

# EUROPEAN FLAX® STANDARD



**European Flax®**  
Premium linen fibre



**EUROPEAN FLAX® Standard version 2.0**

**July 2019**

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## A - Object

This document provides a definition of technical criteria that must be fulfilled by each company wanting to use the EUROPEAN FLAX® trademark.

EUROPEAN FLAX® is a registered mark and is the property of the European Confederation of Linen and Hemp (CELC) and its subsidiary CELC DEVELOPPEMENT. CELC is the international authority for flax/linen and the only European agro-industrial organisation federating all the stages of production and transformation of flax/linen and hemp.

EUROPEAN FLAX® is the guarantee of traceability for premium linen fibre grown in Europe. A natural and sustainable fibre, cultivated without artificial irrigation and GMO free. It represents 85% of world flax fibre production.

## B - Description of the traceability chain

The present standard aims at the certification of the EUROPEAN FLAX® chain of custody. In other words, from the fibre producer to the finished product, every stage of the supply chain taking possession of the material, including processing and trading steps, must be certified to ensure the traceability of EUROPEAN FLAX® materials. A product may only be certified if it is produced/traded by a certified company, made of flax/linen supplies that are 100% certified, and has a final composition  $\geq 50\%$  flax/linen. Invoices, following specific invoicing requirements, are key to evidence the flow of certified materials between steps in the European Flax® chain of custody.

Companies trading flax fibre, processing linen/flax, trading yarns/fabrics/semi-products, manufacturing finished products may become certified by making a conformity assessment against the EUROPEAN FLAX® criteria defined in the present standard. Following this verification, a EUROPEAN FLAX® certificate with number is issued to the company. Bureau Veritas Certification performs the conformity assessment and delivers the certificate.

Companies producing flax fibre (scutching) may become certified by following the certificate issuance process defined in the EUROPEAN FLAX® Charter. In this case, a EUROPEAN FLAX® license number is directly delivered by the CELC DEVELOPPEMENT.

Retailers may also be certified by Bureau Veritas Certification.

This certificate issuance process is defined:

- in this document EUROPEAN FLAX® standard: technical criteria.
- in the document Description of the EUROPEAN FLAX® certification process: issuance process.

CELC Membership is required for European companies applying for certification of the following activities: Flax growing, Scutching/Fibre pre-processing, Trading and Processing (except finished product manufacturing).

Scutcher: if selling fibres to processors, namely spinners and producers of semi products, this activity is considered as fibre trading, subject to CELC Membership and Bureau Veritas Certification with a number BVAAXXXXX (e.g., certificate number: BVBE3008); if selling fibres only to traders, the requirement is EUROPEAN FLAX® Charter and not Bureau Veritas Certification audit, resulting in a licence number CEAAXXXXX (e.g., certificate number: CEBE22093).

Pre-processor: namely activities of rescutching, hackling, carding, combing, cotonising etc. before spinning. Scutchers with fibre pre-processing activities shall comply with the requirement of EUROPEAN FLAX® Charter and a license number is delivered by the CELC as CEAAXXXXX, not valid for sales to

processors. Fibre traders with fibre pre-processing activities shall comply with the requirements relative to processors of the present EUROPEAN FLAX® standard.

