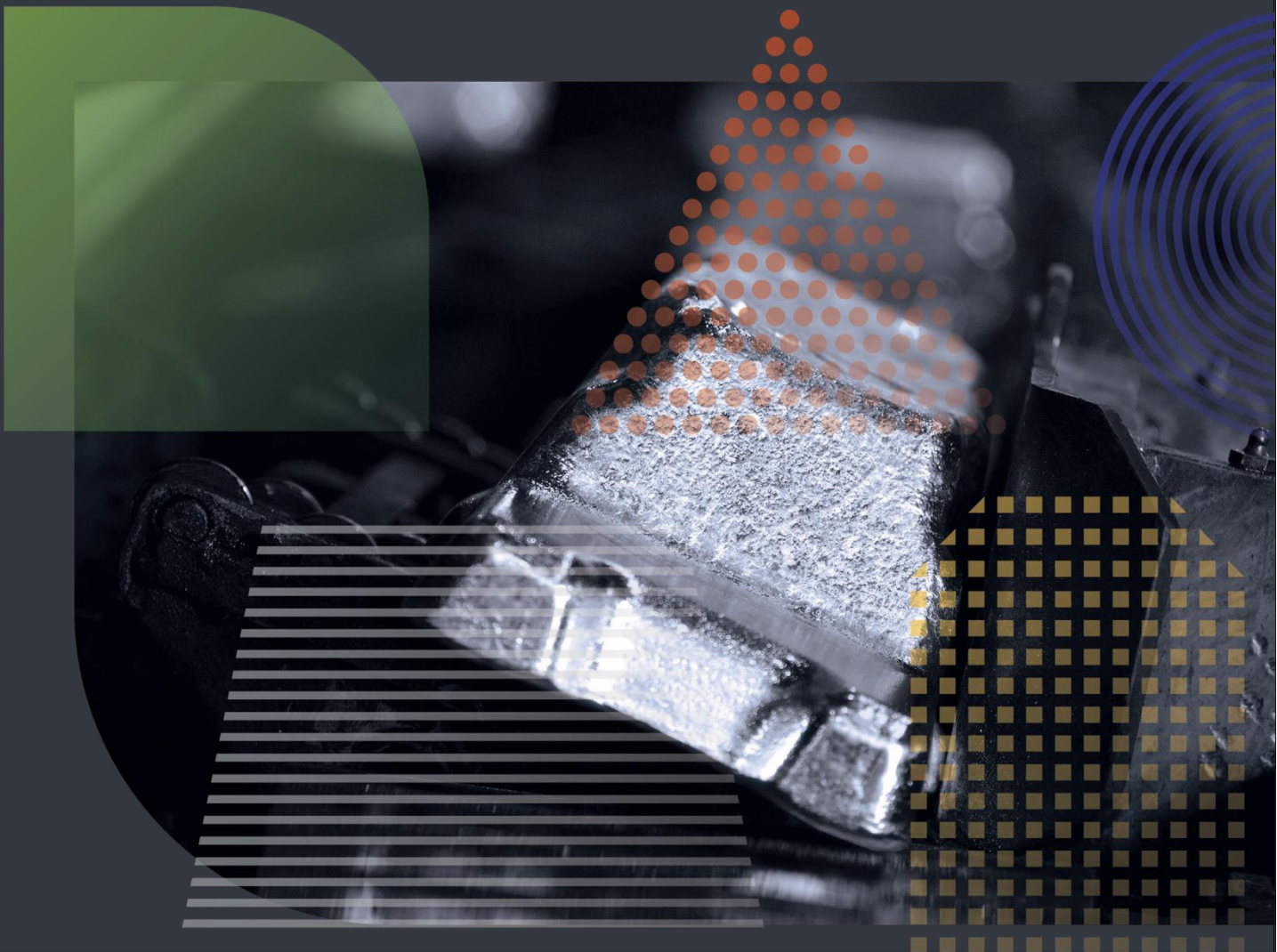


Drivers, Benefits, and Challenges of ASI Membership and Certification:

ASI Certification Survey 2022–2023

July 2024



1. Executive Summary

The ASI Certification Survey 2022–2023 aimed to collect feedback from ASI Members who underwent Certification against the ASI Performance Standard or Chain of Custody Standard in the 2022–2023 period. The survey sought to gauge the motivations, values, challenges, and overall impact of ASI Certification.

Key Findings

1. **Motivations for Certification:** The primary drivers for seeking ASI Performance Standard Certification included meeting customer expectations, gaining competitive advantage, and improving on responsible business practices, consistent with previous years. For the Chain of Custody Standard, the primary drivers included: requested by customers, implementation of responsible sourcing, and making an on-product claim. This represents a slight shift from the previous year, where implementation of responsible sourcing was the top driver, followed by requested by customers.
2. **Value of Certification:** A majority of respondents agreed that ASI Certification had a positive impact on their business. The Certification showcased a commitment to responsible sourcing and sustainability and facilitated compliance with other standards. Most respondents also reported changes or improvements to business practices related to ASI Certification. The areas of improvement most cited were: biodiversity, supplier due diligence, and the integration of previously isolated environmental, social and governance policies into one overarching framework.
3. **Challenges of Certification:** Challenges most cited included the complexity of the ASI Standards requirements (in terms of stringency, applicability, writing clarity, and distinction between what is mandatory or not), and the financial and administrative burdens associated with maintaining Certification. For the Chain of Custody Standard, several respondents noted the complexity of working with ASI's mass balance system.

The 2022–2023 ASI Certification Survey revealed that while ASI Certification is generally viewed positively and leads to significant business improvements for Members, there are also improvement opportunities for ASI. These are summarised below.

Summary of ASI action/improvement areas:

Standards revision topics: The upcoming ASI 2025–2027 Standards Revision will consider the feedback raised throughout the survey related to:

- **Chain of Custody:** Exploration of alternative models (traceability) to the Mass Balance system in the upcoming ASI 2025–2027 Standards Revision.

- **Benchmarking and recognition:** The prioritisation of external Standards or Schemes for benchmarking and (cross-)recognition will be another key area for consultation in the Standards revision. ASI has an active benchmarking and recognition program, with a Working Group holding periodic calls. Members are encouraged to actively participate.
- **Need for improved clarity and materiality in ASI Standards:** specific topics cited by more than one respondent include Biodiversity and environmental compliance, and Public Disclosure. This will be taken into account in the Standards Revision.
- **The blurring of normative and non-normative requirements.** This will be a key focus in the Standards Revision when re-drafting Standards and Guidance documents.

Other Topics

Chain of Custody Standard Material Accounting Tool: ASI is undertaking a series of updates to the CoC Material Accounting Tool (MAT) and guidance on mass balance calculations for specific scenarios. These will be communicated via a series of webinars and member update articles.

Learning team: respondents suggested a number of topics that can be created or expanded in the learning material. These include:

- Create more learning modules specifically tailored to each aspect of the Standard. Biodiversity, environmental compliance, and Public Disclosure were cited in the 'challenge' section as being a difficult area for Members to comply with.
- Give worked examples with explanations (i.e. Youtube clips), for various topics.
- Give further clarification and examples for the GHG Pathway Method.
- Give examples and further guidance on how to fill out a Self-Assessment in the ASI Assurance Platform.

Development of elementAI 2.0: ASI has been developing its updated online assurance platform, elementAL 2.0, which should be released around late 2024/early 2025. Suggestions made to enhance the functionality of the platform were:

- Simplify the way the Self-Assessment needs to be carried out.
- Being able to copy/paste the self-assessment in an Excel format.
- When updating the self-assessment, it would be nice to have a field that can be checked mentioning that 'this requirement has been updated'.

Assurance: Several concerns were raised regarding the Auditor pool availability. ASI discusses situations with Members when limited auditor availability is an

issue, and offers viable alternatives to Members including short-term extensions, advice on Audit delivery and planning, or reviewing and approving alternate suitable ASI Auditors. Regular calls are held with ASI Auditors, which are used to improve, enhance, and calibrate auditors' knowledge of the Standards and auditing processes. ASI Learning material is being developed (see above) both proactively and based on feedback from various channels, including this Certification Survey.

