



**Standard Setting Improvement Committee**

**Terms of Reference**

1 December 2024

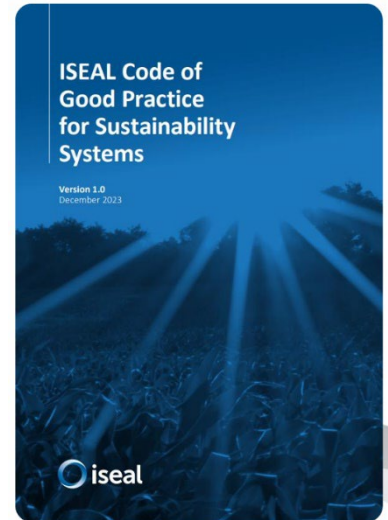
**Owner: SFA Head of Standards**

## About this document

The version of the SFA Standard Setting Improvement Committee (SSIC) Terms of Reference was established to meet requirement 6.9 of the ISEAL Code of Good Practice for Sustainability Systems.

- 6.9 The scheme owner ensures that there is a governance body responsible for making decisions on the content of the standard and that this body:
- a. is open to all stakeholders;
  - b. constitutes a balanced and diverse group of stakeholders, including those that are directly affected by implementation of the scheme or by the sector the scheme seeks to impact.

*The goal of engaging a balanced and diverse group in decision-making is so that stakeholders feel that their voice is represented in those decisions. The aim is for all major stakeholder groups to be represented and gender balance to be considered, to help ensure that no one stakeholder group or set of interests can control decisions.*



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## Responsibilities the SSIC

### Acting in the interests of the SFA

SSIC members are expected to make decisions that help realise the SFA's mission and should not use the SSIC as a platform for lobbying in favour of any other interests.

### Technical Working Groups

On appointment each SSIC member will have declared themselves to have expertise on specific disciplines (Table 1). Where the SSIC are asked to make a decision related to a particular topic it is only those members with that specific discipline that is expected to engage in the detail of that decision, providing advice to the remaining members for decision-making. Any member may engage in the detail of any particular decision at their discretion.

### Chair

The SSIC membership shall appoint a chair from the SSIC membership who is responsible for:

- Chairing meetings;
- Reviewing minutes and any formal communications publishing the decisions of the SSIC;
- Serving as an ex-officio member of the SFA Board to report the activities of the SSIC to the SFA Board.

### Conflicts of interest

Members shall declare any real or potentially perceived conflicts of interest before discussion on any topic.

### Minimum participation

Member that fail to vote and/or fail to abstain from voting for five consecutive decisions will be removed from the SSIC.

### Delegation of responsibilities

SSIC members may not delegate someone to attend meetings, or otherwise carry out their functions as members of the SSIC, in their stead.

### Remuneration

Members of the SSIC shall not be remunerated for their time in service, but may be remunerated for travelling, hotel and other expenses properly incurred by them in connection with their attendance at in-person meetings of the SSIC, at the discretion of the SFA Secretariat.

## Prerogatives

### Making decisions

- The SSIC makes decisions regarding the publication of new SFA standards or revisions to the content of an existing SFA standard, as per the [SFA Standard Setting Procedure](#).
- The SSIC has no prerogatives to propose new standards or revisions themselves, the SSIC can only make decisions regarding proposals made by the SFA Secretariat.
- All members shall be made aware of any discussion before a decision and given appropriate time (which should be at least ten working days) to participate before a decision can be made.
- Each member of the SSIC has one vote. Where two or more SSIC members are employed by the same organisation they shall only have one vote between them.
- Decisions are made by a 60% or greater majority vote in favour of a particular course of action.
- Formal decisions cannot be made without a quorum having participated. Half plus one of the appointed members (i.e., for a membership of  $n$  then  $0.5n + 1$  rounded up to the nearest whole number) shall constitute a quorum. Any member may abstain from participating in a discussion and/or voting on any decision while still counting towards the quorum, but must actively declare their abstention.
- All decisions must be communicated to the SFA Board of Trustees before the decision is communicated and/or implemented. Where the SSIC cannot reach consensus (defined here as general agreement characterised by the absence of sustained opposition from any member of the SSIC) opposing views shall be communicated to the SFA Board of Trustees alongside the majority decision.

