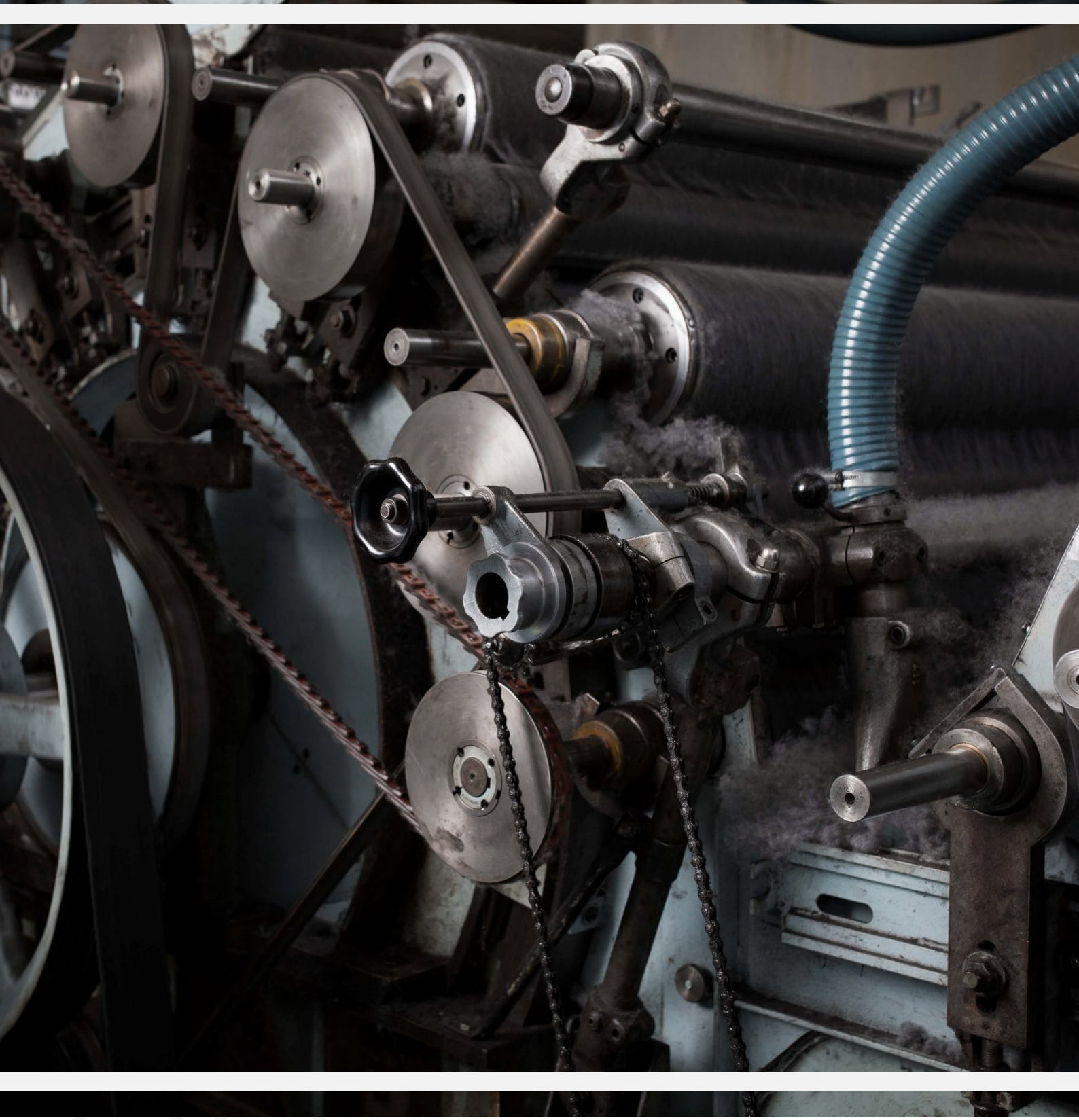

10 SEPTEMBER 2026

SFA FIBRE PROCESSING STANDARD

VERSION 2.0

SUSTAINABLE FIBRE ALLIANCE

Disclaimer

No guarantee, warranty or representation is made as to the accuracy or completeness of the SFA Fibre Processing Standard and other documents, or information sources referenced in it. Compliance with the standard is not intended to, nor does it replace, contravene or otherwise alter the requirements of any applicable global, national, state or local governmental statutes, laws, regulations, ordinances or other requirements. Compliance with the SFA's Fibre Processing Standard is voluntary and is neither intended to, nor does it create, establish or recognise any legally enforceable obligations or rights against the SFA and/or its members or stakeholders. Users shall have no legal cause of action against the SFA and/or its members or stakeholders for failing to comply with the Standard.

About the SFA

The SFA is a non-profit international organisation working with the animal fibre supply chain, from herders and producers to brands and retailers. Our vision is for a responsible and inclusive global natural fibres sector that safeguards the health and well-being of people, animals and the environment. The SFA's Fibre Processing Standard (hereafter, the Standard) is comprised of main principles such as continuous improvement, effective governance and management, fair and decent work, Health and Safety, Environment and chemicals management, quality and supply chain management.

About this Standard

This is a normative document, and the SFA reserves the right to amend it based on developing needs and emerging best practices, as defined in the SFA Standard Setting Procedure. The official language of the SFA is English. Clarifications of translations should refer to the English original for confirmation. Please ensure you have the latest version of this Standard. The SFA website will always display the current valid Standard.

This version expands the scope to include animal fibre in general and applies to any type of Animal fibre (See definition). It also applies to wet-processing aspects of secondary processing of animal fibre. Further, it now covers the processing of pre-consumer and post-consumer recycling of animal fibre.

This standard does not apply to the assembly/manufacture of garments, accessories, beddings, or other Animal fibre-based products.

The requirements are kept high-level and leave room for industries to adopt/develop their best practice to deliver customer requirements. Certain criteria are included with a view to future-proofing the industry, with further enhancements intended in future revisions as the industry progresses and evolves in its path of sustainability.

This version extends requirements as follows:

- Strengthened governance and supply chain management – including new provisions for internal audit and assessment of continuous improvement and negative impacts (Due diligence aligned with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)), extensively covered by guidance in Annex 1 and Annex 2;
- Improvement indicators for resource use – for water and energy management;
- Improvement indicators for waste, discharges and effluent management;
- New gender equality requirements (reflecting studies conducted by the SFA, and based on international conventions);
- Extended requirements covering child labour – aligned with ILO conventions;
- Extended OSH requirements – UV-light exposure, risk assessment;
- Well-developed chemical management system – with provision for organisation to select between specified globally recognised systems and RSL lists.

Other changes include the removal of the gold, silver and bronze awarding system, and the traffic lights system of ranking organisations, and in place, aligning with the SFA Animal Fibre Standard's (AFS) continuous improvement framework.

The following international treaties and guidance underpin additional requirements stipulated in this revision:

- OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains in the Garment and Footwear Sector;
- OECD (2018) OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Business Conduct, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/15f5f4b3-en;
- ILO Convention No 100 (Equal remuneration);
- ILO Convention 111 (Discrimination in employment and occupation);
- ILO Convention 138 (Minimum Age);
- ILO Convention 182 (Worst Forms of Child Labour);
- ILO Convention 183 (Maternity Protection);
- ILO Convention 190 (Violence and harassment);
- EU Consumer Safety and Product Compliance principles;
- ZDHC/OEKO-Tex/Bluesky chemical management principles.

More information on the qualitative aims of this Standard can be found in the Standard's Terms of Reference.

This standard is organised into Sections covering the requirements for general application (Sections 1 to 9, 17, 18 and 19) and shall apply across all operations covered in a single scope certificate. Additional requirements for primary processing are covered in Sections 10, 11 and 12, secondary processing in Section 13, and recycled fibre in Sections 14, 15 and 16. This is summarised in the following table.

Process(es)	**Relevant sections**
ALL	Sections 1 to 9, 17, 18 and 19 Annexes 1 to 5 and 7
Primary Processing only	Sections 1 to 9, 17, 18 and 19; Sections 10, 11 and 12 Annexes 1 to 5 and 7
Secondary Processing only	Sections 1 to 9, 17, 18 and 19; Section 13 Annexes 1 to 5 and 7
Primary and secondary processing	Sections 1 to 9, 17, 18 and 19; Sections 10, 11 and 12; Annexes 1 to 5 and 7
Recycling of Fibre	Sections 1 to 9, 17, 18 and 19; Sections 14, 15 and 16 All Annexes

This is a modular approach where organisations are enabled to select either to be a) certified for primary processing only or b) include one or more secondary processing steps as applicable to their operations. They are, however, required to cover all operations that are

within the scope of the Standard and operated within their establishment. They are required to specifically select their operational boundaries in their scope certificate(s).

This is a global Standard. Therefore, there are certain core and improvement requirements (indicators) that may not apply in every national jurisdiction. It is important to first comply with all national laws and regulations that apply to an organisation and their trading partners.

The SFA recognises the opportunities and challenges encountered by improving and leading industries, and adopts, where appropriate, a risk-based approach to enable several elements of this Standard to be met within a continuous improvement framework. Industries can choose their growth and improvement targets to make a stronger impact by meeting their objectives.

