

Consultation Results Synopsis

Fairtrade Fairer Futures Standard, formerly Fairtrade Standard for Advancing Farmer Livelihoods

To	Fairtrade member organizations Cocoa producers, traders and retailers Consultation participants
Consultation Period	16 July – 15 August 2026
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Abbreviations

BEQ	Cocoa bean equivalent
CLMRS	Child labour monitoring and remediation system
LIRP	Living Income Reference Price
NFO	National Fairtrade Organisation
PN	Producer networks
SC	Standards Committee
S&P	Standards & Pricing
SPO	Small-scale Producer Organization
VSLA	Village Savings and Loans Association

PART 1 Project Information

1.1. General Introduction

Fairtrade International's Standards & Pricing (S&P) would like to thank all stakeholders for the time and effort they have put into participating in the consultation on the draft Fairtrade Fairer Futures Standard

Fairtrade Fairer Futures Standard



(FFFS), formerly the Fairtrade Standard for Advancing Farmer Livelihoods. The stakeholder consultation, conducted from 16 July to 15 August 2026, received input from 63 participants across 18 countries. Feedback was submitted in English, French and Spanish. Thanks to these contributions, S&P has gained a good understanding of the main topics and concerns including potential solutions.

This document aims to present the outcome of the consultation in the most transparent way possible without disclosing confidential stakeholder information.

Should you have any queries or remarks concerning this report, please contact standards-pricing@fairtrade.net .

1.2. Executive summary

Background

The consultation draft proposed a voluntary add-on Standard covering long-term commitments, Living Income Reference Price (LIRP) payments, programme investment, distribution of additional payments, Small-scale Producer Organization (SPO) requirements and product/origin-specific annexes. Following the consultation, the draft was substantially revised and simplified.

The revised draft covered by this synopsis is the final draft that was presented to the Standards committee (SC) for approval on 24 September 2026. It is focused on cocoa in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana and sets requirements for commercial partners and participating Small Producer Organisations (SPOs) on Living Income Reference Price (LIRP) commitments, funding, implementation and reporting.

Project aim

The aim of the project was to develop a new voluntary add-on Fairtrade Standard that helps cocoa Small Producer Organisations (SPOs) move closer to a living income. It does this through long-term commercial commitments, payment of the Fairtrade Living Income Reference Price (LIRP) differential, and implementation funds that support producer organizations to improve farm productivity and household incomes.

Objectives

The specific focus was:

- Set requirements for long-term commercial commitments and the payment of the Living Income Reference Price (LIRP) differential.
- Define how SPOs plan, implement, account for and report on LIRP differentials and implementation funds.
- Consult with relevant stakeholders on the draft Standard.
- Revise the draft based on the consultation feedback and prepare a final draft for approval.

Project phases and timelines

Activity	Timeline
Public Consultation	16 July – 15 August 2026
Consultation analysis and revision of the draft	August – September 2026
Approval by SC	24.09.2026
Publication	15.10.2026

Findings

The consultation led to a clearer and more focused draft Standard. The revised draft narrows the scope to cocoa in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, integrates the former West Africa cocoa requirements into the main body, uses a single "Commercial Partner" concept for commercial actors and places claims and mark-use rules outside the Standard under separate Fairtrade licensing rules.

The largest changes respond to practical implementation concerns. The revised draft gives more time for SPO implementation, introduces clearer change-notification triggers, defines the content of three-year agreements, makes payment and cocoa bean equivalent (BEQ) rules more specific, allows approved service providers and existing methodologies in several areas, and consolidates reporting requirements and frequencies.

Some core policy choices remain unchanged while their implementation is clarified. The minimum commercial commitment remains three years; 100% of the LIRP differential must be paid to members; mobile payments remain the required end-state no later than October 2027; and an independent financial review remains required above USD 50,000 per year.

