



**GOV08 – Standard and Assurance Committee  
Terms of Reference**

**2014-11-24**

**Union for Ethical BioTrade**

<b>GOV08 – Standard and Assurance Committee Terms of Reference</b>		
Replaces	Standard Committee Terms of Reference – 2011- 11-19	
Main modifications from previous version:	Changes to reflect the advisory role of the STDC on assurance matters	
Approval of the original document and previous versions	BoD & EC	2008-10-11; 2010-05-17; 2011-09-13, 2011-11-19
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### **THE UNION FOR ETHICAL BIOTRADE**

The Union for Ethical BioTrade (UEBT) is a member-based non-profit association that promotes the ‘Sourcing with Respect’ of ingredients that come from biodiversity. Members adopt sourcing practices that advance sustainable business growth, local development and biodiversity conservation.

## 1. Period of validity and modifications

This document has been approved by the Board of Directors of the Union for Ethical BioTrade (UEBT) on the date of 24 November 2014. Any modification of these terms of reference shall be approved by the UEBT Board or its Executive Committee. These TOR remain valid until such a revision occurs.

## 2. UEBT stakeholder classification

Stakeholders in the standards development and revision process are classified according to nine (9) broad stakeholder groups, as follows:

	Economic	Social	Environmental
Developed country economy	X	X	X
Emerging economy	X	X	X
Developing country economy	X	X	X

## 3. Appointment and Duration of Terms of officers

The UEBT Standard and Assurance Committee is composed of 5 to 11 persons. Committee members participate in their own personal capacity, but are selected because of their professional affiliation.

At least 40% of the Committee Members are affiliated with organizations that are member of the Union for Ethical BioTrade.

### 3.1. *Balanced representation*

The UEBT Board of Directors shall assure a balanced representation of different stakeholders in the Standard and Assurance Committee, in line with the stakeholder classification mentioned in §2 of this document.

The economic sector is represented by Committee Members affiliated with UEBT Trading Members or other Non-Member Companies. This group shall not exceed 50% of the Committee's membership.

The environmental sector could be represented by organisations involved in biodiversity conservation and other environmental issues linked to the Ethical BioTrade mission.

The Social sector could be represented by:

- Organisations promoting social causes
- Organisation representing smallholders,
- Organisation representing indigenous people,
- Organisation representing workers, etc.

When selecting the Committee Members, the UEBT Board of Directors should assure that the Standard and Assurance Committee includes relevant expertise, such as relevant scientific, legal, certification and standard setting expertise.

Each time a new Committee member is appointed his/her stakeholder group will be clarified.

### 3.2. *Terms of Committee Members*

Committee members will be appointed by the UEBT Board of Directors for a duration of 3 years.

If a committee Member leaves the organisation with which he/she is affiliated, the Committee position may be transferred to somebody else within the same organisation, subject to approval of the UEBT Board of Directors.

If a Committee position is transferred within an organisation, the start of the term is considered to be the date of the appointment by the original UEBT Committee member that is replaced.

## 4. Purpose

The purpose of the Standard and Assurance Committee is to oversee UEBT standard setting and provide advice on the UEBT assurance system.

## 5. Tasks

The Standard and Assurance Committee supports the UEBT Secretariat and/or Board of Directors on the following:

- Provide advice on procedures regarding the formulation of new, and the revision of existing standards;
- Oversee the process of periodic revisions of UEBT standards;
- Assure due process has been followed by the UEBT Secretariat in case of standard development;
- Assess the participation opportunities offered in the standard revision process, reflecting the stakeholder analysis conducted according to the Terms of Reference of the standard revision process (GOV22 – ToRs of the Revision Process)
- Provide advice in case the UEBT Secretariat is unable to provide solutions that will bring about consensus amongst stakeholders that participate in the standard development process. It is the prerogative of the Standard and Assurance Committee to decide if solutions provided by the UEBT Secretariat are sufficient;
- Provide recommendations to the Board of Directors regarding the adoption of new or revised standards.
- Provide advice on UEBT assurance approaches, such as verification and certification methodologies, assurance system risk assessments, issues related to assurance providers (e.g. certification bodies), standard interpretation.
- Review relevant complaints received by UEBT on UEBT standard or assurance model;
- Provide advice on any other issue on which the UEBT Secretariat or BoD requests inputs.