In this document, the following terms are used to indicate requirements, recommendations, permissions and possibilities or capabilities:

- "**shall**" indicates a normative requirement;
- "**should**" indicates a recommendation;
- "**may**" indicates a permission;
- "**can**" indicates a possibility or a capability; and
- "**justify**" or "**justified**" means to justify to the entity's conformity assessment body and infers that the activity being justified is conducted as an exception to the norm.

Indicates guidance. Guidance is not normative in and of itself, but may repeat, reinforce and/or clarify normative requirements.

Industries meeting all the mandatory requirements (indicators) are eligible to be granted 'SFA Certified' status. Those that meet all the mandatory requirements as well as all improvement indicators at any single audit could be certified 'SFA Best Practice' subsequent to that audit; while those that meet all the requirements of this Standard could be recognised as SFA's leading industries and could be certified as '**SFA's Industry Leaders**' as well as granted concessions in audit frequency.

References

Other SFA programme documents:

- SFA Chain of Custody Standard
- SFA Animal Fibre Standard
- Clean Fibre Processing Standard v 1.0
- Visual Claims Guide
- SFA Assurance and Certification Manual
- SFA Glossary of Terms
- SFA Standard Setting Procedure

SFA web links

- SFA – Conformity Assessment Bodies
- SFA Threads (Digital Traceability Platform)

Get Involved

To start producing and trading 'SFA Certified' animal fibres, you need to be certified against this Standard, depending on the outcomes of third-party audits. To learn more about the benefits of certification and find out how to get started, we have developed a range of 'Get Certified' guides.

Review of this document

The SFA is responsible for this Standard. Concerns or comments on the design and/or implementation of this Standard or any other part of the SFA programme more broadly should be lodged through the SFA Open Consultation Portal. All concerns will be considered carefully, no later than when formal review of this document is scheduled to begin within five years of the previous major version being published.

Effective date

Entities may choose to seek certification from the publication date of this Standard.

This Standard will become effective on 28 February 2027 (effective date). An 18-month transition period will last until 28 August 2029, whereby all organisations will have been assessed against the standard.

Any entity already certified against the Clean Fibre Processing Standard v1.0 is permitted to be assessed against the Fibre Processing Standard at any point in the transition period.

All entities are expected to be certified against this Standard by 28 August 2029.

Amendment record

Version	Context	Revision	Date of Publication
1.0	Developed to reduce the environmental impact of harmful substances used in animal fibre processing, especially alkylphenol ethoxylates (APEOs).	N/A	27/08/2021
2.0	This standard has been revised in compliance with the ISEAL Code.	See 'About this Standard' section.	

Definitions

For the purposes of this Standard, the following definitions shall apply and may differ from the equivalent definitions included in the SFA Glossary of Terms.

Animal Fibre – Animal fibre is defined as protein fibre derived from mammalian sources (for the purpose of this Standard) such as wool characterised by its structural components: the cortex, cuticle, and medulla, obtained from cashmere goat (undercoat, guard hair), camelid species, yak, alpaca, bison, sheep, angora, etc. These fibres provide mechanical properties, protect cells, and possess high moisture absorption. Based on origin, animal fibres are mainly classified into two types: hair and secretions. Animal fibres can be potentially used as reinforcement in polymer matrices due to their physical, chemical and mechanical properties. Animal fibres are good raw textile materials because of their high elasticity, warmth retention, water absorption, and soft lustre. The fineness and length of the fibres depend on the species.

Secondary processing – all processing steps covered by this Standard are given in Section 13. These steps are wet processes associated with top-making, spinning, dyeing and finishing of animal fibre. Secondary wet-processing operations are undertaken within the entity's certified scope, including dyeing, bleaching or whitening, washing, rinsing, aqueous preparation and wet chemical finishing. This excludes manufacturing (cutting, sewing, and finished product assembly of garments, accessories, bedding, etc.).

Small organisation – An entity recognised as a small organisation by their in-country legislature and economic policies and verified against these by the certifying Conformity Assessment Body (CAB). For examples, see Annex 4.

Recycling – Animal fibre or animal fibre textile material that has been diverted from the waste stream during manufacturing or processing, and subsequently collected, reprocessed and used as a raw material (see SFA Glossary of Terms). In the case of post-consumer recycling, fabrics are collected and dismantled after use by the consumer.

Plastics – Synthetic polymers derived from petrochemicals (fossil fuels like oil and gas) that are melted and spun into fibres, yarns, and fabrics. These materials are commonly known as synthetic textiles, and include polyester, nylon, acrylic, spandex/elastane and polypropylene.

1. Scope requirements

1.1. All entities processing 'SFA Certified' animal fibre **shall** be certified for that animal fibre type against this Standard, or any of its predecessors that are still in effect, by an approved and accredited third party (i.e. a CAB) before they may make claims regarding the sale, labelling and/or processing of 'SFA Certified' products for that animal fibre.

- *See the SFA Glossary of Terms for the definition of an entity and other terms used in this document.*

1.2. Each certificate **shall** cover one type of animal fibre. Where an organisation wants to be certified to produce more than one type of 'SFA Certified' animal fibre, they will need another scope certificate. For more information, see the SFA Assurance and Certification Manual .

1.3. The Laws and Regulations that operate within a jurisdiction **shall** always be adhered to. Where a requirement of the Standard exceeds the law/regulations, the requirements of the Standard **shall** be complied with. Where a requirement of this Standard contradicts law within a national jurisdiction in which the organisation operates, the law local to that jurisdiction **shall** take precedence.

- *This does not grant exemptions to the organisation when they are operating outside of that jurisdiction.*
- *Products are only 'SFA Certified' when the seller is compliant with the mandatory requirements of all relevant standards, these being SFA's Animal Fibre Standard and Chain of Custody Standard.*

1.4. Blending and mixing of fibres and claims made **shall** be in accordance with the SFA's Chain of Custody Standard (CoC – see Annex 3 and Annex 6).

- *When the CoC Standard is updated, the relevant clauses in the updated standard applies.*

1.5. Small-scale entities (see definition in this standard in Annex 4) **may** use the provisions as described in Annex 4, for compliance with this Standard.

2. Certification requirements

2.1. The entity **shall** meet all the requirements (indicators) designated as 'shall (mandatory)' statements of this Standard.

2.2. An entity **shall** meet all these requirements to be considered 'SFA Certified'.

2.3. The entity **shall** meet at least three new improvement indicators described in this Standard in addition to the mandatory (shall) requirements of this Standard, at each audit. The active ongoing implementation of the selected improvement indicators **shall** be verified at the audit.

- *Improvement indicators are those defined by 'may' statements. An entity that meets all these requirements in addition to the mandatory requirements of this Standard is 'SFA Certified' and may claim to be meeting 'SFA Best Practice'.*

- *An entity that meets both 'may' indicators and 'should' statements (separately listed in Annex 7) will be considered SFA's leading establishments and shall be rewarded with a reduction in auditing frequencies*

2.4. Recycled fibre processed according to Sections 14, 15 and 16 **shall** be eligible to be certified as 'SFA Certified Recycled Fibre'. See Annex 6.

2.5. In undertaking verification activities, the equivalence of evidence as described in Annex 5 **may** be used.

3. Governance and management

3.1 A documented management system, covering all the requirements of this Standard, **shall** be implemented by the entity.

3.1.1 The entity **shall** be responsible for its scope certificate and ensure that all operations covered by the scope certificate are compliant with all the mandatory requirements of the Standard.

3.1.2 The entity shall demonstrate adherence to continuous improvement principles by ensuring that improvement indicators are in place and in the process of being implemented in accordance with 2.3

3.1.3 The entity **could** be either a small establishment, a vertically integrated company, or an independent individual operating alone.

3.2 The entity **shall** be a legal entity or person in the country where its management office is based.

3.3 The entity **shall** appoint management representatives with overall responsibility for meeting the requirements of the SFA Fibre Processing Standard.

- *This may be the same person responsible (SFA's contact point) for ensuring that the entity meets the requirements of the SFA Chain of Custody Standard.*

3.4 The entity **shall** inform the CAB and the SFA of any change in the entity of the management representative within 20 working days.

- *Informing the SFA is done through standards@sustainablefibre.org.*

3.5 Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for receipt of raw materials **shall** be documented and updated as required for the following activities:

a. Handling;

b. Primary and secondary processing;

c. Environmental and chemical management;

d. Training;

e. Continuous improvement planning (using improvement indicators);

f. Fair work and employment;

g. HR policy;

h. Quality management;

i. Supply chain management;

j. Recycling.

- *Governance and management systems **could** be illustrated via an organisational structure, and SOPs for sampling, testing, monitoring, and quality management **could** be collated. Chemical management and environmental management plans **could** be combined where suitable.*

3.6 The entity **shall** maintain records for at least six years.

3.7 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) of sustainability objectives **may** be established and reviewed as required.

3.8 An internal audit framework **may** be in place and internal audits conducted annually, with roles, responsibilities, policies and procedures identified and recorded.

