



International Standards Development Procedures

Version 3.0

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Version history

No.	Date	Description
		Kindly note numbering refers to the numbering of respective versions.
Version 1.0	December 2017	Initial endorsement of these procedures
Version 1.1	May 2018	Variations to paragraphs 2.1.1, 2.2.1c, and 2.3.3
Version 1.1	October 2019	Variations to paragraphs 2.2.1 and a new paragraph 2.5.2
Version 2.0	June 2020	Modification to paragraph 2.2.1.a and variations to section 3.3 and 11.
Version 3.0	September 2023	<p>Modifications to generalise the application of the procedures to multiple Standards.</p> <p>Addition of section 2 covering the decision to develop a new Standard. Addition of section 3.6 on feasibility testing of a draft Standard.</p> <p>Variations to paragraphs 3.7.4 to require 60-day first consultations for the revision of standards the public consultation period of draft Standards and to 11.1.1 regarding determining the need for a clarification or interpretation of a Standard.</p> <p>Modifications to section 12, including addition of paragraphs 12.1.2, 12.1.3, 12.2.2 and 12.2.3 covering the review and revision of an existing Standard. Additions of sections 12.3 for the reaffirmation of a Standard and 12.4 for the withdrawal of a Standard.</p> <p>Some changes to reflect the further development of the ResponsibleSteel programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renaming Executive Director to Chief Executive Officer. • Including the role of the Technical Advisory Panel in section 1.2. • Addition of reference to the ResponsibleSteel Exceptions Procedure in paragraph 12.1.2. <p>Typographical changes and restructuring, including renumbering of some sections.</p>

Disclaimer

The official language of this document is English. The definitive version is held on the ResponsibleSteel website <https://www.responsiblesteel.org/>. Any discrepancy between copies, versions or translations shall be resolved by reference to the definitive English version.

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About this document

This document defines the procedures to be followed for the review and revision of existing ResponsibleSteel International Standards and the development of new ResponsibleSteel International Standards. The procedures have been written to comply with the ISEAL Codes of Good Practice (Setting Social and Environmental Standards, Version 6.0, December 2014, and Second Consultation Draft, May 2023¹). The procedures were first endorsed by the ResponsibleSteel Interim Council in December 2017. Updates to the procedures have since been approved by the ResponsibleSteel Board of Directors and are shown in the version history table above.

The procedures include:

- the steps for proposing a new Standard and the development of a Terms of Reference;
- the main steps of the Standard setting process including the timelines and opportunities for stakeholder participation;
- the decision-making procedures, including how decisions are made and who makes them.

¹ The ISEAL Code is currently under revision. The revision is expected to be completed in early 2024. Once the Code has been finalised, the ResponsibleSteel International Standards Development Procedures will be reviewed and if necessary updated to ensure compliance with the final version of the ISEAL Code.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background to the International Standards Setting Procedures

- 1.1.1 This document specifies the procedures to develop, approve and ratify ResponsibleSteel International Standards and to maintain them over time.
- 1.1.2 Responsibility for approving these procedures rests with the ResponsibleSteel Board of Directors ('Board')
- 1.1.3 ResponsibleSteel International Standards shall be developed in the official language(s) of ResponsibleSteel.

NOTE:

The current official language of ResponsibleSteel is English.

- 1.1.4 Comments or suggestions are welcome and should be addressed to the ResponsibleSteel Chief Executive Officer ('CEO').
- 1.1.5 These procedures shall be reviewed and may be revised by the Board at its discretion, taking account of any stakeholder comments that have been received up to that time.
- 1.1.6 The current version of these procedures and associated annexes shall be published and be available for download from the ResponsibleSteel website.

1.2 Summary of Responsibilities

- 1.2.1 Key responsibilities for the development and approval of a ResponsibleSteel International Standard are summarised as follows:
- a. ResponsibleSteel Board of Directors ('Board')
 - The Board:
 - i. mandates the development of a ResponsibleSteel International Standard;
 - ii. approves the International Standards Development Procedures and the Terms of Reference for a ResponsibleSteel International Standard;
 - iii. appoints the members and the Chair of the ResponsibleSteel Standards, Assurance and Claims Committee;
 - iv. depending on the relevant decision-making procedure for a ResponsibleSteel International Standard, the Board either approves or ratifies a finalised ResponsibleSteel International Standard (and subsequent substantive revisions) on the basis that the ResponsibleSteel International Standards Development Procedures have been implemented to the Board's satisfaction and the resulting ResponsibleSteel International Standard meets the specified Terms of Reference.

