

# Solar Stewardship Initiative

## **Policy of Association**

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## Intellectual Property notice

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### Version History

Version	Date	Description
1	April 2024	First version issued

### The Solar Stewardship Initiative

The Solar Stewardship Initiative (SSI) works with manufacturers, developers, installers, and purchasers across the global solar value chain to collaboratively foster responsible production, sourcing, and stewardship of materials. The SSI's mission is to enhance end-to-end transparency, sustainability, and environmental, social and governance performance across the solar supply chain. Businesses actively involved in the solar value chain can apply to join the SSI and get certified against the SSI Standards.

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## 1. Scope

This Policy governs SSI's Association with those joining the SSI as Members. For this Policy of Association, "Association" with SSI means a formal relationship between SSI and an entity joining the membership in any of the membership categories.

## 2. Association Process and Preliminary Due Diligence Screening

Before associating with an entity through the SSI membership structure, the SSI Secretariat conducts a preliminary due diligence screening to identify and evaluate risks to the SSI's reputation, credibility, and risks that could undermine the integrity of the SSI's mission. Risks investigated through the preliminary due diligence screening include unacceptable activities such as illegal activities, environmental negligence and violation of human rights.

The preliminary due diligence screening is based on desk research, taking various sources into account, including reports issued by civil society, academia as well as official government decisions and court rulings.

The preliminary due diligence screening is intended to assess whether the applicant is applying in good faith to contribute to the SSI mission, with the expectation that they are seeking to improve their supply chain sustainability and traceability, and (where applicable) have their sites go through the SSI certification process.

The preliminary due diligence screening and the subsequent admission as an SSI Member does not replace the certification against the SSI Standard(s), nor any decision by a government or a court ruling and therefore it should not be interpreted as the SSI approval, recommendation and/or endorsement of that SSI Member.

The preliminary due diligence screenings, whether completed by the SSI Secretariat or a third-party contractor will follow the SSI's due diligence procedure.

If the SSI Secretariat considers that findings from the preliminary due diligence screening warrant direct discussions, then the SSI Secretariat will seek to engage with the entity as early as possible in order to clarify any open questions.

The decision on membership applications is taken by the SSI Board based on the recommendations of the SSI Secretariat as the result of the preliminary due diligence screening.

In addition to the preliminary due diligence screening triggered by an entity seeking SSI membership, the SSI Secretariat will continuously monitor the SSI Members for unacceptable activities as described in the SSI Principles.

The SSI reserves the right to reconsider the decision to admit a member based on the criteria set out in Article 3.

### 3. Disassociation Principles

The SSI will not associate or may disassociate based on the following criteria:

#### 3.1 Breach of SSI Principles

Entities which have been screened through the preliminary due diligence screening process and approved by the SSI Board will be invited to sign the SSI Principles to confirm their status as SSI Members. The SSI Principles outline the obligations of Members, and a failure to meet these obligations will result in the SSI disassociating from that Member.

#### 3.2 Assessment Process Breaches

Failure to meet the agreed deadlines in the Assessment Process may result in disassociation. This includes not completing an assessment within the timelines agreed and failure to address findings further to an assessment.

#### 3.3 Other triggers of dissociation

The following conditions may trigger dissociation:

- Proven false evidence provided to the Assessors during the assessment process.
- Intentional misuse of the SSI claims or logos as described in the SSI Claims Guide.
- Failure to adequately respond to requests for information from the SSI Secretariat.
- Involvement in an activity deemed to be unacceptable and which breaches the SSI Principles.

Unacceptable activities involving a Member can also be brought to the SSI's attention by affected stakeholders through the SSI's formal Complaints process.

## 4. Dissociation Process

### 4.1 Warnings

The SSI Secretariat will always issue a warning email to a Member to either remind them of the deadlines and obligations they have committed to or to seek an explanation by a certain deadline for a breach or failure it has identified as outlined in Article 3 of this Policy. If applicable, an extension period can be granted by the Secretariat provided the Member requests it before the final warning is issued.

### 4.2 Final Decision

The decision to disassociate will be discussed and approved by the SSI Board based on the recommendation of the SSI Secretariat.

Once a dissociation decision has been taken by the SSI Board, the SSI Secretariat will notify the entity of the termination of their membership and disassociation once approved by the SSI Board.

Following a decision by the SSI Board to disassociate, actions to terminate the relationship with the Member include:

- Removal of the Member from the membership list on the SSI website.
- Withdrawal of all certified sites related to the Member from the SSI website.
- Withdrawal of certificates confirming site certifications.
- Notice of disassociation published on the SSI website.

All data pertaining to the SSI Member will be deleted after 12 months except the certification reports which remain the property of the SSI. The SSI retains the right to keep documentation for a longer period of time should the entity be the subject of a complaint to the SSI and any other internationally recognized complaints mechanism.

Together with the decision to disassociate, the SSI Board may specify a timeline and conditions for re-joining the SSI membership.

## 5. Appeals Procedure

SSI Members can appeal the decision to disassociate. The appeals procedure follows the SSI's Complaints Procedure.

## 6. Re-joining the SSI

A former SSI Member that was disassociated can apply to re-join the membership after a period of no less than six (6) months provided the disassociation was not based on the following grounds:

- Unacceptable activities as described in the SSI Principles (illegal activities, environmental negligence, or violation of human rights).
- Proven false evidence provided to the Assessors during the process, unless deemed to be an isolated incident where identification and implementation of corrective and preventive actions, including disciplinary actions, where relevant, can be demonstrated by the Member.

Any application to re-join the SSI membership will be discussed and approved by the SSI Board based on the recommendation of the SSI Secretariat.