Data and Research: As ASI transitions to the new Assurance platform (elementAI 2.0), we expect to be able to enhance data accessibility and publish additional insights for our Members and stakeholders. Current data available on the ASI website includes the Outcomes Dashboard¹, location of ASI Member's certified operations (Performance Standard and CoC) via the ASI Certification Map, and other insights, analyses, and evaluations under Data and Research Insights². In line with the new ISEAL Code, ASI is committed to publicly sharing a summary of our Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning activities at least every two years, with a first summary of activities for 2022-2024 now available on our website³.

¹ <https://aluminium-stewardship.org/drive-change/progress>

² ASI's Data and Research program is designed to support insights, analyses, evaluations and decision-making in relation to ASI's programs and aluminium and sustainability more broadly. Data and Research insights can be found in our website, under 'Driving Change': [Data & Research Insights | Aluminium Stewardship Initiative \(aluminium-stewardship.org\)](https://aluminium-stewardship.org/data-research-insights)

³ <https://aluminium-stewardship.org/summary-of-dr-activities-in-2022-and-2023>

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2. Introduction

Each year, ASI asks for feedback from all ASI Members who undergo Certification against the ASI Performance Standard or Chain of Custody Standard. This report summarizes the results of 73 survey responses from companies that were certified between November 2022 and December 2023. This indicates a 41% response rate based on the total number of certifications over the same time period.

ASI's ongoing Certification Survey provides an opportunity for Certified Members to share feedback on the ASI Certification process, its strengths and challenges, and the broader value that ASI Certification(s) is perceived to deliver. Responses to this survey inform the calibration and continual improvement of ASI's Certification program and various workstreams.

3. Methodology

The collection of data was carried out via SurveyMonkey (a web-based survey platform) and was available in both English and Chinese.

The survey seeks feedback on:

1. the drivers for ASI Certification,
2. the perceived value of ASI Certification,
3. the challenges encountered during the Certification process,
4. changes and improvements driven by ASI Certification.

The survey included 13 questions to address these, with a mix of multiple and single-choice questions and options for free text comments. A copy of the survey is available in Appendix 1.

An email containing a link to the survey was initially sent to ASI Members upon their Certification or Re-Certification under the Performance Standard or the Chain of Custody Standard. To encourage participation, a general reminder email was later dispatched to all certificants from the relevant study period, urging those who had not yet completed the questionnaire to do so. It's important to note that these reminders were not individually targeted; they were sent en masse to all applicable Certificants, consistent with maintaining the anonymity of the survey responses.

The survey could be completed anonymously to ensure that respondents felt able to answer freely, including negative feedback where relevant, without being

identifiable. However, at the end of the survey, respondents could choose to provide their contact details for follow-up.

The Certification survey continues to be sent to Members who achieve Certification on a rolling basis, and periodic analysis and reporting will take place on at least an annual cycle. ASI will continue to publish periodic reports on the outcomes of Member surveys on its website.

Result and limitations

This year's surveys garnered 73 responses, compared to 30 in the 2022 survey, and 40 in the 2017–2021 survey, resulting in calculated response rates relative to the number of issued Certifications in those periods of 41%, 31% and 38%, respectively, and an improvement on the previous survey period.

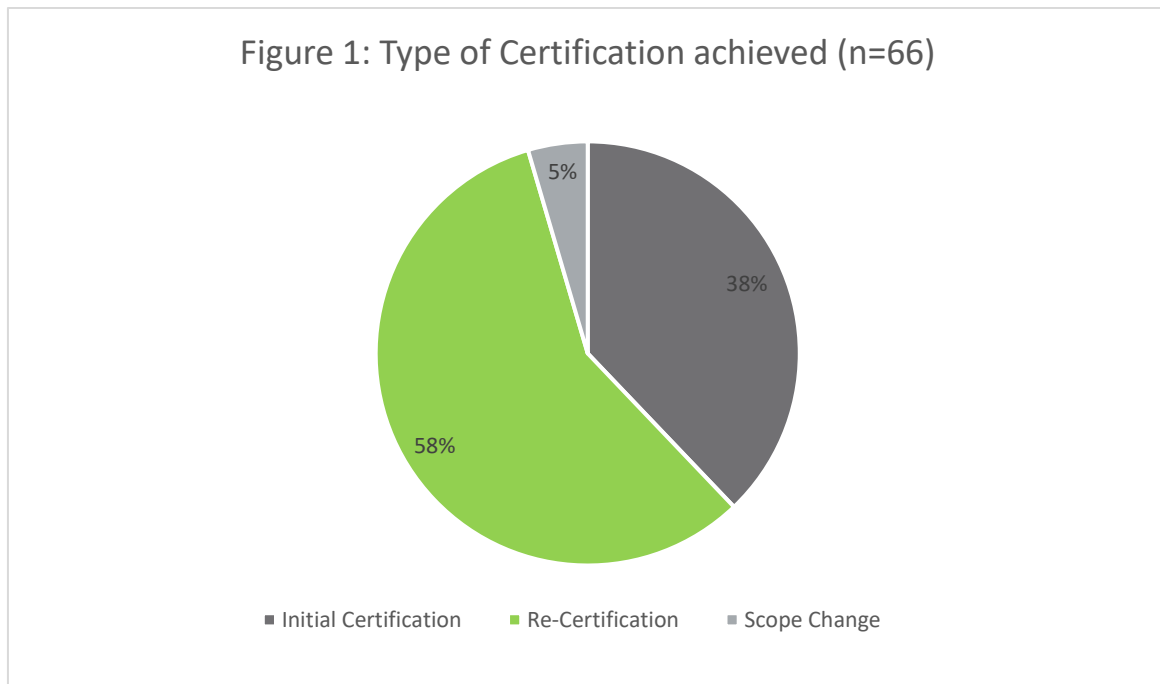
A limitation is that as surveys could be completed anonymously, respondents could potentially respond more than once with respect to the same Certification experience. While the survey could be completed anonymously, 11% of the total respondents provided contact details.

Since not all respondents answer each question, percentages shown in the analysis are based on the total number of responses for each question. These are depicted with 'n=[number of responses]' for each question.

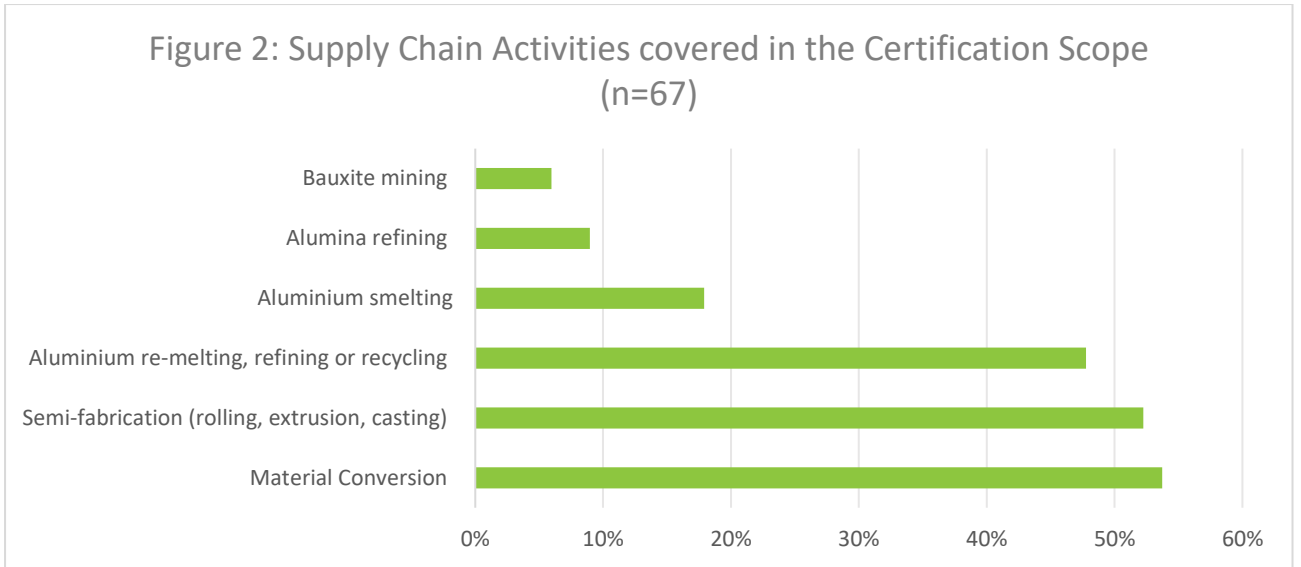
Due to the limited sample, some comments may represent the views of only one or two respondents. These may not be representative of the broader views of ASI Membership, and care should be taken in drawing conclusions from the sample size.