- *Guidance – See Annex 1 for guidance on the development and implementation of an internal audit system.*

3.9 Sub-contractors performing processing **shall** be evaluated against the relevant requirements of this Standard.

3.10 Sustainability performance **may** be publicly reported.

3.11 The entity **may** establish a risk-based process for assessing continuous improvement and impact on responsible business conduct consistent with internationally recognised frameworks (See Annex 2) to identify, prevent, mitigate, monitor and address adverse impacts associated with their operations, products, services and business relationships.

3.12 Compliance with 3.11 **may** be agreed to between the buyer and seller, based on the buyer's requirements for trading. However, it is recommended for recognition as an improvement indicator early in the implementation of this Standard. The findings of the assessment can be integrated into the sustainability objectives of the entity and verified by internal audit.

- *This assessment should extend throughout the supply chain and **should** be integrated into existing governance and management systems.*
- *Guidance – See Annex 2.*

3.13 Entities processing pre- and post-consumer recycled fibre **shall** meet the requirements given in 3.11.

4. Occupational health, safety and hygiene

4.1. Health and Safety policy and procedures, adhering to all legal requirements, **shall** be in place.

4.2. Signage **shall** be clear, and safety information **shall** be made available to every employee in a format and language that is understandable.

4.3. A formal risk assessment of workplace hazards **shall** be conducted annually, and potential risks addressed. The risk assessment **shall** consider:

a. Objectives;
b. Assessment of hazards;
c. Their frequencies, magnitude and consequences;
d. Prevention and mitigation measures.

4.3.1. Corrective actions **shall** be recorded where lapses have occurred.

4.4. The risk assessment **shall** be reviewed and updated annually and **shall** include where there is potential for:

a. Exposure to dust;
b. Slips, trips and falls;
c. Noise pollution;
d. Lone working;
e. UV light exposure (natural and artificial);
f. Fire safety;
g. Injury;
h. Moving machinery.

4.5. The entity **shall** ensure the adequacy of facilities for differently abled workers, pregnant women and vulnerable employees.

4.5.1. The risk assessment **shall** describe preventative/mitigation measures including;

a. A requirement to wear dust masks when high quantities of dust occur;
b. When significant changes occur in operations, equipment, processes or work conditions, or following any serious accident or occupational illness;
c. When new risks are known/identified.

4.6. Machinery **shall** be installed professionally and used according to the manufacturer's instructions and be covered by the risk assessment conducted at least annually for critical machinery and at the beginning of the commissioning of new machinery/equipment; and updated no later than every three years.

4.7. Repair records **shall** be maintained for minor equipment.

4.8. Machinery and equipment used for all operations **shall**:

a. Be regularly serviced and maintained according to company policy (manufacturer's instructions);
b. Have a logbook that is maintained and current for all equipment;
c. Be fitted with guards, bars, barricades and safety features;
d. Have clear labels applied;
e. Have instructions for the safe operation of machines easily understood and accessible to operators.

4.9. The entity **shall** appoint an employee, contractor/external service provider that has competence in and responsibility for:

a. Health and Safety Practice;

b. Labour safety;

c. Improved working conditions;

d. Implementation and monitoring of compliance in accordance with law and legislation and the requirements of this Standard.

4.10. Clean, safe working conditions **shall** be provided with access to;

a. Sanitation facilities;

b. Potable water for drinking;

c. An adequate rest area;

d. Food consumption facilities.

4.11. Access to medical care **shall** be provided and **shall** always include;

a. A first aid kit;

b. Health examinations (recommended yearly for all employees);

c. Appropriate transportation to local medical facilities in case of medical emergencies and accidents.

4.12. All employees **may** be covered by a medical insurance scheme paid for by the employer.

4.13. Records of accidents and occupational illnesses **shall** be documented and maintained.

4.14. Protective garments and equipment **shall** be provided at no cost to the employees.

4.15. Protective garments and equipment **shall** be used and:

a. Meet acceptable industry quality standards;

b. Be regularly maintained and be efficient and safe to operate;

c. Be replaced when necessary.

4.16. All staff **shall** be provided with training in relation to workplace safety policies and procedures.

4.16.1. Training **shall** be conducted at least once a year and at every onboarding of new employees.

4.17. Training attendance and completion records **shall** be maintained and kept for at least six years.

4.18. Near-miss incidents which could lead to accidents **shall** be recorded, reported, and evidence of follow-up action taken **shall** be recorded.

4.19. Noise exposure monitoring **may** be conducted.

4.20. Digital safety monitoring systems **may** be used.

4.21. The entity **shall** provide workers exposed to artificial UV light and other damaging lighting effects due to exposure for sustained periods with regular and sufficient breaks with access to natural light. A rest period after two hours of exposure **shall** be provided.

- *Guidance – See Further Reading section.*

4.22. An extreme weather health management plan **shall** be in place where required, addressing provision of;

a. Shade and shelter;

b. Adjustment of working hours;

c. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE);

d. Exposure management;

e. Food during working hours;

f. Hydration.

4.23. An Emergency Preparedness Plan, with responsibilities and procedures, **shall** be in place, in a format understandable by all employees.

4.24. Hazardous chemicals **shall** be stored in designated, secure, labelled storage areas with secondary containment where appropriate and in accordance with applicable legislation (See section 8).

5. Employment, human rights and fair work

5.1. A human resource (HR) management policy **shall** be in place that covers all labour law and legislation requirements and the requirements of section 5.

5.2. Minimum employment age shall be 15 years of age and practices **shall** comply with ILO Convention 138.

5.3. Hazardous work by persons under 18 years of age **shall** be prohibited in accordance with ILO Convention 182.

5.4. The entity **shall** identify, assess and prioritise risks based on their severity and likelihood. A risk-based approach **shall** be used to identify risks to areas identified in 5.5, 5.6 and 5.7.

5.5. The HR management policy **shall** reflect the Law on Labour (LOL Code) legislation and/or applicable national law and establish a system that outlines its guidelines and systems for addressing each of the following:

a. Equal rights and opportunities;

b. Remuneration and pay policies;

d. Working conditions, safety and sanitation;

e. Non-discrimination policies (women, minors, foreigners and disadvantaged);

f. Policies that prevent child and forced labour;

g. Recruitment procedures;

h. Employment termination and redundancy procedures;

i. Labour dispute procedures;

j. Disciplinary and grievance procedures;

k. Labour management and monitoring;

l. Rights of indigenous peoples and local communities.

5.6. An Anti-slavery Policy **shall** be included in the human resources management policy and implemented, which includes the prohibition, at a minimum, of:

a. Forced overtime;

b. Unpaid overtime;

c. Illegal underpayment;

d. Indentured labour;

e. Bonded labour;

f. Forced labour of any kind;

g. Child Labour;

h. Prison labour.

5.7. A gender equality management policy **shall** be included within the human resources management policy. This policy **shall** take into consideration:

a. Equal pay for all;

b. Gender equality ratio in governance/Management;

c. Expression of women's voice in decision-making;

d. Gender equality in recruitment;

e. Opportunities for career development and promotion for women;

f. Family-friendly work environment;

g. Provisions for providing part-time/temporary/seasonal employment;

h. Special health and safety provisions such as safe working environment, facilities for breast-feeding mothers, rest for pregnant women;

i. Non-discriminatory behaviours and approaches regarding female employees;

j. Provision of maternity leave as in ILO Convention 183;

k. Measures to detect, report, and mitigate sexual harassment, abuse and violence.

5.8. Women's grievance committees **may** be formed and actively participate in the elevation and resolution of female worker issues.

5.9. Harassment and abuse **shall** be prohibited.

5.10. Every employee **shall** be provided with details of their wages, including how their pay is calculated.

5.11. Wages **shall** meet legal minimum wage requirements.

5.12. Records **shall** be kept of wages paid, and these **shall** accurately reflect hours worked.

5.13. Working hours **shall** comply with applicable law.

5.14. Comprehensive written contracts of employment or collective agreements **shall** be received by workers.

5.15. An appointed employee **shall** be responsible for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Human Resource Management Policy.

5.16. Formal staff inductions and training programmes **shall** be provided for all new employees that cover workplace safety and workplace employment procedures, rules and regulations.

5.17. The Human Resource Policy **shall** be reviewed and evaluated according to the entity's needs.

5.18. Staff involved in Human Resource Management **shall** be trained appropriately.

5.19. Accurate and maintained HR records **shall** be available.

5.20. Worker committees **may** be established.

5.21. Worker engagement programmes **should** influence decision-making.

5.22. Overtime **shall** be voluntary.

5.22.1. All hours worked **shall** be paid.

5.23. Equal opportunity targets **may** be monitored and reported.

5.24. Living wage assessments **may** be conducted.

5.25. For directly hired workers, the entity **should** conduct legally required identification, right-to-work and age verifications.

- *The entity should align assessment of safeguarding of human rights in accordance with the principles outlined in the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGP)17 and the Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains in Garment and Footwear Sector.*

6. Quality management

6.1. Formal quality control assurance (QCA) procedures or quality management system (QMS) **may** be in place, as a part of the entity's document management system in relation to fibre processing.