- b. ResponsibleSteel Membership ('Membership')
 - The Membership reviews and approves draft Standards prior to their ratification by the Board when decision-making Procedure B is followed for the development of a ResponsibleSteel International Standard (see 3.10).
- c. ResponsibleSteel Board Standards, Assurance and Claims Committee ('Standards, Assurance and Claims Committee')
 - The Standards, Assurance and Claims Committee oversees the work of the Secretariat in developing ResponsibleSteel International Standards in accordance with the International Standards Development Procedures.
- d. ResponsibleSteel Secretariat ('Secretariat')
 - The ResponsibleSteel Secretariat (the technical and operational team) led by the CEO, drafts the ResponsibleSteel International Standard in accordance with the International Standards Development Procedures.
- e. ResponsibleSteel Technical Advisory Panel ('Technical Advisory Panel')
 - The ResponsibleSteel Technical Advisory Panel advise the Secretariat on technical standards development issues at the request of the Secretariat at any time during the development and maintenance of ResponsibleSteel International Standards, in accordance with the International Standards Development Procedures and the Terms of Reference of the ResponsibleSteel Technical Advisory Panel.

2. Decision to Develop a New ResponsibleSteel International Standard

2.1 Preparation for the development of a new ResponsibleSteel International Standard.

- 2.1.1 The Secretariat shall prepare for the development of a new ResponsibleSteel International Standard as follows:
- a. The Secretariat shall assess the need and justification for a new Standard, including consideration of the existence and design of comparable standards, and discussion with initiatives and organisations responsible for related programmes.
 - b. An assessment of risks (e.g. possible unintended negative social, environmental or economic impacts, including impacts on developing country economies) in implementing the proposed Standard shall be carried out, and actions to mitigate these risks identified and documented.
 - c. A stakeholder analysis shall be carried out, including the identification of key stakeholder groups and representatives.

2.2 Development of a Terms of Reference for a New ResponsibleSteel International Standard

- 2.2.1 The Secretariat shall prepare a draft Terms of Reference ('ToR') for the new Standard for review by the Board. The Terms of Reference shall include at minimum:
- a. the proposed scope of the Standard;
 - b. the objective of the Standard development or revision process;
 - c. the intended sustainability outcomes of the Standard, if applicable
 - d. how the outcomes are aligned to the vision and mission of ResponsibleSteel as described in the ResponsibleSteel Objects (see ResponsibleSteel Constitution, adopted 29th April 2021, paragraph).
 - e. the decision-making procedure, how decisions are made and who will make them;
 - f. a justification of the need for the Standard, including how the Standard complements existing standards or those with overlapping scopes;
 - g. the intended sustainability claims that the Standard will substantiate, if applicable
- 2.2.2 The Board shall review the justification for the new Standard and the proposed Terms of Reference. The Board may identify specific concerns with the Terms of Reference and in consultation with the CEO determine revisions to address the concerns.
- 2.2.3 If the Board determines that a new ResponsibleSteel International Standard is justified, it shall approve the final Terms of Reference, and the decision-making to be followed for its approval (see 3.9 – 3.10).
- 2.2.4 Once the Board has approved the Terms of Reference, then the procedures described in steps 3-11 of this document – subject to any variations that have been approved by the Board (see Section 5) – shall be followed.

3. Development of ResponsibleSteel International Standards

3.1 Publication of Work Programme

- 3.1.1 The decision to develop a ResponsibleSteel International Standard shall be announced on the ResponsibleSteel website together with a summary of the standard development process that shall include:
- a. the Terms of Reference for the Standard; and,
 - b. the main steps in the standard-setting process, including the timelines and clearly identified opportunities for stakeholder participation and comment; in the case of an updated version,

an indication of the transition period that will apply before the updated version comes into effect.

c. The decision-making procedure to be followed to approve the Standard (see 3.9 – 3.10).

3.1.2 The work programme and timetable for the development and any subsequent revision of a ResponsibleSteel International Standard shall be updated on an ongoing basis on the ResponsibleSteel website.

3.2 Establishing and Maintaining a Stakeholder Contact List

3.2.1 The Secretariat shall establish a stakeholder contact list, including a broad range of stakeholders from all the key stakeholder groups, including stakeholders with experience or expertise in steelmaking in both developed and developing countries, and experience of the direct as well as indirect social and environmental impacts of steelmaking with the aim of achieving inputs covering the range of interests in the subject matter and in the geographic scope to which the Standard applies.

