

Standards Development and Modification

Corporate Procedure 13

1 Introduction

1.1 This document sets out the procedure for the development and/or modification of SCS-sponsored standards and guidelines suitable for use in conformity assessments of products and/or quality management systems¹

2 Definitions & Normative References

2.1 **SCS Standard:** A sector-specific set of performance requirements, duly documented, developed by SCS in accordance with this Procedure, that provides the rules and requirements intended to serve as a normative reference against which a management system, product, process or activity can be assessed and, if warranted, certification can be granted.

A document, established by consensus and approved by the SCS Standards Review Committee, that provides for common and repeated use, rules, guidelines and/or characteristics for activities or their results aimed at the achievement of the optimum degree of order in a given context.²

2.2 **Guideline:** A document developed by SCS to supplement existing standards or other normative references that provides clients with more specific requirements or general guidance (e.g., sector-specific supplementary requirements) pertaining to SCS' assessment services.

3 Scope

3.1 This Procedure applies to the development and modification of all new and existing SCS Standards and Guidelines. Although the procedure does not apply retroactively to existing SCS Standards, the Procedure applies to all SCS Standards upon their five-year review and/or should modification occur.

4 Work Plan

4.1 A Work Plan for any new SCS Standard is required for consideration and review by the Executive Team. The Work Plan shall describe the necessary resources and timeframes required for full

¹ Any activity(ies) concerned with determining directly or indirectly that relevant requirements are fulfilled. Examples of conformity-assessment activities include evaluation, verification and assurance of conformity (supplier's declaration, certification), sampling, testing and inspection, registration, accreditation and approval as well as their combinations.

² ISO Definition

implementation of this Procedure. It shall also provide the business justification for developing the Standard, based on market research. At a minimum, market research information shall include:

- Applicability to the SCS mission and objectives
- Market relevance and operating environment
- User costs associated with the Standard
- SCS costs, capacity and resources necessary for [program] implementation
- Harmonization with existing standards (without compromising the rigor of the requirements)

4.2 The Work Plan shall be approved by the Executive Team before development of a new SCS Standard proceeds.

5 Specification of Requirements

5.1 Standards shall be written to specify performance requirements rather than product design requirements.

5.2 Standards shall be clearly written in order to promote accurate and uniform interpretation by all parties. Standards should also specify requirements or tests that are designated for the following purposes:

- initial conformity assessment and/or testing;
- surveillance auditing and/or testing to ensure continued compliance; and
- issuance of certificates of compliance and/or reports of verification or validation.

5.3 The requirements shall be clearly specified, together with the required sampling methods to verify the specified processes and/or characteristics. Standards shall specify the sequence of sampling and/or tests when the sequence can influence results.

5.4 If it is necessary to include specifications for more than one category, type and/or sector within the same Standard, the category, type, and/or sector requirements shall be clearly provided and defined, as needed.

5.5 Standards, or their supporting documentation, shall contain a complaints resolution mechanism for the impartial handling of any procedural complaints and disputes. All interested parties shall have access to this complaints resolution mechanism.

6 Specification of Conformity Assessment Methods

6.1 When applicable, sampling, testing and other conformity assessment methods shall be clearly identified and consistent with the purpose of the Standard. Methods shall be objective, concise, accurate, and produce unambiguous, repeatable and reproducible results so that results of conformity assessments and/or tests made under defined conditions are comparable. The results of conformity

assessments and/or tests should be provided within a reasonable period of time and at a reasonable cost.

7 Metrics (Qualitative/Quantitative)

7.1 Sample selection requirements needed for conformity assessments should be provided. A clear statement regarding whether the sampling requirements are normative or informative should be provided, as well. A sample selection requirement may contain a specified, statistically-calculated sampling and compliance schedule.

7.2 When testing of a number of samples, facilities, or sites is required to determine compliance, the number of required samples, facilities, or sites shall be Specified.

7.3 Standards should avoid discretionary and non-auditable language when describing metrics, such as “sufficiently capable of” or “of adequate strength.”

8 Methods for Indicating Conformity with Standards

8.1 Methods for indicating conformity may include a mark and/or certificate of conformity. A mark of conformity shall be used only where it relates to all the requirements of a Standard, and not to selected sections or characteristics, and shall be operated under specific rules provided as a supplement to the relevant Standard. Certificates of conformity may relate to all the requirements of a standard or to selected sections or characteristics only.