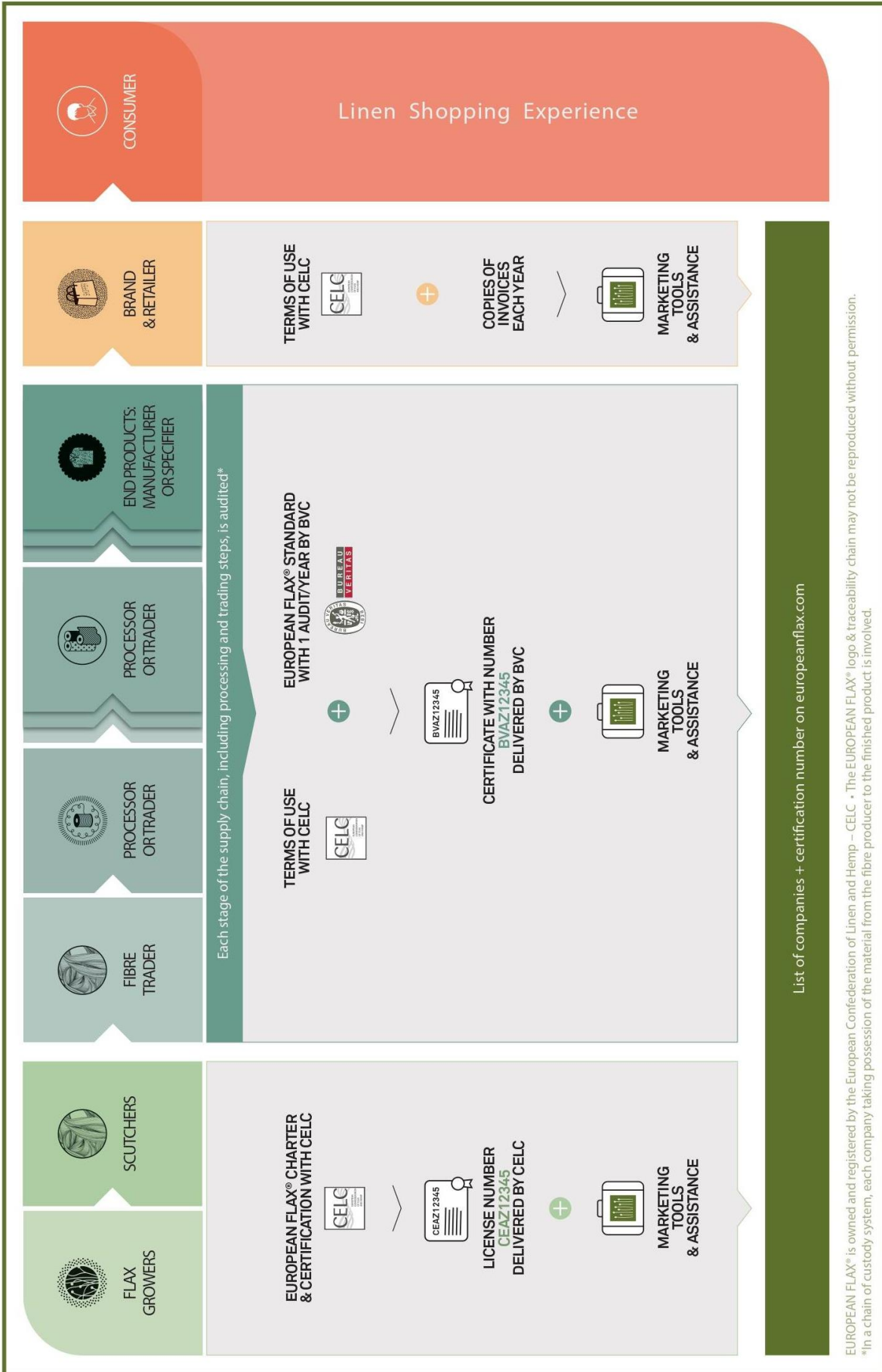
Trader with subcontracted processing: any company selling/exporting flax materials and subcontracting a processing activity such as spinning, dyeing, weaving, knitting, finished product manufacturing, and warehouse storing (it is not considered as a simple trader).

Processor: companies producing or processing textiles or technical semi-products, namely spinners, weavers, knitters, dyers, etc.

Processors shall purchase fibres from fibre traders certified by Bureau Veritas Certification, with a valid certificate: a number BVAAXXXX and a scope including fibre trading; they shall NOT purchase from suppliers with licence number CEAAAXXXX and Scutching scope.

Processors may purchase textiles from companies that are certified both EUROPEAN FLAX® and Masters of Linen® and for which the certificate was delivered after an audit by Centexbel/Centrocot/Legal Auditor. These certificates possess 5 letters and 4 numbers CEAAAXXXX (e.g., CEITL7300) and are specified Masters of Linen® certified on the CELC database. This certificate number is specified on invoices by using the claim: "EUROPEAN FLAX® certified CEAAAXXXX" or Masters of Linen® certified CEAAAXXXX".

