

Process for Standards Development, Publication and Maintenance

V1

30/09/2025

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Foreword

Publishing information

This LWG process was published by Leather Working Group in 09-2025. The date of effect is 30-09-2025.

Information about the document

This publication can be withdrawn, revised, or superseded. For information on the status of this publication, visit the LWG website at www.leatherworkinggroup.com.

The official language of LWG standards and publications is English and the definitive version is maintained on the LWG website. Any discrepancies between copies or translations shall be resolved by reference to the definitive version.

About LWG

Established in 2005, Leather Working Group (LWG) began as a collaborative initiative among leading footwear, apparel, and upholstery brands, alongside leather manufacturers. Founding members include adidas, Clarks, Ikea, Nike, Marks & Spencer, New Balance, Timberland, and PrimeAsia Leather Company.

Since then, LWG has grown into the world's largest stakeholder organization dedicated to the leather industry, representing over 2,000 stakeholders across 60+ countries.

Our diverse multi-stakeholder group includes:

- Brands & Retailers
- Leather Manufacturers
- Traders (raw, part-processed, and finished materials)
- Suppliers (e.g., chemical producers, machinery suppliers)
- Industry Groups, NGOs & Associations
- Finished Product Manufacturers

We are committed to delivering value to our stakeholders. Through collaboration, convening, and standard setting, we are collectively creating a transparent leather value chain that achieves positive impacts aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals.

To maintain the highest levels of quality and transparency, LWG develops its standards using a process that takes into account the principles of the ISEAL Code of Good Practice for Sustainability Systems and ISO standardization. LWG's standards development process supports its mission to promote responsible leather practices through an independent, stakeholder-focused, market-driven certification system.

LWG is committed to transparency and to trusted and respectful engagement with a wide range of stakeholders.

LWG Vision

Leather Working Group envisages a world where leather is sourced, produced, and used sustainably, protecting people and the planet.

LWG Mission Statement

Leather Working Group supports and encourages the use of responsibly made leather as a sustainable material by inspiring, educating, and challenging those that produce and use leather. Through collaboration, convening, and standard setting, we are collectively creating a transparent leather value chain that achieves positive impacts aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals.

1 Scope

This document describes the process by which LWG develops, publishes and maintains standards. It applies to the revision of all existing LWG standards and the creation of new LWG standards.

It does not cover the assurance process or certification requirements of any LWG sustainability system.

2 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

LWG Board: board of the Leather Working Group

Consensus: general agreement, characterised by the absence of sustained opposition to substantial issues by an important part of the concerned interests and by a process seeking to take into account the views of interested parties, particularly those directly affected, and to reconcile any conflicting arguments. Consensus does not imply unanimity

[SOURCE: ISO/IEC Guide 2:2004, 1.7]

Compliance: action of a person or body in fulfilling provisions

Conformity: fulfilment of a provision

Draft: standard or other document under development

Informative: content in a standard that supplements provisions by offering advice, information and guidance

Normative: content in a standard that is essential to the application of the standard in the manner intended, and against which it is possible to demonstrate and claim conformity to the standard

Programme Board: body, established and managed by LWG, that is responsible for standards development work

Provision: normative element of a standard, typically a requirement or recommendation

Public consultation: stage in the development of a standard during which wider consultation is sought from the public

Review: an assessment of an element of the scheme that determines if a revision of that element is necessary

[SOURCE: ISEAL]

Note: A review can assess qualities such as continued relevance, effectiveness, validity, or suitability

Revision: the process of updating a scheme component or element

[SOURCE: ISEAL]

Stakeholder: any person or group concerned with or directly affected by a standard

Standard: document that provides, for common and repeated use, rules, guidelines and/or defines the specifications of a set of products, related processes and/or production methods, with which compliance is not mandatory

Technical Task Team: body, established and managed by LWG, that is responsible for specific delegated tasks related to the development of standards

Work programme: list of projects to be developed as part of a sustainability system which together achieve the strategic aims of the system

3 Development of LWG standards

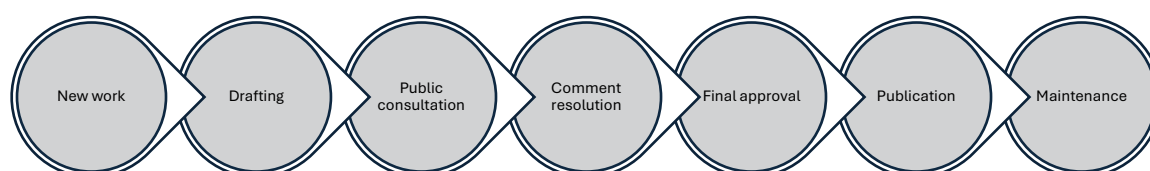


Figure 1: Stages of standards development, publication and maintenance

3.1 New work

A proposal for new work may originate with LWG, its boards and Technical Task Teams, members, or stakeholders. LWG encourages any individual or organization to propose new standards or the revision of existing ones.

LWG may decide to create new standards or revise existing standards based on stakeholder feedback, changes in industry best practice, or other relevant factors. LWG will assess whether there is demonstrable industry need for the standard and complete an analysis as to whether existing standards achieve the same aims. Viable proposals shall be presented to the Programme Board for their evaluation. The Programme Board shall provide a recommendation.

The decision to proceed with the proposal shall be made by LWG following a positive recommendation by the Programme Board.

