



Standards Development Process

# Standards Development Process: Working Group A Terms of Reference

Sustainable Biomass Program  
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# 1 Standards Development Working Group Process

## 1.1 Objective of Working Group A

The Secretariat will establish WG A, comprising a balance of subject matter experts and interested parties, to develop the technical content of Standards 1 and 2, as well as to make recommendations to SBP and/or other WGs. The Standards Committee (SC), Technical Committee (TC), and Stakeholder Advisory Group (SADG) will be consulted during the process of establishing the WG.

The WG will abide by the Standards Development Process ToR and the WG ToR during development of the technical content of the standards. Decision making will be based on consensus, as set out in the WG ToR.

The Secretariat will ensure that WG A is formally established during Q2 2020, after the official launch.

## 1.2 Developing Revision Draft v1 of Standards 1 and 2

Following the development of Revision Draft v0 by the Secretariat, WG A will begin work in Q3 2020. The WG will undertake a review of Revision Draft v0 and through a series of meetings and other activities develop Revision Draft v1, in line with the Standard Development Process ToR during Q3 2020 to Q1 2021.

Inputs that the WG will consider include but are not limited to:

- Public Summary;
- Terms of Reference;
- Working Groups Terms of Reference;
- Document Development Procedure;
- Current SBP standards;
- Normative Interpretations;
- Revision Draft v0 of Standards 1, 2, 3 and 4;
- Gap Analysis;
- Stakeholder Survey Results;
- Sustainability Certification Landscape;
- Overview of Definitions of Biomass Sustainability Within Key Markets; and
- Draft Theory of Change.

In addition, the Chair of the WG will work with the Secretariat to ensure that the WG keeps up-to-date with the development of SBP's Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) programme, which will be built on the foundation of SBP's Theory of Change (ToC).

The WG is free to make other recommendations to SBP and the other Standards Development Process WGs that have a bearing both on Standards 1 and 2 and the ability of the certification system to deliver SBP's purpose.

## 1.3 Public consultation for Standards 1 and 2

Stakeholder engagement processes are covered in the Standards Development Process ToR and include stakeholder engagement before and during the launch of the Standards Development Process, as well as stakeholder involvement through the three Standards Development Process WGs.

Separate to these activities, the public consultation will aim to provide a formal process for stakeholders to provide feedback to WG A on whether the standards meet the Standards Development Process ToR and on any other related concerns or issues. The public consultation will commence in Q1 2021, once the Revision Draft v1 of Standards 1 and 2 is finalised.

### Formal 60-day consultation

The formal 60-day public consultation will follow the procedure set out in the Document Development Procedure (DDP) and will include an online questionnaire, with the opportunity for additional commentary.

### Consultation webinars

The public consultation will be supplemented by a series of webinars focused on the geographic regions of North America, Europe, Russia, and Asia.

## 1.4 Piloting of Standards 1 and 2

As set out in the DDP, the Secretariat shall test through piloting the impact and applicability of the Revision Draft v1 of Standards 1 and 2. The piloting should be developed with the following objectives:

- To validate that the desired and intended outcomes of the standards can be achieved and are aligned with the purpose of SBP; and
- To test the feasibility, applicability, and auditability of the standards.

The Secretariat intends to conduct the pilot in parallel to the public consultation, once Revision Draft v1 has been finalised.

Consideration will be given to best practice examples, as well as the types of Certificate Holder (CHs), geographies and related risks and opportunities for both current operational circumstances and likely future scenarios. In addition, the overlap of geographies and markets with other certification schemes will be considered.

To ensure that the pilot is successful in testing the standards, the Secretariat will conduct further planning at an early stage of the Standards Development Process. The Secretariat will seek the views of the WG, SC, TC and SADG during these planning activities.

## 1.5 Collation of consultation and pilot synthesis report

Stakeholder comments will be collated along with the outputs and findings of the pilot. Recommendations will be presented to the WG in a consultation and pilot synthesis report for use in the further revision of the standards.

## 1.6 Developing Revision Draft v2 of Standards 1 and 2

The WG will seek the views of the SC and TC on the consultation and pilot synthesis report and then agree any further revisions to be made to the standards during the development of Revision Draft v2, which will take place during Q2 2021 to Q3 2021.

## 2 WG membership, roles, and responsibilities

### 2.1 Membership

The WG will be a multi-stakeholder body representing a range of stakeholder groups, including civil society environmental and social interests, biomass supply chain actors (from forest/landowner, through Biomass Producer, to End-user), academic subject matter experts and Certification Bodies.

It should be noted that WG members represent an interest group within SBP, rather than just their own or their organisation's interests. Therefore, it is especially important that each member of the WG discusses recommendations and complex or contentious issues with their peers.

### 2.2 WG members and alternates

In exceptional circumstances where a WG member is unable to be present at a meeting, the member may choose to nominate a named alternate to represent the WG member. However, it remains the responsibility of the WG member to ensure that the alternate remains fully briefed and up to date with the work of the WG and their responsibilities.

### 2.3 WG roles

- A Chair to convene and oversee WG meetings;
- The Chair may appoint a Vice-Chair to support the Chair (for example, should they be unavailable for a meeting);
- An editor to write revisions to the standards as agreed by the WG;
- Where necessary, the Chair and Secretariat may appoint a meeting facilitator to work with the Chair to ensure smooth running of a WG meeting;
- Members who are subject matter experts representing a subsector;
- The option for members to nominate named alternates who can replace the member for a specific meeting if they are unavailable;
- Additional technical experts required by the WG and invited by the Chair; and
- Observers (limited in number and agreed by the Chair in advance) who do not participate in the substantive discussions of the WG unless agreed to by the WG members.

