

Minutes

Standards Committee Teleconference
17 March 2015



Teleconference dial-in times:

City	Local Time (24 hr)
Vancouver/Carlsbad/Seattle	0500
Salt Lake City	0600
Mexico City	0600
New York/Toronto/Ottawa	0800
London	1200
Milan/Antwerp/Paris	1300
Johannesburg	1400
Nairobi	1500
Mumbai	1730
Melbourne	2300

Participants: Claus Teilmann Petersen (Co-Chair), Estelle Levin (Co-Chair), Felix Hruschka, Steven Oates, Marylyn Carrigan, Marianna Smirnova, Didier Backaert, Fiona Solomon, Marieke van der Mij, Chinelo Etiaba, Maria Mursell, Caren Holzman (consultant to RJC).

Apologies: Alan Martin, Ryan Tylor, David Bouffard, Jennifer Horning, Jon Hobbs, Wilfried Hoerner, Ferial Zerouki, Eva Carson, Hiren Vepari, Philip Hunter, Fatima Castelan, Stephane Fischler, John Lee, Cecilia Gardner, Susan Posnock, Cecilia Gardner, Assheton Stewart Carter, Angelo Palmieri.

Documents circulated:

- Minutes of Standards Committee teleconference, 15 September 2014
- Small to Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs): Uptake, Access and Impact of Certification in the Jewellery Supply Chain: Graduate Institute of Geneva

Attendees are kindly reminded that the RJC is committed to complying with all relevant antitrust and competition laws and regulations and, to that end, has adopted an [Anti-trust Policy Statement](#), compliance with which is a condition of continued RJC membership. Failure to abide by these laws can potentially have extremely serious consequences for the RJC and its members, including heavy fines and, in some jurisdictions, imprisonment for individuals. You are therefore asked to have due regard to this Policy today and indeed in respect of all other RJC activity.

1. Welcome (Chair/s)

- RJC's Anti-trust statement was noted.
- Welcome by Claus and Estelle, who were co-chairing the teleconference together for the first time.
- Welcome to new Standards Committee Member, Ainsley Butler, new Program Director from Diamond Development Initiative (DDI) who is replacing Ngomesia Mayer-Kechom on the Committee. She brings impact related work experience in previous roles which will be very valuable to the Committee's current work program. RJC and the Committee warmly thanked Ngomesia for his time and commitment to the work of the Committee.
- Fiona clarified the Committee Members' standing re RJC annual Committee elections: some of the Committee have finished their two year term and some have been re-nominated, while others are one year into their two year terms and are due for re-nomination in 2016

2. Minutes of previous meeting

- Minutes of the Standards Committee meeting in London on 15 September 2014 were accepted. These will be posted on the RJC website at:
<http://www.responsiblejewellery.com/rjc-standards-committee/>

3. SMEs and Certification Research (Fiona)

- In 2014, Richemont had provided funding for a research project, and Fiona reported on the research which was undertaken by three students at the Geneva Institute, on SMEs and Certification.
- One of the main findings in the report was that language was a barrier for some small companies to engage better with the RJC. Although the RJC has translated many of our standards documents into multiple languages, not all Members were aware of this. Most general communication by RJC, including newsletters, webinars, deadline reminders, are in English.
- Another finding related to the importance of enhancing engagement with SMEs through national/regional trade associations, following the positive experience with the French jewellers' trade association, BJOP.
- RJC greatly values the research and its recommendations and has had a number of internal discussions about implementing improvements. These include the development of self-assessment templates for SMEs (such as those already under development for Auditors for audit reports), training provided in other languages through Topic Experts, and peer learning opportunities based on the 'e-coffee morning' model, which are designed for Members to interact more informally with the RJC and each other.
- The Committee noted that the research was very impressive, given it was a student team and the challenges of accessing SMEs in research are well known.
- Fiona reported that most of those involved in the study underwent the COP 2009 certification and the COP 2013 has already simplified complex language and made requirements clearer, with SMEs in mind. Fiona also noted that SME management systems aren't necessarily documented and there is often a very close relationship between senior management and employees in an SME therefore it can sometimes be distracting to document/formalise these systems/procedures, which has to be taken into account. This has been an important clarification in the COP 2013 Guidance, and in auditor training, though there are plans to further revise the training modules to continue to emphasise this.
- It was highlighted that SMEs are not homogenous with some being family-run, active in different parts of the supply chain and located in highly diverse areas, so although many face similar issues, it's important to acknowledge these differences. However, if you tailor to all these variables, the multiplication of guidance documents would itself become confusing. As a result, RJC has to take a careful and restrained approach to developing tailored SME guidance.
- *Action:* The University of Coventry will be undergoing training with SMEs in the UK with the British Jeweller's Association (BJA) in April and any pertinent outcomes will be passed on to the RJC.