A project plan will be created by LWG, which shall include at least:

- the intended scope of the standard;
- the intended sustainability objectives of the standard, consistent with LWG's sustainability impacts and strategies;
- a justification of the need for the new or revised standard, including how the standard complements existing external standards with overlapping scopes;
- the intended sustainability claims that the standard will substantiate;
- the intended audience for the standard and the relevant stakeholders;
- an assessment of risks associated with developing and implementing the standard, including mitigations;

- the work plan, including timelines, stakeholder mapping, communication plan, and decision-making process; and
- the terms of reference for the expert bodies established to have responsibility for the work, including selection criteria, role and responsibilities, frequency of meetings and the conditions for quorum.

3.2 Drafting

LWG and any Technical Task Teams it establishes shall work together to develop draft new or revised standards, making consensus-based decisions.

All proposed drafts of new or revised standards shall be presented to the Programme Board for approval prior to public consultation. Once endorsed by the Programme Board, draft standards shall be released for public consultation.

3.3 Public consultation

Drafts of new standards shall be made publicly available for at least two rounds of public comment and consultation.

Drafts of revised standards shall be made publicly available for at least one round of public comment and consultation. A second round of public consultation may be held if required.

The first period of public consultation shall be for at least sixty calendar days. Subsequent periods of public consultation shall typically be thirty calendar days.

LWG will proactively identify and engage relevant stakeholders, intended beneficiaries, technical experts and other interested parties during the public consultation to enable a comprehensive and inclusive consultation and to encourage participation from underrepresented and/or disadvantaged stakeholders.

Where an add-on or derivative of an existing standard is drafted, LWG shall decide whether a public comment period is required.

LWG may periodically conduct feasibility assessments of the proposed standards to determine their auditability and feasibility.

3.3.1 Urgent substantive changes

Where urgent substantive changes to the technical content of an existing standard are required, they may be made without public consultation with the approval of the Programme Board and Executive Director.

3.4 Comment resolution

All comments received during the public consultation period shall be collated for resolution. Comments relevant to specific technical topics shall be presented to the Technical Task Teams for resolution.

In evaluating comments received LWG and the responsible bodies shall consider comments received on their technical merits and applicability, regardless of the individual or organization submitting the comment.

Decisions regarding the resolution of the comments will be recorded and made publicly available on publication of the standard.

LWG shall keep electronic records of all comments received and the resolutions, and shall maintain these records for a period of at least five years.

LWG invites and welcomes comments on any LWG standard at any time, from any individual or organization and considers them in any subsequent review process.

3.5 Final approval

LWG and the Technical Task Team participants shall work together to incorporate comments into the draft, making consensus-based decisions, and prepare a final version for approval by the Programme Board.

The Executive Director will give approval that the standards development process has been followed.

3.6 Publication

LWG standards shall be publicly available on the LWG website for free download by any interested party.

Revisions of existing LWG standards may allow a transition period of up to six months.

4 Review and maintenance

4.1 Review period

LWG shall conduct a review of each standard at least once every two years from the date of publication. A review usually results in a standard being confirmed for continued use, being revised, or being withdrawn.

The status of standards and the last review date and outcome shall be made publicly available.

A review of a standard may be initiated at any time at the discretion of LWG.

4.2 Making non-substantive changes

Non-substantive changes such as typographical errors, formatting, or organization of the document and minor inconsistencies within the standard may be corrected with the approval of the Director of Standards.

Non-substantive changes involving clarification of language should be submitted to LWG for consideration and decision. The updated standard shall be finalised, clearly identifying the changes made, version number and date, and shall be published on the LWG website.

Non-substantive changes will be issued as corrigenda to the standard.

4.3 Making substantive changes

Substantive changes involving technical amendments should be submitted to LWG for consideration and decision in accordance with clause 3.

The revised standard shall be finalised, clearly identifying the changes made, version number and date, and shall be published on the LWG website.

5 Roles and responsibilities

5.1 LWG

LWG's main responsibilities within the scope of the standards development process are set out in clauses 1 and 3. In addition, LWG endeavours to:

- a) align its standards development work with its vision, mission and strategic objectives;
- b) provide support and guidance to stakeholders participating in standards development; and
- c) maintain policies and procedures to support the effective discharge of its responsibilities.

5.2 Conduct

Those participating in LWG standards development, whether as participants in an expert body, LWG employees, or in any other internal or external capacity, are expected to maintain high standards of commitment, personal conduct and professional integrity in all aspects of this work, including complying with this document and with all LWG policies in force at the relevant time.

Those participating in LWG standards development have a right to expect respectful and courteous treatment by their colleagues and for their views to be duly heard and considered with an open mind. It is expected that participants will behave towards each other without discrimination or bias. Participants should be able to expect from each other commitment and a constructive approach to solving problems, removing obstacles to progress and achieving consensus.

LWG reserves the right to suspend or remove a participant in any expert body created to support standards development for any breach of its relevant policies, or for otherwise acting in a manner detrimental to the standards development process.

5.3 Participants in bodies established to support standards development

The role of participants in bodies established to support LWG standards development is to:

- a) contribute their technical expertise and experience to the development of standards;
- b) review and comment on technical material; and
- c) collaborate with other participants and LWG to reach consensus-based decisions.



Participants are expected to act in good faith, contributing their well-founded expertise and experience without bias, and to act in the interest of the leather industry as a whole. Participants shall not use their participation to promote the particular interests of their organizations or affiliations.

Participants are expected to attend meetings as required using virtual collaboration tools and attending in person when necessary.

Version history

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1	30/09/2025	1st draft	A. Nistad	