



Standards Development Panel

Guidelines and Internal Procedures – 2021

Purpose of the Standards Development Panel

The purpose of the Standards Development Panel (SDP or “the Panel”) is to represent the interests of different stakeholder groups to review and ultimately approve the standards issued by the Specialty Coffee Association. The Panel also serves as the liaison mechanism to query the community about standard development matters, and thus has the capacity to act as an Internal Mirror Committee (IMC) for national and international standardization bodies.

Integration of the Panel

For the purposes of openness and transparency, the procedure for the establishment of the SDP should be made publicly available (e.g., through the SCA Website, presentations, direct communication within the community, etc.)

Voting Members

The configuration of SDP includes voting representatives for the following stakeholder sectors:

1. One (1) representative from the Barista Guild Leadership Council.
2. One (1) representative from the Coffee Roasters Guild Leadership Council.
3. One (1) representative from the Technicians Guild Leadership Council.
4. Two (2) representatives from the SCA Board (the Board).

Non-Voting Members

An SCA staff member (the Technical Officer) will act as non-voting Panel Secretary, convening the meetings and keeping the minutes. The Executive Director of the Coffee Science Foundation will be an observing, non-voting member acting as scientific liaison.

Term

Each SDP voting member will be appointed for a maximum term length of two (2) years. However, once that the SDP member’s corresponding term in a guild leadership or in the board is over, the person will step down from SDP simultaneously, and the corresponding body (guild leadership or Board) will elect a new representative for the vacant seat.

Appointment of Voting Members

1. The members representing each guild’s Leadership Council will be elected from within their guild’s Leadership Council, through internal agreement.
2. The two (2) members representing the Board will be elected from within the Board, through internal agreement. It is recommended for the board representatives to be chosen with the SDP’s diversity in mind, particularly for the sake of representing stakeholder sectors which are not included in a guild.

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3. Members will be appointed by guilds or by the Board in the following situations: (a) for the initial appointment of SDP members; (b) Three to six months before the maximum two-year term of a member expires, or (c) when one of the sector seats vacates for any reason, including the ending of the SDP member's term at a guild's Leadership Council or at the Board.
4. The ideal candidate within each body is the one who has the highest capacity and willingness to perform the member's duties, namely to liaise with their sector and the community at large, query the members of their sector or the community globally and reach a high number of stakeholders to receive feedback about standards projects.

Termination

Outside of regular term expiration, an SDP voting member may end their membership at any time, through a 1-month notice in writing. Members who have not participated in any SDP activities for 3 months will be given a warning by the Secretary and members who have not participated in any SDP activities for 6 months will be automatically terminated.

Modification of SDP structure

The structure of the SDP should be reviewed every four years to ensure that all the specialty coffee industry stakeholders are being adequately represented. Changes in structure should follow consensus and agreement between the SCA Board and SCA staff members, represented by the CEO. An example of a reason to modify the SDP structure would be the creation of a new guild.

Operation Procedure

Overview of the Standard Development System within SCA

The standard development activities are carried out at SCA through three different roles:

1. **Administration.** The system administration is carried out by SCA's Technical Office. The Technical Office will be responsible for developing and revising the standard development procedures, and for moving the standards through the pipeline, ensuring the process adheres to the SCA standard-development principles. The Technical Office will keep and maintain the SCA standards library, and the standards development schedule.
2. **Expert groups.** The standards will be drafted by an ad-hoc expert group, led by an SCA staff member. For example, technical standards expert groups might be led by the Technical Officer; sustainability standards expert groups might be led by the Chief Sustainability and Knowledge Development Officer, and professional competency standards expert groups might be led by the Education Programs Officer. Specific experts will be brought to a group as volunteers or even as consultants (budget-permitting), but at any rate will be engaged for a single standard drafting project each time, through a scope of work document. The leader of each group will be responsible for

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selecting the experts, bringing them on board, and coordinating their work. The scope of work for each group, jointly produced by the convener and the standard development system administrator, will outline the needs or problem the standard should address, identified research sources, a list of relevant stakeholders which might be consulted, a time line for the work, and the deliverable requirements.

3. **Standards Development Panel.** The purpose of the SDP is to represent the interests of different stakeholder groups (as opposed to being integrated by experts), review and ultimately approve the new standards.

