

ISES 2020 Standard - Operating Procedure for Standard Setting and Review

June 2017

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I. Introduction

Customers in the western world set high standards for retailing companies and their products. They do not only demand for an outstanding product quality and an excellent value for money, but increasingly also request a compliance with social and environmental standards in the production process. If customers are doubtful about the social and environmental acceptability they will choose a different product.

With numerous international campaigns, customers and NGOs increase the pressure on companies by publishing violations of human rights and minimum social and environmental standards. The increased world trade has the effect that an organization or company is capable of both, affecting and being affected by a wide range of different stakeholders. For reasons of competitiveness it is evermore essential responding to the increasing demands in social and environmental performance. The concept of social and environmental responsibility has economic effects for the company and its competitiveness.

Companies interested in proving that they and their suppliers are honoring social accountability standards have the possibility to have that fact certified with the ISES 2020 (International Social and Environmental Standard) and through an auditing process.

The aim of this guidance document is to serve as a manual to those companies who want to establish a system of corporate social responsibility by implementing minimum social and environmental standards based on the ISES 2020. This manual intends to serve as a technical guide for the implementation of its eleven requirements, giving precise information on the requirements and showing practical methods to meet them. Using the guidance document in the daily practice enables the company to additionally earn economic benefit from necessary changes and to comply with the ISES 2020 and to meet minimum social and environmental standards in the world-wide production of consumer goods.

Scope of standard development activities

The term 'ISES Standards' (here referred to as 'Standards') refers to:

1. Documents describing the ISES Principles and Criteria (P&C), or related documents, such as all standard documents developed to help implement the ISES P&C.
2. Documents describing the ISES supply chain certification standard, or related documents;

For the purpose of this document both ISES standards setting and standards review activities shall together be referred to as 'standard development activities'.

The purpose of this document is to set out the procedures and describe the process by which the ISES standards are set and reviewed.

A standing committee is charged with the oversight of the ISES Standard & Certifications Standing Committee (S&C SC) who is responsible for the standard development activities.

For the purposes of this document the standing committee is here referred to as 'standing committee (SC)'.

II. Standard development activities

The procedure that is followed by the ISES for standard development activities is set out below; this applies to both developing new standards and revision of existing standards.

1. Identification of standard development activities

1.1 Delegation from the ISES Board (IB) to ISES Standing Committees (SC)

1.1.1 It is the responsibility of the ISES Board (IB) to inform the SC of the need for a standard development activity, resulting from:

- Identification of agreed time for existing standard revision (at least every four years for continued relevance and for effectiveness in meeting its stated objectives. If necessary, revise it in a timely manner, in line with the International Standard – Setting requirements);
- Identification of need for change, correction or amendment of the existing standard
- The SC may itself suggest a standard development activity to the IB if they identify a need for change, correction or amendment of the existing standard

1.1.2 The SC then takes responsibility for executing and supervising the subsequent standard development or standard review and revision activities set out in this document, providing oversight throughout the process to a dedicated task force or working group (TF/WG), until a final draft text of the standard is presented to the IB (see Section 6).

1.2 Review and Revision of existing standards

1.2.1 ISES standards are reviewed at least every four years from their publication date, and the planned start date of the subsequent review is made publicly available and included in the standard.

1.2.2 As part of preparation for standard development activities (Section 2), the existing standard is reviewed for continued relevance and effectiveness in meeting its stated objectives. Continued relevance of the standard is also assessed through results of ongoing monitoring and evaluation activities. The decision on the extent to which revisions to the standard are needed (e.g. minor technical or significant changes to scope) should be based on the results of the review process, which incorporates comments received to date. Results of this review are incorporated into the Terms of Reference (Section 2.1), and a summary report submitted to the IB and made publicly available.

1.2.3 In case of doubt regarding whether an identified change required to the standard is minor or non-critical, consultation shall take place with the IB. The IB shall make the final decision regarding subsequent actions required.