In addition, the Secretariat will provide support to the WG and will be represented at WG meetings.

### 2.4 Observers

At the Chair's discretion, and following notification to the WG, Standards Committee and Technical Committee, technical experts and others who can help take forward the work of the WG may be invited to attend meetings as non-voting observers.

Each observer shall acknowledge, via email, the Code of Conduct (see Annex 1).

Observers shall be given specific opportunities to participate and make comments in the meetings. Observers shall not participate in the discussion unless expressly invited to do so by the Chair. Observers shall not participate in the decision-making of the WG.

Permanent observer status may be granted to particular organisations or individuals with an ongoing interest in the work of the SBP, such as representatives of Accreditation and Certification Bodies.

## 2.5 Individual responsibilities

Each WG member shall acknowledge, via email, the Code of Conduct (see Annex 1). In accepting the role of member of the WG, members must endeavour to:

- Actively participate in all meetings and electronic discussions of the WG and any sub-groups that they join;
- Play an active role in representing their constituents' or stakeholders' interests and not simply those of their own organisations, including understanding the views of those in their sector or highlighting the need to gather those views, and putting forth concerns, comments, or ideas;
- Ensure they are able to participate fully in any decision-making processes of the WG by engaging throughout any such process. If it is likely that a WG member would not be able to perform their role (including attending all meetings of the WG) throughout a particular decision-making process, the member should notify the Chair at the outset.
- Review inputs to the Standards Development Process;
- Consider, in particular, the standards in relation to the desired and intended outcomes listed in the ToC, as well as relevant best scientific understanding, any relevant international norms and any needs to adapt to local conditions;
- Consult with interested parties not directly represented in the WG, ensuring that their views are expressed within the discussions; and
- Seek to build consensus within the WG on how to address any issues that arise and avoid possible conflicts.

### 3 Working methods of the WG

The WG may determine their own working methods, although may consider using various channels of communication including:

- Physical meetings;
- Online video conference calls; and
- Email and telephone communication between individuals tasked with activities on specific sub-topics.

The Chair will work with the Secretariat to ensure that the WG members are able to maintain a regular dialogue. This could be through regular conference calls or other means.

To support fair representation of stakeholder views, the Chair will take all reasonable steps to ensure full participation of members in WG meetings. This could include, for example, through offering potential meeting dates spread over more than a two-week period, and allowing remote/online access to the meeting.

In order to support WG members in representing their constituent's views, the Secretariat and Chair may offer practical help, such as providing meeting room venues.

To ensure focused and effective meetings, the Chair and WG may establish sub-groups to consider particular technical or complex issues. In such situations, the Chair will ensure that the WG ToR is applied and that the sub-group presents any findings and recommendations to the full WG for consideration.



## 4 Decision-making

### 4.1 Achieving consensus

The decision-making process of the WG is as follows:

- The WG will make all decisions, including on the WG outputs (e.g. Revision Drafts) and any other recommendations to SBP and/or the other Standards Development Process WGs, based on a consensus process that includes the principles of inclusive participation, respect for diverse interests, and transparency;
- The consensus process is based on substantial agreement among WG members, rather than a simple majority of votes;
- Substantial agreement is characterised by the absence of sustained opposition to substantial issues by any important stakeholder group; and
- All decisions must be the result of a process seeking to take into account the views of stakeholders, particularly those directly affected, and to reconcile any conflicting arguments; they need not imply positions.

Adapted from ISEAL Code of Good Practice: 2014 Setting Social and Environmental Standards, ISO/IEC Guide 2: 2004.

### 4.2 When consensus cannot be achieved

Deadlock on a single issue does not cause a standstill on the rest of the process and the WG is mandated to continue their work on other elements in the meantime.

The alternative decision-making process for situations of deadlock is as follows:

- Where consensus cannot be achieved, the Chair will notify the Secretariat;
- The Secretariat will support the Chair in considering an alternative decision-making process;
- The Chair and Secretariat will consider establishing a sub-group to resolve the issue;
- Unresolved issues from the WG can be brought to the Standards Committee (SC) by the Secretariat for resolution;
- If the issues continue to be unresolved, the Secretariat will develop a proposal with various options which will be agreed by the SC. This could, for example, include:
  - conducting intensive stakeholder workshops to identify opportunities for resolution, or
  - dissolution and formation of a new WG (as a last resort).

## Annex 1: Code of Conduct

WG members, including observers, shall adhere to SBP's Anti-trust Compliance Policy Statement. The statement shall be referenced at the beginning of each meeting by the Chair.

WG members with any conflicts of interest with particular agenda items shall advise the Chair ahead of, or at the beginning of, each meeting and absent themselves from the meeting room during consideration of the item. The fact that a WG member is a participant in or interested in the biomass industry (including as an employee, officer, consultant, contractor or other representative of any company, entity, organisation or body that has an interest in the biomass industry or the work or decisions of the Company) is not a conflict of interest for these purposes.

WG members shall maintain strict confidentiality regarding any designated commercially or politically sensitive information that might be shared while meeting and shall abide by any non-disclosure agreement relating to confidential or commercially sensitive information.

WG members shall acknowledge, via email to [standardsdevelopment@sbp-cert.org](mailto:standardsdevelopment@sbp-cert.org), that they have read and understood these Terms of Reference, including the Code of Conduct, and agree to abide by the provisions contained within.