

Sustainable Supply Chain Initiative (SSCI)
SSCI Benchmarking Requirements

Version 3.0

APPLICATION FORM

For Scheme Owners to Apply for
Benchmarking against the SSCI
Benchmarking Requirements



The Consumer Goods
FORUM

Sustainable Supply
Chain Initiative



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1. Introduction

1.1 Eligibility Criteria for Application

The following eligibility criteria apply:

- The Scheme Owner must be a legally recognised entity and demonstrate independence from certification activities.
- The Scheme Owner has been operational for at least 12 months.
- The Scheme Owner must conduct an initial self-assessment to confirm its adherence to the SSCI Benchmarking Requirements.

1.2 Duration of the Benchmark

The benchmark is expected to be finalised within one year, allowing for the Desktop Review, Office Visit and potential amendments to be made. A transition period has been put in place for Scheme Owners that expect that their Scheme will have to undergo significant changes in order to pass the benchmark. See Annex I for further details on the transition period.

1.3 Communication during the Benchmark Process

Schemes may choose to be displayed as currently undergoing benchmarking on the CGF website (“In Progress”) to show their commitment to meeting industry expectations. See Annex I for further details on the “In-Progress” status.

In order to apply for the SSCI Benchmarking Process, please fill out the application form below. Once completed, kindly send this form to ssci@theconsumergoodsforum.com with a subject *SSCI_Scheme Owner Application_Name of Scheme*

2. Section A: Identification of the applicant and scope of application

Requirement

Answer From Applicant

1. Name of Scheme in scope for this application.

Please use the same name that is used on the certificates/audit reports.

a. Please provide a short summary of the Scheme's history and objectives.

Please enter details such as date of operation, markets, the rationale for development, mission, objectives.

2. SSCI Scope of Application

Social Compliance:
Processing/Manufacturing

Social Compliance: Primary
Production (including aquaculture)

Social Compliance: At Sea Operations

Environmental Compliance: Primary
Production

Environmental Compliance: Forestry

Environmental Compliance:
Manufacturing

Requirement

Answer From Applicant

3. Name of the legal entity owning and/or operating the Scheme.

Please note: SSCI does not accept applications of Schemes that are governed or owned by one or more audit firms.

4. Registered address of the Scheme Owner.

Please provide the legal address of the Scheme Owner.

5. Business address (Headquarters) of the Scheme Owner.

Only applicable when different from the address above.

6. Additional local offices.

Please provide the address of all additional office locations.

7. Name and position of the authorising officer.

The authorising officer is the person that is formally responsible for the agreement made and that signs the benchmarking application.

Requirement

Answer From Applicant

8. Name and position of the key Benchmarking contact person.

The CGF SSCI needs one point of contact for all operational questions regarding the benchmark (Self-Assessment, Desktop Review, Office Visit, etc.)

9. Address/location of the key contact person.

If different from #5 Business Address.

10. Phone number of key contact person.

11. Email address of key contact person.

3. Section B: Verification of Eligibility Criteria

Requirement

Answer From Applicant

1. Please provide evidence that the legal entity has a legal status in its jurisdiction and is the owner of the Scheme in scope for this application.

This may include incorporation papers/legal constitution/tax papers documentation.

2. If applicable, the total number of audit firms. Please specify whether the audit firms are accredited.

3. Please select the description that best fits the applicant scheme.

The scheme **does not** enable the issuing of certificates of compliance.

The scheme is written to issue certificates of compliance **with formal ISO accreditation** (ISO/IEC 17021-1 or 17065).

The scheme is written to issue certificates of compliance **without formal ISO accreditation** (ISO/IEC 17021-1 or 17065)

4. Total number of certificates/audit reports issued in the last 12 months.

5. List of countries where audits/assessments/certifications were conducted.

Requirement

6. Please confirm that the Scheme does not have any practices in place that are deemed to restrict access to markets.

Answer From Applicant

I confirm that the Scheme does not have any practices in place that are deemed to restrict access to markets.

4. Section C: Re-Application

This section is only applicable for Schemes that re-apply for benchmarking.

Requirement	Answer From Applicant
1. Please provide evidence that outstanding points have been remediated.	

5. Publication of the Benchmark Status on the CGF SSCI Website

Do you **authorise** the Scheme (please state the name of your Scheme) to be displayed as “In Process” on the CGF Website?

We would **NOT** like to be displayed as “In the Benchmarking Process” on the CGF SSCI Website.

For further details on the “In Process” category, please refer to Annex I. If the benchmarking process is successfully completed, the Scheme will be displayed as SSCI-recognised for the relevant scope on the SSCI website.

