

ASI Workers' Rights and Health & Safety Working Group – Call 7 – Meeting Notes

26 May 2026

Agenda points:

- Welcome and introduction (5 min)
- Update on the standards revision, consultation (10 min)
- Key points from consultation feedback (30 min)
 - Overview
 - For the Workers' Rights and Protections section
- Discussion – Leading Practice in this section (40 min)
- Next steps (5 min)

Participants

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ASI Secretariat – Chelsea Reinhardt, Lia Vacheret

Discussion Notes:

1. Welcome and introduction

- ASI welcomed the Working Group to this second phase of work, which will focus on helping to review the public consultation input and serve as a sounding board to advise the Standards Committee on next steps with the drafts

2. Update on the standards revision, consultation

- The Secretariat presented an overview of the first round of public consultation on the draft revised ASI Standards. The consultation ran from 17 February – 30 April 2026. Feedback had been received through online questionnaires, by email, and targeted community questionnaires facilitated through IPAF members. There had been more than 500 responses, amounting to over 1,500 qualitative comments (not yet including comments from the IPAF-led questionnaires, which were still being analysed).

3. Summary of consultation feedback

- ASI presented the key themes coming out of the consultation feedback in terms of high-level feedback on the draft Performance Standard V4. These include

- Positive support for structural changes
 - Mixed views on the level of ambition
 - Support for the concept of leading practice, but lots of different ideas on how to implement it
 - Support for the proposed 'streamlined' certification option for downstream, but with some concerns about impacts on credibility
 - Strong pushback on proposed new climate-related requirements, with concerns about both feasibility (from industry) and credibility (from civil society)
 - Some concerns from upstream that the main burden of certification effort was felt by upstream ASI members, but they did not yet see a corresponding market incentive for this certification.
 - Strong engagement from affected communities and support for strengthened requirements in key areas affecting communities
 - Some respondents wanted to see more consideration of regional differences.
- ASI Shared an overview of the main consultation feedback **specifically on the Workers' Rights and Protections section**, which received a total of 127 qualitative comments from the online survey and consultation inbox. The criteria which received the most comments were Working hours and wages (8.2), followed by Freedom of Association and right to collective bargaining (8.6) and Safe and healthy working environment (8.7).
 - Most respondents were generally supportive of changes in the section. Key themes included:
 - Overall support for living wages, with an ask for clear guidance
 - Some preference for setting a maximum for working hours
 - Overall support for the risk-based approach on Forced/Child Labour
 - Some identifying a gap on gender issues
 - Some concerns about DEI policies and requirements

4. Discussion Topics

- On **Living wages**
 - ASI presented the consultation draft proposal around living wages and summarised the consultation feedback on this point. The ASI Secretariat recommendation is to propose to the standards Committee to maintain the consultation draft requirements around living wages, but with further work to define guidance on methodologies and benchmarks
 - The Working Group discussed the criteria on living wages, including:
 - The aim of the standard is to make an impact. The definition of a living wage is to set a decent standard of living so workers are not in poverty – agrees this should be a minimum expectation
 - Clear guidance will be important (example given of the UK where minimum wages are referred to as living wages). We can consider the Anker methodology but doesn't apply in all contexts

- ASI should consider alignment or collaboration with other standard systems in developing guidance (e.g. ResponsibleSteel)
- On **Working Hours** – ASI reminded the Working Group of the three options around working hours that were shared for consultation and summarised the consultation input. This generally supported option 1 (maximum of 60 hours/week, including overtime), but with a call for clear guidance and definitions of exceptions. Those in favour of option 3 emphasised the value of a risk-based approach and the importance of health and safety monitoring
- The Working Group discussed the proposal and raised the following observations:
 - Some companies will struggle to meet 60-hour limit, but working in excess of this has significant, well-documented health impacts on workers
 - Due to legal requirements and CBAs, workers in some cases are allowed to work more than 60 hours/ week – for these companies, they may need a plan to reduce this over time
 - On the issue of force majeure – even for planned shutdowns, companies may call in contract workers who are working in excess of 60 hours. These same workers might then go on to work for another company the following week, with similarly excessive hours
 - The point about CBAs is an important one – to provide a living wage under maximum working hours may lead to complex negotiations between companies and workers. Could ASI consider having some sort of documentation or examples highlighting how companies in different contexts are managing to meet these requirements, for others to refer to as an example of what is possible for businesses?
 - There is a trend in some companies to contract more workers and reduce total employees/those under CBAs
 - Putting a maximum number on hours could make it too much of a target and can perhaps put less emphasis on health and safety/fatigue monitoring
 - At the same time, having a clear maximum is important to have something to work towards and to have a consistent global expectation – otherwise the criterion has a potential to become too diluted
 - One option might be to combine the 60-hour limit (Option 1) with elements of the health and safety monitoring from Option 2 (or, this could be considered leading practice?)
 - *Next steps* – ASI to consider these points made in updating the draft criteria before discussing further with the Standards Committee in June
- On **forced and child labour criteria** – Some of the consultation feedback asked for more guidance on high-risk areas, including a request for ASI to develop some resources on this, and to clarify the relationship with Human Rights Due Diligence
 - On forced labour, one participant noted that forced labour is not a well understood concept. Even the ILO 11 indicators are not always well understood, but it is good that ASI is looking further into this in the standard.

