

29 May 2026

STATEMENT OF INTENT

REVIEW OF CLEAN FIBRE PROCESSING STANDARD

SUSTAINABLE FIBRE ALLIANCE



WHY A REVISED STANDARD?

Background

The [SFA Clean Fibre Processing Standard](#) (hereafter, the Standard or CFPS) was initially developed to reduce the environmental impact of cashmere fibre processing as SFA intended to ensure that harmful chemicals, specifically alkylphenol ethoxylates (APEOs), are eliminated from the scouring (washing) and dehairing process and that they have not been used at this initial stage of processing. The Standard also features sustainability -related criteria for fair work, Health and Safety, and process quality management. This revision will build on the SFA's commitment to sustainability.

A Terms of Reference for the Standard can be found [here](#).

Time for a scheduled review

Clause 6.14 of the ISEAL Code of Good Practice requires that standards be reviewed at least every five years to assess continued relevance and effectiveness in meeting the Standards' stated objectives. The last version of the Standard was published in 2021, meaning it is now due for review.

Way forward

During 2025, the SFA undertook a focused stakeholder consultation to determine what changes, if any, should be made to the Standard. The aim is to publish the revision by February 2027. Based on the extent of stakeholder feedback, the revision could be a re-issue with medium and minor changes, or a new revised standard with major changes.



WHAT IS BEING CONSIDERED?

Certification of all industrial processing

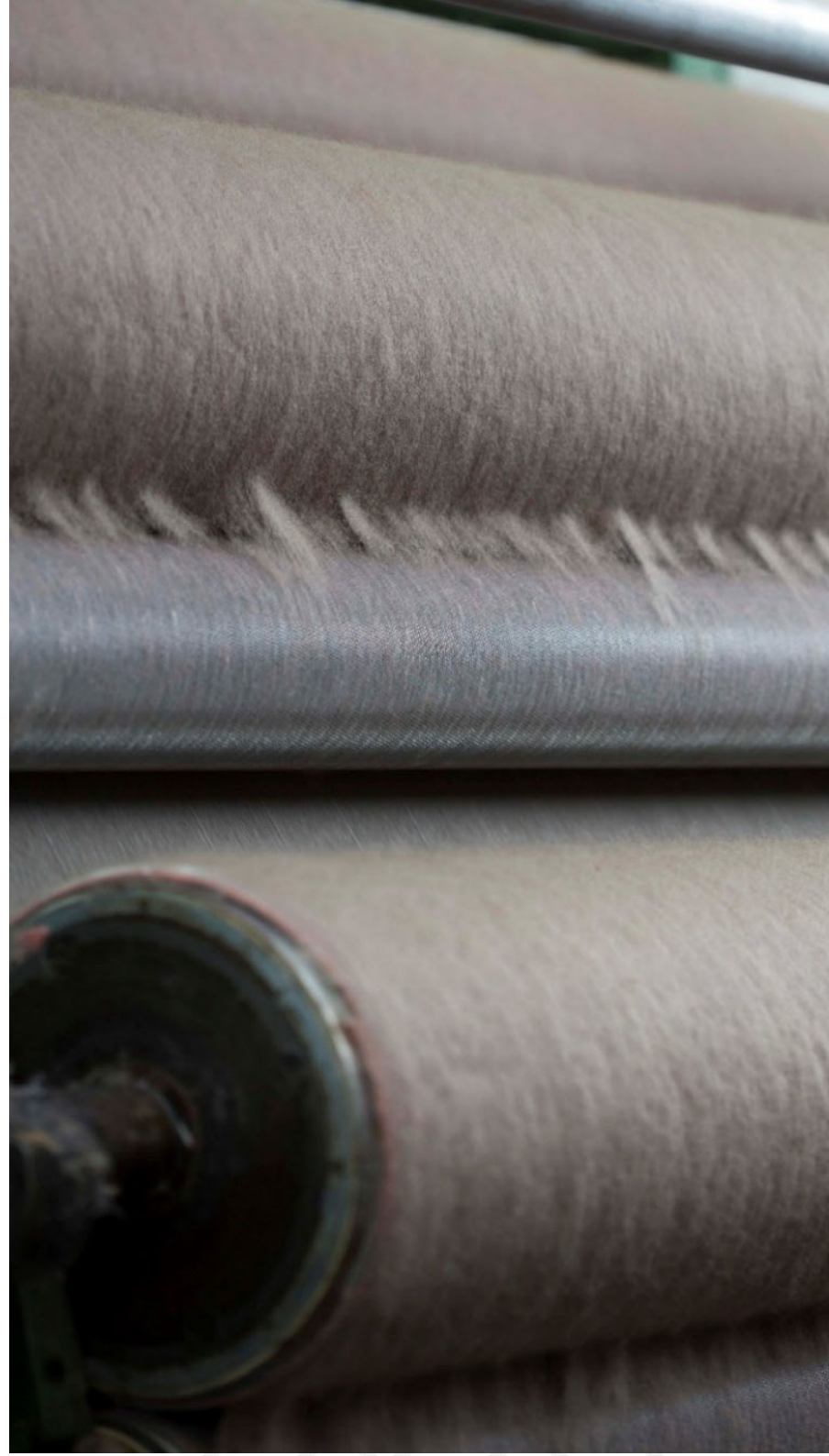
SFA has developed strengths in the implementation of standards, certification and good practice at the first mile and primary processing sectors. Our stakeholders have enquired if the SFA Clean Fibre Processing certification could be extended to cover all industrial fibre processing steps to suit many industries already compliant with ISO standards. SFA will explore ways to cover additional processing steps. This may lead to dual certification, and this standard will then cease to become a primary processing standard. The approach brings more flexibility as stakeholders could select applicable processing steps/stages to be covered in their scope certificates. We will undertake further stakeholder consultation and critically examine any unintended consequences which may result prior to final decisions. It may be best to achieve this by forming mutually beneficial partnerships with other standards/certification systems, where possible.