1.2.4 For a standard revision activity the SC shall define – through initial standard development activities set out in Section 2 – the level to which it is necessary to conduct stakeholder engagement activities

(Section 3), whether a Task Force is required (Section 4) and the extent of the public consultation process (Section 5). This shall be decided according to the relative complexity of the changes required, scope of the revision and the end use of the standard. For example, administrative and non-substantial changes to a standard can be made at the discretion of the SC and IB without need of a consultation or formal revision process, however any changes must still be publicly announced.

1.3 Composition of the SC

1.3.1 As all ISES Standing Committees (SC), the SC consists of members from the IB, or their respective alternates, and ISES members and strives for balanced representation of all membership categories. The IB, at its sole discretion, may propose changes to the composition of the Standing Committee to better serve the ISES or for specific standard development activities. Lack of positive involvement over a continuous period of 12 months will suggest withdrawal from the SC irrespective of notification or otherwise. The SC shall decide leadership and functionaries from among its members. The SC, at its best, may invite experts on terms and conditions it prefers, but such experts cannot assume leadership of the SC nor have a vote in decision-making. ISES Secretariat shall provide facilitation resources to all SCs.

1.4 SC Terms of Reference

1.4.1 The SC is responsible for the following:

1. Define sustainable exports through stakeholder expertise and research.
2. Develop principles and criteria (P&C) that singly and in aggregate reflect the definition of the standard.
3. Construct verifiable indicators for the various criteria.
4. Adapt the criteria and indicators for the various socio-environmental conditions under which natural stone is exported without compromising criteria and definitions.
5. Provide support to ISES Secretariat to organise a credible mechanism for scrutinising and recording the data of ISES defined for natural stones in the various environments, including, where deemed necessary, through engagement with government.
6. Provide support to ISES Secretariat to strengthen capacity to support monitoring.
7. Develop and provide various options for downstream industrial activities, including the trading for different markets without diluting the credibility of ISES certified products.
8. Incorporate parameters into existing specifications for trade.
9. Engage expertise to set up a platform & system to track movement of physical products and trade.

2. Preparation for standard development activities

2.1 Terms of Reference

Before starting any new standard development activity, the ISES SC shall – through research and consultation with the ISES Secretariat and stakeholders – develop or update Terms of Reference (TORs) for the Task Force or Working Group (TF/WG) appropriate to the scale of the activity, which shall include the following elements:

2.1.1 Background introduction and needs justification for the standard development activity, including an assessment of whether the proposed standard development activity will meet the need identified. This shall include a review of which other ISES standards exist or are being developed and of any potential overlap with the standard involved in the proposal. An assessment of how broadly the final standard is intended to be applied shall also be included.

2.1.2 Clear scope of the standard and its intended coverage (geographical and scale of operation).

2.1.3 Clear social, environmental and economic outcomes that the standard seeks to achieve and how those are linked to the ISES's intended change.

2.1.4 An assessment of the risks in implementing the standard, and how to mitigate for these risks. This shall include identification of factors that could have a negative impact on the ability of the standard to achieve its objectives, unintended consequences that could arise from its implementation, and possible corrective actions that could be taken to address these potential risks.

2.2 Work programme and reporting requirements

2.2.1 The SC shall oversee elaboration of a work programme for every standard development activity. This shall be made publicly available on the appropriate section of the ISES website, and be updated at least every six months (or more regularly if there are significant changes to the work programme) until the point the standard is adopted.

2.2.2 The work programme shall contain:

- The ISES contact point for the standard development activity;
- Details of the standard activity (e.g. preparation, amendment, revision);
- A brief description of the scope of the standard, including objectives and justification (as given in the TORs, see Section 2.1);
- Proposed timeline for the standard development activity (e.g. process of stakeholder consultation(s), details of when the task force meetings and public consultation meetings shall be held).

2.2.3 The SC shall keep the ISES Board (IB) well informed of progress made throughout the standard development activity.

2.2.4 At the end of the standard development activity, the SC shall ensure that all parts of the public reporting requirements have been completed – including all associated documents – and that this information has also been submitted to the ISES Secretariat; See Annex 3. It is however recommended that these public reporting requirements are followed and updated throughout the standard development activity as information becomes available.

