



Center for Resource Solutions Governance and Standards Setting Procedures

I. Introduction

The Center for Resource Solutions (CRS) serves as the Secretariat for the Green-e Programs and is responsible for the implementation of the Green-e Energy National Standard, the Green-e Climate Standard and all future standards (see www.green-e.org). The purpose of this document is to describe the procedures CRS uses in the development and maintenance of its standards and certification programs. In the undertaking of the current Green-e Programs and all future certification programs, CRS aims to build on and not duplicate existing certification programs.

II. Decision Making and Governance

Governance Board

The responsibility of the Green-e Governance Board is to ensure that the Programs' standards and policies are appropriate and necessary to meet their stated goals and objectives. The Governance Board also provides a forum to resolve questions of interpretation of the standards. The Board must regularly review the Programs' standards and amend them as necessary so that they remain consistent with changing circumstances and evolve with market and policy conditions. The Green-e Governance Board must approve all standards and substantive policy issues affecting the terms and conditions under which certification is granted.

The Governance Board is composed of members who represent all major stakeholder groups. There must be at least one representative from each stakeholder group serving on the Governance Board. CRS publicly posts the stakeholder groups represented and the representative for each group. If a stakeholder voices concern that their group is not adequately represented, CRS will investigate whether this is correct, and if needed have a new Governance Board member fill this gap. The Governance Board may contain no more than one non-voting representative from each Advisory Committee (described below).

The Governance Board meets quarterly. The minutes of Governance Board meetings are made publicly available on the Green-e Web site.

Voting

The Governance Board can only act if a quorum is first established. A quorum is established when at least half of the Board members are present. Votes by Board members are determined by a simple majority voting system.

Technical Subcommittees

If necessary, the Governance Board will establish subcommittees to guide specific technical or policy aspects of the Programs. The Governance Board may engage expert advisors to provide technical advice to the Governance Board or Subcommittees on an as-needed basis.

Advisory Committees

Advisory Committees are established for organizations participating in each of the certification programs. Each organization that has a product certified by a program of CRS, or is certified by a program of CRS, may appoint a representative to serve on the appropriate Advisory Committee. The primary responsibility of these Committees is to provide recommendations for changes that improve the effectiveness of the Program. The Committees make suggestions to the Governance Board on the feasibility and practicality of policy decisions. In addition, the

Committees provide advice on the Program's outreach and education efforts. Each Committee elects a chair who sits on the Governance Board as a non-voting member, and has the responsibility of representing the views and interests of the members of their Advisory Committee.

III. Development of New Standards

The following procedures must be followed in the development of any new standard.

Advisory Group

To guide the development of new standards, CRS must assemble an Advisory Group at the beginning of the standard setting procedure. This group must be composed of a variety of representatives in the fields related to the new standard, such as environmental advocates, policy experts, and standard setting organizations.

Terms of Reference

Before the standard setting process begins, CRS will develop a Terms of Reference and post it on the website. This will include the following:

Needs Justification Study: CRS staff will conduct a study of any current related standards in existence, evaluate their scope and effectiveness, and make an initial determination as to whether a new standard is essential.

Scope of Work: The Scope of Work will define the objectives of the new standard, describe the end use of the standard, the type and scope, including the geographic and market scope, of the standard, and define the criteria and indicators. This will include an assessment of risks in implementing the standard, and an assessment of how broadly the final standard is intended to be applied.

Any interested party will be allowed to comment on the Terms of Reference. The Terms of Reference will also be discussed with the Advisory Group, and the Advisory Group will make the final determination as to whether to go forward with development of the new standard. The Terms of Reference will be updated during the revision of the standard it applies to, which occurs every five years, or more frequently as necessary.

Stakeholders

At the beginning of a standard setting procedure, CRS will form a stakeholder list by reaching out to existing stakeholders and targeting new groups. Stakeholders will include a wide variety of organizations and individuals. All interested parties are welcome to become a stakeholder and submit comments during open comment periods. New stakeholder lists will be formed through public outreach efforts including press releases, coverage in industry press, and outreach to current Green-e and CRS stakeholders. CRS will add anyone who expresses interest to the stakeholder list.

Stakeholder Comment Periods

CRS and Green-e strive for consensus-based decision making. CRS will hold two 60-day public comment periods in the development of every new standard. Before each comment period begins, CRS staff will notify all stakeholders of the upcoming comment period, and provide a standard comment form. Additionally, the Green-e and CRS website will be kept up to date with announcements of stakeholder comment periods and all other pertinent information. At the conclusion of the stakeholder comment period, CRS will review all stakeholder comments and, in consultation with the Advisory Group as necessary, determine the revisions needed and update the standard accordingly. All

substantive comments received during the stakeholder consultation(s) will be taken to the Governance Board. All final decisions on substantive issues lie with the Governance Board.

Documentation

CRS will publicly post a written synopsis of each material issue raised during stakeholder comment periods, and how the issue was addressed in draft revisions. All stakeholders and commenters will be notified when the synopsis is publicly available. Individual comments will be available by request only although information such as commenter name or other sensitive information may be withheld at the discretion of the Secretariat.

IV. Maintenance of Existing Standards

Review of Standards

All certification programs' standards will be reviewed every five years, or more frequently if necessary. CRS will hold two 60-day public comment periods for the full review of existing standards. The second comment period can be reduced upon recommendation of the Governance Board to no fewer than 30 days.

For revisions of an existing standard or program details between five year reviews, CRS will hold one 60-day public comment period, followed by additional 30-day comment periods as necessary. If a public comment period is ever shortened for any reason, the reason will be included in the public summary of the consultation process. No public comment period will be shorter than 30 days.

