
Standard-Setting Procedures

GEO Certified®

Club and Course Management

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Effective Date: 1 February 2015

Standard-setting Procedures shall be reviewed every 5 years

Official Language: English

[In case of inconsistency between translated versions, reference shall default to the official language version]

Company Limited by Guarantee
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Overview

When a standard development is initiated or comes up for review the following procedures will occur, written to comply with the ISEAL Standard Setting code.

Scoping

1. A scoping document will be prepared by the Expert working group stating:
 - a. Contact information for the organization
 - b. What, when & how the standard will be developed/reviewed
 - c. Proposed purpose, scope and rationale for the standard
 - d. Information on how to contribute
 - e. Stakeholder Mapping
 - i. List defining relevant interest sectors, their interests and materiality
 - ii. Identify stakeholders and stakeholder participation goals (especially those representing marginalised and disadvantaged groups)
 - iii. Provide information showing why stakeholders were identified, how they will be involved in the standard setting process and how best to ensure a balanced representation in decisions
 - f. Decision-making process including how decisions are made, who makes them and how a balance of stakeholders are involved in decision making.
 - g. Criteria to be used for determining when alternative decision-making procedures should be used in striving for consensus among a balance of interested parties
 - h. A timeline with the steps in the standard-setting process
 - i. Terms of reference
 - i. Objectives of standard, including the social, environmental and/or economic objectives
 - ii. Rationale and justification of the need for the standard, including a review of existing standards addressing similar objectives and consultation with those organisations.
 - iii. An assessment of risks in implementing the standard and how to mitigate these risks.
2. Approval of the scoping document by GEO Expert Group, and Advisory Council and final approval by the GEO Ltd. Board.



Review and Consultation

3. Consultation process:

- a. The Scoping document, proposed criteria documents, specific consultation questions/survey and a summary will be published, and maintained publically available throughout the public consultation process on at least the GEO website, which initiates the consultation process.
- b. Promotion and communication that the standard's 1st round consultation will be open for at least 60 days for comment submissions across the GEO network and stakeholders along with proactive recruitment of materially affected, marginalised and disadvantaged stakeholder, through various measures that may include: a consultation meeting, opening of Google apps / wiki, communications through GEOs partners.
- c. Wider promotion of the consultation which may include: GEO press release, newsletter, social media, letter across all wider partners and supporters
- d. Recording of feedback from 1st round (for example, through our Highrise contact database and feedback collated in an excel spread-sheet), along with how items are addressed (e.g. discussion within the Expert working group, other stakeholders, the comment maker) and actions arising from internal and external consultation (Comment for 5.8.4)
- e. At completion of the 1st round consultation period, public notification of the closing and next steps will be made through at least the GEO Website.
- f. GEO staff will compile a matrix of feedback and outline implications (positive and negative) for standard evolution as well as propose new or revised elements to the standard, along with their scientific basis
- g. The Expert Group will meet to discuss the proposed revisions and agree final wording of criteria and guidance required for implementation. This could be online or face-to-face. A second proposed criteria document will be drafted, along with comments from the first round, explanations of deliberations and how decision were made to obtain the proposed final wording by the Expert Group (with support by GEO Staff).
- h. This document shall be circulated to the Advisory Council, Credibility Team, and GEO Boards for input and deliberation on both wording and process.
- i. A 2nd round public consultation of at least 30 days will be held for new standards or if outstanding unresolved issues persist from the 1st round, or the views of stakeholder groups was deemed to be unbalanced.
- j. Alternative decision making process will be enacted if outstanding unresolved issues persist from 2nd round



Approval and Publication

4. At completion of consultation process, GEO staff will create the final draft standard, to be approved by GEO Ltd.'s CEO.
5. Final draft will be circulated to the Expert Group for approval.
6. Final approval by the Advisory Council.
7. GEO Ltd. Board approval that due process and procedures were followed in the consultation process.
8. Prompt public notification of adopted standard, and date of commencement of use of standard (on the standard itself, published on the website and through GEO's network of partners). This should be within three months of the closing of the consultation process.
9. An announcement on the GEO website stating all comments and requests for clarification on the standard should be submitted to info@golfenvironment.org will be made with the posting of the standard and synopsis of the consultation process (summary list of input, how it was addressed, challenging issues and their resolution, the list of stakeholders involved).
10. Archive consultation documents, retained for at least 7 years and make available upon request. These include:
 - a. Draft Standards
 - b. Public summary
 - c. Scoping document/s
 - d. Centralised log of all decisions, feedback and actions
 - e. Summary of internal deliberations
 - f. Stakeholder map – which stakeholders were involved and how, and how they were actively involved in the process (or whether they decline to be involved).
11. After publication minor typographical errors or inconsistencies may be corrected with the approval of GEO's Project Manager Sustainability Standards and made available online and sent to the GEOSAs operating in that region.
 - a. A file shall be kept of all comments on the standard that are submitted after the approval.
12. If an urgent substantive revision to the standard is requested (in-between regular revisions), the CEO of GEO Ltd will assess the need in light of current scientific thinking and confer with the Advisory Council to determine whether to trigger an urgent consultation. This consultation will include at least one round of public consultation, and all processes, documents and deliberations shall be recorded as per these Standard Setting Procedures. The Advisory Council shall have final approval of the proposed change. Any amendments of the standard criteria shall be clearly noted in the standard and



communicated within two months of final approval.

