

ASI Nature Working Group
Call #2 – Post Consultation
13 July 2026

Agenda

- Welcome (5 min)
- Summary of changes to the draft (20 min)
 - Walk-through of the revised draft following consultation input & Standard Committee meeting
- Discussion topic 1 (20 min):
 - Demonstrating effective implementation of management plans (addressing risks & impacts)
 - Harmonization with ISO 14001
- Discussion topic 2: Leading Practice (25 min)
- Next steps (5 min)

Participants

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Discussion Notes:

1. Welcome

- The ASI Secretariat welcomed the group and introduced the agenda. The Secretariat shared an overview of the key themes from public consultation (first round), including on topics such as format and structure changes, introducing leading practices, the streamlined downstream certification option, and climate-related requirements.
- The Secretariat also updated the Working Group on changes made in the Nature section of the Performance Standard (PS), which has been further updated based on:
 - Further review and analysis of consultation input
 - The May Working Group discussion points – especially around NNL targets, air quality, and critical habitats criteria
 - Discussions with the ASI Standards Committee at their recent in-person meeting in June

- The Secretariat explained relevant outcomes from the Standards Committee meeting as related to leading practices (overall) – these are proposed to be maintained as a concept but the current approach (meeting 70% of applicable leading practices to make a claim) will be reviewed and likely adjusted. Leading practices have been separated out into a separate section for each thematic area, rather than integrated into each criterion.
- Key changes in the Nature section were summarized, including:
 - Overall restructuring and consolidation of criteria under the Nature Section.
 - Greater alignment and cross-referencing between the Environmental Management System (EMS) and criteria under Nature, especially around identifying and managing impacts and monitoring against targets.
 - Overall filtering and reduction of leading practices, which have also been separated into their own section.

2. Alignment with the Environmental Management System (EMS):

- The Secretariat introduced the current text around EMS (in Section 2) and related criteria under Environmental topics (e.g. water stewardship), and explained the current intent to recognise ISO 14001 certification as ‘equivalent’ in order to reduce duplicate auditing. This maintains the approach already established in the current PS V3. The Working Group discussed this equivalence and noted the following:
 - a. While reduced auditing is appreciated, there is also a risk in relying on other third-party audit schemes (what if the auditor missed something major?).
 - b. Some type of double checking the ISO certification may be appropriate, for example asking auditors to look at Critical Control Points. At the same time, this can be subjective and already some ASI certified Entities have raised concerns that auditors can be over-zealous about checking elements under ISO.
 - c. It is important that the validity of the ISO certification is also checked. ASI Assurance team clarified that currently auditors are expected to do a spot check of the latest audit report and to look at Corrective Action Plans (CAPs).
 - d. Currently ASI recognises only selected standards as ‘equivalent’ to criteria under the PS and those (like ISO) must have third party auditing/ certification. Other standards may be used but the auditor would need to still audit against the relevant ASI requirements.
 - e. The timing and nature of the most recent ISO audit is important to consider (e.g. remote or onsite). Is ASI moving more towards remote audits? The ASI Assurance team clarified that yes they are already looking at remote audits more on a case-by-case basis but intend to formalise this in the future updates to the assurance manual.
 - f. **Next steps** – Working Group to review the updated draft between July and August and provide input on which elements of the Nature-related requirements (e.g. water management plan, monitoring progress against the plan, etc) should also be covered under ISO 14001 equivalence.

3. Effectiveness of EMS/ Demonstrating progress against targets (EMS):

- The Secretariat explained that in the recent review of leading practices, the Standards Committee had expressed that outcome focused requirements such as ‘demonstrate

progress against water-related targets over the preceding 3 year period' should really be minimum expectations as they are part of an effective management system. The Secretariat was looking for input from the WG on how best to integrate this concept of 'effective' management systems into the existing criteria, for example around water and air quality.

- The Secretariat proposed two potential approaches: *Option A (add as guidance around the monitoring against targets requirements), or Option B (add as a standalone requirement such as 'demonstrate progress against targets')*.
- The Working Group discussed the two options proposed:
 - a. As the water stewardship criteria currently focuses on water quantity and quality, one idea is that Leading Practice around water could reference the other areas covered under the Alliance for Water Stewardship framework (e.g. WASH or Water Governance).
 - b. One challenge was noted around Option B (normative requirement) in that some Entities might not be on track to meet targets for reasons outside of their control, this could also de-incentivize the setting of ambitious targets. Option A might offer more flexibility for auditors to assess the specific context and whether the Entity is demonstrating improvement as per the management plan and monitoring.
 - c. One WG member supported Option B (normative requirement), due to the fact that Entities must take actions if monitoring shows that their management plans are not sufficiently effective.
 - d. One WG member was divided in support between Option A and B.
 - e. Another WG member suggested that ASI could consider setting expectations across a range of nature-related targets (e.g. need to meet 3 out of 5 for conformance).
 - f. **Next steps** – *the Secretariat to represent these considerations around Option A and B in the updated draft and to share this draft with the Standards Committee and Working Group for further review. If Option B remains in the draft, consider adjusted wording e.g. 'demonstrate positive impacts' (rather than emphasis on targets).*

4. Leading practices

- a. The Secretariat shared the draft set of revised leading practices and the set that are *proposed* to be removed from the draft, based on consultation input and Standards Committee discussions.
- b. The Secretariat will make sure this list of proposed to be removed leading practices is clearly identified and the main rationale for proposed removal are highlighted in the draft.
- c. The WG clarified whether each leading practice is expected to align with an international instrument or framework – the Secretariat explained this is not a requirement, but where it is the case, this is highlighted in the draft.
- d. One participant mentioned that in his view, the last three proposed leading practices (5,6,7) all belong as minimum requirements.

5. Next steps / AOB

- The Working Group will be asked to do a more detailed review of the adjusted draft (including the revised set of leading practices) between late July and 31 August

- The Working Group (industry members) are also asked to please complete a short feasibility assessment for the nature-related criteria, also by 31 August – this will help inform next steps in refining the drafts.
- The next Working Group call will be scheduled for September or October 2026.