6. Confidentiality Clause

Each Party shall keep confidential (and ensure that its officers, employees, agents, nominated representatives and professional and other advisers keep confidential) any confidential information.

- Neither Party shall use for its own business purposes or disclose to any third party any confidential information without the consent of the other Party.

The confidentiality obligations do not apply to:

- Information which is independently developed by the relevant Party or acquired from a third party to the extent that it is acquired with the right to disclose it;
- Disclosure of information to the extent required to be disclosed by law, any stock exchange regulation or any binding judgement, order or requirement of any court, government regulatory agency or body or other competent authority;
- Disclosure of information to any tax authority to the extent reasonably required for the purposes of the tax affairs of the party concerned;
- Disclosure of information by SSCI in its Benchmarking assessment report to the extent required to be disclosed by the SSCI Benchmarking Requirements or to enable it or its authorised representatives to fulfil its obligations under the SSCI Benchmarking Requirements;
- Disclosure of aggregated and anonymised data by SSCI in relation to the operational activities of owners of social or environmental sustainability schemes that have been benchmarked by SSCI;

- Disclosure in confidence to a Party's professional advisers of information reasonably required to be disclosed for a purpose reasonably incidental to this Agreement; or
- Information which becomes available to the public (otherwise than as a result of a breach by one Party of its obligations).

The confidentiality obligations provided herein shall remain effective for a term of five (5) years after the expiration or termination of the subsequent Scheme Owner Agreement. Each Party shall return all documents and materials containing Confidential Information or, if so required by the other, shall destroy all material containing Confidential Information (including any copies, analysis, memoranda or other notes made by the receiving party) in its possession or under its custody or control within 14 days from the receipt of a written notification sent by the other Party.

7. Disclaimer

By applying to the SSCI, the Scheme Owner acknowledges that it is the responsibility of the Scheme Owner to submit a complete Self-Assessment including all relevant supporting documents. The cost for potential additional time that is spent by the Benchmark Leader due to missing or unclear information will be borne by the Scheme Owner. The Scheme Owner also commits to respecting the deadlines as set out in the work plan that will be agreed upon. If the benchmark cannot be completed in the maximum timeframe to achieve recognition, a new application will have to be submitted. By signing the application form, the Scheme Owner confirms that they have understood the SSCI Benchmark Requirements and agree to follow the Benchmark Process as outlined in the SSCI Benchmark Requirements.

We **confirm** that the information provided in the application form and in supporting documents are current and accurate.

SIGNED

NAME

SIGNATURE

*for and on behalf of
Name of Scheme Owner*

DATE

8. Annex I: Benchmark Status on the CGF SSCI Website

Status on the CGF SSCI Website	
Recognised (per scope)	Schemes that have successfully passed the SSCI benchmark for the respective scope.
Conditionally Recognised	This form of recognition signifies that the scheme is recognised, provided that specific corrective actions to address minor gaps that do not compromise the scheme's overall alignment with SSCI requirements will be completed within an agreed-upon timeline.
In the Benchmarking Process	<p>Schemes may choose to be displayed as currently undergoing benchmarking to show their commitment to meeting industry expectations.</p> <p>The following conditions apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Application form filled in and accepted by the SSCI.• Benchmark entry fee paid.
No Information	Schemes may choose not to make public that they have applied for benchmarking. If recognition is achieved, the Schemes will be displayed as "recognised".

8.1. SSCI Transition Period

The benchmark process is expected to be finalised within one year. A prolonged transition period of two years has been put in place for Scheme Owners that expect that their Scheme will have to undergo significant changes in order to pass the benchmark.

- Scheme Owners may take up to a maximum of 2 years to successfully finalise the benchmark process and to implement any potential changes to their Scheme, starting from the date of application
- The transition period is only applicable to Scheme Owners that apply for the first time to be benchmarked against a SSCI scope.
- The SSCI Steering Committee may approve the transition period on a case-by-case basis.

In order to benefit from the transition period, Scheme Owners are required to:

- Submit a timeline with milestones that outline the process to achieve recognition within the 2-year timeframe.
- Submit a bi-annual progress report to the SSCI Steering Committee.
- If the Scheme Owner does not pass the SSCI benchmark for the respective scope within the defined period of 2 years, it will be removed from the “in Process” category for the respective scope. The Scheme Owner can re-apply to be benchmarked under the scope, yet will have to pass the benchmark within the standard timeframe of one year.
- An exceptional extension of the deadline may be granted by the SSCI Steering Committee upon justified request by the Scheme Owner three months ahead of the end of the initial transition period.