Commenting between Comment Periods

Any stakeholder or interested party can submit a comment on any standard or to request a clarification or change to the program at any time. These comments can be registered via the comment form on the website, or by emailing, mailing, calling or contacting the Secretariat or the Governance Board.

Once a comment is received, the Secretariat will decide whether it will be addressed upon receipt, or whether to wait until the next review of the appropriate standard to address the comment. In general, recommendations of substantive changes to a standard will be reviewed upon receipt, whereas non-substantive recommendations will be addressed in subsequent revisions.

Those comments addressed upon receipt will be taken to the Governance Board for initial consideration. If the Governance Board finds that the comment warrants a change to the standard or program rules, and if the comment would cause a significant change to the standard or program rules, the proposed revision will be included in the next stakeholder consultation. The stakeholder consultation will follow the guidelines in the *Review of Standards* section above.

Work Program

A work program will be maintained on the Green-e website to notify stakeholders of upcoming comment periods and potential revisions to the standards. This will include information on any standards CRS is currently preparing, amending or revising and the standards that have been adopted in the preceding period. For each standard listed, the Work Program will include a brief description of the scope, objectives and rationale of the standard, the dates of the upcoming comment period, and a contact point for the standard being revised.

V. Maintenance of Standard Setting Procedures

This document, the Standard Setting Procedures, will be reviewed every five years, or more frequently as necessary. All stakeholders and interested parties are able to submit comments on the Standard Setting Procedures at any time. Commenters will be notified within thirty days that their comment was received, and all comments will be reviewed within one month of receipt.

All comments received will be reviewed by the Secretariat. The Secretariat will evaluate the comment and determine if a change to the Standard Setting Procedure is warranted. If so, the recommended change will be implemented within three months, or as soon as feasible if the recommendation cannot be implemented in a three-month time frame. For other comments, the commenter will be contacted and notified as to why their recommended change was not implemented.

VI. Record Keeping

Throughout the standard setting development and maintenance process, CRS keeps records of all documents pertaining to standard setting activities. These records are maintained for at least five years. These records include, but are not limited to:

- The terms of reference for the standard;
- Governance Board meeting minutes;
- Advisory Group meeting agendas and handouts;
- All comments received on a standard;
- A synopsis of how all comments were addressed;
- All data and analysis contained in the standard;
- A list of stakeholders directly contacted and other outreach strategies; and
- All draft and final versions of a standard.

The following documents are publicly available on the website:

- Governance Board meeting minutes;
- A synopsis of how all comments were addressed; and
- All draft and final versions of a standard.

The following documents are available upon request, although certain sensitive information may be withheld at the discretion of the Secretariat:

- The terms of reference for the standard;
- Advisory Group meeting agendas and handouts;
- Specific comments received on a standard; and
- All data and analysis contained in the standard.

VII. Complaints Procedures

Any stakeholder has the right to register a complaint against CRS and its standards. The following complaints procedure shall apply if:

- Complaints are received that a standard is not adhering to the CRS Standard Setting Procedures or to the ISEAL Code of Good Practice for the development of Social and Environmental Standards;
- Complaints are received regarding the content of a standard;
- Complaints are received regarding a certified product;

- Complaints are received regarding companies selling a certified product;
- Complaints are received regarding CRS employees or contractors; or
- Complaints are received regarding the management of safeguarding and impartiality by the certification body.

Procedure

To register a complaint with the Secretariat, the complainant must include the following information:

- Name and contact information;
- Reason for the complaint;
- Evidence sustaining the complaint; and
- Any potential conflicts of interest related to the complaint.

Upon receipt of the complaint, the Secretariat will:

- Confirm receipt to the complainant within 10 business days;
- The Secretariat will evaluate whether the complaint is valid and contains all of the required information;
- The Secretariat will notify the complainant if the complaint is accepted or rejected. Accepted complaints will be passed along to the appropriate party.
 - a. Complaints against certified products or companies selling a certified product will be handled by certification program staff.
 - b. Complaints against CRS employees or contractors will be handled by the Executive Director.
 - c. Complaints against the content of a standard, the standard setting procedure, or the management of safeguarding and impartiality of certification, will be handled by the Green-e Governance Board; and
- The appropriate party will investigate the complaint and make a determination within 60 days.

Rejection

A complaint will be rejected if it does not contain the required information, or if it is irrelevant. If a complaint is rejected, the complainant will receive notification of the rejection, and the reason for the rejection. The complainant has one calendar month to amend the complaint and resubmit it. If upon resubmission, the complaint is still invalid or irrelevant, it will be rejected again at which time the complaint will be abandoned.

Acceptance

When a complaint is accepted, the Secretariat will notify the complainant of the acceptance, the name and contact information of the appropriate party handling the complaint, the next steps, and the time frame for a final decision to be made.

Reporting

Records will be kept for all received complaints, both rejected and accepted. Records will include:

- Name of complainant;
- Reason for complaint;
- Acceptance or rejection; and
- Final outcome.

The following types of complaints and the final outcome will be publicly available on the website:

- Complaints received that the standard is not adhering to the CRS Standard Setting Procedures or to the ISEAL Code of Good Practice for the development of Social and Environmental Standards; and

- Complaints received regarding the content of a standard.

The following types of complaints will be available by request only, and certain information may be withheld in the event the complaint is deemed irrelevant.

- Complaints are received regarding a certified product;
- Complaints are received regarding companies selling a certified product; or
- Complaints are received regarding CRS employees or contractors.