, we are seeking to better understand your experience with the standards: the motivations that led you to seek certification, any difficulties you encountered in implementing them, and your expectations and needs in terms of enhancing their relevance, effectiveness, and recognition.

The questionnaire therefore covers six main areas:

- **Motivations and expectations:** understanding why certified operators chose to obtain certification and what they expect from it.
- **Understanding and applicability:** identifying criteria that are difficult to implement or insufficiently clear, as well as the main obstacles encountered by operators.
- **Relevance and evolution of standards:** evaluating the ability of standards to respond to realities in the field, discussing necessary additions, simplifications, or adjustments.
- **Implementation tools:** gather operators' needs in terms of methodologies and practical tools to facilitate the concrete application of standard requirements.
- **Impact measurement:** explore how to enable stakeholders to better assess and demonstrate their impact by linking it to: the realities of their activities, the expectations of their partners, and the overall challenges of fair trade and responsible supply chains.
- **Recognizing commitment:** identify how to better promote operators' best practices and performance and give them tools to share these successes with their partners, customers, or consumers.

## PART 2: THEMATIC FOCUS

As part of this preliminary consultation, we are seeking your input to inform the revision of the Fair for Life and For Life standards on certain **topics identified as priorities**, which are currently the subject of in-depth consideration. The aim is to gather **additional feedback** and **enrich the work ahead**.

We look forward to receiving your feedback via:

- **specific questions** included in the questionnaire of preliminary consultation,
- if you wish, **additional** individual or group **discussions**.

**The nature and format of exchanges will be adapted according to the topics, availability, and profiles of participants.**

### 1. Redefining the roles of each actor and strengthening collective impact



**Standards concerned: Fair for Life and For Life**

The Fair for Life and For Life standards distinguish between several categories of actors, namely:

- **Certified operators**, of which there are three types: **Producer Operations**, **Fair Trade Partners**, and **Brand Holders**.
- **Registered entities**,
- **Non-committed entities**.

This architecture has provided a clear framework, but it also has certain limitations: definitions that are sometimes too general, rights and responsibilities that lack precision, and expectations that are not always adapted to the specific realities of each actor in the sector.

## Objectives of the revision

- **Clarify the definitions of existing typologies** to avoid any ambiguity.
- **Redefine the rights and duties of each category of actor** according to their role and actual power to act within the sector.
- **Adapt requirements to actual responsibilities:** a smallholder producer cannot be held to the same obligations as a multinational corporation, but each must contribute in proportion to their capabilities and role.
- **Explore the creation of new typologies** if this allows for better recognition of the diversity of actors.
- **Strengthen shared responsibility:** encourage the establishment of collective mechanisms where actors cooperate to achieve common goals, rather than operating in silos.

## 2. Building a tailored environmental ambition



**Standards concerned: Fair for Life and For Life**

The current context requires companies to take greater responsibility for environmental issues. The climate crisis, growing pressure on natural resources, and biodiversity loss are forcing all players in the industry to take action.

In addition, new regulations, such as the European Regulation on Deforestation (UEDR), are reinforcing the need for vigilance and traceability.

### Identified challenges

- **Responding to growing pressure:** our standards must include elements of responsibility and vigilance on major environmental issues in order to remain credible and useful in this context.
- **Maintaining balance:** Fair for Life and For Life are not exclusively environmental standards. Their ambition is broader, integrating social, economic, and societal dimensions. The risk would be to create excessive complexity if we overemphasize the environmental aspect without overall consistency.

- **Clarify and make understandable:** to remain accessible and operational, standards must maintain clear and balanced wording of environmental requirements, adapted to different types of actors and realities in the field.
- **Build on what already exists:** rather than reinventing complex systems on our own, we must work towards equivalence and interoperability with other credible standards and approaches, in order to provide solid and transparent guarantees while limiting the burden on businesses.

### **Objectives of the revision**

- **Define the right environmental ambition:** a level of requirement that meets current expectations without unbalancing the standard as a whole.
- **Maintain consistency between the pillars:** environmental, social, and economic must remain interconnected and complementary.
- **Facilitate implementation:** propose appropriate, clear, and proportionate requirements to prevent standards from becoming too burdensome for operators.
- **Work on equivalencies:** recognize existing commitments and certifications to secure environmental guarantees without multiplying obligations or complicating processes.