4. Profile of respondents

Figures 1 and 2 show that the profile of respondents to this survey indicates a strong focus on mid to downstream Supply Chain Activities and recycling, with approximately half of all participants having (at least) Material Conversion⁴, Semi-fabrication, or Aluminium re-melting, refining or recycling activities included in their Certification Scope.

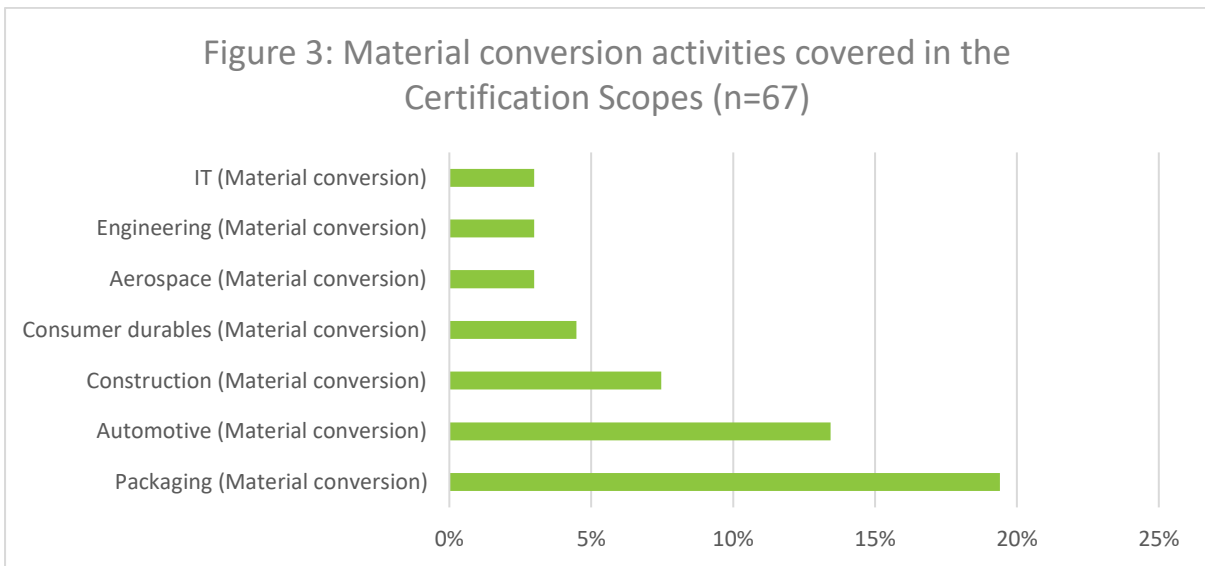


⁴ Material Conversion is defined as the further processing (for example cutting, stamping, bending, joining, forging, product casting, packaging production etc.) of Casthouse Products or semi-fabricated Aluminium products, into products or components that are used in or sold for final assembly or filling and sale to end consumers



*Multiple choice question

Figure 3 shows that when 'Material Conversion' is split further between different downstream industries, the two main activities are (in order), packaging and automotive



*Multiple choice question

5. Drivers for companies to join ASI and seek ASI Performance Standard and/or ASI Chain of Custody Standard Certification

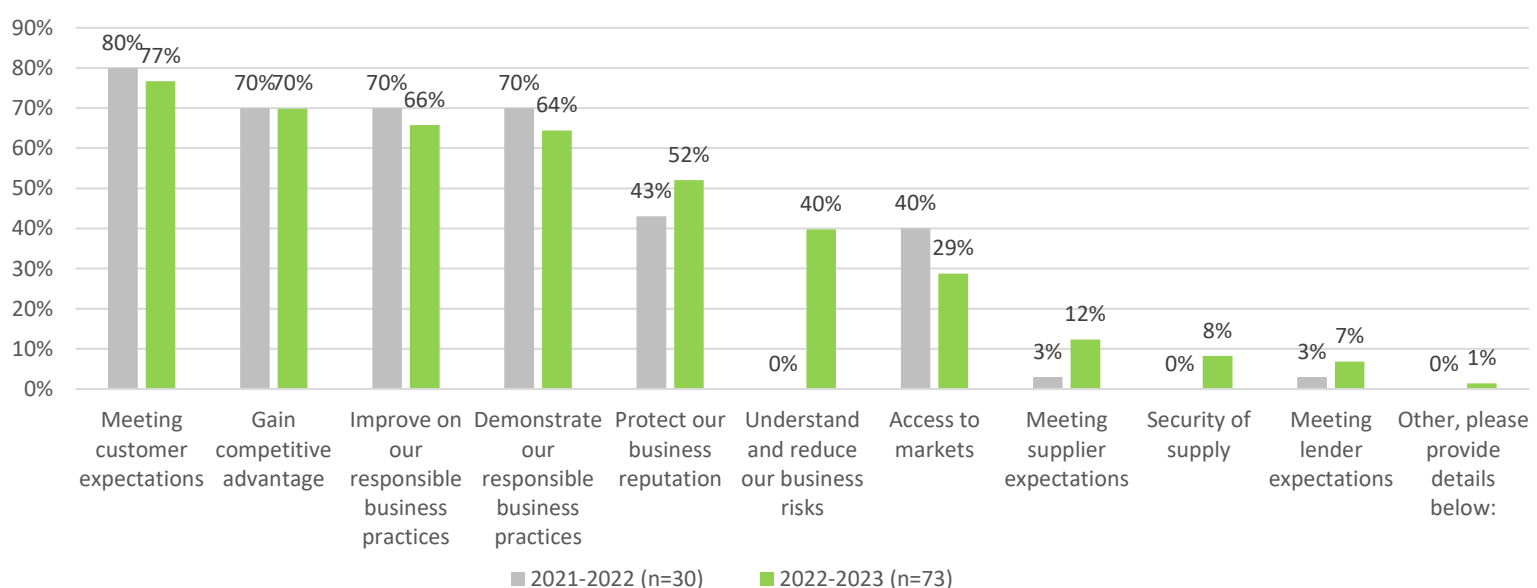
Drivers for achieving ASI Performance Standard Certification

Figure 4 shows that overall, the top four drivers for companies to join ASI and seek ASI Performance Standard Certification have remained constant compared to the previous year's responses. This year's survey underscores a consistent emphasis on meeting customer expectations, gaining a competitive advantage, improving on, or demonstrating responsible business practices, as leading drivers for seeking Performance Standard Certification.

Notably, there has been a significant increase in the proportion of respondents choosing 'understand and reduce our business risks', increasing from 0% to 40% (0 respondents to 29 respondents) over the past year. 'Protect our business reputation' also had a growth in emphasis in this year's responses.

The least selected options (with six or fewer respondents) were: meeting lender expectations, meeting supplier expectations, and security of supply. This is a continued trend since the previous year's responses. It is thus clear that lenders and suppliers are not (yet) the ones exerting pressure on companies to become certified.