Brand/retailer: if buying fabric and subcontracting product manufacturing, this activity is considered as end product specifier, subject to Bureau Veritas Certification audit; if buying finished product, Bureau Veritas Certification audit is not required.



## C - Technical criteria for Companies

### 1 GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- 1.1 The Company shall have procedures in place that ensure the traceability system. Procedures may be written or not.
- 1.2 The company shall establish and maintain during at least 3 years records showing conformity to the requirements of this standard, in particular: purchase invoices, suppliers list, suppliers' certificates, production records, sale invoices, tests results...
- 1.3 The company shall ensure that **only certified flax/linen** is used as inputs in certified products.
- 1.4 If the company uses non certified flax/linen, a physical segregation in space and/or time and/or identification shall be put in place.

**Assessment and verification:** *The Company shall provide a description of the system in place. During on-site audits, the auditor shall be able to track the material and to demonstrate physical segregation is guaranteed.*

### 2 MATERIAL SOURCING

- 2.1 The company shall ensure that its suppliers of certified material have a valid certificate. Processors purchasing fibres shall ensure, as per Chapter B, that their suppliers hold a fibre trading certificate from Bureau Veritas Certification and not only a scutching license number from CELC. The company shall establish and maintain an up-to-date list of its linen suppliers. The EUROPEAN FLAX® suppliers are identified and the identification includes the supplier name, its certificate number and its certificate expiration date. This list shall be updated at least once a year, including a check of the suppliers' certificates validity on [www.europeanflax.com](http://www.europeanflax.com).

**Assessment and verification:** *The company shall provide its suppliers list, including the date of the last update, and a copy of the valid certificates EUROPEAN FLAX® of its suppliers or the screenshot of the website [www.europeanflax.com](http://www.europeanflax.com) showing the suppliers' certificate validity. The validity of the certification of the suppliers shall be verified.*

- 2.2 On receipt of certified material, the company shall check claims on purchase invoices. Each certified material shall be clearly identified on the supplier invoice by specifying the claim « EUROPEAN FLAX® certified ». Moreover, the supplier certificate number, in conformity with the rules described in chapter B, shall be written on the invoice.

**Assessment and verification:** *The company shall provide:*

- *A description of the checking system in place or an appropriate work instruction.*
- *A sample of purchase invoices, as defined by Bureau Veritas. This sample determination is a representative and reliable selection compliant to the ISO 19011 standard.*

### 3 PRODUCTS COMPOSITION

3.1 Only products presenting the following composition can be certified:

- The linen/flax content is 100% certified.
- Composed of 100% linen/flax or a majority linen/flax content: at least 50% of certified linen/flax. The mix could therefore contain maximum 50% of other kind of fibres, excluding non-certified linen/flax, not allowed in the product composition.

3.2 The company agrees to mention the exact composition and percentages on the labels of certified products, according to labelling rules in force in the country in which its certified product is commercialized.

3.3 Once certified, **the processing companies and companies using subcontractors for processing activities** shall perform each year fibre composition tests on a sample of EUROPEAN FLAX® products determined by the auditor, according to the methodology approved by the « BAST FIBRE AUTHORITY » and by one of the accredited laboratories. Accredited laboratories include Bureau Veritas, Centrocot and Centexbel, who may include the composition tests in their certification offer. Otherwise, the company may select another laboratory, and use the appropriate test order form available on [www.europeanflax.com](http://www.europeanflax.com). The minimum of 3 samples shall be selected by the auditor for the test. The product sampling to be tested will be defined by the certification body: it will be defined during each annual audit based on the annual accounting summary by reference (see paragraph below **Records of EUROPEAN FLAX® products' references**).

*Note: composition tests are not mandatory for scutchers, pre-processors, traders selling non-transformed materials and finished products manufacturers.*

#### **Assessment and verification:**

##### *Sampling rules:*

- *3 output samples shall be selected by the auditor, when it is possible, on 3 different output references which are the most often produced.*

*Results of the fibres' composition tests performed by one of the accredited laboratories on the selected EUROPEAN FLAX® products shall be provided.*

### 4 GROUP OF PRODUCTS

4.1 The company shall establish and update the EUROPEAN FLAX® products' references list. For each reference, the exact fibres' composition shall be indicated.