2.3 Development of a new or revised standard document

2.3.1 The development of the standard drafts shall take into account:

For the first draft:

- A review of other relevant commodity standards, to identify any major gaps in the coverage of the standard under development;
- A review of the relevant outputs of ISES working groups and task forces, where those outputs need to be incorporated into the standard;

For existing standards: Incorporation of comments received regarding the Standard since it was last approved (see Section 1.2).

- A compilation of stakeholder comments submitted during the public consultation period(s) (see Section 5).

3. Stakeholder involvement

3.1 Balance of interests

3.1.1 The ISES shall ensure, through stakeholder mapping and consultation as set out in Sections 3.2 - 3.4 below, that participation in the standard development activity is open to all stakeholders, and that participation and decision-making reflects a balance of interests among stakeholders in the applicable standard topic and geographical scope.

3.1.2 Constraints on affected disadvantaged stakeholder groups to participate effectively in the standard development activity shall be taken into account, and ISES shall develop a plan of action for how this can most effectively be addressed within budget and time constraints, on a scale relevant to the scope of the activity.

3.1.3 A final report summarising how stakeholder involvement requirements were implemented shall be published on the ISES website (see Annex 3).

3.2 Stakeholder mapping

3.2.1 The ISES Secretariat shall – through research and consultation with ISES Secretariat and stakeholders – either carry out a stakeholder mapping exercise for development of new standards, or update existing

stakeholder mapping exercises where standards are being reviewed. The purpose of this exercise is to identify major interest membership categories, key affected parties, and disadvantaged stakeholders based on the identified objectives of the standard. The mapping exercise shall include identification of which interest membership categories are relevant and why, and the likely key issues arising for each interest membership category in relation to the standard.

3.2.2 For each membership category, the key stakeholders shall be identified, as well as the most appropriate means of communication to reach them. National stakeholder contacts shall be asked to provide information and contact details about regional stakeholders contacts as appropriate.

3.2.3 Each stakeholder is either materially affected by the activities of the relevant ISES Standard or has sufficient expertise in the subject, and the SC shall ensure that materially affected stakeholders make up a meaningful section of the subsequent public consultation process. Relevant stakeholders generally include all categories of ISES members (miners, processors & traders, retailers, financial institutions, social and environmental NGOs), governments, workers' unions, international organizations, researchers and academic bodies, civil societies, indigenous & local communities, other sustainability roundtables, certification and accreditation bodies.

3.2.4 The results of the stakeholder mapping exercise shall be used to provide a database of stakeholders for engagement in the subsequent standard development activity. This shall also be used as a reference throughout the standard development process to ensure that a balance of these identified stakeholders continues to be involved and their positions are taken into account. The SC shall consider using the stakeholder database to maintain records of communications and contributions during the consultation process.

3.3 Ensuring stakeholder inclusion in standards development activities

3.3.1 Based on information from the mapping exercise, the SC shall set stakeholder participation goals for each standard development activity. These goals shall identify clear participation targets and success criteria for each stakeholder group. The SC shall review progress towards meeting these objectives during and at the end of the standard development process.

3.3.2 The SC shall ensure that key stakeholders (or representatives as appropriate) identified during the stakeholder mapping process are proactively approached to contribute to the public consultation process.

3.3.3 The SC shall actively promote task force (TF) or working group (WG) members as representatives of their stakeholder interest group during the public consultation process, and ensure that details of how they can be contacted by stakeholders are publicly available (e.g. on the relevant section of the ISES website).

3.4 Taking comments into account

3.4.1 The SC shall have systems in place to ensure that the task force takes all comments received during the public consultation periods (and for existing standards, comments received since the publication date)

into account. This shall ensure that different types of inputs received are weighted equally (e.g. written comments, teleconferences, workshops etc.).

3.4.2 The TF shall compile comments received according to the issues raised, or according to the relevant criterion/indicator. A written synopsis shall be documented and published summarising how each of the comments (or groups of comments) has been addressed in the standard development process, including a brief justification if a comment has not been incorporated.

3.4.3 When making the synopsis publicly available, ISES shall consider whether the full text of original comments can be published, or whether the text may be summarised if it is of a nature personal to individuals or any stakeholders.

