



# COMMUNICATION GUIDE

*Communicating Your Commitments Clearly  
Credibly and Responsibly*

July 2026

***For marketing, communication, product and sales teams of Fair for Life certified organisations.***

Communicating about your Fair For Life commitment helps customers, business partners and consumers better understand the actions and practices recognised through your certification.

This guide has been designed to help you communicate about those commitments in a clear, credible and responsible way, particularly in light of evolving European regulations governing sustainability-related communications.

It provides examples of wording, guidance and best practices to help you develop messages that accurately reflect your commitments while meeting applicable regulatory expectations.

This document is intended to support your communications. However, it does not constitute legal advice and does not replace the regulatory requirements applicable to claims and communications.

## **TWO KEY PRINCIPLES TO KEEP IN MIND BEFORE YOU START**

- 1. The Fair for Life Standard applies to products, ingredients or supply chains, never to a company as a whole.**
- 2. Any communication material explicitly referring to Fair for Life must be submitted to the Certification Body for approval,** in accordance with the Standard. This approval process is intended to guide you in the accurate and consistent use of claims related to the certification programme. However, responsibility for published communication materials and messages remains with the company.

# COMMUNICATING YOUR COMMITMENTS: UNDERSTANDING THE REGULATORY LANDSCAPE

## GROWING EXPECTATIONS FOR TRANSPARENCY AND CREDIBILITY

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Expectations for **transparency and credibility in communications** about corporate commitments are growing, together with a **strengthening of the regulatory framework**, particularly at the European level.

These developments reflect the approach that Fair for Life has promoted for many years: encouraging transparent communication grounded in concrete and verifiable practices. They also create a favourable environment for greater recognition of rigorous, independently verified initiatives such as Fair for Life and help strengthen trust in fair trade.

**A growing number of regulatory instruments govern how companies communicate about their commitments and sustainability claims, including:**

- the Directive concerning unfair business-to-consumer commercial practices (EU Directive 2005/29/EC);
- the Empowering Consumers for the Green Transition Directive (EU Directive 2024/825 – EmpCo / ECGT);
- various sector-specific regulations, in addition to national provisions that may be more stringent depending on the country concerned.

In this context, organisations committed to sustainability must, more than ever, **ensure that the messages they communicate accurately reflect the practices they have implemented and can be supported by objective and verifiable evidence.**

# FOCUS ON EU DIRECTIVE 2024/825 (EMPCO)

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The EmpCo Directive strengthens the requirements applicable to communications relating to sustainability commitments, whether environmental or social, when such communications are intended for, or accessible to, consumers within the European Union, regardless of the communication channel used. **Its effective date of application is 27 September 2026.**

## ARE YOUR COMMUNICATIONS AFFECTED?

**If you communicate about your commitments to consumers located in the European Union**, your communications may fall within the scope of this Directive.

**Its scope goes beyond information displayed on products and also covers:**

- 1.claims appearing on product packaging and labels;
- 2.content published on websites and e-commerce platforms;
- 3.communication campaigns and advertising materials;
- 4.sustainability labels, logos and certification marks;
- 5.content shared through social media.



## WHAT IS EXPECTED OF YOUR SUSTAINABILITY MESSAGES?

Sustainability-related messages **must be based on objective evidence and be clearly substantiated**. Such substantiation may rely on a robust and independently verified certification system such as Fair for Life, or on company-specific evidence, including documented data, indicators and action plans.

When communicating about your commitments, make sure to:

- clearly define the scope of the commitment being communicated (product, ingredient, supply chain, etc.);
- use specific and proportionate wording;
- ensure that your messages accurately reflect the practices that have actually been implemented.

Conversely, the **Directive prohibits wording that is vague, ambiguous or likely to overstate the actual scope of your sustainability commitments**, including:

- generic terms such as environmentally friendly, sustainable, eco-friendly or responsible;
- commitments that cannot be verified;
- promises that are not supported by measurable criteria;
- labels or schemes that are not based on a robust certification system and independent verification.