The typical procedure for a standard to be developed would be the following:

1. The process is initiated through the initiative of a member of the coffee community, the initiative of an SCA staff person, or the scheduled revision and update of an existing standard. Initiatives approved by the Standards Development Panel are included in the standards development schedule. Updates of existing standards do not require approval to be included in the schedule.
2. The standard is assigned to a staff convener, depending on its category (technical, sustainability, professional competencies). The convener and the Technical Office invite select experts to be part of the new standard expert group, and produce the scope of work for the group. Experts sign a volunteer contract for each scope of work.
3. The expert group produces the new standard draft, coordinated by the convener. Each group has the freedom to self-organize as a team but must meet the terms in the scope of work.
4. The standard draft is vetted by the convener and the Technical Office for consistency and compliance with required format.
5. The standard draft is submitted to the Standards Development Panel.
6. **Each SDP member is expected to consult with their represented group of stakeholders, to get feedback.** The Panel is allowed two months for this consultation activity, after which time each Panel member is required to submit a comments form, including their recommendation to accept or reject the standard draft. For the standard to be approved, a simple majority of SDP voting members should have voted (three members, given that there are five voting members. Abstentions do not count) and at least two-thirds of members voting should have given their approval.
7. The comments from the Panel are addressed by the expert group.
8. At this point, depending on the voting from the Standards Development Panel, several things might happen: the new standard might be approved after the comments are addressed, a new version of the standard might be resubmitted for review (in which the steps #4 and onwards above are repeated), or the standard might be rejected by the Panel, in which case the process would need to start over.
9. Approved standards are published through SCA's channels, after a final style review to assure compliance with the SCA Style Guide.

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Guiding Principles and Practices

The Standard Development System at SCA adopts some of the best practices in the matter, adhering to the following principles:

1. **User-focused development.** The standard is not created for the person who develops it, but for the person who will use it.
2. **Voluntary implementation.** SCA's standards will be completely voluntary, as a way for users to push their boundaries and improve their products/processes. This means certification is not the goal of the standard developing system, though the certification of some standards might be done directly by SCA or licensed to a third-party certification body, when such a certification system is in the best interest of the community.
3. **Global scope.** SCA is a global organization, and standards should be developed in the spirit of respect to all coffee-producing and coffee-drinking cultures.
4. **Innovation-fostering.** Standards are not meant to hamper innovation but to support it, by bringing more actors of the industry to a 'platform level' of quality and good practices, from which to launch innovation. Highly innovative actors, on the other hand, should not feel restrained by standards, but take them as a framework for 'out of the box' thinking.
5. **Inclusiveness.** The purpose of SCA's standards is to appreciate and celebrate quality, instead of creating a separation between the 'complying' and the 'non-complying' actors. They should never be developed with the idea of excluding a specific actor from compliance.
6. **Research-based development.** This means not just that the standards will be derived from research, but also that technical standards will be tested prior to being issued.
7. **Relevance.** All standards will be relevant to the coffee community as a whole or to certain populations within the community, with the aim of becoming an aid in the creation of value.
8. **Consensus.** Representatives from different populations of the coffee community, namely the actors impacted directly by a standard, will be consulted through the Standard Development Panel. Consensus does not mean unanimity, but in principle a broad consensus will be sought, especially to avoid requirements which might harm certain members of the community.
9. **Transparency.** All standards will be developed according to the same principles, policies and procedures. Standard development files will be accessible for stakeholders. Stakeholders will have the right to propose standards through the appropriate channels.
10. **Quality.** Standards will be drafted by experts and reviewed by SCA technical staff before submitting the draft for approval. The format of standards will adhere to best practices, including appropriate standard identification numbers. Standards will be maintained and updated every few years to ensure relevance.
11. **Efficiency.** The timing and procedures for drafting, reviewing and approving a standard will be managed by SCA staff to avoid delays.