4. Task Force

4.1 Establishment of a Task Force (TF)

4.1.1 Where identified as needed for a standard development activity (see Section 1.2.4), the SC shall establish a TF to undertake the detailed standard development and decision-making activities through TF meetings, resulting in recommendations to the IB. In some cases, an existing ISES working group (WG) may be tasked with a particular standard setting activity, in which case they shall also follow the procedures as set out in this document and the rules for the TF.

4.1.2 The SC shall keep the IB updated with key information and progress of the TF throughout the standard development activity, and the IB can at any time request further information from the SC.

4.1.3 Each stakeholder interest group (as identified by the SC, see Section 4.2) shall nominate their chosen representative(s) and put this forward to the SC. The representative shall join the TF on behalf of their stakeholder interest group. The representative shall also decide to nominate a deputy ('alternate') – see Section 4.6. The members of the TF shall function as defined in the TOR for the TF establishment.

4.1.4 At least one representative of each stakeholder interest category must be an ISES member, unless an exception is approved by the SC.

4.1.5 To avoid conflict of interest and due to the escalated alternative decision-making mechanism as outlined in section 4.4, SC members may not sit on the TF.

4.2 Role of Task Force (TF) Members

4.2.1 The main purpose of the TF shall be to represent a balance of relevant stakeholders at TF meetings. All ISES membership categories shall be represented and the SC may decide on additional stakeholder categories to be included according to the standard development activity, in accordance with the stakeholder mapping exercise (see Section 3.1). So far seven ISES membership categories have been identified:

- **Miners** – including entrepreneurs and higher management representation for both larger mines and smallholder groups and associations.
- **Processors and traders** - including representation for processors and traders / exporters.
- **Banks and investors** – including representation for banks, investors and financial institutions.
- **Environmental interests** – including representation for people affected by the natural stone and elected representatives of communities impacted by the natural stone supply chain, national and international NGOs and conservation practitioners.
- **Social interests** – including representation for people affected by the natural stone and elected representatives of communities impacted by the natural stone supply chain, or NGOs representing them.
- **Retailers** – including retail companies and supermarkets.
- **Consumer goods manufacturers** – including consumer goods manufacturers.

All these representatives must do the respective practical work needed for their category (or must have a long history in having done this). In addition, academics and researchers from the respective field can be selected.

4.2.2 A membership category may request support from the ISES Secretariat for the selection of nominees. Where agreement on nominations cannot be reached, it is at the discretion of the SC to finalise nominations.

4.2.3 The SC shall ensure that the TF provides representation for different affected countries or regions as appropriate.

4.2.4 Additionally, topic experts may be invited to inform the TF on critical issues, such as HCV, labour, health and safety, chemicals, value chain, etc. Topic experts shall not represent any particular membership category and shall not participate in any decision making.

4.3 Task Force (TF) Meetings

4.3.1 The TF shall convene for at least two physical meetings, unless otherwise justified by the SC. It is recommended that each of these meetings is held subsequent to each public consultation period.

4.3.2 The purpose of the TF meetings is to strive for consensus on the content of the standard under development, among stakeholders.

4.3.3 For the TF meetings, the SC shall decide on whether it is most appropriate for these to be guided by an external facilitator, or chaired by the ISES Secretariat or other appropriate person(s). The SC shall ensure that the chosen facilitator(s) have no conflict of interest in the standard development activity. The role of

the facilitators or chairpersons is to ensure that all TF meetings focus on the objectives as defined in the TOR, and ensure that they are being duly conducted in accordance with the requirements of this document (and any other relevant documents).

4.4 Decision making

4.4.1 The TF shall aim to make decisions by consensus.

4.4.2 If consensus is not possible for any specific issue or criteria and this results in a deadlock, i.e. whereby opposing parties come to a point of fundamental disagreement on a significant topic and no further step can be made because it could lead to a standstill or stalemate of the entire process, the TF shall refer the matter to the SC, who shall seek to resolve the issue in question by consensus.

4.4.3 Should the SC not be able to resolve the matter and also result in deadlock, they shall defer it to the IB, who in turn, shall aim to resolve it by consensus.

