RESPONSIBLE JEWELLERY COUNCIL

RJC Standard-Setting Procedure

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1. Purpose

This document outlines the RJC's Standards-Setting procedure, developed in accordance with International Social and Environmental Accreditation and Labelling Alliance (ISEAL) Standard Setting Code of Good Practice requirements (V6 – 2014). The standard-setting procedure will be reviewed at a minimum every 5 years, or at the start of every revision of any RJC standard. This procedure is applicable to both planned substantive and non-substantive reviews of RJC standards, as necessary.

The purpose of the standard setting procedure is to demonstrate the RJC's commitment to:

- Be open and transparent in its standards development process;
- Encourage input from a wide range of interested and affected parties;
- Treat input from interested and affected parties with integrity and respect; and
- Report publicly on submissions received, including how comments have been addressed in subsequent drafting.

2. Definitions

Consensus

Consensus is defined as general agreement characterised by the absence of sustained opposition to substantial issues by any Committee member; it is not necessarily unanimity. Consensus should be the result of a process seeking to take into account the views of interested parties and reconcile any conflicting arguments (ISO/IEC Guide 2:2004).

Substantive

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Substantive changes are any changes to the standard involving matters of major or practical importance to those concerned. In particular, any changes to performance requirements or changes that would constitute a substantive revision to the expected practices or performance levels required of the member. Substantive changes may:

- Introduce or materially modify performance requirements
- Change the expected level of practice, assurance, or compliance required of members
- Alter the scope, applicability, or interpretation of existing requirements
- Impose new measurable outcomes, thresholds, reporting obligations, or audit-verification criteria
- Require members to adjust systems, policies, controls, or operational practices

Urgent substantive

A proposed change that is both time-critical and materially impactful, requiring action outside the normal standards development or revision cycle, pursuant to substantive changes. Urgent substantive changes address unintended negative consequences of the standard, such as pressing legal, regulatory, safety, reputational, or systemic risk issue and requires urgent accelerated decision-making to prevent harm, or material disruption.

Non-substantive

A non-substantive change is a change that improves clarity, consistency, and usability of the standard without changing performance expectations or compliance levels. This could include:

- Editorial or formatting corrections (spelling, punctuation, headings, numbering)
- Clarifications for readability without changing requirements
- Updates to references, URLs, or factual information
- Minor technical or procedural corrections (tables, diagrams, cross-references)
- Additional clarification or signposting to resources

3. Procedure

3.1 Defining the scope

All RJC Standards are reviewed at least every 5 years in line with ISEAL requirements to ensure the standards remain fit for purpose, relevant and effective.

The RJC will follow a number of steps to determine the scope and stakeholder engagement plan for new standards and/or reviews. This process is undertaken by the RJC Standards Team with the RJC Standards Committee, and includes the following:

1. Outline whether a new standard is being developed, or if it is a revision to an existing RJC standard and the type of changes to be made to the standard (Substantive, Urgent-Substantive, Non-substantive).

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   a. If the review determines that a revision is not necessary, the RJC will reaffirm the standard, and communicate this publicly with the rationale.
2. The RJC management team must create or review (as necessary) a Terms of Reference (ToR) which will include requirements of ISEAL Standard-Setting Code (V6) clause 5.1. It shall include the following elements; scope of standard and intended geographic application; justification of the need of the standard; most important issues within the scope of the standard; clear social, environmental and economic outcomes and how these are linked to RJC's Theory of Change; risks in implementing the standard and how these will be mitigated. This document will require Standards Committee approval.
3. Determine a timeline of the standard revision process.
4. The RJC will share publicly a summary of the ToR elements with identified stakeholders and place it on RJC website.
5. Conduct a stakeholder mapping, which includes interested sectors, key stakeholders within those interested sectors based on the proposed scope of the standard and its social, environmental and economic outcomes, and make efforts to ensure that groups that are not adequately represented, are included within the consultation.
6. Undertake a public consultation, as applicable to the type of change being made to the standard.
7. Agree on the new revised standard following the decision-making process outlined in this document.

Substantive changes

Any substantive changes that are identified and are not urgent will be logged and considered for the next revision of the standard. The process for this revision will be defined in the ToR and shall follow the consultation process as outlined in section 3.2.

Urgent substantive

The RJC Executive Director, RJC Standards Team, and/or the Standards Committee may identify the need for an urgent revision to the Standard outside of the formal revision timeline. Such a need may arise from:

- Substantiated stakeholder complaints under the RJC Complaints Mechanism;
- Unforeseen implementation issues affecting multiple members;
- Risks to the credibility of the RJC; or
- Legislative changes or new international obligations impacting the Standard.

When an urgent revision is identified, the RJC Standards Team will prepare a preliminary proposal outlining the proposed changes, the rationale, and the justification for the urgency.

Where a revision is considered urgent, the Executive Director may approve it directly, following a careful analysis of options and endorsement by the Standards Committee, with the rationale clearly communicated. In such cases:

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- The Executive Committee and RJC Board are engaged and informed in the first instance.
- The RJC Board votes on whether the revision should be incorporated into the next scheduled review cycle or proceed as an out-of-cycle revision.

For urgent substantive revisions proceeding through to an out-of-cycle revision:

- Standards Committee feedback will be considered and incorporated into the proposed changes.
- The finalisation, approval, and publication stages follow the standard process outlined in section 3.3, with the RJC Board making the final decision to adopt the revised Standard.
- All revisions, including urgent revisions, shall be communicated to RJC members and stakeholders. The rationale and description of any urgent revisions shall also be published on the RJC website and communicated to RJC members and stakeholders.

Non-substantive changes

Non-substantive changes may be proposed by the RJC Standards Team and approved by the RJC Executive Director at any time without the need for a formal revision process as outlined in this document.

