



SSC Responsible Products Certification Programme

Certification and Governance

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Document approval and revision

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1. Overview

1.1. About this document

This document contains the certification and programme governance for the Sustainable Steel Council (SSC) Responsible Products Certification Programme (the “RP Programme” or “the Programme” or “the certification programme”).

The technical requirements for certification are contained in the *SSC Programme Audit User Guide* document.

1.2. About the Sustainable Steel Council Certification Programme

The RP Programme is adapted from the Australian Steel Institute’s (ASI) Steel Sustainability Australia (SSA) certification programme to provide a best practice standard to assess sustainability performance in the manufacturing and processing of steel across the steel value chain in New Zealand.

The Programme engages the entire steel value chain by certifying downstream steel fabricators, roll formers, and reinforcing processors and verifying the steel supply from upstream steel manufacturers against best practice environmental, social and governance (ESG) sustainability indicators.

Steel businesses and the manufacturing sites under their management are assessed against the Programme’s principles and supporting criteria in terms of their:

- Corporate governance and management systems to ensure business integrity and good operational governance
- Implementation of governance and management systems at the manufacturing/processing site level
- Systems to manage environmental, social and health impacts of steel products in their site-specific steel manufacturing or processing operations, and across their supply chain

The SSC Programme is a response to the ever-present global focus on the sustainable performance and decarbonisation of the construction industry, including the exponential growth in demand for lower carbon and more sustainable construction materials.

The SSC Programme requirements has been developed in two documents. Certification and Governance are contained in this document, while the Technical Requirements can be found in the *SSC Programme Audit User Guide* document. SSC’s compliance with the content of both documents is essential when targeting Green Building Council accreditation for the RP programme.

SSC’s RP Certification Programme has been adapted by thinkstep-anz and the SSC from the SSA certification programme, in response to the Green Building Council of Australia’s (GBCA) Responsible Products Guidelines and other trends and opportunities for steel and sustainability in New Zealand.

It includes the outcomes of workshops with key stakeholders from across the downstream steel value chain. A public consultation period on the programme has commenced and is managed by SSC.

Templates and an online tool are available to support Applicant compliance with the requirements.

For more information, or to submit feedback or questions on SSC, please contact audit@sustainablesteel.org.nz

2. Background and Objectives

2.1. Beginnings

Members of the Sustainable Steel Council are committed to a vision where steel is valued as a critical enabler in New Zealand's journey to a low emission economy. However, there was a need to establish mechanisms for companies looking to reinforce environmental credentials for their projects, to determine what a sustainable steelwork supplier is and how to identify one.

To date, the SSC has operated a certification tool, which was expanded from outlined priorities identified by SSC stakeholders in a materiality analysis. This certification tool reflects New Zealand Treasury's Living Standards Framework and relevant UN Sustainable Development Goals. Members that have completed the former SSC certification process have become SSC Chartered Members.

2.2. Recent Developments

In 2018, GBCA began to revise the Green Star programme to drive the Australian built environment to respond to issues facing the industry in the coming decades. Significant changes were made to the Green Star rating system in 2020, including a revised and expanded framework that includes a greater social awareness, increased stringency for World Leadership recognition, and an increased focus on reducing carbon emissions.

Developed to help the supply chain evolve to address the challenges of the next decade, the GBCA's Green Star Buildings rating tool and Responsible Products Guidelines aim to transform the supply chain by encouraging the delivery of responsible, healthy and positive products that are part of a circular economy.

The New Zealand Green Building Council (NZGBC) has tailored Green Star Buildings to the New Zealand market and released Green Star Buildings in New Zealand in 2024, which includes requirements under the Responsible Products Guidelines.

In response to the Responsible Products Guidelines and its guiding principles, the Australian Steel Institute consulted with members to develop a revised and enhanced Environmental Sustainability Charter. The Charter was re-branded Steel Sustainability Australia (SSA) to demonstrate the broader sustainability aspirations of the steel industry.

To drive further consistency and collaboration between the Australian and New Zealand steel industries, SSC has tailored the SSA standard to the New Zealand market and combined it with an update of the existing SSC certification tool.

In addition to the above, the New Zealand Government is expressing its need to meet its Paris Accord commitments and has indicated strongly that it values the reduction in short- and medium-term carbon emissions both for environmental and international reputational reasons, and to maintain international perceptions of New Zealand as being clean and green.

While the New Zealand steel industry has been steadily and proactively moving towards lower embodied carbon steel, there is now an additional impetus to demonstrate in an objective, evidenced, and public way, that the steel sector is reducing carbon emissions.

2.3. Objectives

SSC's RP Certification Programme is aligned with the Sustainable Steel Council Charter to ensure "steel is valued as a critical enabler in New Zealand's journey to a low emission economy." Its objective is to support the responsible and sustainable manufacturing and processing of steel and steel products in the New Zealand market. It is a holistic programme and demonstrates the New Zealand steel industry's capacity to respond to the market's demand for more sustainable construction products.

To this end, the SSC Programme aims to:

- Improve the offering for SSC Chartered Membership with an up-to-date best practice sustainability standard for steel manufacturing, sourcing, and processing
- Provide a steel-specific sustainability programme that meets industry expectations of sustainability for construction materials
- Assess and accredit sustainability performance in the manufacturing and processing of steel across the entire steel value chain
- Provide specifiers, engineers, builders, and end users with the means to identify more sustainable steel suppliers through transparent and consistent measurement of environmental, social and health impacts of steel products across the entire steel value chain
- Encourage the broad participation of the steel industry in SSC's RP Programme to raise sustainability performance of the sector

2.4. Programme Applicability

The SSC Programme assesses sustainable practices throughout the steel supply chain from crude steel products through to finished steel products by verifying the upstream producers and certifying the downstream suppliers.

The Programme is designed to be used by:

- the building, construction and engineering industry
- regulators
- environmental rating agencies and bodies such as the GBCA, NZGBC and Infrastructure Sustainability Council
- government authorities such rail and road
- public and private developers
- any contracting body wanting to demonstrate holistic sustainability improvement through their contracting and materials specification process

3. Certification Programme Operation

3.1. Operational Structure

The SSC Responsible Products Certification Programme operates under the governance of the Sustainable Steel Council (SSC), with certification services delivered by HERA Certifications Ltd (HERA Cert) as the appointed Certification Body. The governance and operational responsibilities between SSC and HERA Cert are defined under the SSC Responsible Products Certification Programme Rules and the Certification Services Contract.

