

ASI Standards Setting Procedure

V3.2 – 17 April 2020

1 PURPOSE

This procedure describes the process for the development, approval, publication and revision of ASI Standards, which commits ASI to:

- be open and transparent in its standards development and review process
- encourage input from a wide range of Stakeholders
- treat input from Stakeholders with integrity and respect
- report publicly on submissions received, including how comments have been addressed in subsequent drafting
- align with the ISEAL Codes of Good Practice (Standards Setting Code, Impacts Code and the Assurance Code).

2 SCOPE AND APPLICATION

This procedure applies to the development of new and revision of existing ASI Standards.

The procedure does not apply to

- Non-Substantive Changes to existing ASI Standards
- ASI internal operational procedures and policies.

3 DEFINITIONS

ASI Standards	Currently, the ASI Performance Standard and ASI Chain of Custody Standard.
Consensus	General agreement achieved through a process seeking to take into account the views of interested or affected Stakeholders, particularly those directly affected, reconciliation of conflicting arguments and characterised by the absence of sustained opposition from Stakeholders to substantial issues. NOTE – Consensus need not imply unanimity (adapted from ISEAL Code of Good Practice and ISO/IEC Guide 2: 2004).
Outcome	The likely or achieved short-term and medium-term results from the implementation of the Standard.
Board	ASI Board as defined in the ASI Governance Handbook
Non-Substantive Changes	Correction of typographical errors or minor inconsistencies, or formatting changes that do not involve changes to the content or performance requirements specified in the Standard.
Standards Committee	ASI Standards Committee as defined in the ASI Governance Handbook
Stakeholders	Individual or group interested in, concerned with or directly affected by a Standard

Standard Document that provides, for common and repeated use, rules, guidelines or characteristic for products or related processes and production methods, with which compliance is voluntary. (ISEAL Code of Good Practice)

4 REFERENCES

- ASI Performance Standard
- ASI Chain of Custody Standard
- ASI Complaints Mechanism
- ASI Governance Handbook
- ISEAL Code of Good Practice for Setting Social and Environmental Standards
- ISEAL Code of Good Practice for Assessing the Impacts of Social and Environmental Standards
- ISEAL Code of Good Practice for Assuring Compliance with Social and Environmental Standards
- ISO/IEC Guide 2 Standardization and related activities -- General vocabulary

5 PROCEDURE

There are five main stages applied to the development and revision of ASI Standards as illustrated in Figure 1:



Figure 1 ASI Standards Setting Process

5.1 Proposal Stage

1. Any ASI Stakeholder, including the ASI Standards Committee, can initiate a proposal to develop a new or review an existing ASI Standard.
2. The Stakeholder must submit the proposal to the ASI Secretariat including:
 - Justification for the creation of a new ASI Standard or revision of an existing ASI Standard; and
 - Information including content, scope and application of a new ASI Standards, or
 - Overview of suggested changes for an existing ASI Standard
3. The ASI Secretariat will review the proposal and inform the ASI Board.
4. Decision and timing to proceed with the development of a new ASI Standard or revision of an existing ASI Standard rests with the ASI Board.
5. The maximum period that an ASI standard may go without mandatory revision is five years.

5.2 Preparatory Stage

5.2.1 General principles

6. Once a Standards revision or development process is approved, the ASI Secretariat will engage with the ASI Standards Committee to collectively:
 - a. Coordinate the identification of Stakeholders to be directly involved