## **3. Ensuring fair and sustainable income: towards a remunerative price**



### **Standards concerned: Fair for Life**

The concept of a *remunerative price* responds to a growing expectation: that producers should be able to cover not only their costs but also their basic needs, cope with risks (climate change, market volatility), and invest in the sustainability of their business (quality, adaptation, innovation).

There are different approaches and methodologies that aim to define this concept of a fair price. We want to strengthen the economic commitments in Fair for Life around remunerative prices, both methodologically and practically:

### **1. Clarify the definition of remunerative price**

- Minimum definition: cover production costs and essential needs of the producer and their family (food, housing, education, health, clothing, etc.).
- Define what “basic needs” means in different contexts (regional, infrastructure, local cost of living).

### **2. Strengthen consideration in pricing policy**

- Price transparency
- Clearer requirements for managing price-related risks (variations, market downturns, hidden costs).

### **3. Develop a methodology adapted to the realities on the ground**

- Collection of local data: production costs, cost of living, realistic productivity, usable area, etc.
- Take into account variability: years of low yields, input costs, climatic factors, access to finance.

### **Issues to anticipate**

- **Complexity vs. applicability:** The more detailed the methodology, the more burdensome it is likely to be for small producers or remote supply chains. The right level of sophistication must be found.
- **Contextual variability:** what is a remunerative price in one region is not in another—differences in cost of living, access to resources, and markets.
- **Shared responsibilities:** producers cannot bear all the costs alone. Buyers, brands, and importers must play a role in remuneration and price stability.
- **Consistency with other pillars:** social, environmental—the price must also allow for sustainability, climate adaptation, etc., otherwise there is a risk of imbalance (for example, a producer pays the price but cannot invest in costly environmental practices).



## 4. Maximizing the Impact of the Development Fund



### Standards concerned: Fair for Life

The **Development Fund (DF)** is one of the **most visible and tangible pillars** of fair trade under the Fair for Life standard. It is a unique tool: it gives communities the ability to collectively decide on projects that improve their daily lives and strengthen their autonomy.

When used effectively, it has already helped fund essential initiatives: basic infrastructure, access to education, healthcare, income diversification, producer training, and resilience to climate shocks.

### Identified issues

- **A concrete but still underutilized lever:** although powerful, the DF does not always reach its full potential. Its impact varies greatly from one sector to another, sometimes due to a lack of clarity about its uses or means of monitoring.
- **Need for transparency and trust:** local communities, buyers, and consumers expect the fund to be used in a rigorous, participatory, and traceable manner. Without this, its leverage and credibility risk being weakened.
- **Growing stakeholder expectations:** in the face of social, environmental, and economic challenges, the DF is seen as a tool that must respond to more complex issues: climate adaptation, empowerment of women and young people, ecological transition of practices, etc.
- **Visibility and promotion:** for buyers, the DF represents a concrete commitment that they want to better understand and promote to their own stakeholders and consumers.

### Objectives of the revision

- **Clarify the rules of use:** define more clearly what types of projects can be financed, what priorities should be encouraged, and how to ensure that the funds meet locally identified needs.
- **Ensure transparent and participatory governance:** strengthen the role of producers, workers, and communities in decision-making; establish clear monitoring and accountability mechanisms.

- **Maximize impact:** ensure that projects financed by the DF have a measurable and lasting effect on quality of life, resilience, and local development.
- **Improve visibility for committed buyers and brands:** offer simple and concrete reporting tools so that they can promote the impact of the DF to their customers, partners, and consumers.

## **PART 3 : PROPOSED CHANGES**

Certain **elements deemed necessary for the evolution of the Fair for Life and/or For Life standards** have been **identified in light of initial feedback received** on the challenges and realities in the field. These have also been **enriched by the analysis of other similar standards, legislation, and resources**. Proposals for changes have been prepared by the standards technical team, which has many years of experience in developing and implementing standards related to fair trade and corporate social responsibility. You can find them below.