SSC retains responsibility for the governance and strategic development of the Programme, including:

- Establishing and interpreting certification criteria and programme rules in collaboration with stakeholders.
- Managing the SSC audit portal and related administrative systems.
- Setting and reviewing certification and membership fee structures annually, in consultation with HERA Cert.
- Maintaining the Register of Certificate Holders and the SSC Supplier Listing.

HERA Cert is responsible for all activities related to the delivery of certification services, including:

- Conducting audits and assessments as defined in the SSC Programme Audit User Guide.
- Making final decisions to award, suspend, withdraw, or terminate certifications based on audit findings and in accordance with the certification rules.
- Developing, maintaining, and controlling audit tools and procedures.
- Engaging and managing qualified auditors with the necessary expertise and independence.
- Ensuring impartiality and consistency in certification delivery.

All certification decisions, including the issuance or withdrawal of SSC Certificates of Compliance, are the responsibility of HERA Cert, based on its independent audit process.

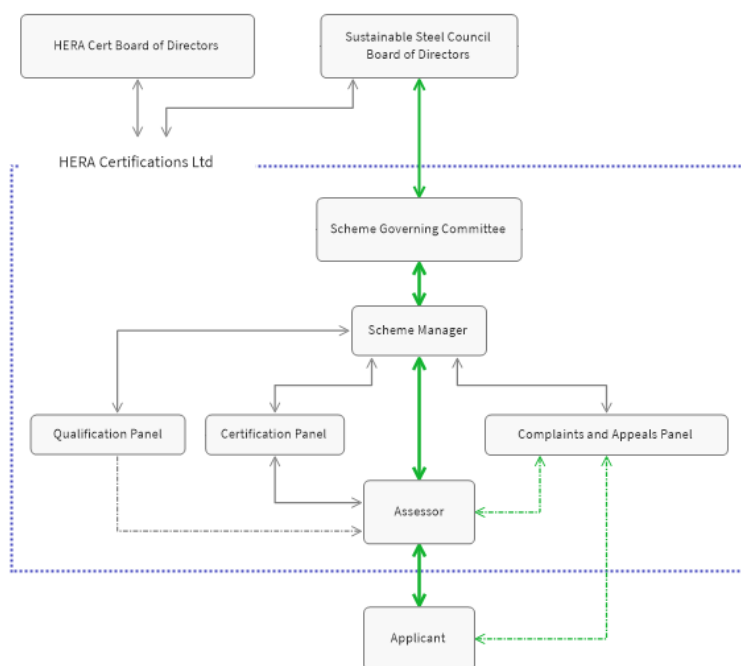


Figure 2: Overview of Governance and Operational Structure

3.1.1 Subcommittees:

Qualification Panel: Oversees the audit criteria and performance of the programme, receives and determines requests for alternative solutions and forwards recommendations to the Governing Committee for consideration. Liaises with the Responsible Products programme owners (GBCA).

Certification Panel: oversees the audit and certification process and determines whether audit outcomes are sent to the Scheme Governing Committee for ratification.

Complaints and Appeals Panel: Receives complaints and appeals and actions, investigates and makes recommendations to the Scheme Governing Committee.

Eligibility for certification is assessed using HERA Certification Limited, an independent auditing agency, to assess performance against the scheme requirements and supporting criteria as detailed in the *SSC Programme Audit User Guide* document. The independent auditor makes a certification recommendation to the SSC Scheme Committee.

The Programme is funded through SSC membership and certification fees or, for approved non-members, an application fee.

Applicant Eligibility

Certification under the RP Programme is open to businesses that:

- manufacture, distribute, fabricate or process steel – steel fabricators, roll formers and reinforcing processors
- are downstream of crude steel manufacturing mills
- supply steel products into the New Zealand market
- wish to participate in the programme to improve their sustainability performance and credentials

3.2. Certification Levels

SSC RP certification is offered at different levels of achievement, to support varying needs of SSC Applicants. Detailed requirements of each level can be found in Table 1 in the *SSC Programme Audit User Guide*.

3.2.1. Fees

Applicants pay a fee for the SSC Responsible Products (GS) Bronze, GS Silver or GS Gold certification. The fee may be varied from time to time.

3.2.1.1 Responsible Products Bronze Certification

The Bronze level is the simplest form of SSC Responsible Products certification. Compliance requirements will be limited to Environmental Management plus the general Governance technical requirements for all certifications.

Responsible Products Bronze certification will allow RP Certified Companies to continue to contribute to a project achieving points in the Sustainable Products credit for the Green Star – Design & As Built rating tools.

While Responsible Products Bronze certification will not qualify a product as either Good Practice or Best Practice under the Responsible Products Guidelines, it can be combined with other valid certifications to build a better Responsible Products Value.

3.2.1.2 Responsible Products Silver Certification

It is expected that this Silver level of SSC Responsible Products Certification is the level to which most SSC Members will graduate. The technical requirements for Responsible Products Silver Certification cover more holistic content.

Responsible Products Silver Certification will give SSC certified members ‘Good Practice’ recognition under the Responsible Products Guidelines in Green Star Buildings under the Responsible Structure credit. In Green Star terms, Silver Certification has a Responsible Products Value (RPV) of at least 10, the minimum for compliance for structural materials.

There are two available pathways for SSC members seeking Responsible Products Silver Certification:

- ➔ **Responsible Products Silver (with EPD) Certification** is available where a verified product-specific EPD can be provided as outlined in the section titled Product Life Cycle Assessments.
- ➔ **Responsible Products Silver (No EPD) Certification** is available where a verified product-specific EPD cannot be provided.

3.2.1.3 Responsible Products Gold Certification

Responsible Products Gold Certification is the aspirational level of SSC Certification. It has extended compliance requirements to achieve Green Star Buildings “Best Practice” recognition with an RPV of at least 18 under the Responsible Structure credit.