- b. Collate information relevant to the ASI Standard
 - c. Identify issues and opportunities associated with the ASI Standard
 - d. Develop a first draft of the Terms of Reference (see section 5.2.3 below) that outlines the development and/or review process including a public consultation and feedback process.
 - e. Develop a proposed timing for the ASI Standard development / revision from the first public comment stage to proposed approval by the Standards Committee. As a guide, minor revisions may take place over 6-8 months, and more significant developments/revisions may take place over up to 2 years.
 - f. Develop a first draft of the ASI Standard for public comment during the consultation stage (see section 5.3).
 - g. Develop a template for comments submission and a register for recording how comments were addressed.
 - h. Determine the role of the Benchmarking and Harmonisation Working Group and the need for any other Working Group/s to assist with drafting or revision of the ASI Standards. If a Working Group is required, it must be established with terms of reference in accordance with the agreed template for establishing Working Groups, should include participants from industry and non-industry relevant to the scope, and be approved by the Standards Committee. External subject matter expertise may be called upon to assist the Working Group as required after a consideration of financial resources required and approval from the ASI Executive Director.
7. All ASI Standards shall adopt the credibility principles outlined in the ISEAL Code of Good Practice for Setting Social and Environmental Standards.
 8. Individual performance requirements shall be written to adopt the following ASI principles:
 - Express a single expectation
 - Be simple, clear, concise
 - Be implementable
 - Be readily auditable.
 9. The first draft of the ASI Standard shall be subject to the legal review process outlines in section 5.2.2 prior to release for public consultation.

5.2.2 Stakeholder Identification

10. At the outset of a standards development or revision process, the ASI Secretariat shall develop or update lists of sectors that have an interest in an ASI standard and key Stakeholder groups within those sectors, based on the standard's scope and its social, environmental and economic Outcomes.
11. Key Stakeholder sectors/groups shall include overlapping and/or interested standards programs. To encourage inter-operability between related standards programs, the ASI Secretariat will inform organisations, seek input and encourage their participation in the standards development or revision process.

5.2.3 Terms of Reference

12. The ASI Secretariat will be responsible for the development of a Terms of Reference for public consultation to meet the requirements of both a 'Terms of Reference' and a 'Public Summary'

under the ISEAL Alliance Standards-Setting Code. It must therefore include the following elements:

- the proposed scope of the standard and the intended geographic application;
 - a justification of the need for the standard, including: an assessment of the most important sustainability issues falling within the scope of the standard; an explanation of whether the proposed standard will meet an expressed need; and documentation of other standards operating or in development that meet all or part of the expressed need;
 - clear social, environmental and economic Outcomes that the standard seeks to achieve and how those are linked to the organisation’s intended change (see ISEAL Impacts Code);
 - an assessment of risks in implementing the standard and how to mitigate these, including: identification of factors that could have a negative impact on the ability of the standard to achieve its Outcomes; unintended consequences that could arise from its implementation; and possible corrective actions that could be taken to address these potential risks (see ISEAL Impacts Code 7.6 and 7.4);
 - steps in the standard-setting process, including timelines and clearly identified opportunities for contributing; and
 - decision-making procedures, including how decisions are made and who makes them.
13. The Terms of Reference should also include the identification of any language translation needs during the consultation phases and define the methods by which comments can be received.
14. The Terms of Reference will itself be released for public comment (see section 5.3).

5.2.4 Legal Review

15. New or revised ASI Standards shall be subject to a legal review by the Legal Committee.
16. The purpose of the legal review shall be to:
- Ensure the ASI Standard complies with applicable laws and minimises ASI’s legal exposure
 - Assist ASI to act in accordance with the Anti-Trust Compliance Policy
 - Bring legal issues to the attention of the Standards Committee and recommend courses of action as deemed appropriate
 - Advise the Standards Committee, the ASI Board and /or the ASI Secretariat as to when external legal advice is required, and recommend on the appointment of external legal counsel.
17. Legal review shall occur at the following stages, as appropriate:
- Prior to each of the public consultation periods (See Table 1)
 - Prior to ASI Board Approval.