### **1. Rethinking For Life: clarifying its role and articulation with Fair for Life**



**Standards concerned: For Life**

#### **Current situation**

Today, **For Life** is a standard that promotes **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)** in supply chains. It provides a framework for the continuous improvement of companies' social and environmental practices.

However, its ambitions and scope of application are sometimes misunderstood, particularly in relation to the **Fair for Life** standard. This confusion can limit the uptake of the standard and reduce its ability to promote the efforts of committed companies, even though it represents a **powerful lever for recognition and differentiation**.

## **Elements of change**

Starting in 2026, For Life will clarify its ambition and scope by structuring itself into two distinct parts:

- **For Life Company:** a standard focused on the CSR commitments of companies as a whole,
- **For Life Sourcing:** a standard dedicated to responsible and sustainable sourcing practices.

This new approach aims to:

- **Clearly distinguish the objectives and types of commitments** for each standard,
- **Provide more targeted support** to companies,
- **Clarify the relationship with Fair for Life.**

The standards operate in a **modular way**: each company can choose the entry point that best suits its profile, without any obligation to progress through the stages.

**Equivalence mechanisms** will be incorporated to reduce the burden on companies that are already multi-certified and to ensure consistency with their existing commitments.

**Please find below a summary for each standard.**

### **FOR LIFE Company**

- **Objective:** to promote companies' CSR commitments
- **Scale:** certification of the company as a whole (not individual products)
- **Promise:** aimed at economic partners (customers, suppliers, investors). B2B tool, without product labeling
- **Scope:** open to **multiple sectors**, including services, catering, manufacturing (food and non-food)
- **Process:** **documentary audit**, supplemented by a field audit if necessary (depending on the risks associated with the country, sector, and type of activity)

**For Life Company enables a greater number of companies to make their CSR commitments visible and credible, even beyond the agricultural sector.**

## FOR LIFE Sourcing

- **Objective:** to strengthen the credibility and value of commitments to responsible sourcing
- **Scale:** certification of a supply chain
- **Specificity:** incorporates For Life Company's social and environmental commitments (equivalence), adding specific criteria relating to **traceability** and **ethical contracting** between committed partners
- **Promise:** B2B tool that enables buyers to promote their responsible sourcing to their customers (without product labeling)
- **Process:** **field audit**, with a frequency adapted to the risk (depending on the sector, country, and industry)

**For Life Sourcing** meets growing expectations in terms of **supply security and risk management** in value chains.

## FAIR FOR LIFE

- **Objective:** to promote commitments to fair trade.
- **Scale:** **certification of a product** or ingredient and its entire supply chain
- **Specificity:** incorporates the social, environmental, and traceability aspects of For Life, adding requirements for sustainable partnerships, fair & remunerative prices, and the use of a Development Fund
- **Promise:** dual, B2B and B2C. It enables direct communication with consumers through product labeling
- **Process:** **annual field audit**, taking into account a risk analysis