3.2.2 The ResponsibleSteel Secretariat shall be responsible for maintaining the stakeholder contact list for a ResponsibleSteel International Standard.

NOTE:

Stakeholder contact lists are updated regularly. The Secretariat shall use the latest stakeholder contact lists.

3.3 Drafting of a ResponsibleSteel International Standard

3.3.1 The Secretariat shall be responsible for the drafting of a preliminary draft Standard at the start of the standard development process, and for subsequent revisions as needed in order to meet the requirements of the Terms of Reference.

3.3.2 In preparing the preliminary draft the Secretariat shall ensure that ResponsibleSteel members have been consulted on the proposed content of the draft.

3.4 Content of ResponsibleSteel International Standards

3.4.1 Once formally adopted by the Board the Standard shall specify the date on which it was formally adopted, and the planned year for its formal review. In the case of an updated version, the Standard shall specify any transition period that may apply before the updated version comes in effect.

3.4.2 The Standard shall include introductory sections describing its objectives, its scope of application, and providing a general description of the mechanisms for its verification and of the claims that

may be made by businesses that are verified as complying with the Standard's requirements, and by their customers.

- 3.4.3 The Standard may provide for different levels and/or types of claims to be made depending on the level of performance that is achieved, and may be divided into separate parts to reflect this.
- 3.4.4 The Standard may include sections that are applicable to specific categories of users, if this is necessary to ensure that the Standard can be applied to all categories of users within its scope of application.
- 3.4.5 The Standard shall include requirements for the collection and/or collation of the long-term data necessary for ResponsibleSteel to monitor the efficacy of the ResponsibleSteel International Standard in achieving its objectives.
- 3.4.6 The requirements of the Standard:
 - a. Shall be drafted so that conformity can be assessed for any applicant within the scope of the ResponsibleSteel International Standard without the need for subsequent modification or adaptation;
 - b. Shall be drafted to minimise ambiguity in interpretation;
 - c. May be expressed in terms of process, management or performance requirements;
 - d. Shall not be intended to favour any specific technology or patented item.

3.5 Glossary of Terms

- 3.5.1 A ResponsibleSteel International Standard shall include or reference a glossary of key terms required to guide its consistent interpretation and implementation.

3.6 Feasibility Testing

- 3.6.1 The Secretariat shall test the impact and applicability of the new Standard or revision to an existing Standard during the standard development process. Testing should assess:
 - a. if the Standard achieves the intended sustainability outcomes;
 - b. if the Standard has unintended negative impacts;
 - c. the auditability of the requirements in the Standard;
 - d. the feasibility of certification applicants achieving the requirements in the Standard.

NOTE:

Testing should include asking approved auditors to review the draft Standard to assess the auditability of the requirements. It may also include other assessment options such as pilot audits or field testing of the requirements.

3.7 Public Consultation

- 3.7.1 When the CEO considers that a draft is ready to be made available for formal public consultation, the CEO shall submit the draft to the Board for its review.
- 3.7.2 The Board shall review the draft Standard to consider whether it meets the requirements of the Terms of Reference for its development.
- a. If the Board determines that the draft Standard does not meet the requirements of the Terms of Reference the Board shall consult with the CEO to determine what further actions are needed to address its concerns. The Board shall document its concerns and the agreed actions to be taken and shall record this as a formal decision of the Board in accordance with its usual decision-making procedures. The CEO shall document whatever actions are then taken, together with any changes to the draft Standard that have been made as a result, and then repeat step 3.7.1, above.
 - b. If the Board determines that the draft Standard meets the requirements of the Terms of Reference for its development this shall be recorded as a formal decision of the Board in accordance with its usual decision-making procedures. The draft Standard shall then be published on the ResponsibleSteel website together with:
 - i. Any concerns that were raised by the Board (if applicable) together with the actions taken to address these concerns prior to the draft's publication for consultation;
 - ii. A collated, anonymised record of any stakeholder comments submitted on the previous draft (if applicable), together with the Secretariat's response to those comments;
 - iii. instructions for the submission of comments on the draft.
- 3.7.3 The Secretariat shall contact all stakeholders on its contact list informing them of the ongoing standard development process and inviting comments on the current draft Standard.
- 3.7.4 The period of public consultation on the first draft of a Standard shall be a minimum of 60 days. For consultations on later drafts, the consultation period may be reduced to 30 days.
- 3.7.5 At the end of the specified consultation period the Secretariat shall collate all the comments received and prepare a revised draft taking account of those comments. At its discretion, the Secretariat may convene stakeholder working groups, invite additional experts to provide advice on particular issues, conduct further feasibility testing, request support from the ResponsibleSteel Technical Advisory Panel, and/or seek other support to develop a revised draft.

