Standard Setting Procedure

Approvals

The signatures below certify that this procedure has been reviewed and accepted, and demonstrates that the signatories are aware of all the requirements contained herein and are committed to ensuring their provision.

	Name	Signature	Position	Date
Prepared by	Lesley Colvin		Standards and Compliance Manager	07/01/2021
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Approved by	Zara Morris-Trainor		Operations Manager	07/01/2021

Amendment Record

This procedure is reviewed to ensure its continuing relevance to the systems and process that it describes. A record of contextual additions or omissions is given below:

Page No.	Context	Revision	Date

Contents

Disclaimer

This document is a continuous work-in-progress. Any errors, required amendments, or additions should be reported to the document owner, and updated copies of the document (or notification of updates) issued thereafter.

Copyright

Introduction

The Sustainable Fibre Alliance (SFA) is a UK-registered charitable organisation established in 2015 to tackle the issues of sustainability within the Cashmere value chain. Working primarily in Mongolia, the SFA aims to educate and accredit herders in sustainable rangeland management and animal husbandry. In pursuit of this goal it seeks to unite stakeholders at all levels of the Cashmere value chain, acting as the catalyst and vehicle for long-lasting, positive change that will see future generations able to enjoy the luxury of Cashmere products, and the continuance of the traditional nomadic herder lifestyle in Mongolia.

The SFA's mission is to promote sustainable practices in the cashmere industry.

For permission to use the SFA logo, or for more information, please contact: info@sustainablefibre.org

Objectives

These Standard Setting Procedures are intended to guide the process of developing or revising the SFA Codes of Practice. The objectives of these Procedures are:

- to ensure the Codes of Practice development process is inclusive and transparent to affected stakeholders

- to provide a robust review process that ensures the Codes of Practice effectively meet their respective goals

- to ensure that the development and revision of the SFA's Codes of Practice complies with international best practices for standard setting (e.g. the ISEAL Code of Good Practice for Setting Social and Environmental Standards).

Scope

The procedures are applicable for the development and revision of The SFA Codes of Practice. Unless otherwise stated, the process for Codes of Practice revision is the same as the development of new Codes of Practice.

Standard setting does not include the Accreditation or Monitoring and Evaluation of the code of practice scheme.

These Procedures shall undergo a scheduled review at least every four years. This is subject to earlier revision and update if deemed necessary, such as in the case of major Codes of Practice revisions by the SFA. The next scheduled review will begin in 2023.

Any complaints about the process for Codes of Practice development shall be addressed through the SFA Complaints Procedure. Any complaints about the content of a Code of Practice then the complaint will be forwarded to the Standards System Improvement Committee (SSIC) will be considered through the development and review process.

For any other comments or questions, please contact info@sustainablefibre.org.

Terms and Definitions

Advisory Group	Members of the Standards System Improvement Committee (SSIC), available for comment and direction into specific elements of the code of practice.
Consensus	General agreement characterised by the absence of sustained opposition to substantial issues by any important part of the concerned interests.
Interested party	Any person or group concerned with or who may be directly affected by a code of practice.
Standards System Improvement Committee (SSIC)	The group of stakeholders actively engaged in the development or revision of a code of practice. The SSIC includes Technical Group Members, Steering Group Members and Advisory Group members.
Public Summary	A notice on a public-facing website that includes the information as detailed in section A1.3.

Workplan	The step-by-step plan for developing or revising a code of practice. The Workplan is provided to all SSIC members and includes an estimated timeline.
Terms of Reference (TOR)	A document which includes a summary of key information to guide the process of code of practice development or revision: a) Justification of the need for the code of practice b) Existing code of practices addressing similar materials or issues c) Proposed scope, including geographic regions d) Clear objectives for the code of practice e) An assessment of risks in implementing the code of practice, and how to mitigate for these: 　i. Identification of factors that could have a negative impact on the ability of the code of practice to achieve its objectives 　ii. Unintended consequences that could arise from its implementation 　iii. Possible corrective actions that could be taken to address these potential risks
Secretariat	SFA Staff that are members carrying out the administrative role of the SSIC, including record keeping, stakeholder management, and other functions.
Steering Group	Members of the SSIC, available for comment and direction into specific elements of the code of practice.
Technical Group	Members of the SSIC, available for providing advice and guidance into specific elements of the code of practice.
Public Stakeholder Code of Practice Consultation	The Consultation held prior to a revision of an existing code of practice, open to any interested parties; announced using a Press Release, etc. Feedback is given on the current version of the code of practice.
Public Stakeholder Draft Consultation	The Consultation held at the end of the development or revision process, open to any interested parties; announced using a Press Release, etc. Feedback is given on the draft version of the code of practice. May be referred to as the "Draft Consultation."