Alternative Decision-making

For instances when a consensus is unable to be reached for a decision, an alternative decision-making process will be enacted. This process consists of the following actions:

13. The unresolved concerns or objections along with the supplied suggested alternative solutions will be reviewed by GEO staff
14. GEO Advisory Council will undertake additional review of points of concern or objection, including conferring with at least three technical experts to ensure standards are based in balanced, current scientific understanding. The findings by the technical experts shall be presented to the Expert Group, which shall further deliberate on the points until consensus is reached.
15. If the Expert Group still cannot reach a consensus on the contested point/s (defined as "an absence of sustained opposition"), a super-majority vote (67%) shall be taken by the members of the Expert Group, the Chairperson of the Advisory Council and the Chairman of GEO Ltd's Board. A quorum shall be a minimum of two members of the Expert Group with the Chairperson of the Advisory Council and the Chairman of the GEO Ltd. Board. This vote can take place face to face, or by email or conference call, depending on the complexity of the issue.
16. The point/s of disagreement and position of each member of the governance groups will be clearly noted and recorded as part of the standard documentation.
17. As part of the 5 yearly review of the standard, points of concern / disagreement will be recorded and fully evaluated at the next review. If a serious concern arises, GEO has the right to start an extraordinary public consultation process earlier than the five yearly cycles.

Work Programme

When actively engaged in a standard development or revision process, a work programme will be made available to the public and shall:

18. Be updated at least every 6 months
19. State the organization's name, address, and contact point
20. List the standards currently preparing, amending, or revising with brief description of scope, objective, and rationale for each standard listed
21. List the standards adopted during the preceding period with brief description of scope, objective, and rationale for each standard listed



Further Guidance

- **Review Cycle and procedures:**
 - Standards are reviewed at least every five years from adoption for continued relevance and effectiveness in meeting their stated objective.
 - The date of the next scheduled review will be included on the cover page of the standard criteria document.
 - Records of standards development activities and process are stored for seven years and available upon request from interested parties. These records include:
 - Standard development process
 - Associated policies and procedures
 - List of stakeholders contacted and parties involved at each stage of the process
 - Comments received and summary of how they were taken into account
 - All draft and final versions of the standard criteria and scientific justification
 - The length of the second round of consultation may be shortened when justifiable reason is provided in writing, in which case a minimum of 30 days will be used.
 - Complaints against the process and content of Standards are handled in accordance with GEO's Complaints and Appeals Procedure (A17).
 - When an individual submits a response against any proposed new standard or change to a standard, they will need to propose alternate solutions within their response.
 - Organizations that have developed related or similar international standards will be informed of a proposal to develop a new standard or revise an existing standard and will encourage their participation in its development.
 - Engagements and extent of engagement with related standard-setting organizations around discussions on consistency and reducing overlaps will be documented.
- **Standards Structure:**
 - Standards will define short and medium-term outcomes expected as a result of compliance with the standard.
 - For each short and medium-term outcome expected, indicators will be defined that will help to measure progress toward these outcomes.
 - For each indicator, specific indicator protocols are defined and documented to ensure data quality. Whenever possible, a baseline for each indicator will be established to compare current and future performance against. An explanation on how the baseline is defined and how it will be applied throughout the monitoring and evaluation programme.



- Standards will be structured to allow for monitoring and evaluation of progress toward achieving the standard's objectives.
- Standards will be expressed in terms of process, management and performance criteria.
- Standards will define the external factors most likely to influence (both positively and negatively) the achievement of the desired results.
- The language of standards is to be clear and eliminate ambiguities in their interpretation.
- Standards will not favour a particular technology or patented item.
- Citation and credit will be given for all original intellectual sources of content.
- Guidance for how to take into account local economic, social, environmental, and regulatory conditions will be provided for each standard where required.
- All updated standards will promptly be available on GEO's website with free access and clearly show the date of revisions and the transition period by which the revised standard will come into effect (an implementation date).
- Trade restrictions of the standards will be limited to no more than necessary to fulfil the legitimate objectives of the standard.
- Hard copies will be available on request and at reasonable administrative cost.
- Translations of draft and final versions of standards are available within means, upon request.

Reference Documents:

A3 GEO Governance Bodies

A17 GEO Complaints and Appeals Procedures

Minor Revisions:

2016 – APRIL 21 - Version 3.1

- **Minor amendments to availability of drafts by request on page 7**
- **Clarification of five year standard revision cycle to ensure consistency on all documents**

2017 – SEPT – Version 3.1

- **Clarification on point 3d regarding how comments are recorded**