Figure 4: Drivers for companies to join ASI and seek Performance Standard Certification (n=73)



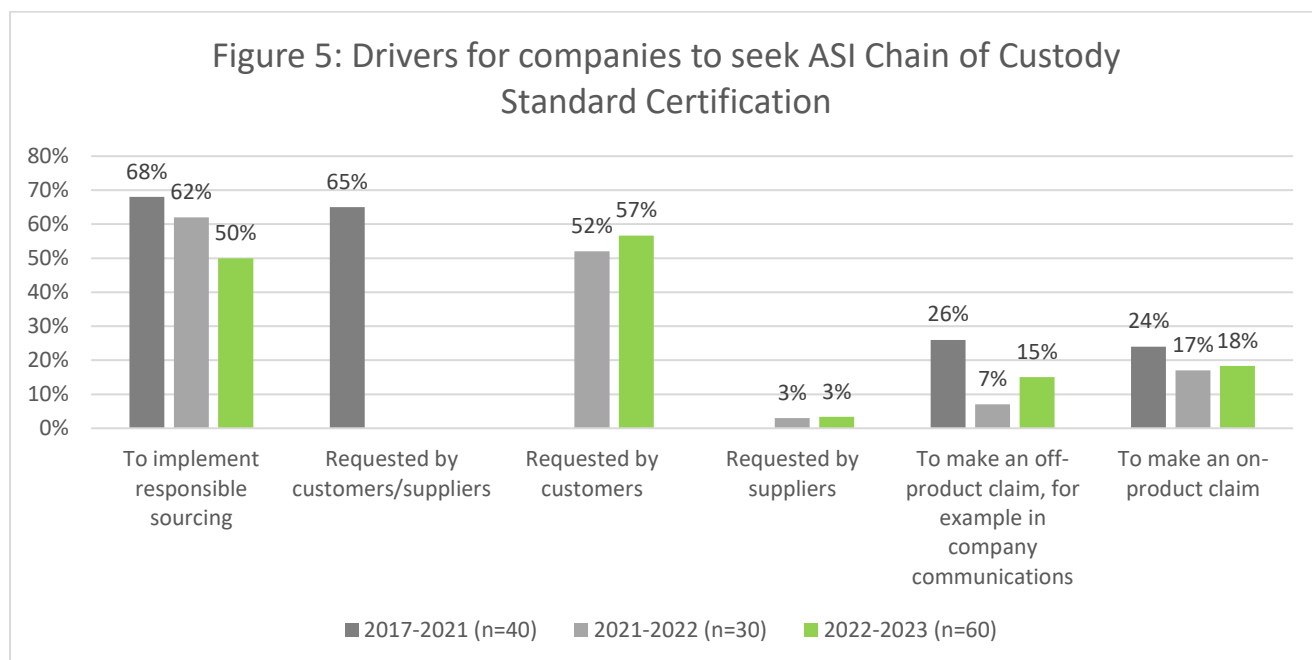
*Multiple choice question

In a few areas, there were differences in motivations between Re-Certifications and Initial Certifications.

'Meeting customer expectations' is the most emphasized among those undergoing Re-Certification or Certification Scope Changes⁵, with 83% compared to 64% for Initial Certifications. This suggests that maintaining customer satisfaction and adhering to their expectations becomes even more critical as companies renew or expand their Certification.

'Protect our business reputation' demonstrates a differential too, with 59% of those undergoing Re-Certification or Scope Changes nominating this, against 44% for initial certifications. This trend could indicate that as companies become more established as a Certified Entity, there is increasing emphasis on safeguarding their reputation, which may now attract greater scrutiny (including through the publication of audit reports).

Access to markets is more important for initial Certifications (36%) than for Re-Certifications (24%). For Initial Certifications, this may indicate aspirations for gaining access to new markets that value Certification. For Re-Certification, this is reduced, which may indicate either that (new) market presence is being maintained, or that these aspirations have not actually been met.



⁵ A Certification Scope Change is issued where there are alterations to the Member's Business, such as organisational restructure, divestments and acquisitions or changes to the equity share of o Businesses, changes to activities, products and processes, changes to the locations and distribution of Member's Facilities, or external influences such as changes in the statutory environment, regulations and/or other stakeholder expectation and commitments that affect the organisation.

*Multiple choice question

**For this question, the survey covering the 2017-2021 period did not have the separate options 'requested by customers' and 'requested by suppliers' split: they were grouped as one option, as shown.

Figure 6 illustrates the drivers for Certification against ASI's Chain of Custody (CoC) Standard. Although the most selected drivers to seek CoC Certification have remained as 'to implement responsible sourcing' and 'requested by customers', the former has steadily decreased over the 3 survey periods, while the latter has increased since the 2021-2022 survey period, suggesting a shift from intrinsic to extrinsic motivations for applying the CoC Standard. It is worth noting that meeting customer expectations is also the most selected driver for seeking or maintaining ASI Performance Standard Certification. However, 2 respondents noted in qualitative comments they had found limited benefits to CoC Certification based on little flow or demand for ASI Certified material.

With regards to the ability to make CoC-related claims, there has been a slight increase in the driver 'to make an off-product claim', while interest in on-product claims has remained stable.

6. Improvements and impact as a result of ASI Certification

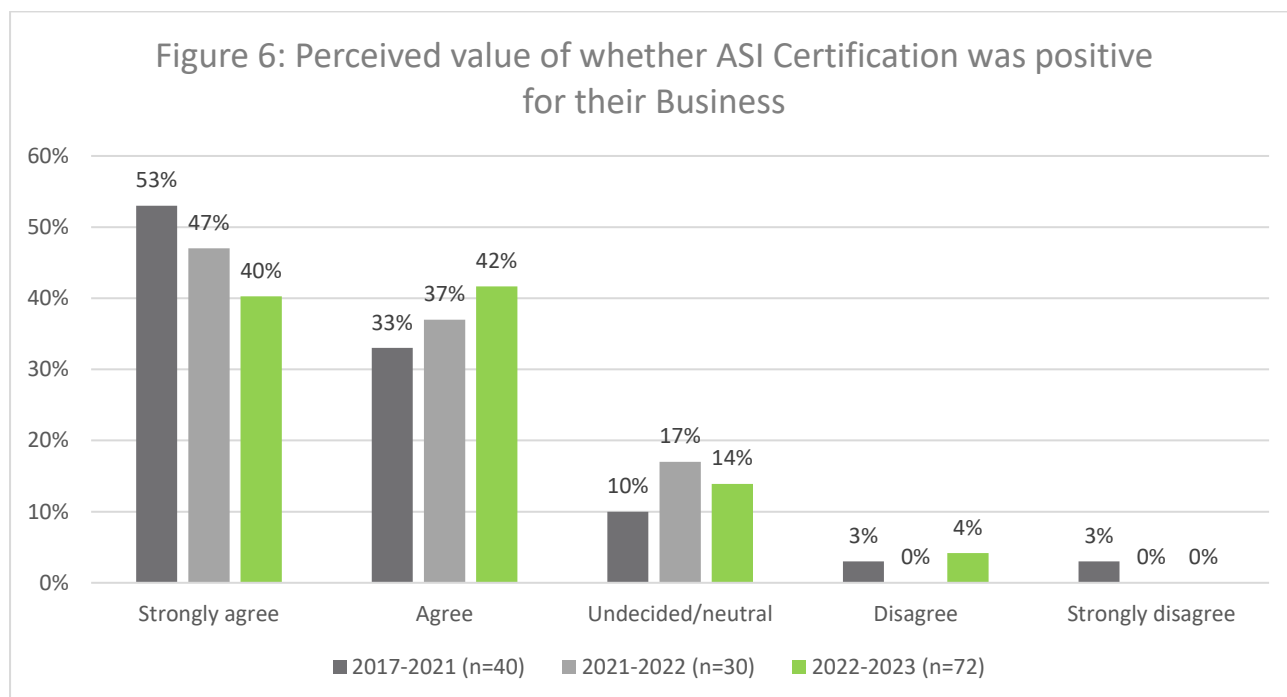


Figure 7 shows that in 2022-2023 that 82% of respondents strongly agree or agree that ASI Certification was positive for their business. While the total of these two categories is reasonably stable over the 3 survey periods, there is a steady decline from stronger to moderate agreement with regards to the business value of ASI.