- ASI responded that we had expected more pushback through the consultation, but perhaps Entities were not yet seeing themselves as being 'high-risk' for these labour issues. They may be more vocal in the next consultation if ASI develops some guidance showing these countries are operating in contexts with higher labour risks
- On **Gender** – Some respondents in the public consultation want to see more integration of gender considerations, throughout this section and across the standard. The PS V3 criteria around women's empowerment had been merged under the broader criterion around diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- On **DEI policies and implementation** – ASI summarised the main points of consultation feedback on this criterion, which highlighted some concerns about implementation in specific contexts and consideration for example of CBAs.
 - One participant recommended that the DEI strategy (8.6.1.2) should be moved to a leading practice (voluntary), or should be made a risk-based approach, since in the example of their company, this is not a concern and should not be applicable. It was viewed that the requirements on non-discrimination should be sufficient
 - It was discussed that in some legislative areas, a DEI strategy may be not possible to pursue. One participant noted that it is important to try to find a way to deal with this conflict, as there is a shared goal to make sure workers feel safe and included at work
 - Other participants expressed that this should not be voluntary because one aspect of DEI is psychological safety, and if this is voluntary, some companies may not pursue it (or those who are already leading in this area)
 - ASI should consider whether the wording of DEI could be adapted (for example, "Fair workplace and talent management" was suggested in the chat). In addition, more guidance could be developed on how this can be implemented in different environments

5. Leading Practices under Section 8: Workers' Rights and Protections

- ASI shared some overall consultation feedback on the concepts of leading practice and how these are integrated into the PS V4 consultation draft.
- Almost 1/3 of the comments received on workers' rights related to leading practice, and the Working Group is asked to help ASI review this feedback and also suggest any better examples of leading practices which should be included.
- ASI summarised some of the main points from consultation with respect to the leading practices around health and safety and these were discussed by the Working Group:
 - One participant noted that no fatalities for 3 years is challenging to achieve and should stay as leading practice – another participant recommended the timeframe could be slightly extended
 - Meeting targets around not having accidents or injuries for a set period could lead to under reporting of incidents

- One participant suggested to be more specific with the leading practice on remuneration (for example, tying this to no fatalities)
- One participant suggested using the Lost Time Incident Rate and Fatal Accident Rate, as these are normalized (200.000 or 1Mio hours worked). ASI explained that these metrics (at least Lost time incident rate) had been considered in the initial drafts and removed based on input from the Working Group, but we can go back and find the detail on why that was done
- It is important to balance leading practices with the challenges of the audit practice, to make sure that Entities are not missing fundamental labour practices but trying to meet leading practices. This comes out during audits through worker interviews and feedback
- What is the role of Leading Practices? To drive good practice and help companies differentiate themselves

6. Wrap up/next steps

- Notes, recording and slides will be circulated to the group.
- ASI Standards Committee in-person meeting will be held in mid-June.
- Next Working Group call is planned in July – placeholder has been sent for 9 July 1000 (CEST). Agenda to follow.
- Amended drafts to be circulated ahead of the July Working Group meeting for comments and further discussion.
- Please reach out to ASI for a 121 discussion on any additional feedback points or priorities that would be helpful to discuss, given the limited time on these Working Group calls