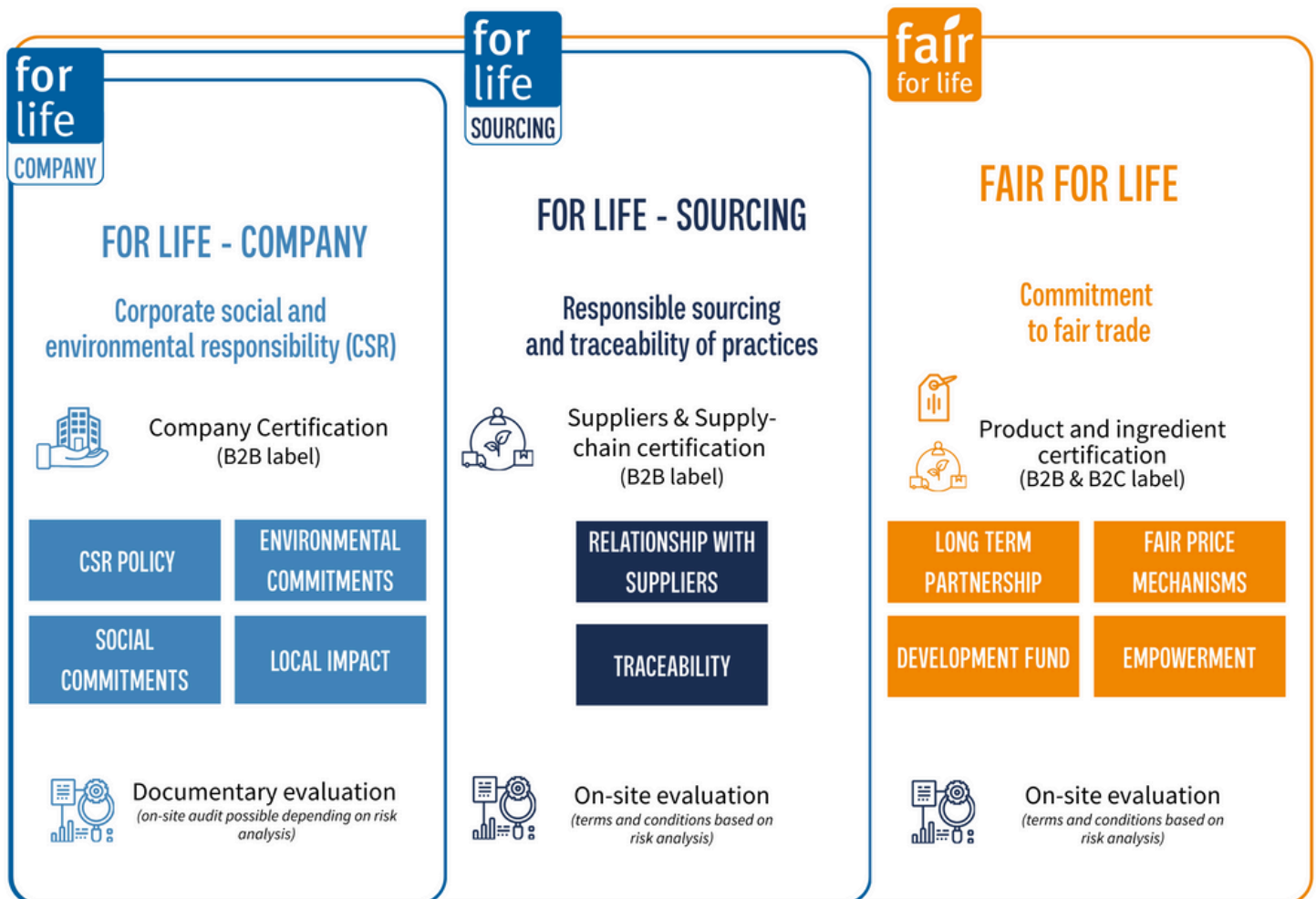
**Fair for Life** remains the standard that brings the **fair trade dimension visible to consumers**, consolidating the entire chain around values of social justice and long-term sustainability.

## A clear and complementary structure

- **For Life Company** → recognizing and promoting a company's overall CSR commitment.
- **For Life Sourcing** → demonstrating responsible and secure sourcing practices.
- **Fair for Life** → guaranteeing and promoting fair trade supply chains to consumers.

These three standards are not interchangeable, but are **complementary**. They offer several entry points for companies and supply chains, depending on their profile and ambition, while remaining consistent with each other.

**Figure 1. Summary of the relationship between standards**



## 2. Facilitating progress: more guiding and pragmatic standards



Standards concerned: Fair for Life and For Life

### Current situation

The Fair for Life and For Life standards are already recognized for their **high standards** and **include both obligations of results and obligations of means**. For example, they impose clear results in terms of working conditions, traceability, and fair partnerships, while requiring operators to implement structured approaches to achieve them.

However, in certain particularly complex areas—such as guaranteeing a decent income or immediately achieving ambitious environmental goals (e.g., zero deforestation)—it can be difficult for operators to reach the final target in a single step, despite real efforts and good practices being put in place.

The challenge is therefore not to replace the obligation of results with an obligation of means, but rather to better combine the two approaches. The aim is **to strengthen the support, clarity, and readability of the standard** in order to **recognize and value the progress** made by stakeholders toward the expected results, while maintaining a high level of ambition and credibility.

### Elements of change

The 2026 revision proposes to incorporate more obligations of means into the criteria in order to make the standards **more guiding and pragmatic**.