### Escalating concerns

Where the SSIC believes (by a 60% majority vote) that the SFA Secretariat is acting - or proposing to act – in a way detrimental to the pursuit of the SFA’s mission the SSIC has the right to write to the SFA Board in a formal capacity.

## Support

### Secretary

The SSIC will be supported by a individual secretary appointed and employed by the SFA Secretariat. The secretary is the main contact for the SSIC and can be reached on [standards@sustainablefibre.org](mailto:standards@sustainablefibre.org). They will provide administrative support to the SSIC and the SSIC Chair, including technical and logistics support, facilitating communication and drafting decisions. The Secretary will also take minutes ensuring that minutes are accurate and complete.

### Membership rules

Membership is open to any interested stakeholder.

SSIC members are appointed by the SFA Secretariat according to the following rules:

- SSIC members shall:
  - a) show commitment to the SFA's mission;
  - b) have the ability to work in English;
  - c) agree to abide by the Chatham House Rule all at times when discussing SSIC business;
  - d) agree to declare all conflicts of interest when discussing matters relevant to that conflict of interest;
  - e) represent one or more of the following stakeholder groups listed in Table 1;
  - f) have demonstrable expertise in one or more of the disciplines listed in Table 2;
  - g) agree to act in the SFA's interests ahead of any other interests they may hold while dispensing the duties of the SSIC;
  - h) not be employed by the SFA Secretariat within the 12 months before becoming a member of the SSIC;
  - i) not receive income as an assessor or auditor for any of the SFA Standards within the 12 months before becoming a member of the SSIC;
  - j) agree for their name, the name of any organisation with which they are affiliated and their expertise (as related to Table 1) to be published on the SFA website in the context of their membership of the SSIC;
  - k) agree that any recommendations made by the SSIC shall be made public;
  - l) agree to provide two references supporting their membership.
- The SFA should aim that expertise for each of the disciplines listed in Table 2 is possessed by two to three members of the SSIC.
- No more than one third of all current SSIC members shall represent any one stakeholder group.
- No more than two thirds of all current SSIC members shall have direct financial interests within the cashmere sector. NGOs do not count as having a direct financial interest, unless they receive funding from someone or something that does.
- No more than two thirds of all current SSIC members can identify as a particular gender.
- No more than two thirds of all current SSIC members can be male or female, as assigned at birth.
- No more than one third of all current SSIC members can be based in the same country.
- The SFA Secretariat may remove members of the SSIC where that member has failed to meet the requirements of this Terms of Reference.

## Tables

*Table 1: Stakeholder groups within the cashmere sector*

<b>Stakeholder group</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Academia	An intellectual/theoretical interest in the cashmere sector.
Cashmere herding/farming	Involvement in the raw production of cashmere fibre
Cashmere processing	Involvement with primary processing, spinning, weaving, knitting, wet processing and any other manufacturing.
Cashmere supply chain	Involvement with trading, packing/repacking, storage and transportation of cashmere products.
Governance/management	Leadership and administration for the governance of the cashmere sector.
Non-governmental organisations	An organisation dedicated to effecting change according to their objectives (e.g. environmental NGOs).
Standard setting, conformity assessment and/or accreditation	Involvement with testing or other activities that determine whether a process, product, or services complies with the requirements of a specification, technical standard, contract, or regulation, or involved with issuing credentials or certifying third parties against an official standard.

*Table 2: Disciplines relevant to the SFA program. There is a Technical Working Group for each discipline.*

<b>Discipline</b>
Animal welfare
Cashmere supply chain
Certification, standards and assurance
Decent work & human well-being
Fibre processing
Rangeland management