3.3. RP Annual Certification Process Overview

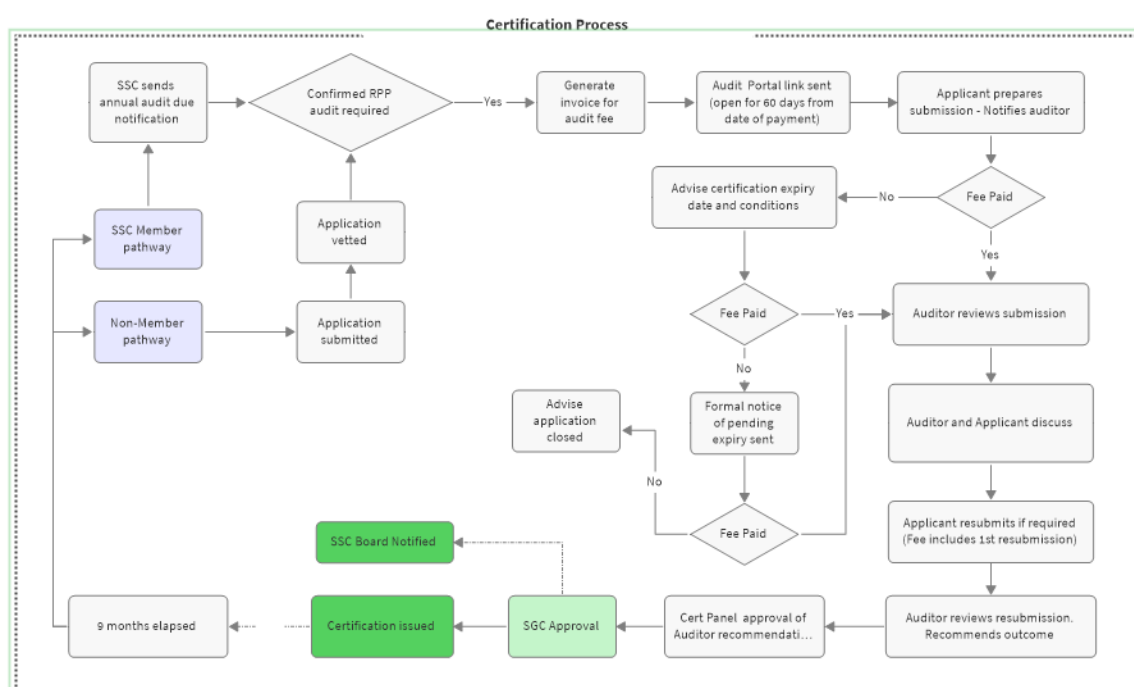


Figure 3: Overview of Certification Process

3.4. Applying for Certification

The term Applicant describes an entity which has signed up to the Programme, but their sites have not yet have been awarded certification under the Programme, or their certification has reached or is nearing its 12-month expiry date.

Companies will be audited and certified on a site-by-site basis, with multi-site certification allowed under specific conditions (refer to 3.6.5 *Multi-Site Certification*). Once an entity’s eligible site/s are audited and awarded certification under the programme, the Applicant’s site will be displayed as ‘Certified – [insert level]’ on the industry listing available on the [SSC website](#).

The SSC application and certification process is managed online. To commence the certification process, SSC will send notification that the need to re-certify is pending the Client may also request that an audit be opened for them on the audit portal.

To manage the application and remainder of the certification process, at least one employee from the applying company is required to provide their contact details for registering a user login to the online SSC audit portal.

On application, the Client is required to:

- Provide details of the company or business and their manufacturing or processing sites seeking certification. Additional sites can be added at a later time, with additional fees payable.
- Provide details of the relevant company and site contacts, or employees managing the SSC certification process.
- Select the chosen level/s of SSC certification sought per site. The levels of SSC certification are detailed in the *SSC Programme Audit User Guide* document.
- Pay any stated fees and charges. Refer to *3.8 Fees and Charges* for further detail.

On receipt of full payment for a new application,

- The Client and their site/s seeking certification are published on the SSC Supplier Listing on the SSC website with the status “Certification Pending”
- The Client is granted access to tools and resources that support compliance to SSC Certification. The resources can be accessed by logging into the SSC audit portal.

Applications are company specific, but audit assessments and certification are site specific. An applying company may specify an unlimited number of sites to be certified under their company account at any time (at a calculated cost), provided those sites are operated under the same NZBN. Company sites operating under a unique NZBN must complete a separate SSC application.

3.5. Assessment and Certification Process

3.5.1. Assessment and Audit

Clients are assessed, audited, and awarded SSC Certification on a site-by-site basis. SSC Certification recognises the operations and steel products processed at the audited site only. Where Clients are seeking certification for more than one site for their operations, refer to *3.6.5 Multi-Site Certification*.

The Client is to provide evidence of compliance to the requirements of the Programme according to the level of SSC Certification sought by uploading the required documents and supporting commentary on the online SSC dashboard at least 3 business days prior to the audit. Requirements per certification level are specified in the *SSC Programme Audit User Guide* document.

Audit Tools

Audit Tools, including checklists and templates, are owned by HERA Cert as the Certification Body. SSC recognises that HERA Cert maintains editorial control over these tools, ensuring alignment with the certification criteria.”

Annual desktop audit

Compliance to the RP Programme is assessed through an annual desktop audit conducted by a third-party auditor authorised and contracted by SSC. SSC may elect to conduct an out-of-cycle audit if there is sufficient cause for concern.

A conflict-of-interest process is included in the auditor contract of engagement, to ensure that no conflict of interest exists between the auditor and either the Applicant or SSC.

It is the Applicant's responsibility to book in the desktop audit for each site/s seeking certification using the instructions provided on the SSC dashboard, within 30 days of paid application, or 30 days prior to certification expiry for maintaining certification.

An assessment audit must occur within 60 days of paid application, after which SSC may terminate the SSC application. If the audit is terminated, then 50% of the fee is refunded.

Applicants must be prepared for the audit at the booked time by uploading the required documentation as outlined above. At the time of the audit, if the auditor deems the Client to be unprepared and is unable to conduct an assessment the certification fee may be forfeited at the discretion of SSC.

Applicants may reschedule a pre-booked audit up to 3 business days prior to the booked audit time (within the 90-day window) through negotiation with the auditor. If the audit is cancelled or rescheduled within 3 business days of the booked time the applicable certification fee or additional site fee may be forfeited at the discretion of SSC.

Suspension of service

SSC acknowledges that audit services may be suspended by HERA Cert in the event of late payment as per the certification services agreement. Suspension may result in delays to certification timelines

Audit outcome

The Applicant is required to nominate and pay for a targeted level of SSC certification per site on application (refer to 3.5 *Applying for Certification*), which will determine the compliance requirements assessed during the audit.

The audit assesses the compliance to the Programme's requirements according to the level of SSC certification sought, as specified in the *SSC Programme Audit User Guide* document.

After an audit is conducted, the auditor submits an audit report via the SSC dashboard to SSC for review detailing any non-conformities, along with the certification recommendation.

