

GoodWeave

**Terms of Reference
GoodWeave Certification Committee (CC)**

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**For further information:
www.goodweave.org/about/certification-division**

Terms of Reference GoodWeave Certification Committee

1. INTRODUCTION

The following defines the mandate, composition, tasks and procedures of the GoodWeave Certification Committee (CC), responsible for overseeing the system of inspection and monitoring, as well as decision-making on producer licensing and certification against the GoodWeave Generic Standard for the Rug Industry.¹ Decision-making authority on certification rests with the CC. The authority of the CC supersedes that of any pre-existing bodies at the national level with overlapping responsibilities, including those relating to inspections, monitoring and certification (IMC). These terms address the need for a single independent and impartial body to achieve consistent and credible certification decisions. These terms are designed to reflect alignment with ISO65 guidelines.

Definitions:

- The terms 'Board,' 'Executive Leadership Team,' 'Standards Committee' and 'Secretariat' are used in reference to GWI.
- The term 'national initiatives' refers to the organizations in producer and consumer countries, which carry out work on behalf of GWI.
- The term 'central inspection unit' (CIU) refers to the GWI unit that is responsible for overseeing monitoring and inspection in producer countries, as described in the GWI-Certification Division (GWI-CD) Terms of Reference.
- The 'website' referred to below is www.GoodWeave.org.

1.1 Responsibilities and mandate

The CC is established as a permanent committee. Its primary role is to ensure the certification program is transparent, credible, effective and reliable, by serving as the highest decision-making body on certification, as well as providing policy advice to GoodWeave on IMC. The CC may recognize the recommendations of national-level committees with roles related to IMC; however, its authority supersedes that of any such bodies.

¹ The GoodWeave Standard is available online at www.goodweave.org/standard.

The CC has the following responsibilities:

- Final decision-making on granting, extending and withdrawing GoodWeave licenses and certification across all producer countries.
- Reviewing cases where violations of the GoodWeave Standard are found through the inspection and monitoring program or complaints process and deciding on corrective measures in accordance with the GoodWeave Standard and operating procedures.
- Advising the central inspection unit and national initiatives on policies and procedures relating to IMC.
- Reviewing the results of internal audits of the inspection and monitoring program, identifying problems during the implementation of the certification program and seeking measures for their resolution.
- Additional tasks assigned at the discretion of the Board, the Executive Leadership Team, the Standards Committee or the CC itself.

The CC is independent in making decisions on certification and may not be unduly influenced by any other arm of the GoodWeave system. The Board sets organizational policies; the Standards Committee provides guidance on interpretation of standards, including clarifying terms and definitions where necessary; the inspection unit provides reports on inspection and monitoring; and national initiatives receive and implement the decisions of the CC. The Secretariat provides administrative support as needed.

When making decisions, the CC may request information from the national initiatives or any other arm of GWI on matters related to licensing and certification.

2. COMPOSITION

The Board appoints CC members to provide certification expertise and oversight to ensure transparency and accountability. This appointment is done on the basis of an open recruitment process coordinated by the Secretariat in consultation with the Executive Leadership Team and an assessment of each candidate's match with the criteria described below. Candidates may be nominated by the Executive Leadership Team or send their application directly to the Secretariat. Based on its assessment of the applicants and nominees with respect to these criteria, the Secretariat provides a recommendation to the Board regarding the CC membership. With their appointment the CC members accept these present terms of reference.

The CC consists of at least four (4) and maximum five (5) members. CC members are selected to reflect a balance of interests (i.e. no single party or region shall dominate the membership) as well as to minimize the potential for conflict of interest in making certification decisions. Individuals holding inspection roles in the GoodWeave system, GWI-CD and Secretariat personnel and industry members may not serve on the CC, with the exception of the Head of the CIU, who serves on the committee in an *ex officio* capacity, as a non-voting member. The composition of the CC includes at least one (1) member from a GoodWeave producing country, one (1) member from a GoodWeave importing country, and up to two (2) additional independent external experts, plus the Head of the CIU. CC members must have sufficient knowledge of GoodWeave and auditing/certification, and have proven expertise in at least one of the following issues: child rights, worker rights/labor laws or environmental impact.