4.4.4 Should the IB not be able to resolve the matter and also result in deadlock, it shall be brought to the General Assembly, where decision shall be made by the members through simple majority, as per ISES Statutes.

4.4.5 Where a decision goes through this escalated decision-making process, the previous language and understanding applies until such time as a new decision is reached.

4.4.6 Deadlock on an issue shall not prevent continuation of the standard development process and the TF shall continue according to the work plan on all other issues not directly affected by the matter causing the deadlock. The SC may consider issuing specific instructions for the continuation of the work.

4.4.7 ISES shall make public the final decisions on the content of the standard, as well as a summary of deliberations in arriving at the decisions made.

4.5 TF member responsibility and conduct

4.5.1 The ISES Secretariat shall ensure that each TF member has:

- Signed the Code of Conduct (CoC) for standard development activity (see Template in Annex 2);
- Received the TORs and work programme for the standard development activity (Section 2);
- Received the ISES document for Standards Setting and Review (this document).

4.5.2 Additional requirements can be made to the template Code of Conduct (CoC) by the SC as appropriate, but the minimum requirements as set out in Annex 2 shall be included.

4.5.3 Substantive members commit to attend all TF meetings unless prevented to do so by force majeure¹. Should a member be unable to participate, he/she should be replaced by their nominated alternate in that meeting, whom they shall brief on developments so far.

4.5.4 Substantives commit to fully engaging in the entire process through active participation during the TF meetings, any activities they agree to conduct in between meetings, briefing of the alternates in their membership category, engagement with their SC and IB representatives and outreach to the stakeholders in their membership category.

4.5.5 Lack of active participation over a continuous period of 12 months or missing two – three consecutive meetings without being substituted by the alternate will result in removal from the TF irrespective of notification or otherwise.

4.6 Alternates

4.6.1. If a TF member is unable to be present at a TF meeting, a named alternate may represent the substantive member on the following conditions:

- A single alternate member may represent multiple substantive members only where the substantive members represent the same membership category;
- Where alternate members are present with substantive members at a physical meeting, alternate members are not allowed to actively participate and shall take on the role of observers. However, alternates can be asked or given permission by the facilitator or the chair of TF to contribute, when appropriate.
- Switching between substantive and alternate members within a physical meeting can only take place after a verbal statement made from the substantive and only in the case of force majeure², and formal approval from the facilitator or the chair of TF during the meeting.
- Where alternate members are representing substantive members, their roles are as described in Section 4.5.
- The substantive member being replaced by the alternate has the responsibility to brief the alternate on the debate so far and current discussion points to assure smooth continuation of the discussions.

4.6.2 The TF member shall inform the SC of the alternate representative as soon as possible ahead of the first meeting. It is recommended that each membership category nominates a number of alternates corresponding to the number of substantives (i.e. as many alternates as there are substantives) prior to the first meeting, who are kept well briefed on proceedings should the need arise for them to step in.

¹ Force majeure refers to any situation which could not have been avoided even with due care and planning by the TF participant (i.e. was outside of the control of the TF participant). Examples include natural disaster, family illness.

² Force majeure refers to any situation which could not have been avoided even with due care and planning by the TF participant (i.e. was outside of the control of the TF participant). Examples include natural disaster, family illness.

4.7 Observers and technical experts

4.7.1 Observers and technical experts may attend task force meetings following approval by ISES Secretariat and facilitators. At no time, observers or technical experts have a decision-making power or vote.

4.8 Financial support and capacity building

4.8.1 TF members are requested by the ISES to cover their own expenses in attending the physical meetings if possible. ISES recognises that this will not be possible for all members (e.g. smallholders and disadvantaged stakeholders), and therefore members can apply to ISES for reimbursement for reasonable travel, accommodation and subsistence costs incurred whilst participating in physical meetings. ISES has a policy of not paying fees for time spent participating in the TF or expenses incurred during consultation, e-mail and telephone discussions.

4.8.2 ISES strives to ensure all stakeholders can participate meaningfully and as such the ISES Secretariat shall facilitate their participation in terms of specific briefings or support to understand documents and processes through additional capacity building if needed.

5. Public consultation

Public consultation period is the time during which stakeholders outside of the TF have the opportunity to study and comment on the draft document.