## 6. Committee President and the role of the Secretariat

The Standard and Assurance Committee appoints a President from its midst, who will oversee decision making of the Committee and report to the UEBT Board of Directors and/or General Assembly on the functioning and decisions of the Standard and Assurance Committee.

The UEBT Secretariat acts as Secretary to the Standard and Assurance Committee. As such it prepares the agenda and background documentation on each agenda point, and elaborates the minutes of each meeting. Before each meeting, it will provide the Standard and Assurance Committee with a summary of the issues at stake, a clear indication of

decisions/feedback required from the Committee, and the necessary background information.

Meetings are convened by the Standard and Assurance Committee's President or by the UEBT Secretariat with prior approval by the President. Meetings are facilitated by the Secretariat. Committee members can request that additional issues be put on the agenda, or request that a special meeting is convened to address a specific issue.

## 7. Meeting format and decision-making mechanism

Quorum is achieved when at least half of the Committee members are present and at least one of each stakeholder category.

For the revision of the work done by the UEBT Secretariat in the development of a new or revised standard, the Standard and Assurance Committee meets at least once per year physically, funds permitting. Additional meetings (virtual or physical) may be organised if necessary.

For addressing further issues, the Standard and Assurance Committee is expected to discuss them by e-mail. Teleconferences may be organised if the need arises. Standard and Assurance Committee members generally have 10 working days to react on issues raised, unless indicated differently. Silence shall be considered as approval.

When decision-making is required, i.e. formal recommendations to the UEBT Board of Directors and/or Secretariat, the Committee endeavours to take its decisions by consensus. In decision making silence may be considered to be agreement with the majority view. However the UEBT Secretariat should make reasonable efforts to receive inputs from all the Standard Committee members.

Consensus is defined as the absence of sustained opposition<sup>1</sup> but does not require unanimity. In cases when consensus cannot be achieved, or when a vote is needed by the Standard and Assurance Committee members, the following voting procedure shall be followed:

- each of the groups below shall be given equal voting right, i.e. one vote per group as depicted in the table below;
- to cast a vote, a simple majority position shall be reached within each voting group;
- for the final vote between stakeholder groups, at least 2/3 majority is required for any decision to be valid.

	Economic	Social	Environmental
Developed country economy	X	X	X
Emerging economy			
Developing country economy			

## 8. Confidentiality & conflict of interest

If a decision to be taken is subject to a potential conflict of interest, the Standard and Assurance Committee member concerned shall notify this to the Standard and Assurance

<sup>1</sup> Sustained opposition means that an important part of concerned interests has indicated, despite meaningful discussion of an issue, that the position or solution put forward continues to be unacceptable to that interest. Source: WWF, Aquaculture Dialogues Process Guidance Document, Appendix A, September 2008

Committee. In case of a conflict of interest, the Standard and Assurance Committee member shall refrain from taking part in the relevant discussions and decisions.

Members of the Standard and Assurance Committee shall sign a confidentiality agreement addressing issues of confidentiality and conflict of interest.

## **9. Reporting**

Minutes will be prepared on all meetings of the Standard and Assurance Committee. Minutes will be signed by the President of the Standard and Assurance Committee and presented to the Board of Directors.

## **10. Contact Information**

Any inquiry about this document of the Union for Ethical BioTrade should be addressed to:

**Union for Ethical BioTrade - Secretariat**

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1013 AA Amsterdam  
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Or via email: [membership@ethicalbiotrade.org](mailto:membership@ethicalbiotrade.org)