In concrete terms, this means:

- **Empowering stakeholders to identify their risks** and gaps in relation to the final objectives.
- Requiring the implementation of **progressive and documented action plans**.
- **Monitoring and demonstrating progress** over time, even if the final target has not yet been achieved.
- Providing operators with practical tools, methodologies, and benchmarks to **better understand and apply the criteria**.

### 3. Clarify and strengthen coordination with other labels



Standards concerned: Fair for Life and For Life

The Fair for Life and For Life standards are part of an ecosystem in which many other labels coexist. The challenge is not to compete head-on with these initiatives, but rather to **promote complementarity** and **recognize existing credible commitments**.

In this context, two distinct mechanisms are proposed: **equivalence** and **recognition**.

#### **REMINDER**

The **equivalence system** allows for **exemption** from certain sections of the standards (particularly the social and environmental responsibility criteria) **if external evidence of compliance exists** for the concerned operators. The standards that fall within the scope of eligibility for the equivalence system are detailed in **Annex VII** of the current standards and are subject to regular review.

The **recognition system** may allow a Fair for Life-certified buyer **to exceptionally source from a producer operation that is not committed** to Fair for Life but whose production is already certified according to another fair trade standard. This recognition system and the recognized standards are presented in **Annex IV** of the current standard.

#### a. Evolution of the equivalence system



Standards concerned: Fair for Life and For Life

#### **Current situation**

The current equivalence system is still limited and sometimes difficult to use. For companies that are already multi-certified, it can lead to duplicate audits, significant administrative burdens, and complexity that hinders engagement.

## **Elements of change**

The 2026 revision aims to make this system **more accessible and pragmatic**, particularly in terms of social and environmental aspects.

- Commitments already covered by other credible standards will be better taken into account.
- Audit redundancies and administrative burdens will be reduced.
- Equivalencies will remain strictly regulated in order to preserve the **rigor and integrity** that are the strength of the Fair for Life and For Life standards.

In short, equivalence becomes a tool for simplification for operators, while maintaining a high level of guarantees.

We therefore plan to **review the inter-label equivalence grid** and include a comprehensive assessment of other sustainability labels in a new version of possible equivalencies, allowing for better recognition of companies' commitments.

The work of **comparison and inter-label equivalence** will be **carried out on the requirements and criteria of the labels and also on their processes of verification and certification**.

### **b. Changes to the recognition system**



**Standards concerned: Fair for Life**

#### **Current situation**

The recognition mechanism was **designed to facilitate trade and market access for producers**: it allowed producers already committed to fair trade under another label to access Fair for Life buyers without immediately undergoing full certification.

However, in its current form, **this mechanism has limitations**:

- It does not provide sufficient incentive to create Fair for Life supply chains in the long term.
- It can undermine the traceability and transparency of supplies.
- It exposes the entire system to the risk of diluting its guarantees.



## **Elements of change**

The 2026 revision proposes a more demanding and rigorous recognition system (see diagram below):