Within 5 business days of the next SSC Board meeting after the audit report issue date, SSC will issue the audit report to the Client as well the certification decision.

The audit report will detail the results of the audit including the conformity status for each Credit. Any non-conformances and appropriate corrective action will be detailed in the audit report. Refer to 3.6.2 *Conformity and Compliance*.

If the audit assessment concludes that the Client conforms to a lower level of certification than targeted, the Client agrees to either:

- a. Manage out the major non-conformances until compliant to the higher level of certification, according to the rules specified in 3.6.2 *Conformity and Compliance*, or,
- b. Accept the lower level of certification with no refund for the difference in certification fee.

3.5.2. Conformity and Compliance

If the audit assessment deems the Client as not conforming to a requirement, this shall be recorded and classified on the audit record as a non-conformance of which there 2 levels (major and minor).

- a. **Minor non-conformance:** A shortfall in performance that indicates a minor risk of the Client not meeting the requirements of the Programme.
- b. **Major non-conformance:** A shortfall in performance that, when assessed in relation to other audit outcomes, represents a significant risk of the Client not complying with the requirements of the Programme.

Minor non-conformances do not preclude certification but must be rectified **by the time of the next audit**.

Major non-conformances

Any Corrective Action Request (CAR) for non-conformances stipulated on the audit record must be undertaken by the Client and evidence uploaded and submitted via the SSC dashboard to the auditor and SSC for review and verification (CAR review). This process will continue until compliance is achieved.

Any major non-conformances specified must be rectified and evidence uploaded to the SSC dashboard **within 30 days** of the audit report issue date, after which certification will be suspended until resolved.

If a Client exceeds 1 CAR review for any major non-conformance per site, the Client is subject to additional fees as specified in 3.8 *Fees and Charges*.

Should any non-conformance not be corrected within the stipulated period, the level of non-conformance shall be raised to the next level: minor to major, major to non-compliance.

Non-compliance shall result in suspension of Certification and the Client will be subject to a review of its Certification that may result in the withdrawal or cancellation of its Certification.

3.5.3. Certification Award

Scope of certification

SSC RP certification will only cover fabricated or processed steel products that have been verified to comply with the SSC requirements at the certified level, and the specific manufacturing site audited.

Where steel products fabricated or processed at a site cannot be verified to comply with all SSC requirements to the assessed level of certification, they will be excluded from the certification with all Included sites displayed on the Certificate of Compliance.

Refer to 3.6.6 *Subcontracting or Outsourcing of Activities* for instances where certification is required to cover minor activities external to the certified site.

Certification award process

SSC Responsible Products Certification is awarded on a site-by-site basis and to the level of SSC Certification applied for and assessed. Where certification is sought for multiple sites, refer to 3.6.5 *Multi-Site Certification*.

The certification outcome is recommended by the auditor based on the audit results and subsequent non-conformance reviews and the final decision is made by SSC.

For a Client to achieve and maintain certification there must be no major non-conformities with any requirement pertaining to the chosen level of certification.

Certified Clients are issued an SSC Certified Mark and SSC Certificate of Compliance specifying the certified site details, the level of SSC certification achieved, and any notes pertaining to the scope of certification, such as exclusions.

The certification status for each Client site/s is published live on the SSC Supplier Listing on the SSC website. Certification statuses are as follows:

- a. **Audit Pending:** Applicant has paid, pending assessment audit. 90-day allowance (refer to 3.6.1 *Assessment and Audit*)
- b. **Certification Pending:** Audit conducted and awaiting confirmation by the SSC Board of Directors, or there are major non-conformances under management (refer to 3.6.2 *Conformity and Compliance*)
- c. **Certified:** Applicant's site(s) is certified. 12-month validity.
- d. **Expired:** Certification validity expired (i.e. 12 months after certification date). (refer to 3.8 *Fees and Charges*) and removed from Supplier Listing.

Complaints and appeals related to audit and certification outcomes and decisions are to be managed by the Complaints and Appeals processes. Refer to 4.5 *Complaints* and 4.6 *Appeals*.

Certification validity

Certifications are valid for 12 months from the date of certification, after which the certification will expire. Refer to 3.6.4 *Continued Certification*.

Clients seeking to achieve a higher level of SSC Certification within the Certification validity period (i.e. prior to the annual re-certification audit) can do so by booking in an additional assessment audit at the cost of an additional site fee, per site if applicable to the content of the application (refer to 3.8 *Fees and Charges*).

3.5.4. Continued Certification

To maintain Certification, Clients are required to successfully complete the assessment audit process, as defined the Assessment and Audit section:

- On an annual basis (according to the Certificate of Compliance validity dates)
- Within 60 days prior to the certification expiry
- Continue to comply with the requirements of the Programme outlined in this document and the *SSC Programme Audit User Guide*.

If re-certification does not occur prior to the Certification expiry (12 months from certification date), the SSC Certification will expire, and this will be published on the SSC Supplier Listing on the SSC website.

Expired certifications are allowable for 90 days from the expiry date, after which the SSC audit fee is payable again.

3.5.5. Multi-Site Certification

SSC mandates that all manufacturing, fabrication, or processing steel sites under management of the Client that are determined to involve 'high risk', or 'high impact' operations are to be included in the SSC certification scope.

- High risk or impact operations are defined as any operation that uses automated machinery, processes or fabricates significant steel tonnage, or significant amounts of energy in steel manufacturing or processing.

Multi-site organisations are defined as organisations that oversee and manage multiple steel manufacturing, fabrication, or processing sites that are operated under the same NZBN.

Where an Applicant has more than one site requiring certification, additional sites can be certified through one of two ways:

- a. **Option 1:** Managed as 'additional site(s)' under the SSC Assessment and Audit process. Additional sites are audited and assessed in the same way that the first site is, as covered under the SSC certification fee. The 'additional site fee' is charged per site as per the SSC Fees and Charges.
- b. **Option 2:** Multi-site sampling. Where there are multiple (more than 3 sites) manufacturing, processing, or distribution sites requiring certification:
 - The main manufacturing site(s) are managed under option (1)
 - Plus, a sample of additional sites will undergo the SSC Assessment and Audit process with the remainder of the sites audited and assessed by an internal audit programme managed by the multi-site organisation.
 - The inclusion and exclusion of sites under SSC certification will be agreed with the Client prior to application.
 - SSC will determine the split of SSC auditing versus self-auditing based on risk assessment (high versus low) of the site operations.