- 3.7.6 When the Secretariat has completed a revised draft to its satisfaction the Secretariat shall submit the draft to the Standards, Assurance and Claims Committee together with:
- a. A copy of all comments received on the previous draft in an anonymised form, together with a record of the way each comment has been taken into account in developing the revised draft;
 - b. A report of any working groups, feasibility testing, additional information or other considerations that have been taken into account in developing the revised draft.
- 3.7.7 The Standards, Assurance and Claims Committee shall review the draft and the accompanying records and reports and determine, in consultation with the Secretariat whether:
- a. the draft should be submitted for a further round of public consultation, or
 - b. the draft should be submitted to the relevant decision-making body for approval, or
 - c. some other course of action.

NOTE:

If the Standards, Assurance and Claims Committee determines that insufficient input has been received from any key stakeholder group, or that substantive, unresolved issues persist that may be resolved through further consultation, then it shall recommend that the draft shall be submitted for a further round of public consultation as described in paragraphs 3.7.1 to 3.7.5 before it is considered for submission to the relevant decision-making body for approval.

NOTE:

If a Standard is being developed under these procedures for the first time at least two rounds of public consultation as described in paragraphs 3.7.1 to 3.7.5 shall be completed before the draft may be submitted for approval. For revisions of existing Standards, at least one round of public consultation as described in paragraphs 3.7.1 to 3.7.5 shall be completed.

3.7.8

- a. If the Standards, Assurance and Claims Committee determines that the draft Standard should be submitted for a further period of public consultation the Secretariat shall initiate the consultation process as described from paragraph 3.7.1.
- b. If the Standards, Assurance, and Claims Committee determines that the draft Standard is ready to be submitted for approval, it shall request the CEO to submit the Standard to the Board for final review as described in section 3.8, below;
- c. If the Standards, Assurance and Claims Committee determines that some other course of action is required this shall be documented together with any resulting changes to the draft

Standard, and the Standard shall be resubmitted to the Standards, Assurance and Claims Committee as described in paragraph 3.7.6, above.

3.8 Board Review

- 3.8.1 When the Standards, Assurance and Claims Committee has determined that the ResponsibleSteel International Standard is ready to be submitted to the relevant decision-making body for approval, the Secretariat shall prepare a report that:
- a. summarises the standards development process to date, demonstrating how the approved procedures have been implemented, and including a clear description of any departure from the approved procedure together with the justification for any such departure;
 - b. explains the main issues and concerns raised during the process, and explains how these have been responded to;
 - c. includes a summary of all comments received during the last period of consultation and an explanation of how these have been responded to in the final draft of the Standard;
 - d. includes as an annex, the version of the Standard that is being submitted for approval.
 - e. Includes a statement to the effect that the CEO considers that the Standard meets the approved Terms of Reference for its development.
- 3.8.2 The CEO shall submit the report to the Board for review. The Board shall review the report to verify that:
- a. the International Standards Development Procedures have been followed, and;
 - b. the ResponsibleSteel International Standard meets the requirements of the defined Terms of Reference.
- 3.8.3 If the Board determines that the International Standards Development Procedures have not been followed, or that the ResponsibleSteel International Standard does not meet the requirements of the defined Terms of Reference the Board shall identify its specific concerns, and in consultation with the CEO determine what further actions it considers are needed to address these.
- 3.8.4 The CEO shall be responsible for implementing such actions as have been determined to be needed to address the Board's concerns. If any revisions to the Standard are made, then such revisions shall be approved by the Standards, Assurance and Claims Committee before being presented to the Board for subsequent approval. When the necessary actions have been completed, the CEO shall prepare an addendum to the report described in 3.8.1, describing the actions that have taken place and identifying any changes to the Standard that have resulted from these. Steps 3.8.2 to 3.8.4 shall be repeated until the Board is satisfied that the International

Standards Development Procedures have been followed, and that the ResponsibleSteel International Standard meets the requirements of the defined Terms of Reference. When the Board determines that this is the case, the CEO shall finalise the report described in 3.8.1, and submit it alongside the final draft Standard to the relevant decision-making body.

NOTE:

Decision-making will follow either Procedure A for Board Approval or Procedure B for Membership Approval and Board Ratification as defined in 3.9 and 3.10 respectively.