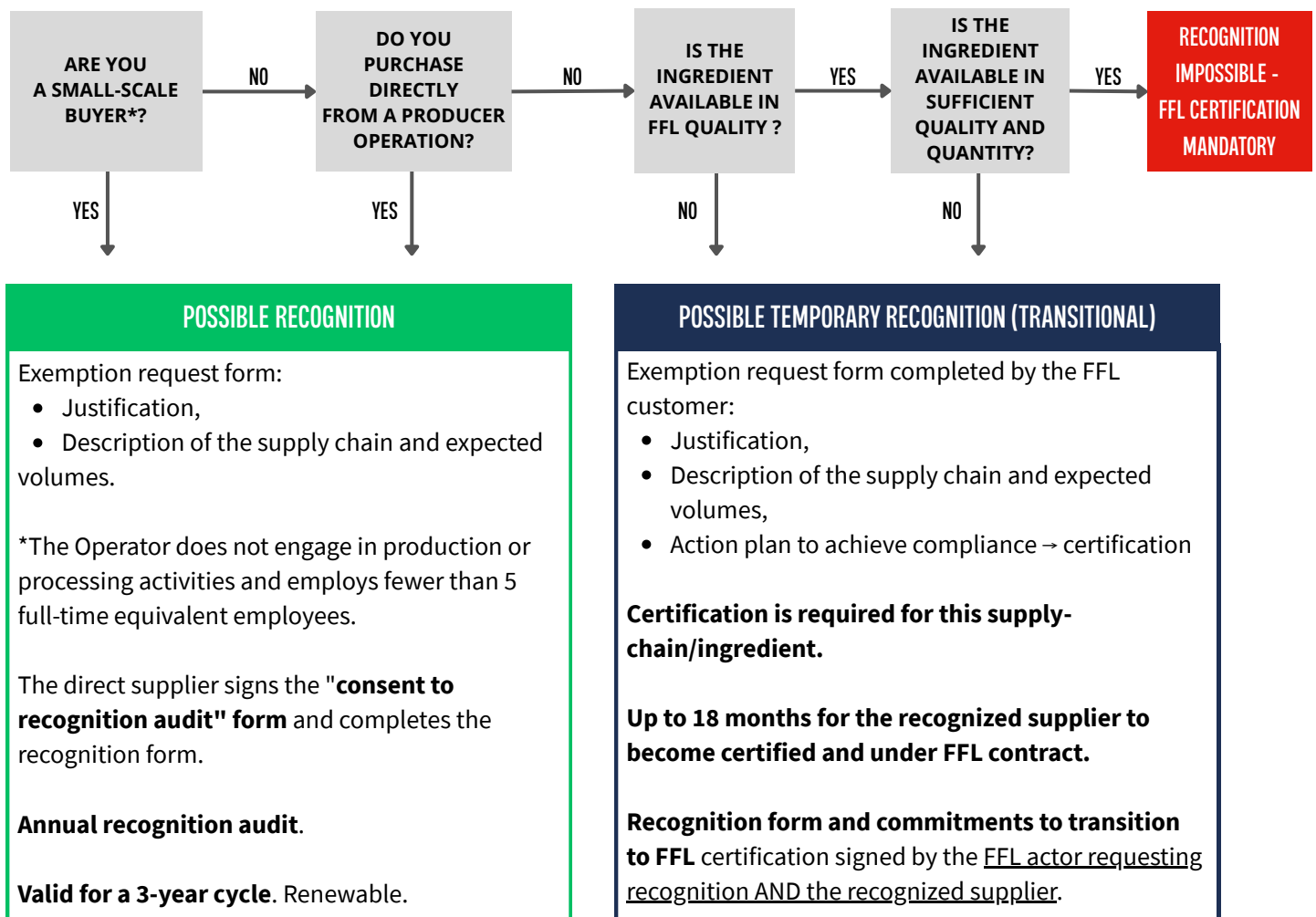
- **Mandatory commitment from the purchaser** requesting recognition: they become jointly responsible and must ensure that the sector moves towards full certification.
- **More specific eligibility criteria**, presented in the consultation diagram: these determine whether recognition is possible, transitional, or impossible (in the latter case, certification of all operators is required from the outset).
- **Enhanced checks**: depending on the level of risk identified, additional controls or partial audits will be put in place.
- **Stricter communication rules**: when a product contains ingredients from sectors undergoing recognition, this must be clearly stated in order to ensure transparency for consumers.

In short, recognition remains **a gateway**, but it is becoming regulated, progressive, and transitional, with a clear path toward full certification.

With the 2026 revision, the recognition system **retains its primary objective**:

- to offer producers already committed to fair trade new commercial opportunities when they need them on an ad hoc basis,
- to enable buyers to secure supplies in very limited cases, either to help them out or to start building new supply chains.

**Figure 2. Summary of the recognition process**



Revision of FFL communication rules : **Addition of mandatory labeling on products whose ingredients come from recognized supply chains.**



## Your Voice Matters

By taking part in this consultation, you are shaping the future of the Fair for Life and For Life standards.

We thank you for your contribution — it is essential to make the standards more impactful and relevant to your realities.

✉ Questions or remarks ? Contact us: [revision@fairforlife.org](mailto:revision@fairforlife.org)



*Let's build fair and responsible supply chains - together.*