Exposure to UV lighting

During this revision, further consideration will be given to Workers' exposure to UV lighting conditions and the implications to worker health and safety.

Enhancing Environmental sustainability

We will explore how to encourage industrial processors to eliminate, from their on-site operations, the use of energy derived from fossil fuels, We will also consult on how to encourage practices to manage waste, water and energy even better.



Better Internal control and management

To better align with international standards frameworks, and to enable interested stakeholders to access EU markets, we will make provision for aligning with the relevant OECD guidance (e.g., OECD 6 steps framework as outlined in the OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains in the Garment and Footwear Sector). This will lead to better due diligence, internal audit practices and management practices, resulting in better governance and the overall improvement of responsible business practices.

Replacing the Awards system with a continuous improvement framework

The awards system currently in place may be replaced to align with the continuous improvement framework of the SFA Animal Fibre Standard. Currently, SFA's 'Best practice' can be claimed by complying with all the mandatory requirements of the standard, as well as improvement indicators. This recognition is expected to continue.

POSSIBLE ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Recycling of fibre and 'SFA Certified'

Stakeholders have asked for the consideration of recycled cashmere to count as 'SFA Certified', arguing that recycled products are at least as ethical as virgin cashmere produced in line with the objectives of the SFA Animal Fibre Standard. However, detractors say certifying fibre for which provenance cannot be traced (very difficult for recycled animal fibre without undertaking costly testing procedures), or with the potential for nominal 'recycling' being used for otherwise robust products, could act as a certification loophole.



We believe it is still worth investigating options. Considerations will include how to define which products could be categorised as suitable for recycling, and to what extent processing should have occurred in these products.

FAQS

How long would we have to prepare?

Enough time will be given for certificate-holding de-hairers and scourers to adjust how they process 'SFA Certified' animal fibre. All 'SFA Certified' animal fibre processors following old requirements will still count as 'SFA Certified', within an agreed transition period. You will have a chance to give feedback on any proposed timelines.

What is not changing?

The scope will remain global and continue to focus on effective management, decent work, and protection of the environment.

How are decisions made?

Technical working groups will support the development of the standard from the initial stages. Decisions are made by the SFA Standard System Improvement Committee (SSIC), based on recommendations made by the technical working groups via the SFA Secretariat. The SFA Board retains the right to veto decisions made by the SSIC. All decisions are announced through the SFA website.

For more information on this and more, see the [SFA Standard Setting Procedure](#).

Contact and comments

We welcome and encourage feedback at all stages of this process. Please send any questions/comments regarding this plan through our [Open Consultation Portal](#), noting that all feedback will be anonymised and published online.



FORWARD PLAN

Development

Consultation on intent and draft revised standard, if any

We seek fairness and inclusiveness through extensive stakeholder consultation. Our goal is for all stakeholders to provide feedback and be heard. In this, we aim to secure strategic insight, build consensus and earn credibility.

To this end, stakeholders will have until **26 June 2026** to comment on this statement of intent, which they can do through our [Open Consultation Portal](#). Following this, a draft revised standard will be developed and made available for public consultation over approximately a 60-day period (first running for a minimum of 30 days and another for 30 days) in late 2026. We will also seek input from CABs to ensure that any new Standard is credible/works in practice. Special focus will be towards overcoming language barriers to receive feedback from traditionally underrepresented stakeholders.

Publication

We aim to complete this review in February 2027. Stakeholders can also expect supporting guidance, summaries and training materials, and a document that outlines the feedback we received from stakeholders and how it was considered. Translations of key documents will follow.





Effective dates and transition timelines

It is intended to give the sector **one year** after publication to become familiar with the new Standard, depending on the extent of the changes agreed. From this date (the 'effective' date), it is expected that all new scope certificates will be awarded against the new Standard, or they will not be able to get a new SFA Chain of Custody certificate. Since scope certificates last for three years, we would expect all old scope certificates to have expired by **May 2031**, meaning that all entities will have to be certified against the new Standard by then. If the scope of the Standard expands to include more processors in the value chain, these entities will be given three years from the effective date to become certified.