Where option 2 - multi-site sampling is selected the following conditions apply:

- a. The multi-site organisation allocates a 'Central Office' (CO) which manages the internal audit programme and appoints a person responsible for overall system compliance
- b. The CO maintains a list of sites including when they were admitted or removed from SSC certification

- c. The Rules for participation, roles and responsibilities are agreed to by all sites in the scope of certification
- d. An internal audit programme is set up and conducted by the CO **covering all sites** within the scope of certification
- e. The CO keeps records of internal audits, which are audited by SSC on an annual basis
- f. Records of internal audits must include the management of internal non-conformances

3.5.6. Subcontracting or Outsourcing of Activities

Certification is provided only for the site or facility nominated on the Certificate of Compliance.

Where the Client has multiple sites or facilities located domestically or internationally, each facility needs to receive independent certification, unless in accordance with 3.6.5 *Multi-Site Certification*.

The Client acknowledges that they retain total responsibility for all the products or services subcontracted or procured under SSC certification. The Client is required to:

- a. Provide the subcontractor or supplier all information necessary to enable them to meet the requirements under the level of SSA Certification targeted.
- b. Ensure that the subcontractor or supplier can and will continue to comply with the requirements as specified.
- c. Ensure that the subcontractor or supplier provides the Client with such records and documentation of their work as may be required of and specified by the Client.

To reduce any risks or concerns in this regard it may be preferable for the Client to subcontract any work to a company Certified to the SSC Programme.

It is not intended that the Client outsources or subcontracts the majority of steelwork in a given package of work. Rather, the norm would be for the Client to undertake the majority of the work at their own facility covered by the SSC Certification and to have demonstrated and direct control of construction of the total package of work.

Any work subcontracted would preferably be undertaken local to the Client's nominated facility to enable appropriate and regular monitoring of the subcontractors or suppliers' activities.

Further, and for the sake of clarity, if the Client's business model or project model is to provide product from construction activities outside of New Zealand or to subcontract fabrication or processing to international or overseas facilities, such facilities will need to be Certified and covered by a Certificate of Compliance awarded under SSC.

- Certifications awarded by Steel Sustainability Australia (SSA) which qualify for the equivalent Responsible Products Values are deemed to satisfy this requirement.

The Client needs to take all steps necessary to ensure that the SSC Certificate of Compliance and use of the Certification Mark is applicable to the work undertaken and in particular where subcontracting of product or services is involved.

Declarations of Conformity to SSC must not be utilised for items not produced under the control of the Client.

If there are any concerns in this regard the Client is advised to contact the SSC Manager to seek guidance on the specific circumstances.

3.6. Use of SSC Certificate and Certification Marks and Symbols

Clients issued with a Certificate of Compliance are authorised to use the SSC accredited Certification Mark as a declaration of conformity to the SSC Programme and the declared scope of registration.

Clients shall use the SSC Certification Mark in accordance with the following conditions:

- a. The Certification Mark shall only be used where a valid Certificate of Compliance has been issued and only in conjunction with the certified Client's site name
- b. The Certification Mark may be used on stationery, advertising and promotional material or website but only in accordance with the requirements of these Rules, and in connection with the scope of the certification system (i.e., for certified sites and products only)
- c. The Certification Mark provided for use will carry the date by which certification will expire if the Client has continued to comply with the requirements of the Programme including these Rules
- d. The Client is not entitled to use the Certification Mark passed the expiry date indicated on the Certification Mark
- e. The Certification Mark will indicate the SSC level of certification covered by the Client's Certification
- f. The Certification Mark must not be used in a context to suggest that a building, or whole structure has been certified
- g. The Certification Mark cannot be applied to laboratory test, calibration, or inspection reports
- h. Entitlement to use the SSC Certification Mark is applicable only to the Client site address(es) and location(s) quoted on the Certificate
- i. The Certification Mark shall not be tampered with or altered in any form, including but not limited to dimensions, colours, words, dates
- j. If a use of the SSC Certification Mark is deemed unacceptable by SSC, the Client shall undertake to discontinue that use. Use of the Certification Mark must be terminated immediately upon receipt of written notice from SSC. If there is a dispute, the Appeals procedure referenced in these Rules will apply
- k. On withdrawal of a Certificate of Compliance the Client undertakes to discontinue the use of the SSC Certification Mark immediately and to destroy within a month all stock of corporate material on which it appears
- l. All advertising matter is to be amended if the scope of certification is reduced and old advertising material depicting certification to a higher SSC level must be destroyed.
- m. The Certification Mark must not be used to imply certification applies to activities outside the scope of certification

- n. The certification is not to be used in such a manner that would bring SSC or the certification programme into disrepute and lose public trust. In this instance SSC reserves the right to terminate certification
- o. Clients are not permitted to make misleading statements about their certification. Clients are not permitted to use the certification documentation (or any part of) in a misleading manner.
- p. Any misuse of the Certification Mark will be taken seriously by SSC and, if considered to be necessary, legal action will be taken against the offending party
- q. The use of the Certification Mark does not exonerate the Client from any liability imposed by law regarding the performance of its services and the performance, design, construction, shipment, sale or distribution of its product
- r. The Client may display the Certification Mark on its website, provided the Certification Mark is displayed as a hypertext link from its website to the URL of the SSC website, www.sustainablesteel.org.nz

3.7. Fees and Charges

Current rates for fees and charges are published on the SSC [website](#).

The Client, whether seeking to achieve or renew certification, shall pay the required fees and charges listed below, as determined by SSC.

- a. The SSC membership fee Programme must be paid current.
- b. An additional annual certification fee is required for Clients applying for Responsible Products Certification. This covers associated costs in auditing, assessing, and managing site certification. One site certification is included. This fee is payable on initial application and every year after where certification is sought.
- c. The certification fee for additional sites is 50% of the cost of the audit for the primary site
- d. A fee for any additional corrective action reviews (CAR) for non-conformances identified is payable only if the Client exceeds the allowance of 1 corrective action review (conducted by the auditing body and SSC) per non-conformance identified.

Should the Client not receive certification to the level requested or decide to not continue with the certification Application, any fees paid to that time will not be refunded.

Fees payable shall be those in force at the date of application. Fees and charges may be subject to change based on variations in costs to run the Programme.

SSC acknowledges that audit services may be suspended by HERA Cert in the event of late payment as per the certification services agreement. Suspension may result in delays to certification timelines.