5.3 Consultation Stage

18. There will be three rounds of public consultation.
19. The scope, comment period and deliverable of each round is indicated Table 1:

Table 1 Public Consultation Scope

Round	Scope	Legal Review	Period	Output
1	First draft Terms of Reference	No	60 days	Final Terms of Reference
2	First draft of the ASI Standard	Yes prior to public review	60 days	Second draft of the ASI Standard
3	Second draft of the ASI Standard	Yes prior to public review	30 days	Final draft of the ASI Standard for Board endorsement

20. The launch of a public consultation round shall be officially announced to the ASI mailing list, and added to the ASI website. Reminders and updates on the consultation period and processes will be regularly communicated via the ASI newsletter.
21. The announcement shall include:
 - a brief and clear description of the scope and objectives of the ASI Standard
 - the justification of the need to introduce or revise the ASI Standard
 - the estimated timeline for completion of the ASI Standard
 - the opportunity and process to submit written comments on the ASI Standard
 - ASI contact details.
22. For all consultation rounds, the ASI Secretariat will facilitate dialogue on input received from the public with ASI Standards Committee using the template developed in step 6(g) above.
23. A compilation of feedback and comments received during the public comment period and a synopsis of how they are being addressed will be summarised and made publicly available on the ASI website, shared through the ASI newsletter and emailed directly to any commenters who choose not to receive the ASI newsletter.
24. The Standards Committee will be involved with redrafting of subsequent versions of the ASI Standard following the public consultation and comments arising from the legal reviews.
25. Where outstanding issues exist at the end of the third consultation round, a final consultation period of 30 or 60 days (which shall be preceded by a legal review) may be considered by the Standards Committee.

5.4 Approval Stage

26. Upon completion of the final draft of the ASI Standard along with relevant associated supporting documentation, the Standards Committee will decide whether to approve the ASI Standard for adoption by the ASI Board in the form of a by-law.
27. The Board will review the recommendation and, where due process has been followed by the Standards Committees and no material risks are identified, document its decision to adopt the new or revised ASI Standard and associated assurance models by making them a By-Law,.
28. Where the Board reviews the recommendation and determines that either due process has not been followed and/or identifies a material risk to ASI, , the Board will refer the proposed Standard/revision back to the Standards Committee for further work.
29. Approval by the Standards Committee and adoption by the Board are subject to the decision making and Consensus processes outlined in the ASI Governance Handbook.

5.5 Publication Stage

30. Once the ASI Standard has been approved by the ASI Board, the ASI Secretariat will prepare the final document for publication.
31. Only editorial corrections can be made during this stage.
32. The approved ASI Standard will be published on the ASI website within 30 days of Board Approval (unless otherwise specified in the Terms of Reference) and the issuance and key details communicated to all Stakeholders, including Accredited Auditors and Certified Members. Translated versions of the Standard may in some cases take additional time beyond this period.
33. The approved ASI Standard shall include:
 - Date of publication
 - Next review date (a maximum of five years for ASI Standards)
 - Official language and a note that in case of inconsistency between versions, reference shall default to the official language version.
 - Contact point where requests for clarification and general feedback can be sent.
 - Reference to the ASI Complaints Mechanism (where appropriate)
 - In the case of revisions, the transition period that will apply for when Members must comply with the revised ASI Standard.
34. The ASI Secretariat will update the internal document register with the details contained in point 31.
35. Once the ASI Standards is issued, the Standards Committee will monitor feedback from Members and other interested Stakeholders about the new or revised ASI Standards, which will be recorded and considered as part of future revisions.

6 RECORDS

Records of public drafts and final versions of the ASI Standard, comments received and responded to during the public comment periods, decisions to recommend and adopt the ASI Standard, and policies and procedures guiding the standard setting activity shall be maintained for a minimum of five years.

7 DOCUMENT CONTROL

Document Name	ASI Standards Setting Procedure	
Document ID	ASI-PRO-1	
Revision	Version 3	
Publication Date	11 October 2019	
Approved By	ASI CEO	
Next Review Date	3 years or as required	
Revision History	Version 1	Issue for use, June 2016
	Version 2	Updates against ISEAL Standards Code, August 2018
	Version 3	Updates against ISEAL Standards Code, October 2019
	Version 3.1	Minor editorial to step 22, 11 October 2019
	Version 3.2	Change of terminology to 'Terms of Reference' in 5.2.3 and elsewhere, April 2020; and section 5.4 on Board

		decision-making (new clause 28 as contained in the ASI Governance Handbook, September 2019).
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Please refer to the ASI Website for the latest version of this procedure.