6.2. A documented customer complaints handling system, including method of investigation, corrective action, and review of effectiveness, **shall** be maintained as part of the QCA/QMS system.

6.3. Defined raw/greasy fibre/yarn quality standards **shall** be in place that provide the end-product requirements, specifications or characteristics. These requirements **shall** be agreed to between buyer and seller, and procedures for the quality assessment **shall** be in place.

6.4. SOPs that ensure that fibre processing is consistent and meets the requirements of this Standard **shall** be in place.

6.5. Required productivity and quality levels **shall** be defined, achieved and monitored.

6.6. Staff **shall** be trained and aware of quality requirements.

6.7. An appointed employee **shall** be responsible for quality and assurance, and all staff **shall** be made aware of the quality aspects they are required to deliver.

6.8. Fibre composition claims **shall** always be maintained accurately and as agreed to between the buyer and seller.

6.9. Process mapping and optimisation methods **may** be implemented by establishing productivity targets that do not compromise quality and integrity criteria.

6.10. End-to-end digital traceability **may** be implemented.

7. Environmental management

7.1. An Environmental Management Plan (EMP), which reflects legislation and includes environmental targets, **shall** be in place.

7.2. The EMP **shall** be updated annually.

7.3. An appointed employee **shall** be responsible for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the EMP.

7.4. All staff **shall** be aware of and support the environmental management system.

7.5. Staff recommendations that support continuous improvement **shall** be encouraged, considered and, if appropriate, included within the Environmental Management Plan.

7.6. Working practices that reflect efficient use of energy and water, and waste control **may** be in place.

7.7. Action to control any sources of significant energy use or water use that could be identified by monitoring **shall** be in place.

7.8. Monthly water consumption **shall** be monitored and recorded.

7.9. The entity **may** use closed-loop water systems

7.10. The entity **may** use advanced wastewater treatment technologies.

7.11. Energy consumption **shall** be monitored and recorded.

7.12. Fossil fuel reduction targets **may** be established, monitored and reported.

7.13. The entity **may** aim to establish a science-based or risk-based reduction target for fossil fuel emissions.

- *For example, an annual reduction target (KPI) of fossil fuel emissions by a percentage expressed as x% per Kg of incoming greasy fibre **may** be established.*
- *See Further Reading section for recommended tools for monitoring fossil fuel emissions*

7.14. Water reduction targets **shall** be established as science-based or risk-based KPIs.

- *For example, the entity **may** establish a target of at least 75% for reusing and recycling process water.*

7.15. Science-based or risk-based energy reduction targets and plans for annual increase in the use of renewable/green energy **may** be established.

- *For example, the entity **may** increase renewable energy use by at least 80% over X years.*

7.16. Wastewater **shall** be either treated on site, or there **shall** be suitable arrangements for the treatment of wastewater through a third party.

7.17. The effectiveness of effluent treatment **shall** be verified through documented monitoring and testing against applicable legal, permit and discharge requirements. Relevant parameters **shall** include, as applicable:

a. PH;
b. Temperature;
c. Chemical Oxygen Demand (COD);
d. Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD);
e. Total Suspended Solids (TSS);
f. Any other locally regulated parameters. Testing **shall** be conducted at a defined frequency by a competent laboratory.

7.18. The entity **should** establish performance objectives to reduce wastewater generation and pollutant loads over time. Indicators may include:

a. Reductions in water consumption per kilogram of fibre processed;
b. Increased water reuse and recycling;
c. Lower COD and BOD loads;
d. Improved treatment efficiency;
e. Reduced sludge generation;
f. The adoption of continuous monitoring technologies for critical treatment parameters.

7.19. Where effluents are discharged directly, laboratory testing **shall** be conducted.

7.20. Where effluents are connected to a municipal treatment facility, a valid permit and utility compliance records **shall** be maintained.

7.21. Actions to correct variations to planned environmental targets **shall** be implemented.

7.22. Life cycle assessment **can** be conducted. The specific scope of implementation, methodological standards, system boundaries, and acceptable types of evidence **can** be established by the entity.

- *Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) is a circularity initiative that breaks down the planetary impact of a product or service into raw material usage, manufacturing conversion, distribution, usage and disposal. At every stage, it measures contribution to causing*

specific types of negative impacts, such as global warming, resource depletion, water and land use, toxicity and ecotoxicity, and eutrophication of water bodies.

7.23. Monitoring and assessment of environmental performance **shall** take place to confirm progress, outcomes and continuous improvement.

7.24. Environmental incidents (e.g. spillage) **shall** be recorded and remedial action established.

7.25. Circular material recovery programmes **should** be implemented.

7.26. The Environmental Management Plan **shall** include all criteria related to the Chemical Management as stipulated in Section 8.

8. Chemical management

8.1. A documented Chemical Management System (CMS) **shall** be in place including:

a. The use of a process to assess all chemicals, including a chemical inventory;

b. specifically addressing procedures for safe handling;

c. transfer and use of hazardous chemicals.

8.2. The Entity **shall** establish a documented risk assessment and risk management plan for:

a. chemical storage;

b. handling and use;

c. considering worker health;

d. environmental impact;

e. product safety (by systematically identifying and assessing chemical hazards, exposure risks and environmental impacts as part of the inventory);

f. Appropriate storage facilities;

g. Maintained records of all chemical inputs;

h. Documentation that confirms the chemicals meet legislation and are acceptable and safe for use;

i. Working practices that are in line with legislation;

j. Trained staff knowledgeable about safe handling and impact of dangerous chemicals and hazardous substances;

k. Procedures understood by staff for handling chemical emergencies;

l. Specific procedures to be followed in case of chemical emergency events.

8.3. Up-to-date Safety Data Sheets (SDS) **shall** be accessible to staff and provided in a language understood, especially by workers handling these chemicals.

8.4. Chemical storage areas **shall** be marked conspicuously and clearly with appropriate signage in compliance with the law and accepted practice, and **shall** be maintained securely.

8.5. All chemical containers **shall** be clearly labelled with the product identification, hazard classification, and handling precautions in accordance with applicable legislation.

8.6. Secondary containment facilities **shall** be provided.

8.7. Chemical substitution plans **may** be implemented (see 8.9 and 8.10) through the Chemical Management Plan.

8.8. Chemical consumption **shall** be measured.

8.9. Hazardous chemicals **should** be eliminated where technically and operationally feasible and/or substituted by safer alternatives.

8.10. Chemical alternatives that are biodegradable **should** be used preferably. See Further Reading for information.

8.11. The Chemical Management Plan **shall** demonstrate:

a. compliance with applicable legal chemical permitted and restricted usage/prohibitions within the organisation's jurisdiction;

b. control of chemical inputs; This **shall** be done either by checking the chemical Material Safety Data Sheet and confirming the chemical's substance CAS number against a recognised restricted substances list or by selecting chemicals certified to be compliant with a recognised Manufacturing Restricted List (MRSL).

c. compliance of finished products with the buyer's Product Restricted Substances List (PRSL) or, by default, a recognised Product Restricted List (MRSL).

- *Recognised RSLs are:*
  - *AFIRM RSL – https://afirm-group.com/afirm-rsl/ (PRSL);*
  - *Bluesign® – https://www.bluesign.com/ (PRSL);*
  - *OEKO-TEX® RSL – OEKO restricted substances list (RSL);*
  - *ZDHC Manufacturing Restricted Substances List (MRSL) – https://www.zdhc.org/mrsl.*

8.12. The entity **shall** clearly identify the chemical management system used in its Chemical Management Plan.

8.13. In recycled fibre processing, the entity **shall** adhere to either:

a. OEKO-Tex Standard 100 – https://www.oeko-tex.com/en/our-standards/oeko-tex-standard-100; or

b. Bluesign®.

Table 1 – Permissions for Chemical Usage in Animal Fibre Processing and limits expressed in the final material (by dry weight)

Operation	Permitted	Non-permitted	Limited use (limits expressed in PPM, where permitted) in the material by dry weight
Fibre sorting and opening	Dust suppression water systems	No chemicals are permitted	N/A
Scouring	• Biodegradable non-ionic detergents • APEO-free surfactants • Sodium carbonate • Sodium bicarbonate • Citric acid • Acetic acid • Hydrogen peroxide (controlled use) • Enzyme-assisted scouring agents	• Alkylphenol Ethoxylates (APEOs – includes Nonylphenol ethoxylates (NPEOs) and Octyl phenol ethoxylates (OPEOs) • Alkylphenols (APs) • All perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances PFAS including perfluorinated stain or water-repellent treatments • Arsenic Compounds • Carcinogenic azo dyes • Biocides: o Dimethyl fumarate (CAS 624-49-7) o O-phenyl phenol (CAS 90-43-7) o Permethrin (CAS 52645-53-1) o Triclosan (CAS 3380-34-5) o Chlorophenols compound (mono, di, tri tetra, penta). UV-Absorber; UV 350, UV 328, UV 327, UV 320	• Phthalates – Di-2-ethylhexyl phthalate (DEHP), Dibutyl phthalate (DBP), and Benzyl butyl phthalate (BBP), below 0.1% or 1000 PPM max • Phenols – Pentachlorophenol (PCP) and Tetra chlorophenol (TeCP) • Tributyltin (TBT) – below 0.5 PPM for Babywear; 1.0 PPM max for all other apparel Dibutyltin (DBT) • Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and Polychlorinated terphenyls (PCTs) • Restricted Arylamines –20 PPM max PFAS: • Below 25 ppb for any PFAS as measured with targeted PFAS analysis (excluding polymer) • Below 250 ppb for the sum of targeted PFAS after degradation of precursor (hydrolysis)