# GUIDELINES FOR COMMUNICATING ABOUT YOUR FAIR FOR LIFE COMMITMENT

## ONE ESSENTIAL CHECK BEFORE YOU COMMUNICATE

The most important takeaway from this guide is simple: **make sure that the commitments you intend to communicate about are actually covered by your certification.** Fair for Life requirements vary depending on your role in the supply chain, the supply chains concerned, and your certification year.

Before communicating, take a moment to ask yourself the following questions:

| Questions to Ask Yourself                                                                      | What This Means                                                                                           |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| What is the exact scope of my certification?                                                   | Is it a product, an ingredient, or a supply chain? <u>Identify it</u> clearly and specifically.           |
| Do my operator category and certification year allow me to communicate about this topic?       | Certain requirements only apply from a certification year onwards or to specific categories of operators. |
| Is the practice being described genuinely in place, with no open non-conformities?             | Do not communicate about a requirement that is subject to an unresolved non-conformity.                   |
| Is the communication material intended for, or accessible to, consumers in the European Union? | If so, it falls within the scope of the EmpCo Directive and must use specific, substantiated wording.     |

## PRESENTING FAIR FOR LIFE IN ONE SENTENCE

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The statements below summarise the **key commitments and characteristics of the Fair for Life programme** and can be used to provide a **concise introduction to the certification programme**.

"Fair for Life is a certification programme that promotes fair trade practices based on social, environmental and economic commitments throughout supply chains."

"Fair for Life contributes to the development of fair supply chains by supporting long-term trading relationships, decent working conditions and practices that help preserve natural resources."

"The Fair for Life Standard addresses social, economic and environmental issues through requirements verified by a third-party audit."

## COMMUNICATING ABOUT YOUR COMMITMENTS

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The wording proposed in the following pages covers the **different themes addressed by the Fair for Life Standard**. Not all statements apply to every type of operator: **only use those that correspond to the requirements that are actually applicable to your situation and certification scope**.

Whenever a statement refers to [*ingredients/supply chains*], specify the relevant ingredients or supply chains in order to accurately reflect the actual scope of your commitments.

The proposed wording is not exhaustive. You may **adapt it or develop your own wording**, provided that it remains **consistent with the Standard and accurately reflects practices** that are genuinely implemented.

## GENERAL APPROACH

We are a  
Producer Operation



We are a  
Fair Trade Partner



We are a  
Brand Holder



Through Fair for Life certification, we are committed to **social, environmental and economic objectives**.

The practices implemented as part of our Fair for Life commitment are verified by an **independent third-party audit**.

By choosing to source Fair for Life certified *[ingredients/supply chains]*, we support **social, environmental and economic commitments** throughout supply chains.

## FAIR TRADE AND TRADING RELATIONSHIPS

We are a  
Producer Operation



We are a  
Fair Trade Partner



We are a  
Brand Holder



The production of Fair for Life *[ingredients]*:

- supports **long-term trading relationships** with our buyers;
- enables the implementation of **fair pricing mechanisms negotiated transparently**;

By sourcing Fair for Life certified *[ingredients/supply chains]*:

- we are committed to **long-term trading relationships** with producers;
- we implement **fair pricing mechanisms negotiated transparently**;

By sourcing Fair for Life certified *[ingredients/supply chains]*:

- we support trading relationships built on **long-term commitments** between producers and buyers;

### We are a Producer Operation



- provides access to **minimum prices** designed to strengthen producers' economic security;
- supports **ongoing dialogue** with our commercial partners.

### We are a Fair Trade Partner



- we provide **minimum prices** designed to strengthen producers' economic security;
- we support trading practices based on **transparent exchanges** with producers.

### We are a Brand Holder



- we support supply chains that incorporate **fair pricing mechanisms** negotiated transparently;
- we contribute to strengthening **producers' economic security** and **business planning** capacity.

## WORKING CONDITIONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

### We are a Producer Operation



### We are a Fair Trade Partner



### We are a Brand Holder



As part of our Fair for Life commitment, we implement:

- practices that promote **decent working conditions** for our employees;
- **anti-discrimination** practices;
- mechanisms that promote **freedom of association** and **social dialogue**;
- practices aimed at strengthening occupational **health and safety**;
- practices aimed at improving workers' access to **social protection and benefits**;
- practices aimed at preventing **forced labour** and **child labour**.