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Main activities of SDP

1. Include standards in schedule. Any SDP member, including non-voting members, may propose a standard to be included in the schedule. This does not mean the member needs to submit a drafted standard, but rather the topic and scope. For a standard-development work to be included in the schedule for the following year, two conditions need to be met: (a) sufficient funds from SCA budget to carry out the development work, when needed, must be available, and (b) the inclusion of the topic and scope must receive approval by two thirds of all sectors potentially affected by the standard, to ensure relevance. Development of standards implying complex or costly work may be split into two or more years. Delayed standards which have not been completed on schedule and due update of existing standards may be included in the next year's schedule without approval. Initiatives raised by community members outside of SDP will be addressed to the SDP Secretary and submitted for approval, budget permitting
2. Collect feedback about standard drafts from stakeholders, express comments and cast votes to decide the status of drafts – see next section.
3. Respond to standard development projects from national and international standard development bodies as Internal Mirror Committee. This will be done according to the policies and procedures of external standard development bodies, but following the principles and procedures stated here unless they contradict each other.

Procedure to collect feedback, express comments and cast votes

1. Once a draft standard is submitted to SDP, the Panel members have 2 months to collect feedback from their stakeholders, express their comments and cast votes, as explained in this section.
2. Each SDP Member should contact relevant stakeholders from their sector and invite them to provide feedback about the standard draft. Care should be taken to approach representatives of all stakeholders within a sector: guild representatives should take care to include stakeholders from diverse geographic regions in the consultation. Board representatives should expand their consultation to the sectors not covered by the guilds and also include geographic diversity in the consultation. Examples of how this may be approached may include enquiries, Internet searches, networks, personal approaches, advertisements, etc. The consensus development process should be open to all who are directly and materially affected by the standardization activity in question. There should be no undue financial barriers to participation.
3. All relevant stakeholders should have equal access to participation in each sector's process for development of positions, and all stakeholders formally engaged in the process should be assured of fair and equitable treatment and consideration in that process. The process should not be limited to guild or SCA members, but open to all stakeholders in the community.

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4. If an SDP Member considers the sector represented by them is not impacted by the standard in question, the appropriate action is to abstain from voting, so that the impacted sectors can have more leverage.
5. SDP Members will use a template to record and submit their comments. Comments should be categorized into general, technical or editorial, and ideally reference a sentence, paragraph or section in the standard draft. Comments should include a proposed change (or proposed deletion) of the said section and a justification for the proposed change.
6. Together with their comments and proposed change, SDP Voting Members should cast a vote regarding the project standard. This vote may be:
 - a. Abstention;
 - b. Approve without comments;
 - c. Approve with comments;
 - d. Disapprove with comments with an option to change to approve if the comments are addressed, or
 - e. Disapprove with comments – no agreement to change to approve even if comments addressed.
7. Depending on the number and nature of the comments received, resolving them can be done either by correspondence, whereby the SDP Secretary responds to each of the comments, seeking approval for these responses. Where the comments are more challenging, and particularly where they are of a technical nature, they are addressed during a 'comments resolution' meeting, where the members of the SDP collectively agree on how to respond to each comment. The response can vary from accept, partially accept (with justification) or reject (with justification).
8. Once responses to all comments have been agreed, the document is modified accordingly and is then ready for the next stage in the process. If there have been a large number of changes introduced, particularly where these affect the technical content, the Secretary of the Panel, who is responsible for ensuring the quality of the documents produced and the robustness of the 'process' used in their preparation, may decide that the document is sufficiently different from what was originally balloted to justify a second 'panel draft' ballot, in which case, the whole commenting and balloting process is repeated. This would also be the case if there had been a significant number of negative votes, and is mandatory in cases where a document has been rejected but the Panel has decided to continue to try to reach consensus.
9. Once a document has been approved by the voting members of the Panel, and all of the comments received have been satisfactorily resolved, it is ready to be published. It now ceases to be the formal responsibility of the SDP and becomes the responsibility of SCA.

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Work system

- All voting members of the SDP should have equal participation rights and equal access to relevant information.
- The Panel will do most of the work through email, holding just two meetings yearly (either in-person or calls), unless an extraordinary comment resolution meeting is needed.
- The SDP Secretary will maintain internal records of all the Panel's work and decisions.
- SDP members are encouraged to develop their knowledge of standardization operations and procedures. This will be achieved via introductory information packages, training and education sessions, mentoring programs, IT tools, or other means.
- The current version of the present document should be publicly available.

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