Operation	Permitted	Non-permitted	Limited use (limits expressed in PPM, where permitted) in the material by dry weight
		• Bisphenols (BPF, BPA, BPAF, BPS) (Final concentration in the product should be <10 ppm) • Glycols and glycols ether (See ZDHC MRSL list) • Chlorine/Hercossett process • Chlorinated solvents • Chlorobenzene compounds • Chlorophenols • Dimethyl Fumarate • Short-chain chlorinated paraffins (C10-C13) • Medium Chain Chlorinated Paraffins (C14-C17) • Chromium VI compounds • Lead compounds • Mercury compounds • Cadmium compounds • EDTA • Organotin compounds	• Total fluorine below 50 PPM, calculated as Fluorine • Substances that may release formaldehyde (except if final concentration in product is less than 20 PPM for children's garments, underwear, and nightwear; 75 PPM max in all other products • D4, D5, D6, L3, L4 siloxanes (final concentration in product should be <1000 PPM)

Operation	Permitted	Non-permitted	Limited use (limits expressed in PPM, where permitted) in the material by dry weight
Dyeing	• ZDHC MRSL, OEKO-TEX, AFIRM RSL or Bluesign® compliant dyes • Low-impact acid dyes • Metal-free dyes • Copper-containing dyes (not exceeding 5% usage)	• Per and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) • Phthalates • Azo Dyes • Heavy metal dyes except for iron and copper-containing dyes (5% w/w limit for copper-containing dyes) • Heavy Metals including Ni, Cd • Formaldehyde • Alkylphenol Ethoxylates (NPEOs) • Chlorinated Organic Dye carriers – those based on trichlorobenzene, biphenyl phenol, ortho-phenylphenol and halogenated aromatic hydrocarbons	
Finishing	• Mechanical finishing methods • Silicone softeners meeting ZDHC MRSL, OEKO-TEX, AFIRM RSL or Bluesign® requirements • Bio-based finishing agents		

Operation	Permitted	Non-permitted	Limited use (limits expressed in PPM, where permitted) in the material by dry weight
	• AOX-free super wash finishing as an alternative to the Chlorine/Hercosett process		
Spinning - Specific	• Oil agents • Anti-static Agents • Paraffin Wax (Fully refined ≤0.5% residual oil content) • Machine Lubricants (Free of Heavy metals) In addition, the above shall meet ZDHC MRSL, OEKO-TEX, REACH, AFIRM RSL or Bluesign® requirements		
Recycling	OEKO-TEX Standard 100 Bluesign®	PVC Plastics Flame Retardants:	

Operation	Permitted	Non-permitted	Limited use (limits expressed in PPM, where permitted) in the material by dry weight
		• Polybrominated diphenyl esters (PBDEs), hexabromocyclododecane (HBCDD) • Other halogenated types Per and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) Phthalates Azo Dyes Heavy Metals including Ni, Cd Formaldehyde Alkylphenol Ethoxylates (NPEOs) Chlorinated Organic Dye carriers – those based on trichlorobenzene, biphenyl phenol, ortho-phenyl phenol and halogenated aromatic hydrocarbons	

9. Supply chain management

9.1. The entity **shall** be compliant with all relevant requirements of the SFA's Chain of Custody Standard.

9.2. The entity **shall** conduct and document a risk assessment for contamination, substitution and unintended mixing of certified and non-certified material and **shall** implement appropriate controls. Clean fibre that has been through the sustainable fibre process **shall** be segregated, labelled, and stored appropriately.

9.3. The entity **shall** reconcile input, output, and stock quantities. Any unexplained variance outside the documented expected conversion range, or exceeding 5% of the planned loss, **shall** be investigated and corrective action recorded.

9.4. Supply chain mapping **may** be extended beyond direct suppliers.

10. Receiving, sorting and grading raw fibre

10.1. Appropriate natural light **shall** be provided.

10.2. UV-light exposure **shall** be managed as in 4.21 with sufficient shielding, breaks and alternatives being provided as in the guidance material provided in Further Reading. These mechanisms **shall** be clearly described in the entity's Health and Safety Management Plan.

10.3. Incoming fibre **shall** be traceable to the producer and identifiable, as required for the management of the supply chain as given in Section 9.

10.4. Foreign matter such as vegetable matter, soil, plastic and other contaminants **shall** be removed. Fibres **should** be opened and synthetics and inferior fibres removed as part of the sorting process.

10.5. Sorting operations **shall** be segregated, standardised and efficient with performance targets in place, and operated by trained personnel.

10.6. Quality standards and grading criteria **shall** be agreed between buyer and seller. They **shall** be applied to the sorting process in a clear, documented form and communicated to staff and followed.

10.7. Fibre quality grades and types **shall** be documented. Responsible employees **should** be trained in these criteria.

10.8. Sorted fibre **should** be segregated, weighed and appropriately labelled.

10.9. Appropriate waste segregation and disposal **shall** be integrated into Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

10.10. Fibre loss **should** be measured.

10.11. Dust generation **shall** be reduced as much as practically possible and described in the entity's Health and Safety Plan.

10.12. Sorted fibre **shall** be collected and moved safely and efficiently for the next process.

11. Scouring and washing of raw fibre

11.1. The entity **shall** ensure that the following documents relating to the scouring process are clearly written, communicated to staff and implemented:

a. SOPs relating to wetting, washing, rinsing and drying;

b. quality standards;

c. grading criteria.

11.2. Scouring operations **shall** be efficient with performance targets in place.

- *This may be expressed as the yield of the scouring operation.*

11.3. Monthly water consumption **may** be recorded.

11.4. Only approved chemicals **shall** be used (see Table 1).

11.5. Machines and equipment **shall** be appropriate to requirements, i.e. machine capacity, working pressure, wash cycle, temperature settings.

11.6. A scouring line in which the liquor flows in the reverse direction to the wool movement (counter-current washing) **should** be used.

11.7. The entity **shall** operate an effective wastewater treatment system maintained as described in 7.17 to 7.20.

11.8. The finished scoured product **shall** be inspected against the required quality standard.

12. De-hairing raw fibre

12.1. Quality standards and grading criteria in relation to the de-hairing process **shall** be clear, communicated to staff, and followed.

12.2. De-hairing operations **shall** be efficient with performance targets in place.

12.3. Machines and their operating conditions **shall** be guarded, appropriate to requirements.

- *i.e. machine capacity, cylinder circumference, airflow, and humidity.*

12.4. Standard operational procedures relating to wetting, washing, and drying fibres **should** be in place.

12.5. Filter bags, dust and waste **shall** be collected and disposed of in accordance with legislation.

12.6. Appropriate waste segregation and disposal **shall** be integrated into working practice.

12.7. De-haired fibre **shall** be labelled appropriately, allowing traceability before being forwarded to the next process.

12.7.1. Guard hair **shall** be separated from the fine undercoat but will be considered as 'SFA Certified' if it is compliant with all requirements applicable to primary processing in sections 10, 11 and 12.

13. Top-making, Spinning, Dyeing and Finishing (wet processing only)

13.1. Standard operating procedures and process controls **shall** be documented and implemented.

13.2. Chemical usage **shall** be in accordance with Table 1.

13.3. The entity **shall** operate an effective wastewater treatment system maintained as described in 7.17 to 7.20.

13.4. Product traceability **shall** be maintained.

13.5. Low-Liquor ratio dyeing **should** be implemented and ratios recorded.

13.6. Process water recycling **should** be maximised.

13.7. Energy-efficient machinery **should** be used.

13.8. Near-zero discharge principles **can** be established and implemented as per net zero guidance.

- *See IWA 42:2022(en) for details.*

13.9. Digital process optimisation systems and methods **may** be used.

14. Recycled fibre

14.1. There **shall** be no synthetic plastic polymer materials in the incoming material intended for recycling.

14.2. Readily removable non-textile components **shall** be removed before shredding or other fibre recovery processes.

- *Examples include plastic buttons, buckles, clips, fasteners; zips and their components; plastic packaging, labels, tags, films; hook and loop fasteners; plastic-backed patches and decorative components; foam; packaging and other foreign plastic materials.*

14.3. Synthetic fibre material and other non-animal fibre material **shall** be removed as far as technically feasible (see 16.4).

14.4. Chemical usage in recycling animal fibre material **shall** conform to Section 8.

14.5. Entities recycling fibre material **shall** meet governance requirements given in 3.11 (also see Annex 2).

14.6. A Product testing programme **shall** be in place, which details:

a. The scope of testing;

b. Methods used;

c. Frequency;

d. Details of sampling;

e. Acceptance criteria;

f. Roles and responsibilities;

g. Actions for non-conforming results.