The CC membership mandate is for a period of two (2) years. The mandate is renewable.

All CC members and as applicable all observers, experts and staff must:

- adhere to these Terms of Reference,
- bring in a maximum of expertise in the various fields of work, particularly with respect to auditing/certification,
- regularly participate in CC meetings,
- actively contribute to the CC tasks,
- properly prepare for meetings and contribute to follow-up actions as agreed,
- declare all conflicts of interest at nomination and before taking part in decision-making processes, and
- be able to communicate easily in the English language and through electronic media.

Members undergo an evaluation process annually against these criteria. The CC chair or vice-chair together with the Secretariat carry out the evaluations. If the evaluation shows that a member does not comply with the criteria anymore, the Board may withdraw the member's appointment or end the term by simple majority vote. Reasons for the removal could include failure to meet any of the aforementioned expectations. Removal becomes effective immediately.

The Secretariat keeps the CC voting member list up to date and available publicly on the GoodWeave website and informs the Board and the Executive Leadership Team of any necessary actions to be taken with respect to membership.

3. WORKING PRINCIPLES

3.1 Language

Working language is English both for written and oral communication.

3.2 Confidentiality

All information and documents gathered during the course of involvement in the CC is understood as confidential. CC members sign a confidentiality agreement and acknowledge that GoodWeave is the rightful owner of all confidential information and undertake all necessary and suitable measures to maintain the level of confidentiality. The Board decides on necessary actions in the event of breaches of confidentiality.

3.3 Meetings

The CC meets at least four (4) times per year, regularly in quarterly standing meetings. The CC will as a general practice also schedule one additional meeting per year jointly with the Standards Committee in order to discuss issues around standards and guidance on implementation. Meetings may take place by teleconference due to the cost and time that would otherwise be required for physical meetings. In cases where urgent matters require discussion and/or decisions prior to the scheduled meeting, the CC may meet on an accelerated timetable or hold additional meetings.

The Head of CIU coordinates preparations for meetings and sends all necessary information to CC members as described in 4.1. Secretariat personnel may provide administrative and/or technical support and participate in meetings as needed.

All meetings are held in confidence and documentation is shared through a password-protected intranet. All members shall carefully study the information provided and prepare their contributions to the meetings. Decision-making takes place as outlined in 4.2. All members shall also contribute to follow-up actions as agreed.

3.4 Chair

The CC elects a chair and vice-chair for one-year terms with the option of renewal. The chair approves the meeting agenda and supervises that all members are duly informed. The chair makes decisions on procedural issues in preparation for the meetings as requested by any relevant parties, including the Secretariat, GWI-CD and national initiatives. The vice-chair replaces the chair in cases of absence, conflict of interest or other grounds found necessary by the CC, which shall be specified in the meeting minutes.

3.5 Observers

Observer status to attend CC meetings is normally granted to the relevant Secretariat, GWI-CD and inspection unit personnel, unless determined otherwise by the chair. Observer status for any other parties may be granted under special circumstances by the CC to an individual representing a stakeholder group or other experts working with GoodWeave, provided that a specific need is identified by the CC in writing and confidentiality is maintained. Individuals may not be granted observer status if their access to information on the agenda of the meeting would constitute a breach of confidentiality by GoodWeave. The status requires prior approval by the Board and may be limited to certain issues or agenda items.

Observers may be invited to present or contribute to discussion of an item, but may be asked by the chair to refrain from contributing at certain times, in accordance with the needs of the CC, and are not eligible to vote on CC decisions. In the interest of confidentiality or for any other reason, the chair may ask observers to leave the meeting or to refrain from taking notes. All observers agree to maintain confidentiality and sign a confidentiality agreement.

3.6 Remuneration

Members are not provided reimbursement for their time, but GoodWeave will endeavor to provide reimbursement for travel or telecommunication costs.