3.7.1. SSC Audit Portal

The SSC Audit Portal accessible through manages the application, auditing, certification and certification renewal process for the SSC programme. The SSC Audit Portal is accessible once a user requests their first audit and remains available thereafter. The SSC Audit Portal displays additional resources for applicants and SSC Certified Companies.

Clients must nominate to SSC and maintain the following company contacts who are relevant to managing, accessing, and receiving information regarding the RP certification programme. All communication to SSC Clients and SSC Certified companies will be issued to contacts on this database.

Company contacts to be nominated:

- Primary Contact: the employee responsible for managing or administering the SSC certification process on behalf of the company.
- Additional Contact: any additional employees who may require access to the company's application regarding SSC certification
- Accounts/Billing Contact: the employee responsible for processing the SSC fees

It is the responsibility of the Client to advise SSC if any of these contacts or details change. SSC is not responsible for non-receipt of communications due to expired or changed contact details.

3.7.2. Certificate of Compliance

The Certificate shall be valid for twelve months and at all times remain the property of SSC and shall be returned to SSC immediately upon request, together with any and all copies of that Certificate made by the Certified Company, and electronic copies held by the client must be deleted.

Certificates remain the property of HERA Cert and may only be distributed by SSC in the form issued and not altered or abridged.”

3.7.3. Register of Certificate Holders/SSC Supplier Listing

A Register of Certificate Holders, named the ‘SSC Supplier Listing’ is maintained by SSC and is open to inspection by the public on the SSC website (www.sustainablesteel.org.nz) or by request to SSC.

The Register identifies the Client/Certified Company, the company name, address and location of the site subject to the certification, contact details, the SSC level certified to, and any exclusions.

3.8. Alterations to Rules Following Certification

These Rules may be altered from time to time by SSC, following the process set out in this document.

No such alterations shall affect the right of any Certified Company's use of the Programme's Certification Mark or claim to be certified unless, or until, it shall have been given notice in writing of such alterations.

SSC will notify the Client of the date by which changes to the Rules become effective. This will primarily be communicated via email according to the company contacts maintained on the SSC dashboard and the Client shall be obligated to apply those changes when renewing the certification.

3.9. Non-Compliance with Certification Rules

3.9.1. Formal Warning Notice

If the Client is unable to comply with the requirements of these Rules, fails to demonstrate ongoing conformity to the Programme or is subject to a serious complaint or series of complaints, SSC may issue a formal warning notice.

The warning notice will advise the Client that the Certificate of Compliance is suspended until SSC is satisfied that the necessary corrective actions have been satisfactorily implemented and full compliance with the conditions of Certification have been restored and within the specified period. The Client's certification status on the public SSC Supplier Listing will also be removed until such time.

3.9.2. Suspension, Termination or Withdrawal of Certification

SSC may, subject to the Rules for Appeal:

- a. Reduce, suspend, withdraw or terminate the scope of certification
- b. Refuse to grant or renew the Certification or extend the scope of certification.

Such decisions shall be considered in the following circumstances:

- a. Failure to comply with these Rules
- b. Significant failure to comply with the requirements of a relevant national or international Standard or normative document
- c. External complaints caused by a verifiable failure of the management system
- d. Changes to management, ownership or scope of work contrary to the conditions and scope of Certification
- e. Failure to pay promptly for all fees and charges as referenced in this document
- f. If the applying or certified Company becomes insolvent (that is, it makes any arrangement or composition with 'its' creditors, enters into liquidation whether compulsory or voluntary (but not including liquidation for the purpose of reconstruction), has an administrator or administrative receiver of its business appointed, or is convicted of an offence tending to discredit the Company's reputation and good faith as a trader.
- g. If the Client or certified Company is deemed to be non-compliant (refer 3.6.2 *Conformity and Compliance*) with the requirements of the Programme at any time, SSC may at its sole discretion terminate or refuse to grant or renew certification, and require the Company to cease the use of the Certification Mark or any claim of compliance or association with the Programme with immediate effect.

Any Client having its certification suspended, terminated or withdrawn shall be removed from the online SSC Supplier Listing, and records kept internally by SSC.

SSC may also make public statements and communications as it deems necessary in regard to any change of status.

3.10. Serving Notice under the Rules

By SSC

Any notice issued to the Client or Company by SSC shall be in writing and signed by or on behalf of SSC and may be served by email to the address on file of the Company's primary contact.

General statements regarding the Programme for public information are deemed to be served when uploaded to the SSC website at www.sustainablesteel.org.nz and all effected and registered Companies notified.

By the Client or Certified Company

Any notice issued by the Client or Certified Company to SSC shall be in writing to audit@sustainablesteel.org.nz

3.11. Force Majeure

Both the Client and SSC shall be relieved from liability each by the other if and to the extent that either becomes unable to carry out all or any of its obligations as a result of any event or matter beyond its reasonable control which occurs after the date of application and which was not reasonably to be foreseen as likely to occur and which the parties could not have taken steps to avoid.

The Client and SSC will each inform the other as soon as it becomes aware that any such event or matter has occurred or is likely to occur.

3.12. Liability

SSC shall have no liability towards the Client Company for any claim for damage, loss or expense arising out of, or in connection with any service provided under the Programme by SSC.

4. SSC Programme Governance

4.1. Criteria

The SSC Certification Programme requirements have been developed in two documents. *SSC Certification and Governance* is contained in this document, while the technical rules can be found in the *SSC Programme Audit User Guide* document. Both documents are required for compliance when targeting SSC certification.

4.1.1. Programme content

The SSC Programme contains introductory sections describing the programme's objectives, principles, performance criteria (and method for achieving compliance with each criterion) and a description of the mechanisms for assessment.

The detail of compliance criteria will be available to SSC paid members and otherwise for purchase through SSC.

4.1.2. Development Procedures

The SSC certification programme has been developed by combining an upgraded version of SSC Chartered Membership and the existing SSA certification programme in Australia. SSC follows a transparent, documented process which is available on the SSC website.

The SSC has engaged with key stakeholders through meeting presentations, workshops and ongoing consultations and has addressed concerns through amendments and clarifications to the Technical Document and will continue to engage with stakeholders in these forums to obtain feedback and/or comments as the programme beds in.

The SSC will make impartial and documented efforts to resolve procedural complaints related to the process of developing the new SSC certification programme, which will be made publicly available on the SSC website.