4. Independent Impacts Evaluation of MYSAC (Marieke)

- This research is a collaboration between the RJC and Solidaridad, and evaluates impact on RJC certified Member, Minera Yanaquihua S.A.C.
- Marieke visited this mine in November 2014 for 5 days as part of her involvement in the LBMA refiner conference and LBMA-RJC Responsible Gold Forum in Lima, Peru.
- The research intends to look at what local issues were pre RJC certification, what changes were made due to RJC certification, how the mines have improved and looking at efforts to continue these changes. A major aim is to develop an understanding of how RJC COP have been an influencer/driver in the changes seen on the ground of the mine.
- The methodology was based on semi-structured interviews, 11 of which were conducted including those from the management team, ASM miners, community members, RJC coordinators and consultants.
- Solidaridad have conducted a baseline study and so RJC is looking to conduct complimentary mid-scale research and looking at what has been accomplished to date by the Member.
- Further research by Solidaridad will be carried out at the end of the month and will culminate in a shared report with the RJC.
- It was asked if the RJC and Solidaridad had any intentions to work with other miners in the region or other countries to widen the impact study. Marieke replied that there has been some work on control groups and using non-certified mines for comparison for the study. Also, Solidaridad is working in Ghana and Peru to identify other mid-scale mines to join RJC.
- A question was raised whether there would be continued research between Better Gold Initiative, Solidaridad and the RJC on mid-scale mining companies and delivering positive impacts at mid-scale mine sites. Marieke confirmed this would be the case, and noted that Caren Holzman has joined the RJC for 2 days a week until June 2015, and will continue the collaboration with Solidaridad and the Better Gold Initiative until the appointment of new RJC staff.
- *Action:* Further information on this project will be delivered by Solidaridad/RJC to Committee Members at the next meeting (in Mumbai in April).

5. Impacts Research on Diamond Cutting Industry in India (Fiona)

- In 2014 Dalberg (a development consultancy) were commissioned to undertake a 'rapid research' project to feed into first RJC Impacts Report and help frame future research. Signet has offered to fund a follow-up study with GBP 15k available.
- Potential areas of interest for further research include:
 - More detailed study of certification impacts with small sample of Certified Members in India, compared with control sample of companies not involved in a standards program
 - Include a number of case studies?
 - A small controlled study of non-RJC companies, which would help understand the difference that certification brings.
 - Other ideas on issues/methodology?
- The potential research providers are Dalberg, as per 2014 study, or ASK-India (who have partnered with Verité on jewellery manufacturing research in India).
- It was noted that there are clear links between this item and the upcoming Standards Committee meeting in Mumbai. It was suggested to use the India trip to try to reflect on current and emerging issues and prioritise the focus of future research.
- It was raised that potential issues for research could include gender and women's rights, SMEs, and child labour.

6. April face to face Meeting in Mumbai (Fiona)

- Fiona reported that the face-to-face Standards Committee meeting is being held on Sunday evening before the AGM begins.
- The proposal is of a largely open discussion, based on reflection questions. The following are initial suggestions from Committee Co-Chairs and staff:
 - How can the Standards Committee best support RJC?
 - What are its potential roles outside of active standards-setting periods?
 - Should it be renamed the 'Standards and Impacts Committee'?
 - What suggestions are there for RJC's next strategic plan re standards priorities?
 - What can participants get out of the opportunity to visit sites?
 - How can this feed into the Monitoring and Evaluation/Impacts research to be commissioned?
- This proposal and approach was agreed by the Committee as a whole.
- Fiona ran through the agenda for the AGM which features Monday 13th April as the AGM itself which will take place at 11 am (Members only). In the afternoon is the RJC conference at BDB. The conference aims to have speakers talking about the challenges and advantages of being certified, from all sides of the supply chain, and include non-RJC SC members reflecting on the use of the RJC.
- Tuesday 14th and Wednesday 15th are reserved for site visits, which will include a diversity of sites, scale and value of goods handled. They will also help to demonstrate the impact that RJC Certifications have had. Wednesday afternoon includes a reflection session, post site visits.
- *Action:* A question was asked if the reflection session would be facilitated or structured. Maria to follow up on how this will be structured.
- *Action:* Follow up questions on AGM attendees were asked. Maria will respond back with a more comprehensive list of attendees.
- *Action:* It was suggested that the Standards Committee could meet again on the 14th, possibly before or after the general reflection session. Maria to follow up to determine Committee Members' availability and travel arrangements to schedule this.

7. Any other business

- Claus began this segment with regrettable farewells but many hearty thanks to both Fiona and Marieke for all their hard work on the Committee. Many Committee Members thanked both Fiona and Marieke for their distinct and greatly appreciated service to the RJC and Standards Committee.
- Caren Holzman introduced herself to the Committee; Caren has worked previously with Estelle and had previously represented Estelle on the RJC Standards Committee. Caren is heavily involved in the ISEAL community: she is an independent reviewer for ISEAL code compliance, has worked as a Standards Director at Fairtrade/FLO, with the Marine Stewardship Council on their Chain-of-Custody system, and many others. Caren is working with the RJC for 2 days a week until June 2015. Caren will be involved in recruitment for the RJC Standard's team, as well as work on ISEAL Code compliance requirements and the development of RJC's 2015 public Impacts Report.
- Fiona updated the committee on the current status on ISEAL compliance requirements. She has completed the Standards-Setting Code assessment (which was new for 2015); and

Caren will manage the Assurance Code and Impacts Code updates for 2015, building on the work completed in 2014.

- Estelle commented that continuing ISEAL compliance is critical and acknowledged that Standards are ultimately transformative. ISEAL is a vehicle for external parties to see the RJC as credible and rigorous. Estelle noted that the Committee needs to find ways in which we can demonstrate to Members the importance of ISEAL compliance.
- Fiona agreed and noted that meeting ISEAL compliance requirements have always been a positive process involving reflection on current processes and identifying opportunities for improvement.

8. Standards Committee schedule –2015 dates:

- The next meeting will be a face to face in Mumbai on April 12th, as part of the RJC AGM
- The 'normal' scheduled teleconference is planned for later in summer 2015
- However it was mentioned that the Committee could be convened prior to then for a debrief session after the AGM for those who didn't attend, as well as if needed by Caren and Maria with regards ISEAL compliance and other factors in the near future.