3.9 Procedure A – Board Approval

- 3.9.1 The CEO shall submit the report described in 3.8.1 and the final draft Standard to the Board for approval.
- 3.9.2 Formal adoption of a ResponsibleSteel International Standard shall rest with the Board. The Board will record its decision in line with its usual decision-making procedures.

3.10 Procedure B – Membership Approval and Board Ratification

- 3.10.1 The CEO shall submit the report described in 3.8.1 and the final draft Standard to the Membership for ballot.
- 3.10.2 Each ResponsibleSteel member shall submit their decision to approve, reject or abstain from approving the final draft ResponsibleSteel International Standard, in accordance with the ResponsibleSteel ballot procedure (see Annex Two) that is in place at the time of the ballot. In the case of a rejection or an abstention, the member shall specify the reasons for the rejection or abstention and specify what actions the member considers would be needed in order for the member to approve the ResponsibleSteel International Standard.
- 3.10.3 If the Membership approves the draft Standard:
 - a. The Membership’s decision will be conveyed to the Board;
 - b. The Board will ratify the Membership’s decision at its next Board meeting and formally adopt the Standard in accordance with its usual decision-making procedures.
- 3.10.4 If the Membership rejects the draft Standard:
 - a. The CEO shall collate the reasons given by the members for their abstentions or rejections, and the actions that they have proposed would be needed to gain their approval;
 - b. The CEO shall review the members’ reasons in consultation with the Chair of the Standards, Assurance and Claims Committee, and propose a plan of action;
 - c. The plan of action shall be presented to the Board, which shall determine what further steps should be taken, at its discretion.

4. Availability of ResponsibleSteel International Standards

- 4.1.1 A ResponsibleSteel International Standard shall be published on the ResponsibleSteel website within four weeks of its formal adoption by the Board, and all stakeholders that provided input to the Standard, as well as current ResponsibleSteel certificate holders and certification bodies shall be informed of such.
- 4.1.2 Any associated guidance or explanations relating to the ResponsibleSteel International Standard shall be published on the ResponsibleSteel website.
- 4.1.3 ResponsibleSteel International Standards and any associated documentation shall be available for download from the ResponsibleSteel website free of charge.

5. Variation of Documented Procedures

- 5.1.1 Departures from these procedures may be approved by the Board in exceptional circumstances, when compliance is not possible for reasons beyond the control of the Secretariat, or when the Board determines that an alternative process would better achieve the ResponsibleSteel programme's objectives.
- 5.1.2 The Secretariat shall document any such departures in writing and include a description and explanation in the report submitted when Board review for the final Standard is sought (see 3.8.1).

6. Record Keeping

- 6.1.1 The CEO shall ensure that the following records are kept and are accessible for review on request for each ResponsibleSteel International Standard:
 - a. The International Standards Development Procedures (this document);
 - b. Copies of the results of the need assessment and justification for a Standard including the names of standards, initiatives and/or organisations that were reviewed.
 - c. The approved Terms of Reference for the development or review of the Standard;
 - d. Copies of drafts of the ResponsibleSteel International Standard circulated for formal review;
 - e. The ResponsibleSteel International Standards formally adopted by the Board;
 - f. Names and affiliations of organisations, groups and/ or individuals invited to comment on the ResponsibleSteel International Standard during each stage of its development or revision;

- g. Names and affiliations of the members of the Standards, Assurance and Claims Committee and invited experts who participated in the review and revision of each draft of the Standard including members of the Technical Advisory Panel;
- h. Copies of all comments received on drafts of the ResponsibleSteel International Standard circulated for formal review;
- i. A synopsis of the comments received in response to each draft of the ResponsibleSteel International Standard circulated for formal review, together with an explanation of how the comments were subsequently taken into account;
- j. A description of and explanation for any departures from the published procedures for ResponsibleSteel International Standards development;
- k. The final report on the implementation of the International Standards Development Procedures considered by the decision-making body showing how the procedure was implemented;
- l. All formal decisions of the Standards, Assurance and Claims Committee, the Membership and the Board in relation to the development and approval of the ResponsibleSteel International Standard.

7. Concerns and Complaints

- 7.1.1 Any stakeholder has the right to raise their concerns or submit a complaint about the implementation of the International Standards Development Procedures or about the content of ResponsibleSteel International Standards.
- 7.1.2 Concerns or complaints should be submitted in writing to the Secretariat who shall follow the ResponsibleSteel Issues Resolution System and ensure that the complaint is conveyed to the appropriate body or individual for response.