4.1.2.1 Stakeholder Consultation

The public consultation phase for development of the proposed SSA certification programme commenced 21 January 2025 for one round of 20 days for comment by stakeholders. This consultation closed on 11 February 2025.

Participation in the consultation process was open to all key stakeholders and the broader public; and efforts were made to engage all stakeholders identified throughout early engagement activities.

Comments received during the consultation period will be compiled and a written synopsis of comments and how they were addressed in the revision will be made publicly available and sent by electronic mail to all parties that submitted comments.

The queries and submissions received were related to process and clarification of requirements. No system changes have been required subsequent to the initial consultation round.

4.1.2.2 Decision Making

SSC is committed to ensuring that participants of the SSC Programme are involved in the decision-making process to develop the Programme and make any changes to it, by taking a consensus-based decision-making approach.

Any party that may be significantly or materially affected by the SSC certification programme has been provided with the opportunity to comment throughout the development of the programme and any major revisions.

All views and objections are considered, and efforts are to be made by the SSC toward their resolution. A consensus view to adopt or reject a proposed content for the SSC Certification Programme will prevail. Procedures for reaching consensus are publicly available on the [SSC website](#).

4.1.3. Representative of best practice

The SSC Certification Programme has been developed to align with various recognised standards and rating schemes and thus supports the activities steel industry companies are undertaking to comply with these standards, guides, and schemes:

- EN 15804 Sustainability of construction works. Environmental product declarations. Core rules for the product category of construction products
- ISO 9001 Quality management systems
- ISO 14001 Environmental management systems
- ISO 14025 Environmental labels and declarations. Type III environmental declarations. Principles and procedures
- ISO 45001 Occupational health and safety management systems – Requirements (previously OHSAS 18001)
- World Steel Climate Action data collection programme
- ResponsibleSteel Standard Version 2.1
- Eco Choice Aotearoa Flat and Long Steel standard (EC-41-15)
- Eco Choice Aotearoa Pre-painted and Resin Coated Metal Products (EC-57-23).

To be representative of best practice, SSC ensures that where its objectives can be achieved most effectively through the recognition of an SSC Client's compliance with criteria in another approved standard, SSC shall recognise this.

When developing criteria, the SSC certification programme does not favour any specific technology or patented item.

4.1.4. Publicly available

Once approved, SSC will publish the SSC certification programme and make it available in electronic format on the SSC website. Access will be provided free via SSC membership and/or on application to SSC.

The SSC certification programme and supporting documents provide contact information for standard-related enquiries.

For clarity, publicly available means obtainable by any person, without unreasonable barriers of access and includes publication on the SSC website.

4.1.5. Changes to the SSC RP certification programme

The SSC RP certification programme will be considered for revision within a maximum of five years from the date of approval. This first version of the programme will be reviewed and is expected to be revised within three years.

The certification programme can be updated as follows:

- Ad hoc, maintenance or corrections – including releasing additional criteria or pathways to the certification programme, issuing or updating guidance or reference materials, and correcting any significant errors. These changes will be available on the SSC website.
- Minor update – including minor updates to compliance requirements and benchmarks. Where a significant change is made in a minor update, SSC will engage with stakeholders and all significant changes will require the endorsement of the Governing Committee and will result in the release of a revised certification programme e.g., v1.1.
- Major update – involving major amendments to benchmarks and new categories of criteria. Major updates will involve significant stakeholder engagement and will result in the release of a revised certification programme e.g., v2.0.

4.2. Responsibilities

4.2.1. Client responsibilities

The Client shall:

- Comply with these Rules at all times
- Provide all necessary and requested information to allow for the audit and assessment to accurately reflect the activities and operations of the business
- Notify SSC of significant changes, that may affect the operations of the Client Company including but not limited to changes affecting:
 - Ownership or company title or NZBN
 - The management organisation
 - The management representative(s)
 - Site or office locations
 - Certification scope
 - Steel products manufactured or processed at certified sites
 - Changes to steel sourcing which could impact the certification
- Advise its customers of the Status and Scope of Certification when required.
- Make use of the Certificate of Compliance and the Certification Mark for promotional and display purposes in accordance with 3.7 *Use of SSC Certificate and Certification Marks and Symbols*.

4.2.2. SSC Responsibilities

SSC is required to undertake its activities regarding the management and operation of the SSC Certification Programme in accordance with the Rules in this document, and to provide impartiality in all of its activities, to keep confidential information provided and to act with

competence, openness, be non-discriminatory and responsive to any complaints and appeals.

SSC shall:

- Manage and issue certifications in a timely manner
- Ensure provision of sufficient evidence upon which to base certification decisions
- SSC shall award an SSC Certificate of Compliance in accordance with the rules in this document.
- Conditions relating to the award of a Certificate of Compliance shall be determined by SSC and communicated to the Client.
- Effectively resolve complaints and appeals to help protect against errors, omissions or unreasonable behaviour. Refer to sections 4.5 and 4.6 of this document.
- Maintain impartiality: it is necessary for SSC to be impartial, and to be perceived as impartial, in order to give confidence in activities and outcomes.
- Maintain openness, within the confines of confidentiality. Openness is a principle of access to, or disclosure of appropriate information.
- Notify the Client of any changes to the SSC Programme Technical Requirements, of these Rules, and allow such time as is reasonable, to adjust its processes and relevant procedures to meet the revised requirements.
- Provide a Complaints Procedure as defined in Section 4.5 of this document and available on the SSC website.
- Provide an Appeals Procedure as defined in Section 4.6 of this document which is available on the SSC website.
- Maintain a Register of Certificate Holders which will contain the details of all Certificate Holders, the SSC level of certification held, any exclusions relating to the Certification.
The formal Register of Certificate Holders will be publicly accessible on the website and will include the company name, the site certified, and the certification level.
- Provide a website (www.sustainablesteel.org.nz) for the purposes of facilitating Application and Certification to the Programme, payment of fees, information about the Programme, the Register of Certificate Holders and other information of interest to stakeholders and steel industry participants.
- SSC shall coordinate with HERA Cert during the investigation and resolution of complaints or appeals relating to audit services

4.2.3. Audit Tool Ownership

Audit Tools, including checklists and templates, are owned by HERA Cert as the Certification Body. SSC recognises that HERA Cert maintains editorial control over these tools, ensuring alignment with the certification criteria.”

4.3. Confidentiality

Excepting for the information described elsewhere in these Rules, all personnel representing SSC in any capacity will safeguard the confidentiality of information obtained or created during the performance of certification activities at all levels, including committees and external bodies or individuals acting on its behalf.