Fourteen respondents provided additional qualitative feedback for this question, summarized here:

Positive Aspects

Demonstration of commitment: Four respondents noted that Certification helps companies demonstrate their commitment to responsible sourcing and sustainability for their customers.

Ease of compliance: Certification facilitates meeting requirements of other organisations including ICMM and LME (two respondents noted in the survey the benefit of ASI being aligned with LME Responsible Sourcing requirements specifically).

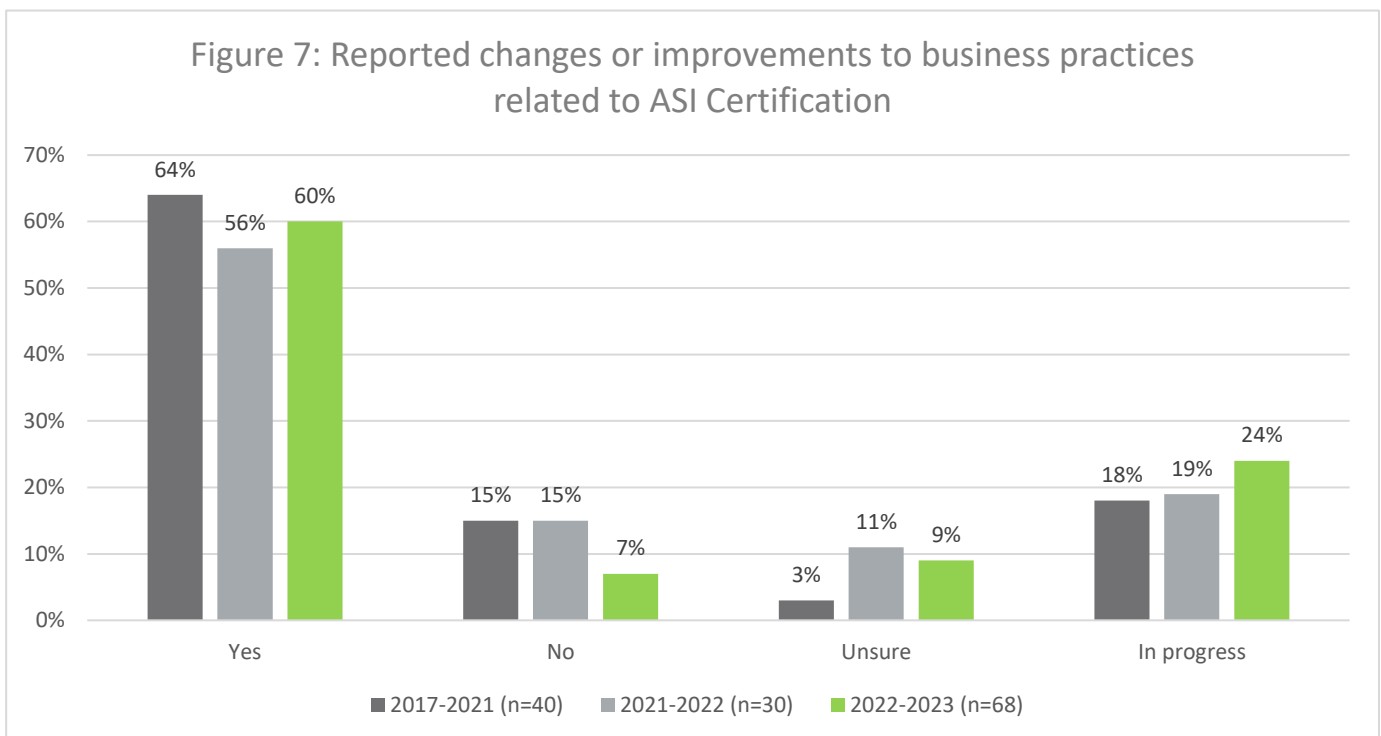
Challenges and limitations

Lack of recognition: Four respondents noted that there is limited recognition from customers and almost none from the general public, especially in Europe. (Three of these respondents didn't specify whether it was about CoC or PS, and one respondent referred to CoC specifically).

Costs vs. benefits: One commentator mentioned the high membership fees and audit costs, particularly in Japan, where there is a low number of suitable auditors. Another respondent noted there was less value delivered from Certification than anticipated.

Overall, while ASI Certification brings strategic benefits, the complexity, cost, and limited recognition present some challenges. These are described further in Section 7.

Changes or improvements to business practices or outcomes as a result of the ASI Certification process



When asked whether there had been any changes or improvements to business practices as a result of ASI certification, Figure 8 shows that the results stayed similar to previous years' results, with 84% of respondents stating 'Yes', or 'In progress'.

Seventeen respondents provided additional qualitative feedback on improvement areas, summarized here:

Environmental: Biodiversity was mentioned by three respondents as being an area that has improved as a result of the ASI Certification process. However these were also areas mentioned in other responses as particularly challenging, so although the ASI Standard(s) can be complex, it pushes companies to do better, leading to improved practices.

Social: One respondent mentioned that it incentivized their company to do more work around community relations. Another respondent mentioned a notable impact in the Living Wage component (Criterion 10.7, 'Remuneration').

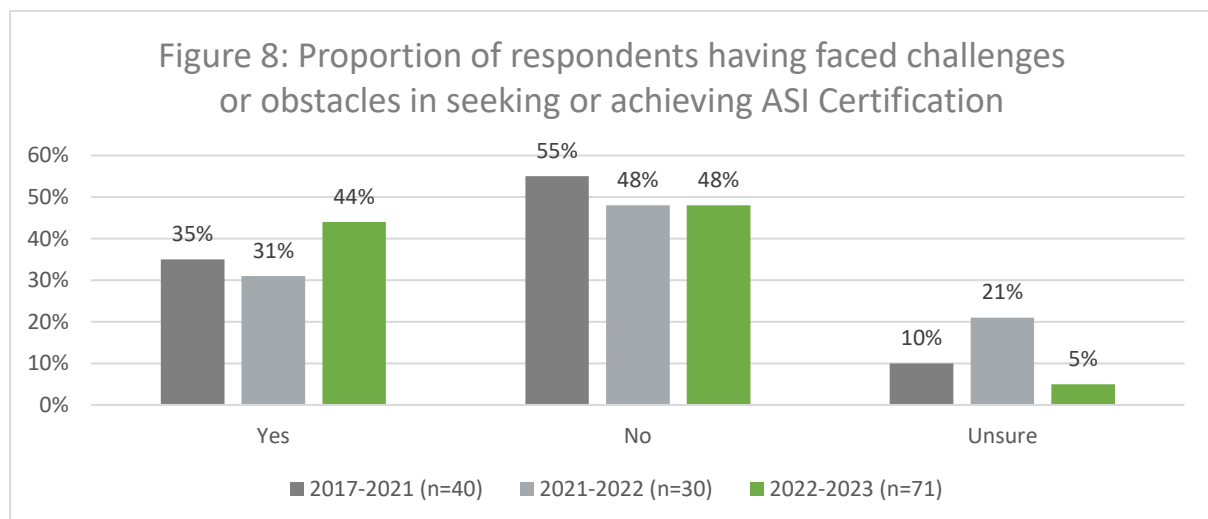
Governance: Improved supplier due diligence practices were mentioned by three different respondents, resulting in more stringent investigation and risk analysis of their suppliers.

General: Three respondents noted that achieving the ASI Performance Standard resulted in more integrated ESG policies: ASI provided an overarching framework to manage sustainability, moving away from seeing these aspects in isolation.

7. Challenges linked to Certification

When asked whether there had been any specific challenges or obstacles in seeking or achieving ASI Certification, Figure 9 shows that the responses were mixed, with roughly half indicating 'No', and half indicating 'Yes' or 'Unsure'. The percentage of companies reporting challenges increased from 35% in 2021-2022 (14 respondents) to 44% in 2022-2023 (32 respondents).

