

GoodWeave International

Operating Procedure (OP) Development of GoodWeave Standards

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Operating Procedure (OP) Development of GoodWeave Standards

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to describe the process for the development of GoodWeave standards. Exporters and importers must meet GoodWeave standards in order for their products to carry any GoodWeave certification. The procedure is designed to reflect GoodWeave's commitment to continuing to meet the ISEAL Code of Good Practice for Setting Social and Environmental Standards.

Definitions:

- 'Project' refers to the development or revision of a Standard of any type for the GoodWeave program.
- 'Standard' refers to generic and country specific/regional standards.
- 'Consensus' refers to a general agreement, characterized by the absence of sustained opposition to substantial issues by any part of the concerned interests. Consensus need not imply unanimity.
- 'Board', 'Executive Leadership Team' and 'Secretariat' are used in reference to GoodWeave International (GWI).
- The 'website' referred to below is the GWI website, www.GoodWeave.net.

1.1 Overview of GoodWeave Standards

GoodWeave has a generic international standard, which sets out the requirements that exporters of rugs must meet before they can qualify for GoodWeave certification. When commencing operations in a new exporting country, GoodWeave will carry out an evaluation of the production methods and prevailing employment conditions in that country. This evaluation may result in a recommendation that a national variation of the generic standard is necessary. In such cases, a national variation of the generic standard will be developed for application to exporters in that country.

1.2 Decision Makers

Final decision-making authority on the content of standards rests with the GoodWeave Standards Committee (SC). The Executive Leadership Team (ELT) defines the goals and objectives of the SC's standard development work. The ELT also reviews the work of the SC to determine whether it followed this standard development process properly, and if approved, determines procedures for the implementation of GoodWeave standards.

The ELT appoints members to the SC, consisting of representatives of the key stakeholders for GoodWeave standards, including rug manufacturers, importers, retailers, and NGOs representing child rights, workers rights and environmental protection, as well as other external experts.

The Secretariat manages the process of arriving at or reviewing GoodWeave standards and undertakes the research and coordination work to support their development and maintenance.

2. PROCEDURE FOR DEVELOPING OR REVISING STANDARDS

2.1 Project Proposal

A Project may be proposed to the ELT by any of its members, the Board or the Secretariat. The Secretariat may propose projects as a result of adherence to review cycles, (see 3.6), of analysis of monitoring and evaluation of standards (see 3.5 and 3.4) or of receipt of a complaint (see OP Complaints). The procedures that follow apply equally to the development of new standards and to the revision of existing standards (see 3.6).

2.2 Review of Project Proposals

Where a substantial need for a Project can be identified, the ELT will consider the proposal. The needs assessment looks at: whether the proposal fits into the strategic direction of GoodWeave, whether other existing standards or standards in development already encompass the expressed need, and whether funding and resources can be secured. It also evaluates the urgency of the project.

The ELT, in consultation with the Chair of the SC, makes a decision whether to approve the Project.

2.3 Definition of Project Scope and Planning

Once a Project proposal has been approved, the Secretariat commences a planning stage. The planning activities generate the scope, objectives, timelines, work plans, budget and allocation of responsibilities. A responsible person is assigned to serve as the main contact point for the Project.

Additional activities carried out during the planning stage include:

- An initial assessment of risks in implementing the standard and how to mitigate for them;
- Identification of all stakeholders – both internal and external – who will receive communications and who will be consulted over draft standards. External stakeholders may include consumers, retailers, unions, NGOs, governments, authorities, trade bodies and researchers, etc. Particular attention should be given to proactively identifying and involving disadvantaged groups that face barriers to participation.

The output from the planning stage is a Project Description which is placed on the website for further input from stakeholders so far unknown to GoodWeave.

2.4 Research

At the research stage of a project, input from stakeholders, internal sources and external sources is collated. This work is undertaken by the Secretariat, but in some cases a decision can be made by the Secretariat to outsource the research stage of a Project.

The nature of the research undertaken varies according to the type of Project, but may include questionnaires to stakeholders, individual meetings, expert input and reviews of other existing standards.

During this stage, the Secretariat will prepare a Public Summary that is posted on the website, which shall include:

- Contact information;
- A summary of the Project Description, including the scope, objectives, rationale and needs justification;
- A timeline for the standard-setting process, including opportunities to contribute, and decision-making procedures.

Throughout the research stage of a Project, the Secretariat works to develop a draft Standard reflecting the data and responses from stakeholders.

2.5 Consultation

Once a draft Standard has been prepared, a formal consultation exercise with stakeholders is commenced. The initial draft of a Standard is sent to the SC, whose members will be given at least 15 working days to comment. Their comments will be incorporated into the draft Standard, which will then be sent to stakeholders with a request for feedback. It is also posted on the website.

The public is involved in the consultation in at least two rounds. Each public consultation period shall last no less than 60 days. However, in cases where an urgent need is identified and it is justified in writing by the SC, the consultation period may be reduced to no less than 30 days. In cases where unresolved issues do not persist after the first round, the SC may decide that a second round will not take place. In case of non-substantive changes (e.g. correction of mistakes and necessary clarification of intentions and guidance of the standards) the amendments may be undertaken without a consultation round at all.

The Secretariat receives and reviews all comments from stakeholders on the draft Standards as well as the Project Description or Public Summary. The Secretariat incorporates the feedback and – if applicable – the results from additional research, as appropriate, in a revised draft Standard.