5.1 Public consultation periods

5.1.1 Each standard development activity shall include:

- For new standards: at least two rounds of public consultation (allowing submission of comments by stakeholders), with the first one of at least 60 days and the second one of at least 30 days.
- For standard revisions: at least one round of public consultation (allowing submission of comments by stakeholders) of at least 60 days.
- Where substantive, unresolved issues persist after the consultation round(s), or where insufficient feedback was received, additional rounds of consultation shall be carried out as necessary.

5.1.2 The consultation phases shall be used to present new drafts of the standard, as developed by the TF, to the public for comment.

5.1.3 The consultation process is open to all stakeholders and aims to achieve a balance of interests in the subject matter and in the geographical area and scale of operation to which the standard applies.

5.1.4 Stakeholder groups that are not adequately represented are identified and being proactively consulted for their contributions to the process, using methods tailored to these stakeholder groups (e.g. physical consultation meetings in their regions)

5.1.5 The SC shall, if requested, support Task Force members to organise at least one regional public consultation meeting in each relevant region or countries.

5.1.6 All comments received during consultation are compiled for the consideration by the TF. A written synopsis is given on how each comment has been addressed. Where no follow up action, a written justification is necessary. This is documented and the synopsis is made publicly available and accessible to all parties that submitted comments.

6. Pilot Testing

6.1. As a compulsory practice, the new or revised standard shall be field tested to assess the feasibility and auditability of requirements in the draft standard or any of its new elements or major alterations.

6.2 The tests can include field trials or mock audits, measurement of impact and evaluation of risk as appropriate.

6.3 Where feasible, multiple pilot tests should be held to test the new or revised standard in geographical regions which are significantly different from one another.

6.4 Results of the field test shall determine any edits and changes necessary to the draft standard prior to final endorsement.

7. Endorsement of standards

7.1 Process for endorsement of standards

7.1.1 The ISES Secretariat and SC, with the support of technical experts if needed, shall check that the appropriate requirements of this document have been complied with, and shall submit any relevant recommendations and comments to the IB for consideration.

7.1.2 The final draft standard as approved by the SC– or optional versions where consensus has not been reached (see 4.4.2-4.4.6) – shall be submitted to the IB for endorsement.

7.1.3 The ISES IB shall discuss endorsement of the standard as an agenda item at their next upcoming meeting. The Board’s decision shall be final.

7.1.4 Documents supporting the implementation of the ISES P&C require endorsement by the ISES IB only. They do not need to be brought to the General Assembly.

7.2 General Assembly voting on ISES Standard

7.2.1 Upon endorsement of the IB, the ISES Standard is then voted on at the ISES General Assembly, in accordance with the ISES Statutes – this requires a simple majority of a fixed quorum of ordinary members.

8. Publication and availability of standards

8.1 Publication and availability of standards

8.1.1 The approved final standards shall be published within 2 weeks of approval, and made available for free in electronic format.

8.1.2 The ISES Secretariat shall inform its stakeholders of the new or revised standard and any applicable transition period, in particular certification bodies and, where feasible, certified enterprises.

8.1.3 The ISES Secretariat shall inform about implications for other associated documents that are affected by the new or revised standard and indicate timelines for their subsequent adjustments/revisions.

8.1.4 The corresponding standard draft as agreed by the TF shall be made available during the public consultation phases in the standard development process.

8.1.5 Hard copies of public summaries, standards and other available materials related to the standard shall be made available on request at as low cost as possible, and covering only reasonable administrative costs. These materials shall be made available for free in electronic format.

8.1.6 The ISES Secretariat shall provide translations of the final versions of the standard as appropriate for members. Translations of draft versions of the standard should be made available in the languages of key membership countries. The ISES secretariat shall strive to provide translations within three months of the standard being endorsed.

8.1.7 All translated documents shall include on their cover page the official language of the original standard and reference of where to find this, and note that in the case of inconsistency between versions, reference shall default to the original English version.

8.2 Standards' structure and content

8.2.1 The SC shall ensure that the social, environmental and/or economic objectives shall be clearly set out in the introduction to the standard as relevant.

