

ASI Workers' Rights and Health & Safety Working Group – Call 8 – Meeting Notes

9 July 2026

Agenda points:

1. Welcome and introduction (5 min)
2. Update since May call (10 min)
3. Summary of changes to the draft and discussion (45 min)
 - Living wages
 - Leading Practices
 - Diversity, Equity, Inclusion (DEI) sub-section
 - Streamlined Downstream Certification
4. Next steps (15 min)
 - Review of draft
 - Feasibility assessment
 - Next call – September/October – doodle poll to follow

Participants

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Discussion Notes:**1. Welcome and introduction**

- The ASI team (ASI) welcomed the Workers' Rights Working Group (WG) to the 8th call of the WG

2. Update since May call

- The ASI team updated the group on progress since the May WG call. The ASI Standards Committee had met in June to discuss the feedback received through consultation and had proposed a number of changes to Section 8 (see slide 5).
- One participant said that references to the fundamental international frameworks as a base of the Standard needed to be more prominent. These frameworks were overarching principles that both ASI Members and auditors should refer to, as the Standard cannot comprehensively reproduce all requirements.

- International Labour Organization Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises on Responsible Business Conduct
- United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs)
- ASI noted that similar feedback has been received for sections on management systems and community rights especially around alignment with the UNGPs. It will be explored to have stronger integration and cross-referencing of important documents across all sections of PS, potentially using icons or other visuals.

3. Summary of changes to the draft and discussion

Living Wages

- ASI reminded the Working Group of the proposed approach to living wages and of the feedback received from consultation, which overall supported including an explicit requirement to pay living wages to employees. There had also been calls for guidance on benchmarks and on calculating living wages; and a suggestion for recognition of equivalent certification schemes. ASI confirmed these points will be considered during the next draft. ASI also presented a comparison of against other standards.
- The Standards Committee had discussed and commented that this was the one area where a distinction was made between ‘employees’ and ‘contract workers’. In the consultation draft, paying living wages applied to employees as a minimum requirement, and at leading practice the requirement was to work with suppliers of contracts to assess wages and where they were below living wages to make a plan to bring them up by 2035. The Standards Committee during its meetings in June 2026 had proposed making this a minimum requirement and amending the timeline in line with the UN Global Compact commitments of paying living wages by 2030.
- ASI invited the Working Group to provide views, including on an alternative option which would require Entities to work with suppliers of contractors to assess wages of contractors but leave the implementation for contractors at Leading Practice. ASI emphasised that requirements needed to be as implementable as possible and that auditors needed to be able to determine whether the requirements were being met in practice.
- Several participants supported strengthening the minimum requirement. Living wages were viewed as essential to ensuring workers could meet basic needs and maintain a decent standard of living. Legal minimum wages established by governments were often insufficient. In many countries there was a gap between statutory minimum wages and living wages. Some countries did not even have minimum wages. One participant thought that a target date of 2035 was too far away for such an important issue
- One participant said that the definition of contract workers will become very important with this distinction, and ASI should consider aligning with other international frameworks.
 - One participant recommended distinguishing between a one-off contractor and those permanently or regularly on site – cleaners, security, canteen workers. ASI explained that the current definition of contractor is quite broad and agreed further clarification on this will be important.

- It was pointed out that while entities have more control over wages paid to their own employees than those paid by contractors, they do have some influence. They thought that the Standard should include at least a minimum expectation for contract workers. If we did include a minimum requirement for contractors, requirements should go beyond conducting an assessment (“an assessment alone is not sufficient”) and should include systems to monitor wages paid to contract workers, particularly in jurisdictions where no living wage standards exist.
 - ASI asked how responsibility should be shared between the entity and a company providing contractors, and what implementation would look like in practice. Participants suggested:
 - auditing of contractor companies (example provided by one participant included auditing contractors payroll, grievances and accommodation; other provided encouraging them to implement living wages).
 - Taking a risk-based approach could determine the level of oversight.
 - Conclusion: There was strong support to have some minimum requirement around living wages for contract workers, but to go slightly beyond the proposal (Option B) and include some type of requirement in addition to just carrying out an assessment vs living wages.
- Action: ASI to consider and redraft the alternative option B for further consideration.

Promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in the workforce

- ASI provided some context – the consultation draft had contained 2 criteria in this sub-section. This included requirements to have a system in place to prevent discrimination and ensure equal opportunities and on promoting diversity, equity and inclusion in the workforce. Through consultation much of the feedback had been related to this section – in particular, the Leading practice requirements (of which there were 5). The comments received through consultation had mainly been on 8.6.2 (measures to promote DEI in the workforce). ASI presented the feedback and a comparison with other standards.
- WG Discussion:
 - One participant suggested shifting the focus from diversity targets to the objective of achieving meaningful workforce DEI outcomes. It was acknowledged there are legal restrictions on the use of diversity targets in some jurisdictions e.g. in the US. There had been discussion on this at the Standards Committee. The requirement had already been amended to ensure the reference was to internal reporting and not full public disclosure, which would be an issue for some in terms of legal compliance.
 - Perhaps removing specific references to targets and adding guidance on what the measures in the strategy might be a way forward? Measures could include targets, but targets would not be mandatory for the minimum requirement. Some of the Leading Practices could be included as examples into guidance. The WG was asked for their views.
 - One participant commented that this requirement was important, as many companies were promoting DEI in their workforce and hadn't encountered legal barriers, including in the US. The Standards were voluntary and local laws took precedence.