By sourcing Fair for Life certified [*ingredients/supply chains*], we support supply chains that promote respect for **human rights** and **decent working conditions**.



## ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

We are a  
Producer Operation



We are a  
Fair Trade Partner



We are a  
Brand Holder



As part of our Fair for Life commitment, we implement practices aimed at:

- reducing **water consumption** associated with our activities;
- preserving **natural resources** and **biodiversity**;
- minimising **energy waste** and optimising resource use;
- improving **waste** management related to our activities;
- reducing the environmental impact of our **packaging**;
- supporting **deforestation** prevention practices.

In the production of Fair for Life certified [*ingredients*], we implement practices that:

- include measures for the conservation of **soils** and **ecosystems**;
- rely on the limited use of **agrochemical inputs**;
- exclude the use of **GMOs** in Fair for Life certified production.

By sourcing Fair for Life certified [*ingredients/supply chains*], we support agricultural practices that:

- preserve **natural resources** and **biodiversity**;
- promote the responsible management of **water**, **energy** and **waste**;
- incorporate measures for the conservation of **soils** and **ecosystems**;
- rely on the limited use of **agrochemical inputs**;
- exclude the use of **GMOs** in certified products.



## LOCAL DEVELOPMENT AND GOVERNANCE

### We are a Producer Operation



As part of our Fair for Life commitment:

- we implement collective **development projects**;
- we contribute to the **funding of initiatives** defined together with local stakeholders;
- we strengthen the beneficiaries' **technical, organisational and economic capacities**;
- we implement **participatory governance mechanisms** and ensure the **transparent management** of development funds.

### We are a Fair Trade Partner



By sourcing Fair for Life certified [ingredients/supply chains], we support the funding of **local collective projects** through **development funds**.

### We are a Brand Holder



By sourcing Fair for Life certified [ingredients/supply chains], we support producer organisations that implement **local collective projects** through dedicated **development funds**.

By sourcing Fair for Life certified [ingredients/supply chains], we support, within producer organisations:

- **development initiatives** designed in collaboration with local stakeholders;
- initiatives that contribute to strengthening the **beneficiaries' technical, organisational and economic capacities**;
- **participatory governance mechanisms** that encourage the involvement of local stakeholders in decision-making processes.



## TRANSPARENCY AND TRACEABILITY

We are a  
Producer Operation



We are a  
Fair Trade Partner



We are a  
Brand Holder



As part of our Fair for Life commitment:

- we implement **traceability systems** that enable us to ensure the origin of certified products;
- we ensure the **segregation of certified and non-certified products** throughout production, storage and processing activities;
- we implement **transparent communication practices**.



## TALKING ABOUT THE COMPOSITION OF YOUR PRODUCTS

The wording below is intended for use in your corporate communications (website, brand communications, reports and commercial materials).

It does not replace the product labelling requirements applicable to certified products: **the claims appearing on product packaging remain subject to Annex II of the Fair for Life Standard**, as well as to the applicable regulatory requirements.

| Situation                                                                            | Suggested Wording                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>100% Fair Trade Product:</b> 100% of the ingredients are Fair for Life certified. | All the ingredients in this product come from Fair Trade sources certified according to the Fair for Life Standard.<br><br>This product is made entirely from Fair Trade ingredients certified according to the Fair for Life Standard. |

| Situation                                                                                                                  | Suggested Wording                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Product Containing Fair Trade Ingredients:</b> contains Fair for Life certified ingredients but is not 100% Fair Trade. | <p>This product contains XX% Fair Trade ingredients certified according to the Fair for Life Standard.</p> <p>XX% of the ingredients in this product come from Fair Trade sources certified according to the Fair for Life Standard.</p> |

## COMMUNICATION BEST PRACTICES

Whether you choose to adapt the wording provided in this guide or develop your own, these guidelines are designed to help you communicate in a clear, credible and consistent manner while remaining aligned with the Fair for Life Standard.