8.2.2 The SC shall ensure that the final structure of the standard forms a logical framework such that the requirements clearly contribute to the standard's objectives. A statement of intent shall be developed for each principle, providing a link between the respective criteria and indicators. Each principle, criteria and

indicator shall be clearly numbered and the SC shall check that these terms are being used correctly in the standard as according to the definitions in Annex 1.

8.2.3 Compliance requirements (major or minor indicator) shall be clearly identified in the introduction and throughout the standard.

8.2.4 The proposed date for standard revision shall be noted in the standard along with a transition period by which the revised standard shall come into effect.

9. General

9.1 Record keeping

9.1.1 All standards setting and review activities are recorded and documented by the ISES Secretariat.

9.1.2 To ensure transparency to stakeholders, where possible and appropriate these documents are made publicly available on the relevant section of the ISES website.

9.1.3 Where not made publicly available on the website, these records are made available to interested stakeholders on request. Stakeholders are made aware of all records available on request through the relevant section of the ISES website.

9.1.4 The ISES Secretariat shall ensure that documentation of the standard development process, associated policies and procedures, lists of stakeholders contacted and the stakeholders involved at each stage of the process, comments received and a synopsis of how those comments were taken into account, and all draft and final versions of the standard are kept for a minimum of five years.

9.2 Procedural complaints

9.2.1 The ISES Complaints System is available with the aim of impartial handling of procedural complaints regarding standard development activities as set out in this document. ISES stakeholders have ready access to this service via the ISES website online or submit directly to email (info@igep.org)

9.2.2 The ISES Complaints System documents efforts to resolve complaints, and keeps these records for a minimum of 5 years.

9.2.3 Decisions taken on procedural complaints shall be disclosed at least to the affected parties, and where appropriate a summary shall be made publicly available. The SC shall be informed of any complaints and involved as necessary with follow-up actions.

9.3 Substantive complaints and comments related to the Standard

9.3.1 A documented process to receive ongoing substantive complaints, comments and requests for clarification is established and maintained by the ISES Secretariat upon publication of the initial standard.

The ISES Secretariat is identified as the focal point for standards-related enquiries and for submission of comments, with contact information (info@igep.org). These comments shall be taken into account during the subsequent standard revision process (see Sections 2.3 and 3.4).

9.4 ISES website section for standard development activities

9.4.1 An individual website section is used for standard development activities, with sub-sections created for each standard setting activity. This provides all interested stakeholders with clearly identified access to all relevant information and documents (as set out in this document) throughout and after the standard development activity. It is the duty of the ISES to ensure that information on the website is kept up to date.

9.4.2 During any standard development activities, the ISES website shall actively be used to alert stakeholders to this (e.g. through promotion on the front page), and direct stakeholders to the appropriate place on the website where more information can be found.

Annex 1. Definitions

Conflict of interest: Situation in which a party has an actual or perceived interest that gives, or could have the appearance of giving, that party an incentive for personal, organizational, or professional gain, such that the party's interest could conflict, or be perceived to conflict with, the conduct of an impartial and objective certification process.

Consensus: Decision taken in absence of any sustained objection (unanimously).

Criteria: The conditions that need to be met in order to fulfil a principle. Criteria add meaning and operationally to a principle without themselves being direct measures of performance.

Deadlock: Whereby opposing parties come to a point of fundamental disagreement on a significant topic and no further step can be made without risking a standstill or stalemate of the entire process.

Force majeure: refers to any situation which could not have been avoided even with due care and planning by the TF participant (i.e. was outside of the control of the TF participant). Examples include natural disaster, family illness.

Indicators: The measurable states which allow the assessment of whether or not associated criteria are being met. Indicators convey a single, meaningful message or piece of information.

Interest group: Any person or group concerned with or directly affected by a standard.

Materially affected stakeholders: These are stakeholders that will be directly impacted by the application of the standard.

Principle: A fundamental statement about a desired outcome, often providing greater detail about the objectives.

Procedural complaints: Procedural complaints relate to the way in which the standard was developed. These can include complaints about the process for deciding on the content of the standard, but not about the content of the standard itself.