8. Comments after Approval

- 8.1.1 The Secretariat shall keep an Issues Log of all comments that are received on the content of a ResponsibleSteel International Standard after its formal adoption.
- 8.1.2 The Secretariat shall review all received comments on an ongoing basis with a view to providing guidance on interpretation of a ResponsibleSteel International Standard by certification applicants, certificate holders, certification bodies and other stakeholders, and/or proposals for revisions in accordance with Sections 9 – 12 below, as required.

9. Urgent Revisions

- 9.1.1 The CEO may determine that there is a need for an urgent revision to a ResponsibleSteel International Standard.
- 9.1.2 Conditions under which an urgent revision can be triggered may include, but are not limited to:
- Formal complaints raised by stakeholders that are deemed to have merit as per the ResponsibleSteel complaints procedure;
 - Problems of implementation which affect multiple organisations;
 - Perceived threats to ResponsibleSteel's credibility; or
 - Changes in legislation or international obligations that affect the implementation of the ResponsibleSteel International Standard.
- 9.1.3 If the CEO believes that there is a need for an urgent revision of a ResponsibleSteel International Standard they shall direct the Secretariat to prepare a paper outlining the reasons for the proposed urgent revision and shall submit this to the Board for consideration. The Board shall then make a decision whether to proceed with an urgent revision.
- 9.1.4 If the Board determines that there is a need for an urgent revision it shall direct the CEO to draft a proposed change in consultation with the Standards, Assurance and Claims Committee and submit it to the Board for approval and adoption in accordance with its usual decision-making procedures.
- 9.1.5 If the Board determines that an urgent revision is not required it shall provide reasons for the decision and shall direct the CEO as to any alternative measures that it considers to be appropriate.
- 9.1.6 Urgent revisions shall not be required to undergo a public consultation process nor feasibility testing. However, any approved urgent revisions shall be included in the subsequent regular ResponsibleSteel International Standard revision, consultation and feasibility testing process of the relevant Standard.
- 9.1.7 Upon Board approval of an urgent revision, a new version number of the relevant ResponsibleSteel International Standard shall be created along with an effective date, and this ResponsibleSteel International Standard shall be published on the ResponsibleSteel website and announced to ResponsibleSteel certification applicants, certificate holders, certification bodies and stakeholders.

10. Administrative and Non-Substantive Changes

- 10.1.1 The CEO may determine that there is a need for an administrative or non-substantive change to a ResponsibleSteel International Standard.
- 10.1.2 Administrative and non-substantive changes to a ResponsibleSteel International Standard may be made at any time at the discretion of the CEO. These do not require a formal revision process, though any changes made shall be notified to the Board, Standards, Assurance and Claims Committee and Membership, shall be published in a list of changes on the ResponsibleSteel website and noted to certification applicants, certificate holders, certification bodies and stakeholders in the subsequent revision process. Administrative and non-substantive changes do not affect the regular review and revision cycle, but shall require a new version number of the relevant ResponsibleSteel International Standard, to be issued and published on the ResponsibleSteel website.

11. Clarifications and Interpretations

- 11.1.1 The Secretariat may determine that there is a need for a clarification or interpretation of a ResponsibleSteel International Standard:
- a. A clarification is an explanation of the correct meaning of a requirement of the relevant ResponsibleSteel International Standard, where the correct meaning is clear from existing guidance, context or other sources of information. Clarifications may be provided without the need for stakeholder consultation.
 - b. An interpretation provides guidance on the application of a requirement where the correct meaning is not clear from existing guidance, context or other sources of information. Interpretations require stakeholder consultation prior to finalisation.

11.2 Clarifications

- 11.2.1 Where a clarification is required, the Secretariat shall provide a written explanation.
- 11.2.2 The clarification shall be provided to the individual who requested it and be posted on the ResponsibleSteel website promptly.

11.3 Interpretations

- 11.3.1 Where an interpretation is required, the CEO shall oversee the development of the interpretation by the Secretariat. The development of an interpretation takes place in two steps: firstly, the development of a provisional interpretation; secondly, finalisation of the interpretation.
- 11.3.2 Provisional interpretation:

The Secretariat shall prepare a provisional interpretation which includes at least the following:

- a. Explanation of the issue for interpretation;
- b. Considerations;
- c. The provisional interpretation.

11.3.3 In developing the provisional interpretation, the Secretariat may consult with stakeholders including ResponsibleSteel members, members of the ResponsibleSteel Technical Advisory Panel, members of the Board and/or relevant experts at its discretion.