This rise in reported difficulties is likely to be attributed to the new revised ASI Standards (both PS, V3 and CoC, V2). Members were required to demonstrate Conformance to the new versions of the Standards in all New and Re-Certification Audits conducted from 1st June 2023 onwards.



Qualitative feedback

Under this question, 19 respondents provided a qualitative response. Since 12 respondents also provided comments about the challenges that they faced during Certification in the following question (Question 8), these are summarized together below:

Documentation and standardization: Transitioning existing informal procedures into formally documented procedures was seen as challenging –yet beneficial– by two respondents.

Complexity and requirements of the ASI Performance Standard V3⁶:

- Stringency of requirements: Four respondents noted that adapting to the ASI Performance Standard V3 was challenging, as the Standards became stricter and more complex.
- Applicability: Two respondents indicated that the scope of the Performance Standard was now too broad compared to the company's Supply Chain Activities. One respondent gave the view that Material Conversion facilities should not be required to demonstrate compliance with all of the requirements⁷. Another respondent mentioned that they deemed some elements to not apply to the Scope of the Entity, specifically Biodiversity assessment for those operations that are located far from any protected area.
- Lack of clarity in Standards writing: Three different respondents indicated that there is a lack of clarity with regard to the requirements laid out in the Standard. One respondent expressed the fact that the expectations laid out in Guidance documents are increasingly perceived as mandatory, blurring the lines between Guidance (non-normative) and Standard criteria (normative). Three other comments noted: the difficulty in understanding – more broadly – the Standards requirements, the way that the Standards are worded leaves much open to interpretation; and specifically about Public Disclosure, that the way it was worded was ambiguous.

Financial costs: Costs were mentioned by three different respondents. The financial burden associated with obtaining specific software for Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) reports and conducting carbon checks in compliance with ISO14064-1 was mentioned as notable by one respondent⁸. The costs associated with achieving a 1.5 °C reduction pathway were seen as significant for another respondent. Lastly,

⁶ The revised ASI Performance Standard V3 and the ASI Chain of Custody Standard V2 were published the 1st of June 2022. Members were required to demonstrate Conformance to the new versions of the Standards in all New and Re-Certification Audits conducted from 1 st June 2023 onwards. Audits conducted between 1st June 2022 and 31st May 2023 may be against either version of the Standard.

⁷ With the previous version of the Performance Standard V2 (2017), Industrial User members with only Material Conversion activities were required to only comply with principle 4 of the Performance Standard (Material Stewardship). With the publication of the revised ASI Performance Standard V3, there is no longer a “stand alone” Material Stewardship certification for Entities doing only Material Conversion activities; all Entities with Material Conversion and/or Other Manufacturing Facilities are required to: Certify against applicable requirements of at least Principles 1-4 for the first Certification cycle under the new Standard (i.e. a maximum three-year period). After three years, certify against applicable requirements of the full Performance Standard (Principles 1-11). This three-year period must also include any time where the certification is deemed as provisional. The intention is that, in line with the revised Standard, all Facilities will be required to demonstrate Conformance to all applicable Criteria within 5 years after the launch of the Performance Standard version 3.0.

⁸ Note that ASI does not require Entities to following any specific Standards for compliance with criterion 4.1 (Environmental Life Cycle Assessment). ISO is referenced as a guide for Entities to apply the LCA methodology.

one other respondent noted the financial and time resources required to update IT systems to meet ASI Standards were high.

Corporate and site level management: Integrating practices at the corporate level and executing them at the site level during audits presented difficulties for one respondent.

Auditing and Certification Process: Finding qualified audit firms and educating them about specific business processes unique to the company, such as the purification of aluminium ingots, has been difficult. This has led to extended audit schedules and increased costs for one company.

CoC Standard: Chain of Custody was mentioned by four respondents as a challenge. The mass balance system and/or tool was difficult to understand or use for four respondents, with one seeking a (new) 'traceability' approach. Another respondent mentioned struggling with the definition of scrap.

Workforce engagement: Ensuring consistent focus and engagement at the plant level, particularly with high staff turnover, has been a recurrent issue for one participant.

Community and environmental concerns: There are worries about the method of assessing community concerns during the certification process, which might lead to more issues rather than providing a neutral, objective analysis. This point was mentioned by this participant again in Question 10 (general feedback) and will be expanded upon later.

External Standard recognition: One respondent noted that operating in a highly regulated environment, with various ESG Certifications already in place, is not sufficiently recognised by ASI, requiring additional documentation without perceived added value.

Were there some part(s) of the Performance Standard and/or the Chain of Custody Standard that you found difficult to understand and/or implement?

This was a new question for this year's survey, following the introduction of the 2022 revised Standards. When asked this question, the results were mixed; 56% of respondents indicated 'no', and 44% indicated 'yes'.

Twenty-one qualitative responses were received in this section. As mentioned earlier, the comments about general challenges linked to Certification have been moved and merged into the previous section. The following section of comments pertains to more specific aspects of the Standards:

Biodiversity and environmental compliance challenges: Biodiversity was mentioned three times in this section by three different respondents (14% of responses in this comment section), described as a very new and difficult topic for companies to comply with. It is also notable that when asked whether there had been any changes or improvements to business practices or outcomes as a result of the ASI Certification process, three respondents noted Biodiversity as an area where their companies had improved practices (including one respondent who had also cited this as a challenging area).

Another respondent mentioned having to check significant amounts of external information when assessing environmental risks, and this was seen as difficult to implement.

Transparency and Public Disclosure Requirements: Public disclosure was seen as a challenge for three respondents. Increased demands for public disclosure are complicated to comply with for global businesses, as local disclosure platforms often do not exist. Moreover, it was not clear to one respondent what extent of disclosure is required for compliance (with ASI Guidance and auditor judgment leaving room for interpretation in their view).

Human Rights: One respondent noted that requirements concerning human rights and affected populations are challenging to meet due to unclear expectations and what evidence is required.

8. General feedback and next steps

Survey results highlighted useful feedback and several improvement points for ASI. A summary of points raised and learning areas for ASI (combining qualitative responses left in the open feedback section of the survey, as well as to specific questions), are grouped by topic issue below:

Benchmarking and recognition: Throughout the survey, several respondents noted the difficulty in having to comply with several other standards/sets of requirements. ASI recognises the pressure faced by companies in complying with different requirements and aims to recognise relevant Standards and Certification Schemes wherever possible and appropriate, to enhance collaboration and reduce unnecessary duplication. ASI has an active benchmarking and recognition program for external Standards and Schemes that share issues and objectives with the ASI Standards. Any Member can submit a proposal to the ASI Secretariat for alignment with an external Standard or Certification Scheme, and this will be examined closely by the ASI Secretariat following the ASI Benchmarking and Recognition procedure. Interested members are also encouraged to actively participate in ASI's Benchmarking and Harmonisation Working Group. The prioritisation of external Standards or Schemes will be a key area for consultation with Members in the upcoming ASI 2025–2027 Standards Revision.

Standards: In the open feedback section of the survey, the complexity and requirements of the new ASI Standard were seen as very stringent, and one respondent called for finding a balance between raising the bar for sustainability within the industry and finding solutions and requirements that are implementable by companies. Another respondent noted that it can be seen as 'too complicated for effective implementation'. One respondent suggested providing a gap analysis with each new version of the Standard to clarify changes⁹. Further clarification and examples were requested for GHG pathway calculations.

Throughout the survey, the lack of clarity in Standards writing was mentioned several times by respondents, particularly with regard to the difference between normative and non-normative language. This will be carefully considered in ASI's upcoming 2025–2027 Standard Revision.