- One participant suggested including B (belonging) in the terminology. No clear preference from other participants was mentioned, if it was clearly defined and consistent.

Leading Practices

- Most of the changes to the draft since consultation were related to Leading Practices:
 - Separated out Leading Practices into a separate sub-section (as proposed for all sections in the Standard);
 - Filtered the requirements, keeping only those deemed to drive impact:
 - 8 Leading Practices have been retained (including 2 that have been merged into 1 and one that becomes a prerequisite - it must be met to be assessed against leading practice in the section)
 - 5 Leading Practices have been proposed to be removed
 - 1 has been removed as a leading practice and will be included into guidance

Streamlined downstream certification

- ASI provided context – part of the consultation had covered a proposal to have a streamlined certification approach for downstream entities – defined as post semi-fabrication. Many are multi-material companies, and feedback was that it was too burdensome to meet a specific aluminium standard as well as all the other standards for other materials. They are looking for some convergence. The initial streamlined proposal would require certification (at minimum) against Responsible Sourcing and Due Diligence, Climate, and Circularity sections – with the option to do the full standard. These were viewed as key areas where downstream Entities have the most ability to drive change throughout the aluminium value chain. This approach was largely supported through the consultation, with a handful of respondents who were not supportive, raising concerns about credibility in if not covering other areas – in particular Workers' rights. This was discussed at the Standards Committee, who agreed to progress the streamlined option but with the addition of some element around workers' rights, noting that this is a material issue across the value chain.
- The Standards Committee had discussed whether some criteria under Workers Rights were priorities to include for downstream but did not agree on a clear set and thought that it wouldn't add that much effort to implement the whole section.
- ASI has also had clear feedback from downstream Entities that a cross-recognition approach should be pursued, whereby other worker/ labour rights related Standards could be recognised, rather than having duplicate auditing. The ASI team invited thoughts from the Working Group on this.
 - One participant raised the importance of ensuring that the core elements of the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Rights at work were incorporated. The ASI team explained that this might require some further consideration if stakeholders also push for other areas such as working hours and wages to be covered
- ASI agreed to work further on this and to bring some proposals back in the next draft. The Working Group was asked to send any further thoughts on this topic to the Secretariat.

Approach on fatalities

- ASI informed the Working Group that the latest version of the draft would be circulated after the call. Areas where we were looking for specific comments had been highlighted. The major changes since the last draft was related to the Leading Practices.
- There was discussion on the requirement to achieve zero fatalities in the preceding 5 years, which the SC had proposed becomes a pre-requisite – an entity had to meet this requirement to be eligible for assessment against Leading Practice in this section. The other change to this requirement was an increase the number of preceding years from 3 to 5.

What did the Working Group think of this proposal?

- Some people who responded through the consultation thought that this shouldn't be a leading practice requirement and that leading practice requirements shouldn't be based on lagging indicators.
 - There was a suggestion that Lost Time Injury rate could be better used as an indicator. Although there were concerns about inconsistency of reporting and it leading to under-reporting of incidents. There would be practicalities to work through about how it would work as a pre-requisite, guidance would be needed – e.g. for larger and e.g. multi-material companies the scope should be in the aluminium area, not others, in the same way that other parts of the standards are currently applied.
 - One participant thought that fatalities needed to be recognised somewhere in the standard, it was a question of credibility for the standards.
- The group concluded to continue for now with this requirement as a pre-requisite that must be met for Entities to be eligible for leading practices under Workers Rights. Further feedback would be sought through the next Working Group review and future consultation.

4. Next steps

- The ASI team ran through the timeline for the revision – there would be a second round of public consultation towards early 2027, with final publication of V4 potentially in Q3 of 2027. The ASI team will be looking to publish a summary of the consultation feedback in September, along with the anonymised comments and how they were responded to.
- Notes, recording and slides will be circulated to the group.
- Action for Working Group members **by 31st August**
 - Review **revised drafts** and provide any further input (comments in the draft where ASI is seeking specific input)
 - Complete the short '**feasibility assessment**' (in the form of a simple excel form), which will be shared after the call. Feedback on this will help the ASI team understand whether the proposed changes since consultation are going to be implementable and what the challenges to implementation might be.
- The next Working Group call is planned for September/October

Commented [CR1]: I've been saying 31 August to all WGs - 4 Sept for SC