11.3.4 The CEO shall approve the provisional interpretation. Once approved, the provisional interpretation is considered definitive until further notice. Certification bodies shall base their decisions on provisional interpretations where relevant, and ResponsibleSteel shall consider decisions based correctly on provisional interpretations to be valid for the remaining duration of any certificates issued on this basis.

11.3.5 The provisional interpretation shall be provided to the individual who requested it, circulated to all ResponsibleSteel certification applicants, certificate holders, certification bodies, members of the ResponsibleSteel Assurance Panel, members of the ResponsibleSteel Technical Advisory Panel, and ResponsibleSteel Board, and be posted on the ResponsibleSteel website.

11.3.6 Finalisation of interpretation

All provisional interpretations shall be subject to stakeholder consultation before finalisation. The Secretariat shall prepare a consultation paper which includes at least the following:

- a. Explanation of the issue for interpretation;
- b. Considerations;
- c. The provisional interpretation;
- d. An explanation of the provisional interpretation;
- e. The consultation process to finalise the interpretation, including timeline and opportunities for stakeholders to contribute;
- f. The decision-making procedure – including how decisions are made and by whom, in accordance with 11.3.7 and 11.3.8 below.

11.3.7 Interpretations shall be subject to a minimum consultation period of 30 days. The Secretariat shall carry out consultations at its discretion. The Secretariat shall inform ResponsibleSteel members, certification bodies, certification applicants and certificate holders of the consultation and shall make the consultation paper publicly available on the ResponsibleSteel website.

11.3.8 The Secretariat shall prepare a summary of input received, the proposed final interpretation and the date on which it shall take effect for a decision by the Standards, Assurance and Claims Committee. Where an interpretation is approved, it shall come into effect on the specified date and shall be communicated to ResponsibleSteel members, certification bodies, certification applicants, certificate holders, members of the ResponsibleSteel Assurance Panel, and members of the ResponsibleSteel Technical Advisory Panel, and be announced on the ResponsibleSteel website.

NOTE:

Certificates issued correctly on the basis of a provisional interpretation shall remain valid for their normal remaining duration.

Certificate holders would be required to comply with the finalised interpretation by the time of their next re-certification audit.

11.3.9 Where appropriate, interpretations shall be incorporated into the relevant ResponsibleSteel International Standard during its next revision.

12. Review of an Existing ResponsibleSteel International Standard

12.1.1 Within a maximum of five years of the date of formal adoption of a ResponsibleSteel International Standard the Secretariat shall carry out a formal consultation with ResponsibleSteel members, approved certification bodies and ResponsibleSteel certificate holders to determine whether the ResponsibleSteel International Standard needs to be reaffirmed, revised, or withdrawn.

12.1.2 The Secretariat shall consider relevant data and information to determine whether the Standard needs to be revised, which may include:

- a. monitoring of ResponsibleSteel's performance and effectiveness;
- b. assessment of client's conformity or performance against the Standard;
- c. analysis of feedback received from certificate holders, members, auditors, certification bodies, and other stakeholders, particularly with respect to Standard effectiveness, implementation and scope;
- d. any urgent revisions implemented since the last revision of the Standard;
- e. any exceptions to the Standard received and processed by ResponsibleSteel;
- f. external research and industry best practices.

NOTE:

Exceptions are governed by the ResponsibleSteel Exception Procedure and exceptions issued by ResponsibleSteel in relation to a ResponsibleSteel International Standard must be considered at the Standard's next revision.

12.1.3 The Secretariat shall report its findings to the Board for decision. The Board may decide to revise, reaffirm, or withdraw the Standard.

12.2 Revision of an International Standard

12.2.1 If the Board determines that a revision is desirable, the Secretariat shall review the Terms of Reference of the Standard in consultation with the Board, and propose any revisions for approval by the Board.

12.2.2 The Secretariat may revise the decision-making procedure of the Terms of Reference (see 2.2.1.e) from 'Board Approval' (see 3.9) to 'Membership Approval and Board Ratification' (see 3.10). The Secretariat shall not revise the decision-making procedure of the Terms of Reference from 'Membership Approval and Board Ratification' to 'Board Approval'.

12.2.3 The Secretariat shall re-apply the preparation steps described in 2.1.1.

12.2.4 Once the Board has approved the Terms of Reference, then the procedures described in sections 3-11 of this document – subject to any variations that have been approved by the Board (see Section 5) – shall be followed.