The cycle of consultation with the SC, stakeholders, revision and communication of revisions to stakeholders is repeated as often as necessary to resolve relevant issues. At this point a final draft, judged suitable for submission to the SC as the approving body, is said to have been prepared.

2.6 Decision-making

The SC will consider whether it believes a consensus has been reached among a balance of interested parties in favour of the content of the draft Standard (or part of the Standard). If a vote is required, the SC follows the decision-making process outlined in the SC Terms of Reference, section 4.2.

The Secretariat shall submit the following to the SC for decision-making:

- The most recent version of the draft Standard;
- A report explaining the main issues and concerns raised during the standard development process and how these have been addressed;
- A summary of all comments received during the last round of public consultation and their treatment.

Where conflicting views are identified during the consultation process, the Secretariat shall coordinate discussion by the SC on how to address these in the draft Standard. The results of these discussions and any decisions shall be documented by the Secretariat and circulated to the SC.

If, after a reasonable period of time that would not normally be less than one year, the SC determines that a consensus on a final draft cannot be reached, it shall instruct the Secretariat to prepare a report outlining those areas where consensus has not been reached, along with a description of the unresolved issues, including a summary of all related stakeholder comments.

Based on a review of this report, the SC shall consider the outstanding issues and draft recommended language. Depending on the nature and complexity of the issues involved, the SC may choose to conduct additional review(s) before finalising draft language for areas lacking consensus. Once this drafting has been completed, the final approval process shall proceed according to the decision-making process detailed in the SC Terms of Reference.

2.7 Approval

A final draft must be formally approved in order to be introduced as a Standard. The draft Standard is referred to the SC normally to its next meeting for decision making on the content of the Standard.

Taking into account deliberations during the SC review, the Committee Chair shall prepare a formal motion to the effect that the final draft:

- Meets the aims, scope and objectives specified in the Project Description;
- Has undergone sufficient consultation and testing to have identified the likely impacts of implementation;
- Based on the level of consensus in stakeholder comments merits the approval of the SC.

The Standards Committee will approve the final draft if its analysis affirms this motion; it will reject the final draft if it deems otherwise. If a draft is not approved, the SC will provide guidance to the Secretariat as to amendments that should be made and further research that is required. In this case, a Project or parts of it effectively returns to the research stage and the draft Standard must go through the subsequent steps of drafting and consultation with stakeholders prior to submission to the SC for final approval.

2.8 Adoption

The ELT reviews the work of the SC and determines whether a proper process was adhered to in the development of the content of the Standard. The Secretariat shall prepare a report for the ELT's consideration, which:

- Summarises the standards development process;
- Includes a clear statement as to whether the process complied with the relevant policies and procedures;
- Includes a clear description of any departures from these procedures;
- Includes the decisions of the SC.

If the process is approved, and the ELT affirms that the Standard is consistent with the objectives approved when its development was initiated, the determines the necessary steps to implement the Standard. If the process is not approved, the ELT provides guidance to the Secretariat on the necessary corrective actions, and the Project or parts of it effectively return to the appropriate stage of development.

3. IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW OF AN APPROVED STANDARD

3.1 Editing and Publication

Once a draft Standard has been formally approved, it is edited for presentation in perfect English. The English version of a Standard is the only valid version of the Standard. The Secretariat makes a judgement as to the need to provide the Standard in other languages and appropriate translations are arranged. The edited and approved English version of a Standard is published within a month after completion on the website. It is also circulated to all parties that commented during the consultation process. Any approved translations of a Standard are published on the website as they become available.

3.2 Application

Following publication, an interim period may be allowed before a Standard becomes effective. The date of entering into force is clearly indicated in the published standard. A certain period may be granted to manufacturers to make preparations to comply with the Standard.

3.3 Training

If necessary, training sessions in respect of a Standard will be arranged by GoodWeave for the relevant stakeholders responsible for implementing the Standard, particularly producers, as well as GoodWeave personnel.

3.4 Monitoring and Evaluation

The Secretariat shall take appropriate steps to monitor and evaluate the results of introducing the Standard in order to inform future reviews cycles (see 3.6). This shall be done in line with the requirements of the ISEAL Impacts Code.

3.5 Ongoing Stakeholder Feedback

Once published, stakeholders may comment to the GoodWeave contact point found on the website and may submit proposals to be taken into account during future review cycles (see 3.6). The Secretariat continually accepts feedback from internal and external stakeholders about the application of the Standards in practice, which is documented and added to the comments from stakeholders.

3.6 Review Cycle

The Secretariat will undertake a review of a Standard at least every five years. The review cycle will include a formal comment period and the results from the monitoring and evaluation activities (see 3.4 and 3.5). The Review may lead to a Project proposal for the revision of a Standard, which if approved follows the process described in 2.1-2.6.

3.7 Complaints

Stakeholders have the right to follow the mechanisms of the OP Complaints against GoodWeave Standards.

4. INFORMATION

All relevant and applicable documents related to a Project are placed on the website and hence made available to stakeholders and the public. This in particular includes: updates to work plans, project descriptions, public summaries, consultation documents, synopsis papers from consultation rounds, drafts, final drafts, decisions of the SC and this standard setting procedure. On request, all these documents are also available as hard copy, if necessary against payment of an administrative fee.

The Secretariat shall notify all parties that commented during the consultation process of the availability of these documents and any feedback received shall be shared with the Standards Committee.

5. DOCUMENTATION

All records related to a Project are kept for at least five years. Electronic copies are kept as existing and back-ups are made as often as deemed necessary.

6. REFERENCES

OP Complaints against GoodWeave Standards
SC Terms of Reference