9 Validation Steps and Transparency

9.1 SCS shall ensure that participation in developing new standards and guidelines reflects a cross-sectional diversity of interests among interested parties in the subject matter and in the geographic scope to which the Standard applies. Participants in the standard-setting process should have expertise relevant to the subject matter of the Standard and/or be materially affected by the Standard. Interested parties shall be provided with meaningful opportunities to contribute to the elaboration of a Standard. SCS shall identify parties that may be directly affected by the Standard and seek their input. Impartiality shall be accorded throughout the development or modification process so that no single interest or perspective predominates. SCS shall include a balance of interests in the processes that are employed for developing and approving new Standards.

10 Internal Review Process

10.1 Prior to the commitment of staff and financial resources, an internal review shall be undertaken for all new Standards and Guidelines. The internal review shall first be conducted by the Standards Review Committee, to include at a minimum the relevant program manager or director and one or more members of Senior Management. In addition to the requirements outlined in this procedure and the

supporting Work Plan, all SCS Standards, Guidelines and Manuals shall be periodically reviewed based on the following considerations:

- Clarity and consistency
- Intended objectives
 - Drive behavior by industry?
 - Provide information for consumer?
 - Leadership performance versus continuous improvement?
- Scope
 - How far up/down the supply chain to extend the reach of the Standard?
 - Corporate level, facility level, and/or supplier level requirements?
- Coordination
 - Is coordination with other standards necessary (e.g., ISO, ISEAL)?
 - Is coordination with other bodies necessary (e.g., ANSI, FSC)?
- Levels of achievement
 - Where to set entry level?
 - Number of levels of achievement; too many/not enough?
 - Across the board improvement requirements versus excellence in single areas?
- Units of measurement
 - What to measure and how?
 - Thresholds necessary?
 - Formulas?
- Conformity assessment obstacles
 - Difficulty in compiling information from suppliers?
 - Costs of certification versus business gain?
 - Extent of analytical testing required?

11 Technical and Stakeholder Review Process

11.1 Upon completion of the Internal Review process, all SCS Standards shall also be made available for review by the following:

- **Advisory Board Review:** At least one Advisory Board member considered to be an expert in the relevant field.
- **Technical Expert Review:** At least two Technical Experts.
- **Stakeholder Review I:** Each standard will be posted to the SCS website for public review and comment for a minimum of 60 days. (If approved by the Executive Team, the review period may be reduced to 30 days). Representatives of the relevant program(s) will also identify and solicit review comments from a balanced sampling of clients and stakeholders.
- **Stakeholder Review II:** Upon incorporating feedback from the Advisory Board Review, Technical Expert Review and Stakeholder Review I, a second 30-day public review period will ensue as deemed necessary based on the extent of content revision or if unresolved issues persist.

11.2 Written records of standards development activities shall be prepared and maintained by the person/parties initiating the standard development or modification. A summary of comments and proposed revisions shall be made publicly available publicly (posted or upon request). Should the review process exceed six months, an update of the status of the process must be publicly posted.

12 Implementation and Continual Review

12.1 The Standards Review Committee will convene to finalize the SCS Standard or Guideline. Endorsement of any Standard shall be based on evidence of consensus within the Standards Review Committee, but does not require unanimity. Final approval to proceed with any new Standard or Guideline resides with the Executive Team. Upon formal endorsement, SCS will make the final Standard or Guideline available on the SCS website.

12.2 SCS Standards shall be reviewed on a periodic basis for continued relevance and effectiveness in meeting their stated objectives and, if necessary, revised. A review of each SCS Standard shall occur one year after its inception and then, at least once every five years, thereafter. The review process shall include, at a minimum, the Internal Review Process. The date of any revisions or reaffirmations of an SCS Standard shall be noted in the Standard or official supplements to the Standard.

13 Modification of Standards

13.1 Proposals for the revision of SCS Standards and Guidelines shall be submitted to the Standards Review Committee. The Committee Chair shall determine whether or not a formal review of the Standard is necessary, outside of the five-year review schedule. Should it be deemed necessary, the Standards Review Committee will convene and proceed with the Internal Review Process, then determine whether and what portions of the Technical and Stakeholder Review proceedings may be necessary. If the full Stakeholder and Technical Review Processes do not ensue, justification shall be provided and documented by the Standards Review Committee.