References

The following documents were referenced in the development of this document.

• ISEAL Code of Good Practice: Setting Social and Environmental Standards v5.0

• The SFA Complaints Procedure.

Section A - Roles and Responsibilities

A1. The SFA

A1.1 The SFA shall play the role of Secretariat for all code of practice development and revisions or designate another party to do so.

A1.2 The Technical Group is responsible for ensuring that all Codes of Practice are developed in accordance with this document.

A1.3 During the course of the code of practice development process, the Public Summary shall be made publicly available by the SFA. This shall include, but is not limited to:

   a) The overview of the work being done on the code of practice (notes, decisions, drafts, etc.)
   b) Relevant details about the code of practice
   c) The development process
   d) Contact information.

The Public Summary will include the following information:

   a) The overview of the work being done on the Codes of Practice (notes, decisions, drafts, etc.);
   b) Relevant details about the Codes of Practice;
   c) How to contribute or participate in the process;
   d) Draft Terms of Reference of the Codes of Practice;
   e) Steps in the standard-setting process, including timelines and clearly identified opportunities for contributing;
   f) Decision-making procedures, including how decisions are made and who makes them. This shall be a reference to this document;
   g) Regular updates on the status of the Codes of Practice development or revision activities; and
   h) Relevant SFA contact information

A2. Standards System Improvement Committee (SSIC)

A2.1 The development of The SFA Codes of Practice shall be managed and released by the Standards System Improvement Committee (SSIC).

A2.2 Participation in the SSIC is on a voluntary basis.

A2.3 The SSIC is composed of the Secretariat, a Technical Group, Advisory Groups, and a Steering Group.

A2.4 SSIC Membership shall be open to all interested parties and shall not be limited in number. Voting shall be representative across the following sectors:

   a) Brands/Retailers
   b) Supply Chain
   c) Material Producers
   d) Civil Society
   e) Professional Services.

A3. Decision Making

A3.1 The standard-setting process shall strive for consensus among all voting Members of the SSIC. Consensus shall be considered the absence of expressions of dissent.

A3.2 In the event that consensus is not met:

a) The member(s) who disagree from the majority shall present alternative solutions for consideration

b) If a compromise cannot be reached within the group, input from the wider stakeholder group shall be invited; after consideration of this feedback, the Members shall attempt to form a consensus. A decision is considered to pass with a majority consensus.

Section B – Development/Revision Process

B1. Initiating Development/Revision

B1.1 Proposals to develop or review a new code of practice may be submitted by any interested party to the SFA and a Document Change Request (F001-3) shall be completed and submitted to the SFA Board.

B1.2 The final decision of whether to develop a new code of practice shall be made by a senior manager within the SFA and authorisation shall be provided in writing or by email.

B1.3 In some cases, it may be necessary to conduct an urgent revision of a code of practice. The cases that trigger a revision may include, but are not limited to, the following:

a) Code of practice criteria result in critical unintended consequences that compromise the goals of the code of practice

b) The Codes of Practice contains a mistake, incorrect guidance, or language that was unintended by the SSIC.

B1.4 When these types of revisions are necessary, the previous SSIC shall be reconvened and consulted for a final decision. This process shall not be considered a full Revision of the Codes of Practice, and therefore shall not affect the timing of the previously scheduled Revision.

If the resulting decision conflicts with the current Terms of Reference (TOR), then a minimum 60-day Public Draft Consultation shall take place. See Section B4.

B1.5 In some cases, a small-scale revision may be used to add a regional scope or application of the Code of Practice. The following criteria apply:

a) The full SSIC shall approve an additional scope, and the writing of the new section may be run as a task force revision

b) Stakeholder Mapping shall be conducted to identify interested parties affected by the new section

c) Public Stakeholder Draft Consultation shall be followed.

B1.6 Revisions shall begin with a Public Stakeholder Codes of Practice Consultation, see Terms and Definitions. This shall be at least a 60-day period. Previously received feedback should be entered into the Codes of Practice Consultation Log:

a) This log shall include the sector and geography represented by the submission

b) Individuals and organisations that submit comments to the Public Codes of Practice Consultation shall be considered a stakeholder and notified of changes or future revisions.

B1.7 A review process shall consider a code of practice's continued relevance, effectiveness, and whether external circumstances have changed to the point where change is required:

a) All comments from the Public Stakeholder Codes of Practice Consultation

b) Information on the impact of the code of practice, as identified through The SFA's Monitoring and Evaluation process

c) New technology developments

d) Changes in industry best practices

e) New or changed legislation.