14.7. The entity **shall** implement and maintain a documented system to verify origin, traceability, and quantity of recycled material in certified products.

14.8. The entity **shall** maintain records demonstrating the source and type of all incoming material intended for recycling.

14.9. The entity **shall** ensure that recycled material is identifiable and segregated from virgin materials throughout receipt, storage, processing, and dispatch.

14.10. The entity **shall** maintain a documented system demonstrating that the quantity of recycled material purchased, processed, held in stock, and sold is consistent.

14.11. For each animal-fibre textile recycling process, the organisation **shall** establish an expected input-to-output conversion factor, taking account of the type and condition of the reclaimed material, contamination, non-fibre components, fibre blends and the recycling technology used. Input and output quantities **shall** be recorded and reconciled. Material differences **shall** correspond to documented and technically justifiable process losses. Unexplained or abnormal deviations from the established conversion factor **shall** be investigated and documented.

14.12. The entity **shall** retain records including:

a. supplier declarations;

b. purchase and sales records;

c. receiving and inventory records;

d. production and batch records;

e. traceability records; and

f. product claims and labels

14.13. Entities processing recycled fibre **shall** comply with the requirements of the SFA's Chain of Custody Standard.

15. Pre-consumer recycled fibre

15.1. All requirements of Section 14 **shall** apply to pre-consumer fibre.

15.2. Pre-consumer recycled fibre material **shall** consist of animal fibre components and animal-fibre-based textile materials that are generated through the primary and secondary processing.

15.2.1. Pre-consumer recycled fibre **shall** be recovered from manufacturing or processing waste that has been discarded or designated as waste during manufacturing or processing and further recovered and reprocessed into raw material before it reaches the end user.

15.3. Pre-consumer recycled fibre **shall** be generated from within the processing factory and not from external suppliers. See Annex 6 for details of what is considered as pre-consumer recycled fibre.

- *It excludes materials that are routinely reused within the same manufacturing process that are reprocessed without first becoming waste (Annex 6).*

15.4. Recycled pre-consumer fibre content **shall** be reconciled at every recycling processing step such that output equals inputs within a variation factor of 2% of the defined conversion factor (see 14.11).

15.5. The quality of the final recycled fibre product **shall** be as agreed to between the buyer and seller.

15.6. Recycled pre-consumer fibre **shall** be fully traceable in accordance with the SFA CoC Standard requirements.

16. Post-consumer recycled fibre

16.1. All the requirements of Section 14 **shall** apply to post-consumer recycled fibre.

16.2. Recycled post-consumer animal fibre **shall** be obtained from suppliers with whom the entity has up-to-date documented contractual agreements.

16.3. The entity **shall** conduct a risk assessment covering:

a. Mixing of synthetic/non-animal fibre material;

b. Inevitable inclusion of a quantity of synthetic fibre;

- *Guidance – elastane, polymer coatings, membranes, adhesives, laminates and other polymeric material that form part of, or are permanently bonded to, the original textile are not required to be completely removed where separation is not technically practicable. Their presence shall be considered in determining the fibre composition of the recycled material.*

c. Use of unapproved chemicals;

d. Obscure/incorrect traceability;

e. Risk mitigation actions.

16.3.1. The entity **shall** ensure that a mitigation action is the confirmation through testing that chemicals considered health hazards or as environmental contaminants are not leachable from within the product.

16.3.2. The entity **shall** justify and declare the inclusion of a quantity of synthetic fibre with every batch of raw and processed recycled fibre containing these materials.

16.4. The composition of every batch of post-consumer animal fibre material obtained **shall** be identified and quantities recorded.

16.5. The entity **shall** obtain a record of chemicals used in the dismantling and/or concentration of post-consumer fibre material from the supplier, which shall comply with section 8.

16.6. Where the final product contains other natural fibre material, the composition of the final material **shall** be declared in labelling and be verifiable according to the calculated quantity reconciliation ratios of the fibre material.

17. Sampling and testing fibre

17.1. Laboratory testing **shall** be performed by an ISO/IEC 17025 accredited laboratory.

17.2. Testing equipment and facilities **shall** be clean and well maintained.

17.3. Lot samples, laboratory samples and test samples **shall** be representative of the same fibre type according to test requirements, using appropriate sampling methods.

17.4. Modifications in the sample procedures **should** be made if samples do not meet the required standard.

17.5. Reliable testing and identification techniques **should** be in place.

- *i.e., light microscopy (LM) or scanning electron microscopy (SEM). See Further Reading.*

17.6. Test methods **shall** be in accordance with relevant national standards, ISO Standards, ASTM Standards, and other internationally accepted methods recognised in the field of textile technology. See Further Reading.

17.7. Accurate identification, qualitative, and quantitative analysis of fibre and fibre blends **shall** take place, where relevant (see Annex 3).

17.8. Fibre **shall** be assessed against customer requirements as agreed to between the buyer and seller.

17.8.1. Parameters such as fibre diameter (in microns), fibre length, moisture content, moisture regain, residual grease, and fibre composition **may** be tested.

17.9. Routine internal testing **shall** be performed using calibrated equipment and suitable conditions and by competent personnel.

17.10. A product testing programme **may** be in place, which details:

a. the scope of testing;
b. methods used;
c. frequency;
d. details of sampling;
e. acceptance criteria;
f. roles and responsibilities;
g. actions for non-conforming results.

17.11. Sampling frequency **shall** be risk-based and linked to the relevant processing stages.

17.12. Sample approval procedures **should** be in place.

17.13. Modifications **should** be made if samples do not meet the required standard.

17.14. Accurate and complete test reports and records **shall** be in place.

17.15. Laboratories run internally by an entity **shall** comply with Sections 4 and 5.

18. Data management and cybersecurity

18.1. The entity **shall** collect, process, and transfer all data in compliance with all applicable jurisdictional laws and data protection regulations.

18.1.1. The entity **shall** implement and maintain robust technical and organisational measures to ensure a level of security appropriate to:

a. Risk;

b. Protecting all shared data against unauthorised or unlawful processing;

c. Accidental loss;

d. Destruction;

e. Damage.

18.2. The entity **shall** implement a formal Cybersecurity Management Policy. The organisation shall notify the affected parties and the CAB within forty-eight (48) hours, taking immediate remedial action to mitigate the breach and secure the data.

18.3. The entity **may** demonstrate compliance with certification against a recognised data security standard.

- *For example, ISO/IEC 27001:2022.*

19. Continual improvement

19.1. At each audit, the entity **shall** show continual improvement by meeting at least three improvement indicators not already met at their last assessment, while continuing to meet all previous improvement indicators, until all the improvement indicators are met.

- *Some improvement indicators are conditional, in that they are only relevant under certain circumstances. Where an improvement indicator is not relevant to the entity, it cannot be used to show continual improvement.*

19.2. The entity **shall** have a continual improvement plan that outlines how the entity plans to meet 2.2 at its next reassessment.

- *The entity still needs to meet all improvement indicators before they can claim to be 'SFA Best Practice'.*

19.3. Entities classified as small organisations **may** be exempt from certain requirements as described in Annex 4.

Further Reading

1. Analytical approaches and advancement in the analysis of natural and synthetic fibre: A comprehensive review (2025) – Analytical approaches and advancement in the analysis of natural and synthetic fibre: A comprehensive review - ScienceDirect

2. ISO 18074:2015(en) – Textile-Identification of some animal fibres by DNA analysis method-cashmere, wool, yak and their blends – ISO 18074:2015(en), Textiles — Identification of some animal fibres by DNA analysis method — Cashmere, wool, yak and their blends

3. Methods of Fibre Identification – 9 Methods of Fiber Identification - Testex

4. Textile Industry Restricted Substances List – https://www.textileindustry.net/restricted-substances-rsl-for-textile-and-apparel/

5. The Textile Guide: How to replace hazardous chemicals – https://chemsec.org/reports/the-textile-guide-how-to-replace-hazardous-chemicals/

6. https://www.oeko-tex.com/en/news/blog/green-chemistry-sustainable-chemicals-in-the-textile-and-leather-industry/

7. Countercurrent washing of solids – https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/chapter/edited-volume/abs/pii/B9780750645683500419

8. UV radiation – natural and artificial – https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/who-compendium-on-health-and-environment/who_compendium_chapter6_01092021.pdf?sfvrsn=eb9eb9e1_5

9. WHO's SunSmart Global UV app – https://www.who.int/teams/environment-climate-change-and-health/radiation-and-health/non-ionizing/optical-radiation

10. Lighting at Work – https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/hsg38.pdf

Annex 1. Establishing an internal audit framework

Purpose

To provide independent assurance that the entity's sustainability management system, practices, and reported performance conform to the requirements of the sustainability standard and support continual improvement.

- *Small organisations with limited availability of personnel may engage external auditors to embed and manage internal audit (e.g., consultants, peer auditors from other sites within the same group, or shared audit services through industry associations), and by using documented self-assessment checklists*

Scope

The audit programme should cover:

a. Governance and leadership commitments.

b. Sustainability policies and objectives.

c. Environmental, social, and economic performance requirements.

d. Legal and regulatory compliance obligations.

e. Operational controls and supporting procedures.

f. Data collection, monitoring, and reporting processes.

g. Stakeholder engagement activities.

h. Corrective actions arising from previous audits or incidents.

