

Solar Stewardship Initiative Assessment Body and Assessor Approval Procedure

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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.

The SSI's core objectives are to:

- Ensure the energy transition is just, inclusive, and respects people's human rights.
- Establish mechanisms to enhance supply-chain integrity in the global solar industry.
- Enable continuous improvement of ESG performance.
- Build confidence of regulators, customers, business partners and other stakeholders in the sustainability of the solar value chain.

About this document

The SSI Assessment Body and Assessor Approval procedure specifies the process that applies when:

- Approving Assessment Bodies that can carry assessments against the SSI Standards.

→ Maintaining Assessment Body approval.

→ Approving individual assessors associated with approved Assessment Bodies based on the competency criteria outlined in this document.

Version history

Version	Date	Description
1.0	November 2023	First version issued as approved by the SolarPower Europe and SEUK Board.
2.0	March 2025	Second version issued, reflecting the addition of the SSI Supply Chain Traceability Standard as approved by the SSI Board.

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1. General guidelines

Approved Assessment Bodies (ABs) must demonstrate and always uphold impartiality, independence and confidentiality principles.

Only SSI-approved ABs can sign contracts with SSI members for assessment activities. Only SSI-approved assessors may conduct assessments against SSI Standards.

Approved ABs are those listed on [the SSI website](#).

2. Assessment Body approval process

2.1. Initial application and approval

During the application window, ABs can submit applications to the SSI Secretariat by completing the AB Application Form available on [the SSI website](#) and providing the documentation listed.

The SSI accepts applications for approval from ABs who are:

- A legal entity
- Currently accredited to ISO 17065 or 17021 with a relevant scope by an accreditation body member of the International Accreditation Forum (IAF).

Or, in exceptional cases, ABs who are:

- A legal entity
- Can provide documented evidence, to be submitted to SSI, that demonstrates conformance with ISO 17065 or 17021. This evidence must demonstrate specifically that:
 - There is a mechanism to safeguard impartiality through a documented impartiality structure within the AB's operations.
 - Internal audits are carried out at least every 12 months to verify the fulfilment of applicable requirements and to evaluate if the management system is effectively implemented and maintained.
 - There are documented procedures for preventing, reviewing, and determining timely and appropriate responses to any potential conflict of interest declarations.

- Commit to incorporating the SSI assurance program into its internal management system.

The SSI reserves the right to verify the incorporation of the SSI assurance program, as detailed above, through an oversight verification assessment.

The SSI Secretariat will confirm approval of the AB application upon completion of the following:

- The review of the AB's application and associated documents.
- A due diligence checks of the AB
- A signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between SSI and the AB
- The SSI has approved at least one lead assessor, and they have completed training and approved the relevant exams on the SSI Standards and assurance system as provided by the SSI Secretariat or SSI's outsourced training provider (if applicable).

Upon fulfilling the conditions listed above in section 2.1, the SSI Secretariat will approve ABs for three (3) years, after which a re-application may be necessary.

The SSI Secretariat may restrict the approval to a specific geographical scope, topic (e.g. Environmental, Social and Governance) or standard (SSI ESG or SSI Supply Chain Traceability).

3. Assessor competency criteria and approval process

Assessors' applications can be submitted through the Form available on [the SSI website](#) and providing the documentation listed.

In addition, assessors must complete training and pass an exam on the SSI Standards and assurance system.

3.1. Requirements for lead assessor:

- University or college degree.
- 5+ years of auditing experience in solar, renewable energy or related industries.
- Familiarity with the geographical context where the site(s) are located.
- Experience doing on-site assessments in at least two (2) of the following areas:
Management systems, health and safety assessments, greenhouse gas

verifications/assessments, environmental impact assessments, social impact assessments, human rights impact assessments, environmental monitoring, traceability/chain of custody.

- Management systems/auditing qualifications.
- English language proficiency.

3.2. Requirements for assessor:

- University or college degree.
- 3+ years of auditing experience in the solar, renewable energy or related industries.
- Experience doing on-site assessments in either: Management systems, health and safety assessments, greenhouse gas verifications/assessments, environmental impact assessments, social impact assessments, environmental monitoring, traceability/chain of custody, and internal audits.
- Management systems/auditing qualifications.
- English language proficiency.

If the competency criteria as detailed in this procedure are met, the approved assessor's details will be maintained on the SSI Auditor registry.

4. Oversight and quality control

The SSI Secretariat, or an externally appointed agent, reserves the right to request and review ABs' documentation regarding the SSI assurance system for monitoring and quality control, particularly in case relevant information on potential non-compliance or negative feedback is received.

The SSI Secretariat, or an externally appointed agent, reserves the right to witness on site assessments -t any time during an AB's approval period.

The SSI Secretariat reserves the right to review AB assessment reports and request (when necessary and justified) additional information and adjustments to the conformance findings.

Should deficiencies be identified by SSI during document reviews or oversight verification assessments (such as witness assessment), ABs must take necessary actions to address them within the timeframe specified to maintain their approved status.

5. Records

The following records are maintained by the SSI in relation to approved assessors and ABs for the duration of the approval:

- CVs, certificates and Audit Log.
- Training attendance.
- Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).
- Assessor and AB approval status.
- Results of exams
- Complaints or concerns raised by stakeholders about Assessors/ABs and any follow-up or corrective actions identified.
- Results of witness assessments and any follow-up or corrective actions identified.
- Implementation by Assessors/ABs of any follow-up or corrective actions.

6. Enquiries, Complaints and Appeals

Mechanism

The SSI welcomes comments and feedback from all stakeholders on this document, which can be submitted at any time to contact@solarstewardshipinitiative.org.

The SSI has an independent [Complaints & Appeals Mechanism](#) to process concerns that may arise from SSI members, SSI-approved ABs and assessors, stakeholders and the public regarding the initiative, the SSI Assurance Process, ABs and assessors, or SSI claims and logo use.

The mechanism is designed to be aligned with the criteria laid out in the [UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#) for the effectiveness of non-judicial grievance mechanisms.

The SSI aims to investigate Complaints & Appeals in a fair, balanced, and transparent manner, and to resolve the issues efficiently and effectively.

7. Annexes

7.1. Assessor Audit Log Template

Audit Log				
Month/Year	Role	Audit standard/type	Organisation	Country
<i>Starting with the oldest audit of the past 5 years (for lead assessors) or 3 years (for assessors)</i>	<i>Lead Auditor / Auditor / Sole Auditor / Internal Auditor</i>			