⁹ ASI provides a summary of changes that have occurred since a previous version of the Standard, which is available publicly on the ASI website

- Performance Standard: Biodiversity was a recurrent area of challenge for respondents in this survey as it is often a new area for companies to have to comply with. Similarly, Public Disclosure requirements were also seen as difficult to comply with. This will be taken into account as an area of focus for the upcoming Standards Revision, and will also feed into the Learning team's planning.
- Chain of Custody Standard: Difficulties in certifying against the CoC Standard was an often-raised issue, by four different respondents under question 8, and one more time by one of these four respondents, in the general feedback section. From these respondents, two respondents mentioned the mass balance system (one also mentioned the tools to comply with the CoC Standard, the other respondent noted seeking a (new) 'traceability' approach, both under question 8 and in the general feedback section), one respondent struggled with understanding the definition of scrap, and another respondent noted that the CoC Standard VI was difficult to understand in general. Acting on similar feedback ASI has recently developed formula sheets for the calculation of key metrics under the ASI CoC Standard and is undertaking a series of updates to the CoC Material Accounting Tool. A series of webinars is planned for Q4 2024. With regard to interest in other traceability models, this will be an area of focus for the upcoming Standards Revision.

elementAL: In the open section feedback of the survey, there was a call for features that allow for automatic copying of descriptions and evidence from previous audits to aid in self-assessment during surveillance audits (by two respondents). Several respondents (four) noted that elementAL could benefit from improved functionality and a simpler user interface. Suggestions included a checkbox to indicate updates in the Standards when conducting self-assessments and more examples of how to complete forms. ASI has been working on the new version of elementAL, 2.0 which should be released around late 2024/early 2025. Suggestions for new elementAL functionalities collected in the open feedback section of the Survey will be taken into account as the new elementAL platform continues to be developed.

Learning: In the open feedback section of the survey, several respondents suggested adding more learning modules and providing more comprehensive guidance tailored to different aspects of the Standard. The incorporation of examples, such as YouTube clips, was recommended to enhance understanding. These suggestions, as well as feedback from comment sections earlier in the survey (e.g. improving auditor knowledge, or more training on biodiversity), will be

taken into account and carried through in the Learning workplan for possible inclusion.

Data and Research (D&R): In the open section feedback of the survey, two respondents emphasized the need for more data analyses to help companies grasp the impact of their certification efforts, suggesting reports on the number of certified companies, responsibly sourced products, and any other relevant data. Since 2020, ASI regularly reports on the group of indicators through the Outcomes Dashboard¹⁰, maps ASI Member's certified operations (Performance Standard and CoC) on the ASI Certification Map, and publishes other insights, analyses, and evaluations under Data and Research Insights¹¹.

ASI is committed to publicly sharing a summary of our Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning activities at least every two years, with a first summary of activities conducted over the 2022 and 2023 calendar years now available on our website¹². After the transition to elementAL 2.0 (ASI's assurance platform holding Certification Audit Reports data), we expect to be able to enhance data accessibility and publish additional insights valuable for members and stakeholders.

Assurance: In the open section feedback of the survey, one participant raised concerns about the inherent conflicts in the assurance process, particularly the hiring of auditing firms by the companies they assess, which may lead to leniency. Another respondent commented that the way auditors rate Conformance to criteria is not consistent, noting that different results can be found by different audit firms. This same respondent flagged insufficient auditor knowledge, especially in local contexts and community engagement. The same respondent voiced out that there is a risk of 'consultation fatigue' due to frequent and ineffective community consultations calls for a more nuanced review of the process.

Challenges with auditor quality and availability were cited six times by four respondents throughout the survey. Three comments noted the low availability of auditors, and three comments noted the lack of competence of auditors. ASI discusses situations with Members when limited auditor availability is an issue, and

¹⁰ <https://aluminium-stewardship.org/drive-change/progress>

¹¹ ASI's Data and Research program is designed to support insights, analyses, evaluations and decision-making in relation to ASI's programs and aluminium and sustainability more broadly. Data and Research insights can be found in our website, under 'Driving Change': [Data & Research Insights | Aluminium Stewardship Initiative \(aluminium-stewardship.org\)](https://aluminium-stewardship.org)

¹² <https://aluminium-stewardship.org/summary-of-dr-activities-in-2022-and-2023>

offers viable alternatives to Members including short-term extensions, advice on Audit delivery and planning, or reviewing and approving alternate suitable ASI Auditors. With respect to Auditor competence, ASI holds regular calibration calls for ASI Auditors, which are used to improve, enhance, and calibrate auditors' knowledge of the Standards and auditing processes. ASI Learning material is also being developed both proactively and based on feedback from various channels, including this Certification Survey. The key points will be taken forward to the Learning team at ASI to refine the training materials.

Perceived amount of support received from ASI: When asked whether they received sufficient support with regard to their ASI Certification process (Question 13), the vast majority (90%) of respondents reported that they did.

9. Conclusion

The findings from the 2022–2023 Certification survey highlight important trends and insights from Certified Entities. It helps ASI identify difficulties and obstacles faced by ASI Certified Entities and understand the evolving motivations for seeking and maintaining Certification. ASI uses the data gathered to inform planning, tailored responses and continual improvement, with the goal of delivering a relevant valuable program for members and stakeholders.

Appendix 1 – Certification Survey

Copy of ASI Certification Survey

ASI Certification Survey

Introduction

Welcome to the ASI Certification Survey.

ASI is conducting an ongoing internal research project to understand what the drivers, benefits and challenges are for different types of companies seeking ASI Performance Standard (PS) and Chain of Custody (CoC) Standard Certification.

You are receiving this survey because you are listed in elementAl as a main contact for an ASI Certification.

This survey gives you the opportunity to share your experiences of the ASI Certification process and should take around 10 minutes to complete. Please note that any urgent or time-sensitive matters should be communicated as soon as possible directly to ASI, or using the ASI Complaints Mechanism (for more information, go to: <https://aluminium-stewardship.org/complaints-mechanism>)

The data collected is for ASI Secretariat analysis and your response allows ASI to improve its processes, so we welcome your candour. No individual Members or Entities will be identified or identifiable in any output from the analysis (e.g. published report, communications material, impact indicator) - all data will be aggregated and anonymised.

We thank you in advance for your time and responses.

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Step 1 - Drivers for ASI Certification

1. Please indicate the type of Certification

- Initial Certification
- Re-Certification
- Scope Change

2. Which ASI Standard(s) has your company achieved? (tick all that apply)

- Performance Standard
- Chain of Custody Standard

3. Please indicate which Supply Chain Activity is applicable to your Certification(s)?

- Bauxite mining
- Alumina refining
- Aluminium smelting
- Aluminium re-melting, refining or recycling
- Semi-fabrication (rolling, extrusion, casting)
- Aerospace (Material conversion)
- Automotive (Material conversion)
- Construction (Material conversion)
- Consumer durables (Material conversion)
- Engineering (Material conversion)
- IT (Material conversion)
- Packaging (Material conversion)
- Other (please specify)

* 4. What have been the main drivers for your company to seek Performance Standard Certification?

Please tick all that apply

- Improve on our responsible business practices
- Gain competitive advantage
- Access to markets
- Protect our business reputation
- Meeting customer expectations
- Meeting supplier expectations
- Understand and reduce our business risks
- Demonstrate our responsible business practices
- Security of supply
- Meeting lender expectation
- Other, please provide details below:

5. If applicable, what have been the main drivers for your company to also seek ASI Chain of Custody Certification?

Please tick all that apply

- To implement responsible sourcing
- Requested by customers
- Requested by suppliers
- To make an off-product claim, for example in company communications
- To make an on-product claim
- Not applicable
- Other, please provide details below:

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Step 2 - Value of ASI Certification

* 6. From your perspective, is ASI Certification positive for your business?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Undecided/neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please add other details or comments below. For example, what have been some of the benefits of ASI Certification? Have the outcomes been different for the Performance Standard or Chain of Custody Standard? (optional)

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Step 3 - Challenges of certification

* 7. Have there been any specific challenges or obstacles faced by your company in seeking or achieving ASI Certification?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Please add other details or comments below, for example, do you also foresee any challenges in maintaining your current certification? (optional)

8. Were there some part(s) of the Performance Standard and/or the Chain of Custody Standard that you found difficult to understand and/or implement?