Audit principles

Internal audits should be:

- **Independent** – auditors should not audit their own work.
- **Objective and evidence-based** – conclusions should rely on verifiable information.
- **Risk-focused** – higher-risk and higher-impact areas should receive greater audit attention.
- **Consistent** – using standard methodologies and criteria.
- **Confidential** – protecting sensitive information.

Audit planning

The entity should establish an annual audit programme that:

a. Uses a risk-based approach to prioritise audit activities.

b. Defines audit frequency, scope, criteria, and methods.

c. Considers previous audit findings, material sustainability issues, and document changes.

d. Assigns competent auditors with appropriate sustainability knowledge.

Audit process

The internal audit process should include:

a. **Preparation** – review requirements, define objectives and scope, prepare checklists, and notify relevant functions.

b. **Fieldwork** – conduct interviews, review documents and records, observe activities, and sample evidence.

c. **Evaluation** – assess conformity against the sustainability standard and internal requirements.

d. **Reporting** – document findings clearly and objectively.

e. **Follow-up** – verify implementation and effectiveness of corrective actions.

Non-conformance classifications

Non-conformances can be classified as:

a. **Opportunities for improvement** – enhancements that could strengthen performance;

b. **Minor nonconformities** – isolated failures that do not undermine the overall system;

c. **Major nonconformities** – significant breakdowns affecting the ability to meet standard requirements.

Corrective actions and follow-up

The entity **should**:

a. Identify root causes of non-conformities;

b. Develop corrective action plans with defined responsibilities and timelines;

c. Monitor completion of actions;

d. Verify the effectiveness of corrective measures during subsequent reviews or audits.

Competence requirements

Internal auditors **should** demonstrate competence through:

a. Knowledge of the applicable sustainability standard;

b. Understanding of sustainability risks and impacts relevant to the entity;

c. Training in audit principles, techniques, and reporting;

d. Ongoing professional development.

Records and Documentation

The entity **should** maintain documented information relating to:

a. Audit programmes and schedules;
b. Audit plans and working papers;
c. Audit reports and findings;
d. Corrective action records;
e. Evidence of auditor competence and independence.

Management Review

Results of internal audits **should** be reported to senior management and considered during management reviews to:

a. Evaluate the effectiveness of the sustainability management system;
b. Identify systemic issues and emerging risks;
c. Inform strategic decisions and continual improvement initiatives.

Annex 2. Assessment of continuous improvement and impact

This assessment helps to avoid/mitigate adverse impacts, including those that are directly linked to their business relationships, to integrate responsible business conduct into management systems, and supports strengthening the transparency and accountability through the supply chain.

This assessment enables companies to ensure that the practice of continuous improvement and enhancing positive impact are embedded into governance. It requires that SOPs become a part of normal business operations rather than an isolated compliance exercise by requiring companies to:

a. Develop and publicly communicate policies;
b. Assign clear senior management responsibilities (Board-level responsibility for implementation and oversight);
c. Provide appropriate resources and training to support implementation;
d. Incorporate responsible business conduct expectations into supplier contracts and purchasing practices;
e. Establish traceability systems.

Companies are expected to identify risks throughout the supply chain in section 5 to prioritise the most severe and likely risks by using:

a. Self-assessments;
b. Worker interviews;
c. Site visits;
d. Stakeholder consultation;
e. Supply chain mapping.

Relevant risks **should** be identified via scoping and analysis, and **may** cover regional context (e.g., low educational levels, poor governance, high rates of migrant labour), as relevant.

When risks are identified, the risks **should** be prioritised based on their adverse impact (severity and likelihood), and the most significant risks addressed via documented risk assessment. All risks relating to environmental integrity, chemical usage, and waste discharge **should** be identified as part of the risk assessment, and prioritised.

Companies are expected to act proportional to their level of risk/involvement, including stopping such activities, ceasing contribution to mitigate negative effects, and by using influence.

The assessment **should** be incorporated into SOPs to align collaboration between departments such as sourcing, Research and Development, compliance, and sustainability to ensure that cross-functional teams are engaged and provide feedback to enhance internal quality and audit activities.

Internal audit should ensure data recording and integrity (See Annex 1).

Actions such as establishing corrective action plans, supplier capacity building, revising purchasing practices that pressurise suppliers, and higher collaboration with industry initiatives are possible.

Companies are expected to monitor the effectiveness of the interventions by using and tracking:

a. Performance indicators;
b. Regular supplier reviews;
c. Worker feedback;
d. Independent assessments.

To enhance stakeholder trust and accountability, transparent reporting on the following is recommended:

a. Policies and commitments;
b. Priority risks that are identified;
c. Actions taken;
d. Outcomes achieved;
e. Challenges encountered.

Where relevant, companies are expected to participate in remediation measures such as:

a. Compensating affected workers;
b. Reinstating unfairly dismissed employees;
c. Supporting medical treatment following workplace incidents;
d. Strengthening grievance mechanisms.

*Small and medium-sized organisations **may** have limited resources and **should** perform due assessment proportionate to their size and capability and undertake a collaborative approach with other actors of their supply chains.*

Industries are called upon to establish strong governance, map the entire supply chain by prioritising visibility beyond Tier 1 suppliers by identifying:

a. Textile mills;
b. Dyeing and finishing facilities;
c. Raw material producers;
d. Subcontractors;
e. Digital traceability systems can support this effort.

At a higher level, companies are called upon to combine audits with:

a. Worker voice;
b. Trade union engagement;
c. Local stakeholder consultation;

d. Establishing anonymous grievance channels.

As many labour violations arise from unrealistic commercial demands, entities are advised to:

a. Avoid last-minute order changes;
b. Set realistic lead times;
c. Ensure prices enable the payment of legal wages;
d. Coordinate sourcing and sustainability teams.

Instead of terminating supplier relationships, entities are asked to:

a. Support improvement plans;
b. Provide training;
c. Monitor progress;
d. Use termination only when suppliers fail to improve/severe abuses persist.

The practice of publishing annual reports describing the assessment process, key risk areas, actions implemented and performance indicators and outcomes is encouraged. Therefore, reporting frameworks that are aligned to international sustainability standards can help facilitate consistency. This is an ongoing risk-management process (with annual review) rather than a one-off compliance activity.

Companies **should** embed responsible business conduct into decision-making, collaborate with suppliers and stakeholders, and continuously monitor and improve their practices.

A suitable step-by-step approach could be:

a. Embed assessment/dentification of negative impacts into policies and management systems – through policy development, consultation, integrating policies into contracts, ongoing training, assigning governance responsibilities;
b. Identify actual/potential impacts – conduct scoping and analysis by reviewing annual audit reports, analysis of region/country-specific risks, by consulting experts;
c. Identify actionable measures – determine root causes of risks/challenges, document process;
d. Mitigate negative impacts – develop corrective action plan after discussion with key stakeholders, based on internal audit findings, influence suppliers or stakeholders to mitigate/influence risks, provide access for stakeholders to provide input into corrective action plans
e. Track implementation – review effectiveness of the action plan, review data, carry out surveys, verify and record improvements;
f. Communicate – improvements via annual reporting, and other means;
g. Enable remediation.

This approach not only supports compliance with the OECD Guidance but also enhances supply chain resilience, protects workers' rights, reduces reputational risk, and strengthens long-term business sustainability.

Annex 3. Relevant Clauses of the SFA Chain of Custody Standard modified for application to this Standard regarding blends

1. The following shall apply for the interpretation of section 1.5 (as modified from the SFA's Chain of Custody Standard (the clause numbering is carried over from the CoC Standard):

2.9.7 The entity **shall** not sell products as 'SFA Certified' unless 100% of the fibre in the product is 'SFA Certified'

2.9.8 Where 'SFA Certified' fibre contains a mix of animal fibres, the entity **shall** not sell products as 'SFA Certified' unless 100% of the animal fibre content in the product is 'SFA Certified' and the 'SFA Certified' animal fibre comprises at least 5% of the product's composition.

- *As an example, if a scarf is 70% silk and 30% animal fibre, then the 30% animal fibre content must be 'SFA Certified' animal fibre in the total product.*
- *In another example, if a product is 95% wool and 5% other animal fibre, then the 5% of the other animal fibre must be 'SFA Certified' animal Fibre.*

2. See Annex 6 about blends of recycled fibre.

Annex 4. Small organisations

- *Entities that claim the description of 'small organisation' **shall** do so in consultation with their CABS and any providing justification using economic policy/legal criteria that may be in place in their jurisdictions.*

Example 1

The Mongolian criteria for categorisation of organisations are provided as an example.

The criteria are set out in Article 5.1 of the Law on Supporting Small and Medium Enterprises and Services (revised version, 2019). Classification is based on two criteria: the number of employees and annual sales revenue.