**Reminder: implementing these recommendations does not exempt you from submitting any communication material that explicitly refers to Fair for Life to the Certification Body for approval.**

### CLEARLY LINK YOUR MESSAGES TO THE CERTIFICATION

The Fair for Life Standard applies to products, ingredients or supply chains, not to a company as a whole. **Clearly identify the scope concerned in order to avoid any misunderstanding.**

| Preferred                                                                                                                                            | Avoid                                                                                                                           |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Fair for Life certified [<i>ingredients</i>]</li> <li>✓ Fair for Life certified [<i>product</i>]</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ Our company is Fair Trade</li> <li>✗ Our company is Fair for Life certified</li> </ul> |

## ENSURING ALIGNMENT WITH YOUR CERTIFICATION SCOPE

Messages referring to Fair for Life should relate only to **commitments that are effectively covered by your certification**.

Before communicating, make sure that they:

- correspond to the **requirements applicable** to your organisation;
- reflect **practices that have actually been implemented**;
- do not concern requirements that are subject to **unresolved non-conformities**.

Any reference to Fair for Life must be supported by the applicable requirements and by the elements verified during the audit process.

## MAKE SPECIFIC CLAIMS

Communicate about **implemented practices, actions undertaken or objectives pursued**, rather than using broad, vague or absolute statements that may be perceived as misleading.

### Specific and Substantiated

- ✓ Implementation of practices aimed at reducing water consumption.
- ✓ Our approach is built on trading relationships with producers based on long-term commitments.
- ✓ The use of agrochemical inputs is controlled in certified production.
- ✓ Our approach includes fair pricing mechanisms.

### Vague or Absolute

- ✗ Environmentally friendly
- ✗ Sustainable product
- ✗ Guarantees a living income for all producers
- ✗ Zero deforestation

## USE CAUTIOUS AND PROPORTIONATE LANGUAGE

The wording used in your communications should convey a contribution, support or commitment, **without overstating the actual impacts of your practices.**

| Recommended Verbs                                                        | Verbs to Avoid                                   |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| contributes to, supports, promotes, encourages, aims to, participates in | guarantees, eliminates, protects against, solves |

## NEVER USE THE FOLLOWING CLAIMS

 **A final checklist before publication.**

**The following types of claims expose your organisation to risk and may undermine the credibility of the label:**

- presenting the label as a **guarantee of results** ("guarantees", "ensures", "eliminates", "zero...", etc.);
- presenting Fair for Life certification as **company certification**;
- using terms such as "100% sustainable", "100% responsible", "100% environmentally friendly" or other **superlatives** ("the most...", "the best...", etc.);
- making a claim **without clearly identifying its scope**;
- claiming **climate neutrality** or **zero impact** without substantiated evidence;
- making a claim that **does not correspond to your operator category or certification year**.

# NON-CERTIFIED ENTITIES REFERENCING FAIR FOR LIFE

The wording and recommendations provided in this guide are intended for organisations that hold Fair for Life certification.

However, **other organisations that are not Fair for Life certified** (whether registered entities or organisations not engaged in the programme) **may also wish to refer to the Standard in their corporate communications**, particularly when they operate within a supply chain or source from certified operators.

These **non-certified entities** may **communicate** about the certification status of their suppliers and about their use of Fair for Life ingredients or products, provided that the conditions set out in the Standard are met.

**Their communications must not imply that the products they market are themselves Fair for Life certified.**

Any reference to Fair for Life is subject to **compliance with the communication rules** defined in the Standard. **For entities that are not engaged in a Fair for Life certification process, a prior agreement with the owner of the Standard is required.**

For further information, **please refer to Annex III – Communication Rules** of the Fair for Life Standard.





## FURTHER INFORMATION

The Fair for Life Standard is available at:  
[www.fairforlife.org](http://www.fairforlife.org)

For any questions relating to Fair for Life  
communications, please contact:  
[Communicationffl@fairforlife.org](mailto:Communicationffl@fairforlife.org)

*Thank you for contributing to a rigorous  
and transparent fair trade model*