ASSURANCE COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

RESPONSIBLE
JEWELLERY
COUNCIL

Our vision is a responsible world-wide supply chain that promotes trust in the global jewellery and watch industry.

The Responsible Jewellery Council (RJC) is a not-for-profit standard-setting organisation founded in 2005.

ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

These Terms of Reference provide an overview of the Responsible Jewellery Council (RJC) Assurance Committee's responsibilities and duties, as well as the rules and details of the appointment of members of the committee. This document supersedes the version published in August 2023 and should be read in conjunction with the **RJC's Governance Handbook.** Please contact the Compliance Assurance Department should you have any questions or comments about these Terms of Reference at the following email address: assurance@responsiblejewellery.com.

1. COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES

1.1   ASSURANCE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The role of the RJC Assurance Committee is to oversee the ongoing evolution and maintenance of the RJC assurance system, including any decisions related to the RJC Assurance Departments (Quality and Compliance Assurance). Duties of the committee include the following:

- Review, provide recommendations and, where appropriate, assist in the development of key assurance documentation (requirements, policies, procedures, manuals, etc.), to ensure consistency, quality and impartiality.

- Recommend to the Executive Committee (ExCo) that it should seek adoption of a new or revised key assurance document by the Board based upon an assessment as to whether the correct procedure was followed.

- Provide technical advice to the RJC Executive Director (ED) and the Management Team on matters relating to assurance and certification.

- Oversee reporting of assurance activities at least annually (e.g. quality checks, critical breach cases, risk management, complaints and incidents, including any misrepresentation of RJC certification, individual auditor approvals & assessments etc.).

- Oversee the RJC's compliance with the ISEAL Code of Good Practice (assurance areas).

1.2   ASSURANCE COMMITTEE CHAIR

- The Assurance Committee Chair shall be responsible for chairing each meeting, ensuring that all members are invited to express their views.

- The Chair shall represent the views of both industry and non-industry and communicate any areas of disagreement.

- They will present updates on the work of the Committee to the RJC Executive Committee and RJC Board when required.

2. COMPOSITION

The Assurance Committee has a maximum membership of ten members and a minimum of six. which are split across:

- 3-7 industry members (one per RJC forum, except Association members who are not subject to audit and certification), one of whom is the Chair

- 1 RJC appointed assurance provider

- 2 non-industry experts with specific expertise in the issue areas covered by the RJC Assurance Committee, who are appointed in their personal capacity and not as representatives of any organisations. Relevant interested parties that could become non-industry members include experts from:

    o Non-RJC approved certification bodies/auditors

    o Non-governmental organisations

    o Standard-setting organisations

    o Other stakeholders that may be relevant to the Assurance Committee work programme, such as international institutions, national government bodies, accreditation bodies, technical experts, etc.

- The Assurance Committee may, from time to time, be joined by a Guest Speaker, who has expertise in an assurance-related field and shall join the committee in a non-voting capacity to present and discuss a specific topic with the members of the committee.

3. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Members of the committee shall have expertise in one or several of the following topics:

- Assurance systems and methodologies, such as auditing and certification, accreditation of certification bodies and individual auditor approval;

- Management of the RJC audit process and certification within their RJC-certified organisation;

- ISEAL Code of Good Practice;

- Relevant ISO standards, in particular ISO/IEC 17065, ISO/IEC 17011.

4. APPOINTMENT & TENURE

4.1. APPOINTMENT OF INDUSTRY MEMBERS AND OF THE CHAIR

- The Executive Committee, on the recommendations of the ED, will approve industry members of the Assurance Committee and the Chair of the committee.

- The ED's recommendation will be based upon the Management Team's suggestion and consideration of the eligibility criteria (see Section 3).

4.2. APPOINTMENT OF NON-INDUSTRY MEMBERS

- Non-industry members are recommended by the Management Team in consultation with the current Assurance Committee Chair, depending on priority subjects and expertise.

- The Executive Committee, on the recommendations of the ED, will approve non-industry members of the Assurance Committee.

- The ED's recommendation will be based upon consideration of the eligibility criteria (see Section 3). A non-industry member of a committee is not eligible to be the Chair.

- The secretariat role is fulfilled by the RJC (Senior) Assurance Manager.

4.3. TENURE

- Committee tenure for industry and non-industry members is three years, subject to reappointment.

- No committee member shall, unless otherwise agreed by ExCo, be eligible to remain a committee member for more than six consecutive years.

- If, for any reason, the number of members of this committee falls below the quorum (see Section 5), a call for recruitment and appointments as per Section 4 shall be held.

- Representation and tenure for the assurance provider shall be managed by the provider, throughout the duration of the services provided to the RJC.

5. QUORUM & ATTENDANCE

- The quorum for the RJC Assurance Committee is four members, including the Chair.

- The secretary shall monitor and keep a register of attendance and advise the Chair if committee members are absent on a regular basis, in which case the ExCo reserves the right to remove somebody as a member of the committee.

6. MEETINGS

- Meetings will be conducted using electronic means such as teleconferences to the extent possible, to maximise participation.

- The committee shall have six conference call meetings per year in addition to ad-hoc conference calls or in-person meetings and other online work where required.

- Committee meetings shall be open to all appointed members, and their participation in discussion and debate will be encouraged, subject to appropriate confidentiality constraints and practical considerations.

7. DECISION-MAKING

7.1. CONSENSUS

Committee decisions are made with the objective of achieving 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.

To work towards consensus on decisions, the Committee Chair will ensure that all participants in meetings are invited to express their views. Sufficient time to discuss and debate decisions should be allocated. Additional time and/or information may be requested by Committee members to help facilitate a consensus outcome. In the event that a consensus cannot be reached, a vote will be taken among the committee members.

If, after review by the Executive Committee of a new or revised key assurance document recommended by the Assurance Committee, the Executive Committee does not agree to seek its adoption by the Board, the key assurance document will be reverted to the Assurance Committee for further revisions.

The Board will have the sole discretion as to whether to adopt a new or revised key assurance document.

7.2. VOTING

The ability to vote in the RJC Assurance Committee is provided to industry and non-industry members and the RJC assurance provider. Committee Guest Speakers have no voting rights.

8. REPORTING

- Minutes of each committee meeting will be recorded by the secretary and submitted to committee members one week before the subsequent meeting, for approval at the meeting.

- The Chair of the committee shall report to the ExCo and/or Board on matters within its duties and responsibilities.

9. CONFIDENTIALITY

The agenda, papers and minutes of the committee shall be held in confidence by committee members.

10. IMPARTIALITY

All committee members will be bound by the RJC Conflicts of Interest Policy and must declare potential or perceived conflicts of interest, by completing the RJC Conflict of Interest Declaration annually, and prior to the discussion of agenda items.

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For enquiries about the contents of this document, please contact the RJC on +44 (0)207 321 0992 or email info@responsiblejewellery.com