Table 2 – Mongolian organisation classifications

Category	Employees	Annual sales revenue (MNT)	Approx. equivalent (USD)
Micro	Up to 10	Up to 300 million	Up to ~USD 83,000

Small	10–50	300 million – 1.0 billion	~USD 83,000 – 278,000
Medium	50–200	1.0 – 2.5 billion	~USD 278,000 – 695,000

USD figures are indicative only, converted at MNT 3,598 to USD 1 as of 7 August 2026. The thresholds are set in tugrik in the law itself, so the USD equivalents shift with the exchange rate.

Example 2

OECD Introductory Paper on SMEs and Responsible Business Conduct in the Garment and Footwear Sector

This document states:

- Small enterprises: 10–49 employees;
- Medium enterprises: 50–249 employees;
- Micro enterprises: <10 employees.

Example 3

Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC of 6 May 2003 concerning the definition of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. (CELEX: 32003H0361)

The Recommendation defines an enterprise first:

"*An enterprise is considered to be any entity engaged in an economic activity, irrespective of its legal form.*"

Table 3 - 2003/361/EC Article 2: Size thresholds

Category	Employees	Annual turnover	or Balance sheet total
Micro	<10	≤ €2 million	≤ €2 million
Small	**<50**	**≤ €10 million**	**≤ €10 million**
Medium	<250	≤ €50 million	≤ €43 million

The Recommendation also provides rules for determining whether enterprises are autonomous, partner or linked enterprises, meaning employee numbers and financial data may need to be aggregated where ownership links exist. This prevents large companies from artificially qualifying as SMEs through subsidiaries.

Provisions for small organisations

- Small organisations may meet two improvement indicators at a time.
- See also provisions made for small organisations in Annexes 1 and 2.
- Small organisations shall be permitted to undergo surveillance audits within a maximum duration of 18 months.

Annex 5. Equivalent evidence

Where equivalent evidence demonstrates effective implementation, additional documented procedures are not required.

Examples include:

a. Photographs of signage and work areas;
b. Video surveillance recordings;
c. Up-to-date charts, logbooks, and diagrams;
d. Production records;
e. Legally required registers and registrations;
f. Valid permit and utility compliance records;
g. Invoices and purchase records;
h. Maintenance logs;
i. Worker/stakeholder interviews;
j. Publications, journal records;
k. Direct observation during audits
l. Testing records and results;
m. Data or information generated for/by other agencies or institutions involved in organisational functions or activities, such as:
    i. Research;
    ii. Local government or government monitoring/surveillance;
    iii. Monitoring;
    iv. Inspections;
    v. Data collection;
    vi. Reporting;
    vii. Compliance.
n. Previous data collections/reports that may have been generated for other agencies and may be considered suitable as evidence for verification but not more than three years old;
o. Historical information and data that are relevant shall be viewed, verified, and details recorded for use in audit/assessment reports;
p. Corporate records such as:
    i. Worker/supplier contracts/agreements;
    ii. Pay slips;
    iii. Process records:
    iv. Meeting/decision records;
    v. Licenses/Registrations/Permits.
    vi. Organisational charts

vii. Leave records
viii. Training records
ix. Dispute settlement records

Annex 6. Recycled fibres

1. The following shall be considered as pre-consumer fibre:
    a. Carding waste;
    b. Combing noils;
    c. Spinning waste;
    d. Yarn waste;
    e. Weaving waste;
    f. Knitting offcuts;
    g. Cutting-room waste;
    h. Unsold fabric rolls discarded as waste;
    i. Rejected garments from manufacture;
    j. Excess production stock destined for disposal;
    k. provided they:
        i. were intended to be discarded;
        ii. are collected as waste;
        iii. undergo recycling or reprocessing before reuse.

2. The following claims may be made for recycled fibre:

Table 4 - Permitted claims for recycled fibre

Actual composition	Appropriate SFA description
100% recycled animal fibre	**100% SFA recycled cashmere/ wool/yak/etc. fibre**
95% recycled animal fibre + 5% other natural fibre	**95% SFA recycled cashmere/wool/yak/etc. fibre**
80% recycled animal fibre + 20% other natural fibre	**80% SFA recycled cashmere/wool/yak/etc. fibre**
70% recycled animal fibre + 30% other natural fibre	**70% SFA recycled cashmere/wool/yak/etc. fibre**
Wool garment + accidental plastic buttons	Buttons should be removed; **not counted as fibre composition**

Annex 7. Improvement indicators

1.9. Small-scale processors (see definition in this Standard) **may** use the provisions as described in Annex 4, for compliance with this standard.

2.7. In undertaking verification activities, the equivalence of evidence as described in Annex 5 may be used.

3.1.3. The entity could be either a small establishment, a vertically integrated company, or an independent individual operating alone.

3.7. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) of sustainability objectives **may** be established and reviewed as required.

3.8. An internal audit framework **may** be in place and internal audits conducted annually, with roles, responsibilities, policies and procedures identified and recorded.

3.10. Sustainability performance **may** be publicly reported.

3.11. The entity **may** establish a risk-based process for assessing continuous improvement and impact on responsible business conduct consistent with internationally recognised frameworks (See Annex 2) to identify, prevent, mitigate, monitor and address adverse impacts associated with their operations, products, services and business relationships.

3.12. Compliance with 3.11 **may** be agreed to between the buyer and seller, based on the buyer's requirements for trading. However, it is recommended for recognition as an improvement indicator early in the implementation of this Standard. The findings of the assessment can be integrated into the sustainability objectives of the entity and verified by internal audit.

4.12. All employees **may** be covered by a medical insurance scheme paid for by the employer.

4.19. Noise exposure monitoring **may** be conducted.

4.20. Digital safety monitoring systems **may** be used.

5.8. Women's grievance committees **may** be formed and actively participate in the elevation and resolution of female worker issues.

5.20. Worker committees **may** be established.

5.21. Worker engagement programmes **should** influence decision-making.

5.23. Equal opportunity targets **may** be monitored and reported.

5.24. Living wage assessments **may** be conducted.

5.25. For directly hired workers, the entity **should** conduct legally required identification, right-to-work and age verifications.

6.1. Formal quality control assurance procedures (QCA) or quality management system (QMS) **may** be in place, as a part of the entity's document management system in relation to the clean fibre process.

6.9. Process mapping and optimisation methods **may** be implemented by establishing productivity targets that do not compromise quality and integrity criteria.

6.11. End-to-end digital traceability **may** be implemented.

7.6. Working practices that reflect efficient use of energy and water, and waste control **may** be in place.

7.9. The entity **may** use closed-loop water systems.

7.10. The entity **may** use advanced wastewater treatment technologies.

7.12. Fossil fuel reduction targets **may** be established, monitored and reported.

7.13. The entity **may** aim to establish a science-based or risk-based reduction target for fossil fuel emissions.

7.15. Science-based or risk-based energy reduction targets and plans for annual increase in the use of renewable/green energy **may** be established.

7.18. The entity **should** establish performance objectives to reduce wastewater generation and pollutant loads over time. Indicators may include:

a. Reductions in water consumption per kilogram of fibre processed;
b. Increased water reuse and recycling;
c. Lower COD and BOD loads;
d. Improved treatment efficiency;
e. Reduced sludge generation;
f. The adoption of continuous monitoring technologies for critical treatment parameters.

7.22. Life cycle assessment **can** be conducted. The specific scope of implementation, methodological standards, system boundaries, and acceptable types of evidence **can** be established by the entity.

7.25. Circular material recovery programmes **should** be implemented.

8.7. Chemical substitution plans **may** be implemented (see 8.9 and 8.10) through the Chemical Management Plan.

8.9. Hazardous chemicals **should** be eliminated where technically and operationally feasible and/or substituted by safer alternatives.

8.10. Chemical alternatives that are biodegradable **should** be used preferably. See Further Reading for information.

9.4. Supply chain mapping **may** be extended beyond direct suppliers.

10.7. Responsible employees **should** be trained in these criteria.

10.8. Sorted fibre **should** be segregated, weighed and appropriately labelled.

10.10. Fibre loss **should** be measured.

11.3. Monthly water consumption **may** be recorded.

11.6. A scouring line in which the liquor flows in the reverse direction to the wool movement (counter-current washing) **should** be used.

12.4. Standard operational procedures relating to wetting, washing, and drying fibres **should** be in place.

13.5. Low-Liquor ratio dyeing **should** be implemented and ratios recorded.

13.6. Process water recycling **should** be maximised.

13.7. Energy-efficient machinery **should** be used.

13.8. Near-zero discharge principles **can** be established and implemented as per net zero guidance.

13.9. Digital process optimisation systems and methods **may** be used.

17.4. Modifications in the sample procedures **should** be made if samples do not meet the required standard.

17.5. Reliable testing and identification techniques **should** be in place.

17.8.1. Parameters such as fibre diameter (in microns), fibre length, moisture content, moisture regain, residual grease, and fibre composition may be tested.

17.9. A Product testing programme **may** be in place, which details:

a. the scope of testing;
b. methods used;
c. frequency;
d. details of sampling;
e. acceptance criteria;
f. roles and responsibilities;
g. actions for non-conforming results.

17.12. Sample approval procedures **should** be in place.

17.13. Modifications **should** be made if samples do not meet the required standard.

18.3 The entity **may** demonstrate compliance with certification against a recognised data security standard.