Public consultation: Public consultation is the defined period or periods during which stakeholder comments are sought about a draft standard or document during a standard development process. Typically, different methods of engagement are used, such as an online comment on templates or physical consultation workshops.

Standards: A document that provides, for common and repeated use, rules, guidelines or characteristics for products or related processes and production methods.

Standard development activities: The term used in this document to cover both ISES standards setting and standards review activities.

Stakeholder: An individual or group with a legitimate and/or demonstrable interest in, or who is directly affected by, the activities of an organisation and the consequences of those activities.

Substantive complaints: Substantive complaints relate to important content of the standard and should be dealt with through the standard development or revision process.

Task Force: The ISES's task force is normally established to work on specific issues to address complex and difficult challenges and work towards developing solutions. The task force normally establishes under a standing committee and is therefore non-permanent by nature.

Verifiers: The means of verification define the type of information or observations that are used to demonstrate that the required indicator state is being realised. Verifiers provide specific details that reflect a desired condition of an indicator. Verifiable criteria can be checked for compliance through an audit process.

Working Group: The ISES's working groups are established under Standing committees or directly by the IB. Its establishment is normally designed to encourage members to address complex and difficult challenges and work towards developing solutions.

Annex 2: Template Code of Conduct for standard development activity

It is fundamental to the integrity, credibility and continued progress of the task force or working group TF/WG that every member supports, promotes and works towards the ISES goals. Every member organization and individual must act in good faith towards this objective and commit to adhering to the principles set out in this Code. This Code applies to all Members of the TF/WG.

Achieving consensus

Each individual member of the TF/WG shall be responsible for seeking to build consensus within the TF/WG on how to address any issues which arise. Members shall recognise that achieving consensus in practice requires all members to be prepared to listen carefully to all the views of the group, and wherever possible actively seek compromises which will allow agreement

The TF/WG meetings are likely to include a number of contentious issues. Members shall at all times be respectful of the opinions of other TF/WG members, and the right of each member to share their expertise and opinions with the group. Members shall at all times respect and support the role and authority of the chairpersons/facilitators to encourage this.

Attendance

Members shall commit to physical attendance at all physical meetings. If this is not possible, Members are responsible for organising a previously nominated alternate to attend in their place, and shall inform the SC of this.

Representation of stakeholder groups

Each individual member of the TF/WG shall be responsible for consulting with stakeholders not directly represented in the TF/WG and ensuring that their views are expressed within the discussions. Members are expected to play an active role in representing their stakeholders' interests, including ensuring that consultations with their stakeholder group are carried out and putting forward their concerns, comments or ideas to the group. Members are there to represent an interest group within the ISES, not their own interests or the interests of their own organisation

Members shall provide and allow their contact details to be publicly used by the SC during the standard development activity, to encourage communication from their interest group.

Promotion and Commitment

Member organizations shall acknowledge their membership of the TF/WG and its objectives, the ISES Principles and Criteria (ISES P&C) and its implementation process through informed and explicit endorsement. Members of the TF/WG shall promote and communicate this commitment throughout the stakeholder group that they are representing.

Breaches of this Code

Breaches of this Code may lead to exclusion from the TF/WG.

Members shall seek to resolve grievances directly with other member organizations, and shall not make unsubstantiated allegations of breaches against other members.

Prior to taking public action in cases of unresolved allegations of breaches of this Code, members shall report breaches to the SC and their appropriate representative in ISES Board of Governors (IB), who shall deal with the alleged breaches in accordance with the ISES Grievance Procedure.

TF Member agreement

I acknowledge and agree with the terms in the TF/WG ToR and CoC above, and standard development activity requirements as set out in the ISES document for Standards Setting and Review.

Date:

Name:

Signature: _____

Annex 3. Public Reporting Requirements

All of the following information shall be made publicly available throughout the standard development activity process as it becomes available, and updated as necessary.

1. TF ToR
2. Work Programme – see Section 2
3. Summary report of stakeholder involvement actions – see Section 3
4. Draft standards for public consultation
5. Summary of comments from public consultations
6. Final draft standards for approval by the ISES IB
7. Final standard as approved by the ISES IB