**Assessment and verification:** *The Company shall provide the EUROPEAN FLAX® certified products' references list indicating their composition.*



## 5 PRODUCTION CHAIN

5.1 The company shall implement and maintain a traceability system for tracking raw material, components, products and sub-products European Flax certified through production chain. This system shall ensure that no mix with non-selected material occur during production chain.

### **Assessment and verification:**

*The company has traceability procedures (written or not) if they are not written, the employees are aware of the procedures and implement them on field.*

*The material can be tracked at each steps of the production process through documentary and/or software system.*

*From the input to the output, at each step of the production process:*

- *The certified material is physically identified (e.g., sticker, non-removable marking, etc.) next to the lot number.*
- *The certified material is tracked by documentary and/or software system. Verification of production orders and traceability documents associated to the material.*
- *The material sold EUROPEAN FLAX® certified cannot originate from a mix between certified Flax/linen and non-certified Flax/linen.*

## 6 SALES

6.1 Each certified material shall be clearly identified on the invoice by specifying the claim « EUROPEAN FLAX® certified » allowing to distinguish it from non-certified material.

6.2 The exact composition and percentages of certified products shall be written on each relevant invoice. Moreover, the certificate holder's certificate number shall be written on the invoice (at least once on the invoice).

### **Assessment and verification:**

*The auditor shall verify a sample of sales invoices, as defined by the certification body. This sample determination is a representative and reliable selection compliant to the ISO 19011 standard.*

*During the on-site audit, the certification body may also check an invoices' sample of non-certified products.*

## 7 VOLUME CONTROL

7.1 The company shall make an annual accounting summary of material inputs (EUROPEAN FLAX® certified sourcing) and outputs (EUROPEAN FLAX® certified sales), for each reference and, if relevant, explanation on the conversion factor (input/output conversion rate , material yield).

**Assessment and verification:** *The annual accounting summary may include 2 separated tables, one for the inputs and one for the outputs. The annual accounting summary shall include:*

*For the inputs*

- *Supplier invoice reference*
- *quantity received (volume, weight, number of pieces)*
- *Lot number issued by the supplier*
- *Internal lot number*

*For the output*

- *Sales invoice(s) reference(s)*
- *Quantity sold (volume, weight, number of pieces) per invoice reference*
- *Quantity in stock (volume, weight, number of pieces) per invoice reference*
- *Internal lot number*

## **8 SUBCONTRACTOR**

**Note:** *using a subcontractor means outsourcing a work on certified flax/linen material. Purchase and sale of certified products are managed by the Company, not the subcontractor. The material remains the property of the certified company. Invoicing between the subcontractor and the Company is only related to the outsourced activities.*

- 8.1 When a company is outsourcing work on certified fibres/products, the concerned subcontractors shall be in conformity with the technical criteria related to **on site traceability**.
- 8.2 The company shall establish and maintain an up-to-date list of relevant subcontractors and inform the certification body of any changes.
- 8.3 The subcontractor shall sign an agreement with the company where it acknowledges the following requirements:
- The subcontractor ensures the traceability of the EUROPEAN FLAX® certified material from the input to the output.
  - The subcontractor shall identify EUROPEAN FLAX® certified material at each step of the process through physical separation and/or permanent identification mark.
  - The subcontractor accepts the possibility of on-site controls by the company and/or Bureau Veritas.
  - The subcontractor engages not to outsource processing unless the company is informed and accepts it.
- 8.4 The company shall audit all their subcontractors on the requirements of the standard at least once a year. The audit reports shall be recorded.
- 8.5 Production orders and delivery notes for each lot of subcontracted EUROPEAN FLAX® certified material shall be recorded.

### **Assessment and verification:**

*The auditor shall verify the audit reports of each audit that the company performed on all of their subcontractors. The traceability procedure and the agreement for each subcontractor shall be available.*

*The auditor shall make an on-site audit of a sample of subcontractors, as defined by the certification body and depending on the activity the company is subcontracting (i.e., the risk level). Refer to GP01 description of certification process for details on sampling rules for subcontractors.*