4. WORKING PROCESS

4.1 Agenda and Correspondence

The Licensing and Certification Policy outlines the general steps and procedures that determine agenda items for CC meetings. The CC regularly reviews a selection of certification cases, including:

- non-conformities found that require a decision on corrective measures, suspension of a license or decertification,
- corrective measures that have been completed by a current or prospective licensee in order for a license to be granted, continued or reinstated,
- situations where the CC or inspection unit has identified a particular high risk factor, or
- any other considerations that merit attention by the CC (e.g. new or unusual situations, cases dealing with complex organizational structures, etc.).

All other routine cases involving recently performed inspections are handled through the system of automatic approvals. The CC also reviews the quality of inspections carried out in each country, based on internal and/or independent third party assessments coordinated by the central inspection unit, including periodic random checks of inspection teams and individual inspector reports.

The Head of the CIU informs the CC on a monthly basis about items to be put on the next meeting agenda. This includes recommendations on action that require approval by the CC. The Secretariat and CC members may also inform the chair about items to be put on the agenda, in writing and in a timely fashion.

The Head of the CIU prepares the agenda at least fifteen (15) working days before the meeting, in consultation with the chair, based on the reports and recommendations from the inspection units. Cases for review at the next meeting are decided by the chair in consultation with the Head of the CIU. The Head of the CIU circulates the agenda and all associated documents, including a complete list of decisions needed, to the members at least ten (10) working days before the meeting.

4.2 Decision-making process

The CC seeks to achieve decisions by consensus, defined in this context as decisions made with majority support and no votes against. If the CC chair feels that consensus is not achievable, the chair asks the CC members whether further discussion could lead to consensus. If this evaluation does not lead to any solution built on consensus then majority decision-making procedures are used. In this case, decisions can be made by simple majority. Secret voting by ballot is only done on demand of at least one member. In other cases, voting is done by a roll call vote.

The presence of two-thirds (2/3) of the members including the chair or the vice-chair constitutes a quorum. Every member has one vote. In case of a tie the vote of the chair decides. In case of a tie and absence of the chair, the vote of the vice-chair decides. Abstentions and absentees do not count as votes against the proposal, but are included in the calculation of the total CC membership.

When the CC must make a decision that constitutes a conflict of interest for one of its members, the member is excluded from voting on this decision. Conflicts of interest must be announced by the relevant member to the chair before voting, preferably when agreeing upon the agenda during the opening of the meeting. Declaration of conflicts of interest lies in the responsibility of the members and shall be recorded in the meeting minutes.

The CC may form sub-committees to consider specific cases or approve recommendations from the inspection unit or national-level IMC committees; however, the final decision rests with the CC itself.

Between meetings, the CC may automatically approve granting or extending licenses in cases where inspection results indicate full compliance with the GoodWeave standard, upon the chair or vice-chair's confirmation of receipt of the report. Such approvals are noted in the agenda of the subsequent CC meeting.

4.3 Minutes

GWI-CD or Secretariat personnel shall take minutes of the meetings, which are given to the Head of the CIU. Minutes are distributed to the CC by the Head of the CIU at earliest convenience, not later than fifteen (15) working days after the meeting. Minutes must be formally approved by the CC before circulated to interested parties.

A list of decisions from meetings related to specific cases and their details is recorded by the Head of the CIU separate from the more general meeting minutes. Decisions taken by the CC that require immediate action are communicated directly to the relevant party by the Head of the CIU within ten (10) working days.

The chair or vice-chair presents the discussions and decisions taken by the CC to the Board in person or in writing at least once per year, and also participates in meetings of the GWI-CD Review Panel as needed.

5. INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTATION

All relevant public documents related to certification are placed on the website and made available to interested stakeholders. GWI-CD also maintains a log of complaints against certification decisions including the outcome of each. These documents are also available as hard copy upon request, if necessary against payment of an administrative fee. GWI-CD notifies any parties that have submitted complaints or other input to the CC deliberations of the availability of these public documents. Any feedback received is shared with the CC. Confidential documents are kept on a password-protected intranet, which is accessible by the GWI-CD, inspection unit and Secretariat personnel.

All records 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

GoodWeave Generic Standard for Rug Producers
GWI Licensing and Certification Policy
GWI-CD Terms of Reference
OP Complaints against GoodWeave Standards