Main changes at a glance

Area	Main change
Scope and structure	The draft is now focused on cocoa in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, with one integrated set of requirements rather than separate global and West Africa architectures.
Roles and agreements	Commercial actor roles are consolidated under "Commercial Partner", and the written three-year agreement sets clearer minimum content.
Timing and feasibility	Many SPO implementation requirements move from Year 0 to Year 1; several programme requirements become voluntary.
Payments and volumes	Country-specific LIRP rules, annual minimum volumes, shortfall correction and payment routes are more explicit.
Implementation and reporting	Equivalent providers and established methodologies are allowed in several requirements; reporting indicators and frequencies are consolidated.



Way forward

The final draft was presented to the Fairtrade International Standards Committee (SC) on 24 September 2026 and was approved. The Fairtrade Fairer Futures Standard is scheduled for publication on 15 October 2026. The application and transition arrangements will be communicated at publication.

Guidance, tools and templates referenced in the Standard will support its implementation. These include support for agreements and checklists, BEQ calculation tools and worked examples, guidance on farm assessments and farm record keeping, reporting templates and guidance on mobile payments.

Claims and mark-use requirements will continue to be governed separately through the applicable Fairtrade licensing rules. Certification against the applicable requirements of the Standard remains a prerequisite for any claims linked to the Standard.

PART 2 Consultation outcomes

2.1. Consultation Process

The public consultation on the draft Fairtrade Fairer Futures Standard began on 16 July 2026 and closed on 15 August 2026. Stakeholders were invited to comment on the following parts of the draft:

- General requirements
- Commercial partner requirements
- SPO requirements
- Product/origin annexes

The main questions were addressed through structured consultation questions and written feedback, to allow for both qualitative as well as quantitative feedback.

Written feedback was consolidated into a consultation master and analysed by consultation section and feedback theme. The analysis looked at both the number of comments and the substance of the feedback. The consultation was not treated as a vote: comments were also considered in relation to the affected actor, the requirement concerned and the practical significance of the issue.

2.2. Participating Organizations

The written feedback represented a broad range of stakeholder perspectives. Respondents included Small-scale Producer Organizations, Producer Networks, National Fairtrade Organisations, retailers and other commercial actors, Fairtrade system colleagues, a certification body, a development cooperation agency and other supply-chain actors.

The different stakeholder groups often focused on different aspects of implementation. Producer-side comments frequently addressed payment distribution, governance, mobile-money feasibility, cost and Fairtrade Fairer Futures Standard

operational practicality. Market-side and Fairtrade-system comments frequently focused on long-term commitments, role clarity, claims boundaries, payment routes, evidence and scalability. The revised draft addresses both types of concerns through a combination of clearer rules and more flexible implementation mechanisms.

2.3. Consultation Outcome and stakeholder feedback

Feedback was concentrated around a small number of topics: LIRP distribution, long-term sourcing commitments, SPO planning and governance, the clarity of scope and actor definitions, and payment obligations and routes. The revised draft makes major changes in these areas and simplifies the overall structure of the Standard.

Where feedback was most concentrated

Consultation topic	Number of comments received	Number of respondents
LIRP differential distribution	67	39
Multi-year commitment	65	49
SPO planning and governance	34	28
Overview and definitions	30	17
Payment obligations and routes	28	26

Main feedback and changes following consultation

What stakeholders raised	Main feedback	How the revised draft changed
Scope, roles and structure	Stakeholders asked for clearer actor definitions, clearer scope and less overlap between the general text and the West Africa annex.	The revised draft is limited to cocoa in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, defines "Commercial Partner", integrates the West Africa cocoa requirements into the main body and removes the former global Annex 1.
Implementation timing	Stakeholders questioned whether full operational implementation in Year 0 was realistic for SPOs.	Most farm-service, household-income and risk-reduction implementation requirements move to Year 1. Income resilience, gender-sensitive household economics and reducing-risk requirements are voluntary.