12.3 Reaffirmation of an International Standard

12.3.1 If the Board determines that the Standard should be reaffirmed, the Board shall state the rationale given, reaffirm the Standard, and specify the year for the next review of the Standard.

12.3.2 The decision, rationale, and year for the next review of the Standard shall be published on the ResponsibleSteel website promptly, and the Secretariat shall announce the decision in the ResponsibleSteel newsletter or similar.

12.4 Withdrawal of ResponsibleSteel International Standards

12.4.1 If the Board determines that the Standard should be withdrawn, then the CEO shall develop a proposal for the withdrawal of the Standard including the rationale for withdrawal and the implementation steps in line with this procedure.

12.4.2 It is at the discretion of the Board to determine if a consultation should be conducted for a proposal to withdraw a Standard.

12.4.3 A consultation may include ResponsibleSteel members, certification applicants, certificate holders, certification bodies, the ResponsibleSteel Technical Advisory Panel, and other



stakeholders. The time period to submit comments on the proposal for the withdrawal is determined by the Board. The Secretariat shall conduct the consultation.

12.4.4 The Secretariat shall submit the final proposal for withdrawal and, if applicable, a summary of comments received, to the Board for a decision. The decision shall be recorded following the Board's usual decision-making procedures.

12.4.5 If the withdrawal of a Standard is approved by the Board, then the Standard will be removed from the ResponsibleSteel website, and certification bodies will be instructed that no further certificates of conformity shall be issued. Valid certificates that have been issued prior to the withdrawal shall remain valid until their date of expiry.

12.4.6 The Secretariat shall announce the withdrawal of the Standard to certification applicants, certificate holders, certification bodies and in the ResponsibleSteel newsletter or similar.



Annex One: ResponsibleSteel™ Board Standard Committee ('Standards, Assurance and Claims Committee')

The Standards, Assurance and Claims Committee is responsible for overseeing the drafting of ResponsibleSteel™ International Standards in accordance with the approved International Standards Development Procedures, on behalf of the ResponsibleSteel™ Board of Directors.

The Standards, Assurance and Claims Committee shall consist of one independent Board Member (who shall be the Committee Chair), and one Board Member representing each of the two ResponsibleSteel™ membership categories.

Standards, Assurance and Claims Committee members shall be appointed by the Board.

The current Standards, Assurance and Claims Committee membership will be published on the ResponsibleSteel™ website.

If a Committee member is unable to attend a meeting, the member may be represented at the meeting by another Board Member from the same membership category, with the agreement of the Chair of the Board of Directors.

The Committee may invite additional individuals to attend meetings to assist the Committee with its work at its discretion, subject to the approval of the Committee Chair.

Additional invitees attending Standards, Assurance and Claims Committee meetings but who are not listed as members of the Committee, shall not vote.

Standards, Assurance and Claims Committee members may participate in and act at any Standards, Assurance and Claims Committee meeting through the use of conference telephone or other method through which all persons participating in the meeting can communicate with each other, such as but not limited to webex, e-mail, skype, or other electronic means. Participation in a meeting by such means shall constitute attendance and presence in person at the meeting.

The Standards, Assurance and Claims Committee shall take all formal decisions by consensus, as defined by ResponsibleSteel™ (see glossary). If consensus cannot be achieved the Committee may refer decisions to the full ResponsibleSteel™ Board of Directors, that shall take a decision following its usual decision-making procedures.



Annex Two: ResponsibleSteel Ballot Procedure

This is the current ResponsibleSteel Ballot Procedure, as of the 28th July 2023. The process may be amended by a decision of the Board.

In accordance with Clause 3.10.2 of the ResponsibleSteel International Standards Development Procedures, each ResponsibleSteel member shall be requested to submit their decision to approve, reject, or abstain from approving the draft ResponsibleSteel International Standard.

The ballot shall be open for four weeks for members to submit their decision.

Please note that abstentions and non-responses do not count as a vote and will not influence the outcome of the ballot.

In the case of a rejection or abstention, “the member shall specify the reasons for the rejection or abstention and specify what actions the member considers would be needed in order for the member to approve the ResponsibleSteel International Standard”.

The Board of Directors has determined that responses to the ballot shall be delivered by email. Responses shall be sent to: vote@responsiblesteel.org. A vote will remain confidential to the ResponsibleSteel Secretariat.

In order for the Standard to be approved it must be approved by a simple majority of the eligible ResponsibleSteel business members, and by a simple majority of the eligible ResponsibleSteel civil society members.