- Yes
 No

If yes, which ones/standard and why?

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Step 4 - Changes as a result of ASI Certification

* 9. Have there been any changes or improvements to business practices or outcomes as a result of the ASI Certification process?

- Yes
 No
 Unsure
 In progress

Please give further details below: (optional)

* 10. If you have identified improvements, may ASI follow up with you in the form of a scheduled interview for the development of a Story of Change for publication on the ASI website?

We have been collecting anecdotal evidence and feedback from ASI Members as to how their implementation of the ASI Standards and process of Certification has created change in their activities and real impact on the ground. See for more details: <https://aluminium-stewardship.org/asi-launches-story-of-change-series/>

- Yes
 No

11. Do you have any general feedback for ASI? For example, suggestions for new learning modules, Guidance, data analyses or any other improvement idea?

12. If you would like to be in touch with ASI to develop a Story of Change (Q10above), or to enable us to discuss your feedback further, please include your contact details below.

Alternatively, you can email us directly at info@aluminium-stewardship.org

Name

Company

Email Address

13. Did your business receive sufficient support from ASI to achieve/maintain ASI certification? (for example, learning material, elementAl help desk, 1-to-1 calls/e-mails, ASI Registered Specialists, ASI webinars, other...)

Yes

No

If not, what additional support would you have liked to receive from ASI?

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Thank you for taking part in this survey. Please press the 'Submit' button at the end of this page to submit your answers.

Appendix 2 – Quantitative and qualitative data – tables

Question 1 – Please indicate the type of Certification

| Answer Choices | 2022-2023 | Number of respondents |
|-----------------------|-----------|-----------------------|
| Initial Certification | 37,88% | 25 |
| Re-Certification | 57,58% | 38 |
| Scope Change | 4,55% | 3 |
| | Answered | 66 |
| | Skipped | 7 |

Question 2 – What ASi Standard(s) has your company achieved? (tick all that apply)

| Answer Choices | 2022-2023 | Number of respondents |
|---------------------------|-----------|-----------------------|
| Performance Standard | 90,41% | 66 |
| Chain of Custody Standard | 49,32% | 36 |
| | Answered | 67 |
| | Skipped | 6 |

Question 3 – Please indicate which Supply Chain Activity is applicable to your Certification(s)?

| Answer Choices | 2022-2023 | Number of respondents |
|--|-----------|-----------------------|
| Bauxite mining | 6% | 4 |
| Alumina refining | 9% | 6 |
| Aluminium smelting | 18% | 12 |
| Aluminium re-melting, refining or recycling | 48% | 32 |
| Semi-fabrication (rolling, extrusion, casting) | 52% | 35 |
| Aerospace (Material conversion) | 3% | 2 |
| Automotive (Material conversion) | 13% | 9 |
| Construction (Material conversion) | 7% | 5 |
| Consumer durables (Material conversion) | 4% | 3 |
| Engineering (Material conversion) | 3% | 2 |
| IT (Material conversion) | 3% | 2 |

| | | |
|---------------------------------|----------|----|
| Packaging (Material conversion) | 19% | 13 |
| Other (please specify) | 0% | 0 |
| | Answered | 67 |
| | Skipped | 6 |

Question 4 - What have been the main drivers for your company to seek Performance Standard Certification? Please tick all that apply

| Answer Choices | 2022-2023 | Number of respondents |
|--|-----------|-----------------------|
| Meeting customer expectations | 77% | 56 |
| Gain competitive advantage | 70% | 51 |
| Improve on our responsible business practices | 66% | 48 |
| Demonstrate our responsible business practices | 64% | 47 |
| Protect our business reputation | 52% | 38 |
| Understand and reduce our business risks | 40% | 29 |
| Access to markets | 29% | 21 |
| Meeting supplier expectations | 12% | 9 |
| Security of supply | 8% | 6 |
| Meeting lender expectation | 7% | 5 |
| Other, please provide details below: | 1% | 1 |
| | Answered | 73 |
| | Skipped | 0 |

Question 5 - If applicable, what have been the main drivers for your company to also seek ASI Chain of Custody Certification? Please tick all that apply

| Answer Choices | 2022-2023 | Number of respondents |
|---|-----------|-----------------------|
| To implement responsible sourcing | 50,00% | 30 |
| Requested by customers | 56,67% | 34 |
| Requested by suppliers | 3,33% | 2 |
| To make an off-product claim, for example in company communications | 15,00% | 9 |
| To make an on-product claim | 18,33% | 11 |
| Not applicable | 18,33% | 11 |
| Other, please provide details below: | 6,67% | 4 |
| | Answered | 60 |
| | Skipped | 13 |

Question 6 - From your perspective, is ASI Certification positive for your business?

| Answer Choices | 2022-2023 | Number of respondents |
|---|-----------|-----------------------|
| Strongly agree | 40% | 29 |
| Agree | 42% | 30 |
| Undecided/neutral | 14% | 10 |
| Disagree | 4% | 3 |
| Strongly disagree | 0% | 0 |
| Please add other details or comments below. For example, what have been some of the benefits of ASI Certification? Have the outcomes been different for the Performance Standard or Chain of Custody Standard? (optional) | 0,00% | 14 |
| | Answered | 72 |
| | Skipped | 1 |

Question 7 - Have there been any specific challenges or obstacles faced by your company in seeking or achieving ASI Certification?

| Answer Choices | 2022-2023 | Number of respondents |
|---|-----------|-----------------------|
| Yes | 45% | 32 |
| No | 49% | 35 |
| Unsure | 5% | 4 |
| Please add other details or comments below (optional) | 26% | 19 |
| | Answered | 71 |
| | Skipped | 2 |

Question 8 - Were there some part(s) of the Performance Standard and/or the Chain of Custody Standard that you found difficult to understand and/or implement?

| Answer Choices | 2022-2023 | Number of respondents |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|-----------------------|
| Yes | 43,94% | 29 |
| No | 56,06% | 37 |
| If yes, which ones/standard and why? | 31,82% | 21 |
| | Answered | 66 |
| | Skipped | 7 |

Question 9 - Have there been any changes or improvements to business practices or outcomes as a result of the ASI Certification process?

| Answer Choices | 2022-2023 | Number of respondents |
|----------------|-----------|-----------------------|
| Yes | 60,29% | 41 |
| No | 7,35% | 5 |
| Unsure | 8,82% | 6 |

| | | |
|---|----------|-----------|
| In progress | 23,53% | 16 |
| Please give further details below: (optional) | 25,00% | 17 |
| | Answered | 68 |
| | Skipped | 5 |

Question 10 -If you have identified improvements, may ASI follow up with you in the form of a scheduled interview for the development of a Story of Change for publication on the ASI website?

| Answer Choices | 2022-2023 | Number of respondents |
|----------------|-----------|-----------------------|
| Yes | 17,81% | 13 |
| No | 75,34% | 55 |
| | Answered | 68 |
| | Skipped | 5 |

Question 11 - Do you have any general feedback for ASI? For example, suggestions for new learning modules, Guidance, data analyses or any other improvement idea?

| | |
|----------|----|
| Answered | 41 |
| Skipped | 32 |

Question 12 - If you would like to be in touch with ASI to develop a Story of Change, or to enable us to discuss your feedback further, please include your contact details below. Alternatively, you can email us directly at info@aluminium-stewardship.org

Question 13 - Did your business receive sufficient support from ASI to achieve/maintain ASI certification? (for example, learning material, elementAI help desk, 1-to-1 calls/e-mails, ASI Registered Specialists, ASI webinars, other...)

| Answer Choices | 2022-2023 | Number of respondents |
|---|-----------|-----------------------|
| Yes | 90,48% | 57 |
| No | 9,52% | 6 |
| If not, what additional support would you have liked to receive from ASI? | 4,11% | 3 |
| | Answered | 63 |
| | Skipped | 10 |