

# Call for tender: New Oversight Body

## 1. Introduction

The Sustainable Fibre Alliance (SFA) is a non-profit standard holding organisation. We represent a global alliance of supply chain actors, stakeholders, and industry experts with a mission to ensure the long-term viability of the cashmere sector. Through our work, the SFA aims to minimise the environmental impact of cashmere, safeguard livelihoods and ensure high animal welfare standards. We work with the end-to-end supply chain, connecting livestock herders to brands and retailers in the global fashion industry.

The SFA run a third-party assurance system where accredited Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) deliver assurance and certification services against the requirements of the SFA Assurance and Certification Manual (ACM).

To further strengthen our approach to assurance and certification the SFA is seeking to engage an independent fourth party (the oversight body, or OB) to oversee the activities of CABs. The role of this new OB will be to audit CABs to ensure that their activities are always carried out to the requirements of the SFA ACM and that any areas of concern are brought to the attention of the SFA standards team.

## 2. Scope of work

The aim of this tender is to contract one or more companies that can provide expert services to meet the SFA's requirements as specified in the SFA's CAB Oversight Manual (i.e. those provided by an oversight body). Contracts would be for three years, with one year probation and options for renewal and early termination.

Each oversight body will need to consider the specific features and requirements of the SFA standards, and assurance and certification system, noting its scope of supply chain coverage and global operation. The OB shall operate in a consistent, reliable and credible manner, reflecting the good name of the SFA on a national and international basis.

Each oversight body shall also ensure that CABs carrying out SFA certification provide services and achieve outcomes that are consistent, comprehensive, transparent, reliable and credible, thereby helping to ensure the credibility of the SFA and so further enhance the rigour and reliability of the SFA's assurance model.

Scope of work Assess and evaluate CAB compliance with the SFA Assurance and Certification Manual (ACM) in compliance with the SFA CAB Oversight Manual (COM). Any audits shall use whichever versions of the ACM and COM are in effect at the time of the audit. These documents are available to download from the SFA website [here](#).

This includes auditing all SFA CABs annually. A list of SFA CABs can be found [here](#).

## 3. Demonstrating competence for this tender

In their application the applicant shall demonstrate that they can meet all the requirements of the SFA's CAB Oversight Manual. All application shall include a schedule of activities

alongside estimated costs and the profiles of personnel assigned to complete these activities. The application should specify which CABs and/or countries (i.e. China, Mongolia and/or rest of the world) is within the scope of their application. Each applicant will be assessed using the following scoring matrix, so the applicant may include any information that facilitates this assessment.

It is expected that audits of China based CABs will need to be done by a Chinese-based oversight body. The SFA will consider offering Chinese based operations to one company and the rest of the global operations to another company. In this case companies will be expected to cooperate with each other where needed.

<b>Competence</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>The applicant shall:</b>
Commitment to meeting the requirements of the SFA COM	Essential	Declare that they are able and willing to meet these requirements. The SFA welcomes feedback on the COM and is willing to discuss any reasonable changes prior to issuance of contract.
Willingness and ability to work in China and Mongolia	Essential	The OB must be able to work in China and Mongolia if they are to audit CABs based in those countries.
Experience of conducting CAB oversight	Out of 6	Have experience in this type of work.
Personnel - assurance and certification	Out of 4	Demonstrate understanding of how to conduct CAB oversight.
Personnel - SFA subject matter	Out of 2	Demonstrate understanding of animal fibre production, fibre processing and chain of custody.
Chinese and Mongolian language competency	Out of 2	Have ability to work in China and Mongolia in Chinese and Mongolian, depending on the contract. The SFA would allow the work to be completed through translators, but the cost of this must be included in the application.
Rigour in incentivising improvement	Out of 4	Give examples where their activities have resulted in consequences for non-compliance.
Rigour in the prompt delivery of high standards of service	Out of 2	The applicant shall provide references for other clients.
Value for money	Out of 4	The SFA will not simply award the contract to the lowest bidder; we are looking for the bid that shows the best value for spending the maximum value of the contract.

## 4. Application

Applications must be submitted by email ([standards@sustainablefibre.org](mailto:standards@sustainablefibre.org)) by 5pm UTC on 30th June.

The SFA secretariat hopes to have contracted a new oversight body by the end of August 2024 at which point training and onboarding will start with the chosen body.

We thank all applicants for their interest.