

Summary Notes
RJC Standards Committee Teleconference
15/03/2016 - 16:00-17:30 GMT

Participants: Assheton Carter, Clarie Piroddi, Claus Teilmann, Didier Backaert, Estelle Levin, Eva Carlson, Marianna Smirnova, Michael Geelhand, Stephane Fischler, Cecilia Gardner

RJC Management team: Anne-Marie Fleury, Bethan Herbert, Peter Dawkins, Maria Mursell

Apologies: Philip Hunter, Wilfried Hoerner, Ainsley Butler, Marylyn Carrigan, Stephen Oates and Jon Hobbs.

1. Welcome

Claus welcomed people and referenced the anti-trust statement. Summary Notes from the previous teleconference on 12 February were approved by Cecillia Gardner, seconded by Eva Carlson.

2. Governance changes

Anne-Marie reported that the ExCo and Board approved all the governance changes which were put forward for the Standards Committee apart from the proposed reduction in the size of the Committee. Some Board members expressed significant concern that a reduced Committee size would be perceived as an overly limiting factor to RJC member participation.

The Committee will maintain its current size of 28 'seats', though Anne-Marie noted the intention to observe the 3 year term for all members. This means that non-industry who have participated in the committee for longer than 3 years will be asked to re-apply or step down.

Action: Schedule a discussion on skills-mapping for non-industry members of the Committee.

3. Standards Revision

Anne-Marie described the high-level planning for the review of standards: a 10 step process including planning, gap analysis, drafting, consultation and revision. Committee members, as well as the broader RJC membership and accredited auditors will be consulted for input on the gap analysis. She also welcomed input at any time, referring to a log being kept by RJC to track issues.

The approach has been approved by the Board.

Chain of Custody (CoC) review timeline

Anne-Marie noted that the CoC is planned to be reviewed first. This will include an update of the cross-recognitions (with LBMA and CFSI); a review of the restricted eligibility criteria for CoC material, particularly mined material; and consideration of RJC's desire (or not) to include Country of Origin disclosure with certification. It was noted that the OECD is carrying out an assessment alignment against the Due Diligence Guidance which should provide interesting insights to our work.

There was agreement about the overall plans for the CoC review, however an extension to the timeline was recommended to accommodate for holiday periods.

Action: RJC Management team to revise and extend the CoC review timeline.

Code of Practice (COP) review

This is scheduled to start at the end of 2016 coinciding with the last stages of the review of the CoC standard. Some of the possible areas of review will include conflict-sensitive sourcing, the issue of partial membership, and disclosure requirements on synthetic diamonds.

The timeline and general approach were approved by the committee.

4. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Programme

Bethan took the committee through the basics of the M&E program and ISEAL Alliance requirements. She noted some loss of momentum in the programme due to the changes in management in 2015 and outlined some issues with the existing M&E program which require attention, including RJC's Theory of Change which requires clarification, the compliance based nature of indicators currently collected (as opposed to impact-based) and limitations this introduces to conclusions which can be made. The challenges of collecting impact based data was highlighted.

The value of producing an annual impacts report was discussed. Bethan proposed changing the frequency of external publication of the full Impacts Report to every other year and staggering this with an internal report. There were differing views on this proposal amongst the committee members.

A discussion was had on the nature of impacts and how and why they are collected and analysed and it was argued that an M&E programme is critical for withstanding allegations of greenwashing, and for feeding into communications, strategy, and membership as a whole.

M&E report on impacts in India by StratWon

Bethan reported on an evaluation study commissioned in 2015 to look at uptake and impact of RJC certification in India. The report made various recommendations to the RJC which were presented to the Committee. The committee called for an additional call to discuss and respond to the recommendations before the findings are published externally (as per ISEAL requirements).

Action: An additional Standards Committee call on the M&E programme as well as the India report will be scheduled.

5. Any other business

Claus announced that Fatima Castilan has resigned from the committee. Thanks were offered to her for her time and contribution.

Anne-Marie reported that the Better Gold Initiative are funding a study on how the Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining (ASM) sector can be better included in international certification systems (including RJC) and have approached the RJC to share this work and collaborate on its development. She noted that this would be useful input to the Standards Review process and committed to share further information as the project developed.

Claus gave his thanks to committee and RJC for the teleconference.