B1.8 The Secretariat shall draft the initial TOR document to guide the process. See the definition of Terms of Reference.

B1.9 The Secretariat will complete a CoP Development and Review checklist to ensure that all parts of the development or review process are completed.

B2. Stakeholder Engagement

B2.1 The Secretariat shall conduct Stakeholder Mapping to develop an initial list of potential stakeholders and interested parties for outreach:

a) Clear stakeholder participation goals shall be set and communicated for each stakeholder sector (Brand and Retailer, Supply Chain, Material Producers, Civil Society, and Professional Services). These participation goals shall ensure representation from affected geographic regions and market sectors of the given code of practice.

b) Under-represented stakeholders and disadvantaged stakeholders shall be identified in the stakeholder mapping and targets shall be set to seek their participation through coordination with local organisations, supply chain visits, and/or pilot projects.

   I. The Secretariat shall identify parties who may be directly affected by the code of practice and those that are not adequately represented and proactively seek their contributions.

   II. Key stakeholders and interested parties, including organisations that have developed related code of practices, shall be contacted about the code of practice and the ways that they can participate.

c) For revisions, the list of previous stakeholders and interested parties may be used and updated to ensure broad stakeholder engagement.

B2.2 The Secretariat shall invite participation in the Standards System Improvement Committee and keep record of all parties that indicate interest in the development or revision process. SSIC members may self-select their participation (i.e. Voting Member, Advisory Group) in the SSIC during the open invitation period.

B2.3 The Secretariat shall draft a Work Plan that outlines the roles, responsibilities and timelines involved in participation with the Codes of Practice Development or Revision. Members are required to declare their commitment to comply with the Work Programme by signing a declaration.

B2.4 The Secretariat shall publicize its intention to develop/revise the code of practice and invite expressions of interest in participation. See the definition of Public Summary.

B2.5 Throughout the development of the code of practice:

a) Participation in code of practices consultation is open to all interested parties and that participation reflects a balance of among interested parties in the subject matter and in the geographic scope to which the code of practice applies

b) Constraints on disadvantaged groups to participate effectively in code of practices development and revision shall be addressed in the code of practices development process

c) Interested parties shall be provided with meaningful opportunities to contribute to the development or revision of a code of practice, through direct comments or during the stakeholder review process

d) Records of code of practice development or revision activities shall be regularly posted on the corresponding website while the code of practice is still in development, with an open invitation to send comments. For revisions, the existing stakeholder mapping shall be reviewed, amended as needed, and approved by the SSIC.

B3. Writing (or Revising) the Codes of Practice

B3.1 The Standards System Improvement Committee shall be responsible for reviewing and revising the TOR, with final approval given through consensus.

B3.2 The Technical Group shall be responsible for writing the drafts of the code of practice.

B3.3 When preparing the final draft of the Code of Practice, the Standards System Improvement Committee shall follow the decision-making process, Section A3. The SFA code of practices shall comply with the following:

B3.4 The criteria within the code of practice shall be linked to desired outcomes that align with the objectives of the code of practice, as defined in the TOR.

B3.5 The Codes of Practice shall not seek to restrict trade in anyway or give preference to one geographic region over another.

B3.6 The Codes of Practice shall include guidance for local applicability where necessary and helpful.

B3.7 In setting the requirements for the code of practice, consideration shall be given to regulatory requirements, market needs, as well as scientific and technological developments.

B3.8 Each requirement shall be clear, objective and verifiable, and clearly contribute to the achievement of the code of practice's objectives.

B3.9 Codes of practice shall be structured in consideration of monitoring and evaluation.

B3.10 A code of practice shall be expressed in terms of a combination of process, management and performance criteria. To this end, the code of practice shall be outcome-based as much as possible, to avoid being prescriptive.

B3.11 The code of practice shall not deliberately favour a particular technology or patented item.

B3.12 Each code of practice shall have an implementation manual to give further guidance for the requirements of the codes of practice. These may be updated by The SFA as often as deemed necessary without going through the revision process.

B3.13 The code of practice shall attribute or cite all original intellectual sources of content.

B3.14 The code of practice shall include the anticipated timing of the next revision, and how to submit feedback or complaints.

B3.15 The Secretariat shall obtain external Regulatory Approval in writing where appropriate.

B3.16 All national or regional codes of practice shall be based on international standards, unless they would be ineffective or inappropriate, and shall be as consistent as possible with relevant international standards and at least as stringent.