What stakeholders raised	Main feedback	How the revised draft changed
Changes affecting commitments	The term “material change” was seen as too broad. Stakeholders asked for objective triggers.	The revised draft introduces actor-specific triggers, including an annual cocoa-volume variance above 10%, sourcing changes, crop failure and capacity constraints.
Long-term commitments	Stakeholders generally supported longer-term planning but raised concerns about fixed volumes where production, demand or market conditions change.	The three-year commitment remains, but the agreement now sets clearer minimum annual volumes and allows shortfalls to be corrected over the remaining term. Reductions to the total three-year minimum require a written amendment.
LIRP payment and payment routes	Stakeholders asked for clearer calculation rules, schedules, responsible parties, payment routes and evidence.	The revised draft separates LIRP differential, implementation-fund and record-keeping obligations. It provides country-specific Côte d’Ivoire and Ghana rules and requires the payment route and schedule to be set in the written agreement.
Cocoa bean equivalent (BEQ)	Stakeholders requested clearer conversion methodology, consistent supplier treatment and practical calculation support.	BEQ ratios and the supplier-level methodology move into the main Commercial Partner chapter. Fairtrade will provide an automated calculator and worked examples.
SPO planning and governance	Stakeholders asked for clearer annual planning, approval and allocation rules.	The revised draft requires an annual budget, LIRP distribution plan and implementation-fund spending plan approved by the Board or General Assembly. Member allocation may use a quota, equal amount or targeted-member approach.
Farm-service delivery	West Africa feedback considered some delivery mechanisms too prescriptive and asked for equivalent providers, existing systems	The revised draft allows approved coaching and farm-service providers, suitable nursery service providers and established record-keeping

What stakeholders raised	Main feedback	How the revised draft changed
	and a stronger focus on participating members.	methodologies. Farm assessments and plans focus on participating members and can use previous assessments or monitoring information where appropriate.
Programme flexibility	Stakeholders questioned whether all income-diversification, gender and risk-reduction activities should be mandatory for every participating SPO.	Income resilience and gender-sensitive household economics are voluntary Year 1 requirements. Reducing Risk is also voluntary and can use an alternative tool or system that achieves similar results to the Protective Community Index.
Environmental resilience	Feedback highlighted overlap and prescriptiveness in the environmental module, while other comments asked for strong environmental outcomes.	The dedicated Environmental Resilience module is not retained as a separate chapter. Environmental elements are integrated into farm assessment, farm improvement plans, farm services, nurseries, agroforestry and related guidance.
Reporting and evidence	Stakeholders asked for clearer indicators, reporting frequencies, targets, templates and less duplication.	Accounting and reporting are consolidated. The revised draft specifies receipts and reconciliation requirements, target-setting, annual evaluation and a reporting table with indicator detail and reporting frequency.
Claims	Stakeholders asked for clearer boundaries between certified actions, permitted communications and living-income outcome claims.	Claims and mark-use requirements are no longer contained in the Standard itself. They are governed separately under Fairtrade licensing rules, while certification against the applicable Standard requirements remains a prerequisite for claims.

Areas where feedback was mixed and the core direction was retained

On several issues, stakeholders expressed different views. The revised draft keeps the core policy direction while making implementation clearer or more flexible.

Area	What the consultation showed	Position in the revised draft
Three-year minimum commitment	Some stakeholders supported three years as a practical balance; others preferred longer or more flexible periods.	The minimum remains three years. Annual volume confirmation and a shortfall-correction mechanism provide additional flexibility.
100% LIRP differential to members	Feedback included support for direct payment as well as requests to allow limited alternative uses, transaction-cost coverage or collective investment in some circumstances.	The revised draft requires 100% of the LIRP differential to be paid to members and does not allow SPO operating, administration or implementation costs to be deducted.
Mobile payments	Stakeholders recognized transparency benefits but also raised network coverage, phone access, literacy, transaction fees and local-readiness concerns.	Mobile payment remains required as soon as a viable mechanism is available and no later than October 2027. The requirement applies from Year 1 and is supported by guidance.
Independent financial review	Stakeholders supported strong financial controls but some producer-side feedback raised cost and proportionality concerns.	The USD 50,000 annual threshold is retained. The review may be combined with Fairtrade Premium audit work where the scope separately covers the add-on funds.

Overall, the consultation resulted in a more focused cocoa-specific Standard with clearer commercial commitments, more explicit payment and reporting rules, more realistic implementation timing and greater flexibility in how SPOs deliver several programme activities. At the same time, the revised draft retains the main policy direction on the three-year commitment, full LIRP distribution to members, mobile payments and independent financial review.