Any changes made shall be notified to the RJC Standards Committee and documented and communicated on the RJC website.

Non-substantive changes do not affect the regular review and revision cycle but shall require a new version number of the relevant RJC Standard, to be issued and published on the RJC website.

3.2 Standard consultation and revision

The RJC aims to ensure open and transparent consultations on the development of its standards. A full consultation shall be applied for the development of new standards or reviews of existing standards as part of the 5-year review period.
Steps taken during consultations include:

1. Open a public comment period for a minimum of 60 days open to all stakeholders. A notification is sent directly to all identified stakeholders asking for comments and recommendations on proposed changes. The consultation is communicated on all public RJC channels including mailers, RJC website and social media channels. The RJC will engage with stakeholders through numerous channels, for example webinars, teleconferences, direct consultations and online surveys. All consultations will seek to obtain a balance of interests in the subject matter and geographic scope.
2. Engage with Standards Committee on the revision of the standard based on the comments received in the consultation.

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3. Publish a summary of comments received and responses on the RJC website.
4. Share a draft of the new Standard developed with RJC Standards Committee.
5. Open a second public comment period for a minimum of 30, days sending the draft of the revised Standard to all identified stakeholders.
6. Engage with the Standards Committee on the revision of the standard based on the comments received in the consultation.
7. Publish a summary of comments received and responses on the RJC website.
8. Share a draft of the standard developed with the Standards Committee.
9. (If required) conduct a third public comment period of 30 days – sending a revised draft of the Standard Committee. The RJC will monitor the participation of stakeholders throughout the standard development process aimed at achieving a balanced and effective participation. If subject matters are identified that need additional consultation, this qualifies as a possible reason to trigger a third public consultation. (If a third public consultation is not required, proceed to point 13).
10. Engage with the Standards Committee on the revision of the standard based on the comments received in the consultation.
11. Publish a summary of comments and responses received.
12. Follow the decision making process as outlined below in section 3.3.

3.3 Decision Making Process

The RJC aims to operate in conformance with the ISEAL Standard Setting Code of Good Practice. Following the revision or creation of a standard, the decision for the RJC to adopt a new or revised RJC standard will pass through the following steps (see the RJC governance handbook for more detail):

- Consensus-based decision-making on the revised standard by the Standards Committee (the definition of consensus can be found at the beginning of this document);
- In the event that a consensus by the Standards Committee cannot be reached, and a vote is taken, there will be a balance of industry and non-industry participants voting;
- Recommendation by the Standards Committee to the Executive Committee (ExCo) that it should seek adoption of the new or revised standard by the Board based upon an assessment as to whether the correct procedure was followed;
- If, after review by the ExCo, the ExCo does not agree to seek adoption of the new or revised standard by the Board, the standard will revert to the Standards Committee for further revisions; and
- Once ExCo agree to seek Board decision, the Board will have the sole discretion as to whether to adopt a new or revised standard or remand it to the Standards Committee for further review.

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3.4 Transition Period and Publication

Once a standard has been approved by the Board, an effective date and transition period will need to be set for RJC members to begin implementation. The transition period between the outgoing and new standard will be clearly indicated in the relevant standards documentation. All new documents will clearly state the status of the document, official language, version and contact information of RJC to address any queries.

All new standards documents will be free to download and available in the RJC's official language, English, on the RJC's website. Any translations will be issued as and when required and should always refer to the English version on points of clarification and interpretation.

3.5 Standards Committee

The decisions on setting the RJC standards, are made by the Standards Committee. The Standards Committee has 32 seats, which are split between 16 industry members (2 from each membership forum), 16 non-industry members with specific expertise in the issue areas covered under the RJC standards and additional invited Guests of the Committee with expertise across key topic areas/projects. The Committee includes two Co-Chairs who represent the industry and non-industry members respectively. A list of Committee members can be found on the RJC website.

The details on the Standards Committee roles and responsibilities can be found in the Standards Committee ToR on the RJC website.

4. Document Retention:

The following documents are kept for 10 years:

• Standard Setting Procedure (including superseded versions).
• List of Stakeholders attending consultation events.
• List of Stakeholders invited to comment during public consultation periods.
• Comments received during public consultation period and summary of how comments were actioned.
• Drafts and final versions of RJC Standards

All documents are stored electronically via cloud storage. All stored documents are encrypted, and password protected to ensure security.

5. Comments on Standard-Setting Procedure:

The RJC welcomes comments on its standard-setting procedures by email to consultation@responsiblejewellery.com at any time. Comments will be logged and will

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be considered in the next available review process. Reviews of RJC standards will take place at least every five years, or as required.

Official Language:

The official language of this document is English.

Complaints:

The RJC will make all efforts to resolve any issue or grievance regarding the standard-setting document in an impartial and documented manner. If you wish to register a complaint about the standard-setting procedure, please refer to the complaints mechanism on the RJC website.

6. Disclaimer:

No guarantee, warranty or representation is made as to the accuracy or completeness of this document and other documents or information sources referenced in this document. Use of this document is not intended to and does not replace, contravene or otherwise alter the requirements of any applicable global, national, state or local governmental statues, laws, regulations, ordinances, or other requirements regarding the matters included herein.

7. Version History

Document version	Date of implementation	Summary of changes
4.0	November 2026	• Updated to include procedure when no updates are identified as part of the review process, and therefore no revision is necessary.
3.0	February 2025	• Updated to include non-substantive changes and urgent substantive changes. • Consolidation of content and removal of duplication between the RJC Governance Handbook and Committee ToR.
2.0	January 2024	• Full review. • Timeline and outreach for consultations. • Standards Committee composition & governance.
1.0	2019	• First version.

For the most up to date standard setting document, please refer to the RJC website: https://www.responsiblejewellery.com/standards-development/

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