B3.17 All codes of practice developed or reviewed must follow the requirements of The SFA's Internal Management System (IMS).

B4. Public Draft Consultation

B4.1 The SSIC Members shall approve the draft code of practice or the draft revised code of practice before releasing it for Public Draft Consultation.

B4.2 Upon completion of the code of practice draft (or draft of changes in the case of a revision), all code of practices shall undergo Public Draft Consultation, which shall involve at least two rounds of stakeholder feedback (one Public Draft Consultation is sufficient in the case of a revision). The launch of a Public Draft Consultation shall be publicly announced.

B4.3 The first round of Public Draft Consultation shall include:

    a) A period of at least 60 days for submission of feedback
    b) Code of practice draft made available for public view
    c) Publicised process for submitting feedback
    d) Invitations sent to all stakeholders identified during the stakeholder mapping.

B4.4 The Secretariat shall collect and record all feedback submitted during the Public Draft Consultation, with the geography and sector of the contributor noted. Individuals and organisations that submit comments to the Public Draft Consultation shall be considered a stakeholder and notified of changes or future revisions.

B4.5 The Secretariat shall consider all comments and input received during the Public Draft Consultation under consideration. All feedback shall be reviewed by the Technical Group. Actions taken, or not, on each point of feedback shall be recorded by The Secretariat:

a) For revisions, a second round of Public Draft Consultation shall be carried out if substantive, unresolved issues persist after the first round, and shall include the same steps as the first round, for a period of at least 30 days

b) For development of new code of practices, a second round of Public Draft Consultation shall be carried out for a period of at least 30 days.

B4.6 The final version of the code of practice shall be approved by the SSIC Voting Members prior to release.

B4.7 The Secretariat shall prepare a written synopsis (Feedback Summary) of how each point of feedback has been addressed. For Revisions, the Feedback Summary shall include the comments received during the initial Public Codes of Practice Consultation.

B4.8 The Feedback Summary shall be made publicly available, and all parties that contributed comments shall be sent a copy.

B4.9 The SFA shall determine the ownership and governance of the final code of practice.

B4.10 Any document released for public consultation will be made available in English and in the main written language where affected stakeholders are located

B5. Publishing the Codes of Practice

B5.1 The SSIC will release the final version of the Code of Practice to the Secretariat for publishing.

B5.2 All current draft and final code of practices shall be published by the Secretariat and will be publicly available for free download on the corresponding website. The following documents shall be published upon release of a final code of practice:

a) Final Codes of Practice
b) Final Codes of Practice with implementation guidance (Implementation Manual)
c) Feedback Summary of all feedback collected, organised by topic, with explanations of how it was addressed
d) Updated Logo User Guide and Claims Guide, if needed
e) Statement of all major changes to the code of practice and the effective date.

B5.3 The following shall be noted on page two of the code of practice:

a) That the official language of the Codes of Practice shall be English and in the case of inconsistency between translated versions, the English version shall prevail
b) Reference to the release date and effective date
c) A disclaimer stating that The SFA shall not be held liable for use of the code of practice
d) A copyright statement.

B5.4 Hard copies and translations shall be provided upon request, dependent on resources.

B5.5 The location and retention period for records relating to standards development and review is managed in accordance with SFA IMS Clause P002 6.3. Copies will be available to stakeholders on request.

B5.6 Records of development activities on completed code of practices shall be made available upon request. These shall include, but are not limited to:

    a)   Terms of Reference (see Definitions)
    b)   Public Summary
    c)   Stakeholder Mapping
    d)   Feedback Summary

B5.7 Following a revision of an existing code of practice, the following shall also be made available:

    a)   Transition details for existing sites to the new version
    b)   Summary of all substantive changes
    c)   Detailed list of all changes, available upon request.

B5.8 The SFA codes of practice shall be reviewed at intervals of no more than 5 years. The date of the subsequent scheduled review shall be listed within the Codes of Practice.

B5.9 There shall be a one-year transition period for certified organisations to transition to the revised version, starting from the release date of the revised code of practice. This date shall be known as that code of practice version's "Compliance Date".

B5.10 On the Compliance Date:

    a)   Certified sites are to be operating in compliance with the new version of the code of practice, even if their annual audit has not occurred yet. Certification Bodies are not required to alter the renewal audit time period in order to confirm compliance
    b)   Certification Body staff shall have been trained and shall be performing all certification activities in accordance with the new version, including unannounced audits. They may begin earlier than this date, but any non-conformities identified – and solely occurring because of changes in the new version – shall be deferred until the Compliance Date.