This information will be securely maintained electronically for at least seven years (to allow for support of construction projects with long durations.)

Information obtained by or provided to SSC as part of a complaint will be treated confidentially as per these Rules.

SSC will inform the Client in advance of information it intends to place in the public domain. All other information, except for information that is made publicly accessible by the Client, will be considered confidential.

Confidential information will not be released to any third party except in the following circumstances:

- Where the Client has given express written consent that the information may be released; or
- Where SSC is required by law to release the information to a third party; or
- Where SSC is required by a relevant accreditation body to release the information to such body. (SSC will inform the Client before any release of confidential information to an accreditation body); or
- Where further described in these Rules.

SSC provides access to and disclosure of:

- Appropriate and timely information about the evaluation and certification processes.
- The Certification status of businesses and facilities (including granting, maintaining, extending or reducing the scope of, suspending, withdrawing or refusing certification.)

4.4. Transition Period

The previous SSC certification programme will remain available until 31 March 2025.

The minimum threshold to meet the old as-build certification level is bronze certification in the new regime.

From 1 April 2025 the old programme will be retired and only the new Responsible Products Certification will be available for applicants seeking Responsible Products recognition.

NOTE: SSC will continue to run a parallel lower-level certification programme for members that do not require or aspire to Responsible Products Certification level but wish to demonstrate capability and commitment in non-Green Star spheres of activity.

4.5. Complaints, Disputes, Appeals

If an applicant feels they have been unfairly treated or they are unhappy with the processes, or have a grievance of any nature, there are two pathways to register concerns

1. If the complaint or dispute relates to certification process and results, then the **Appeals Procedure** applies (see P29 figure 5)

- If the complaint or dispute relates to any matter other than certification process and results, then the **Disputes Process** applies (See p28 figure 4)

Complaints and disputes are made, registered, and managed in accordance with the procedures at Figure 4 and Figure 5.

4.5.1 Disputes Procedure

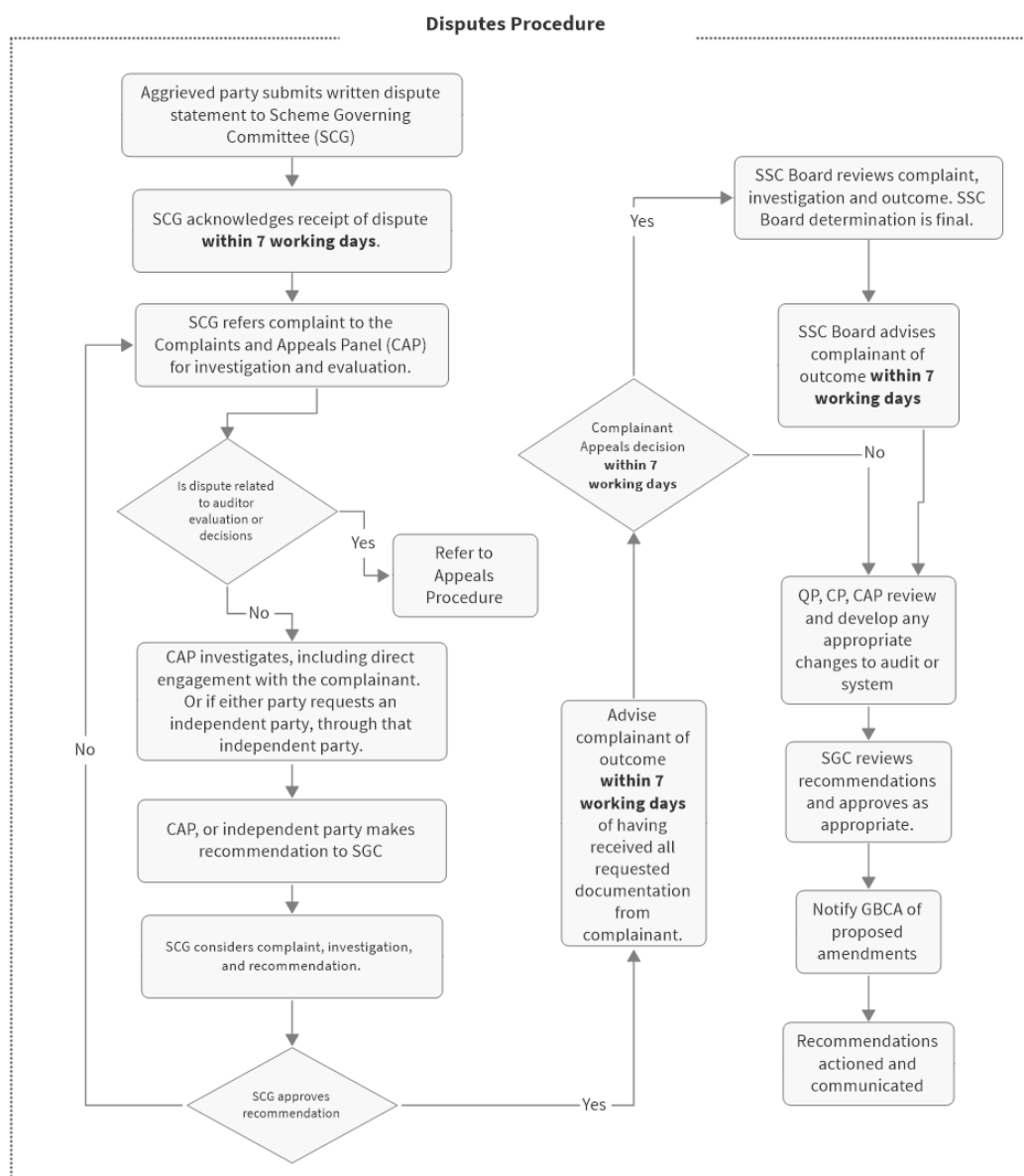


Figure 4: Complaints and Disputes Procedure

The Complaints Procedure is made available on the SSC website for registered users along with contact details for registering a dispute.

4.5.2. Appeals Procedure

The Client may appeal a refusal by SSC to grant or renew certification under the Programme.

Where an appeal concerns an audit or assessment conducted by HERA Cert, HERA Cert shall be consulted and given the opportunity to respond or provide clarification to the Complaints and Appeals Panel (CAP).

Any appeal by the Client against refusal, withdrawal or suspension shall be in accordance with the Appeals Procedure at Figure 5.

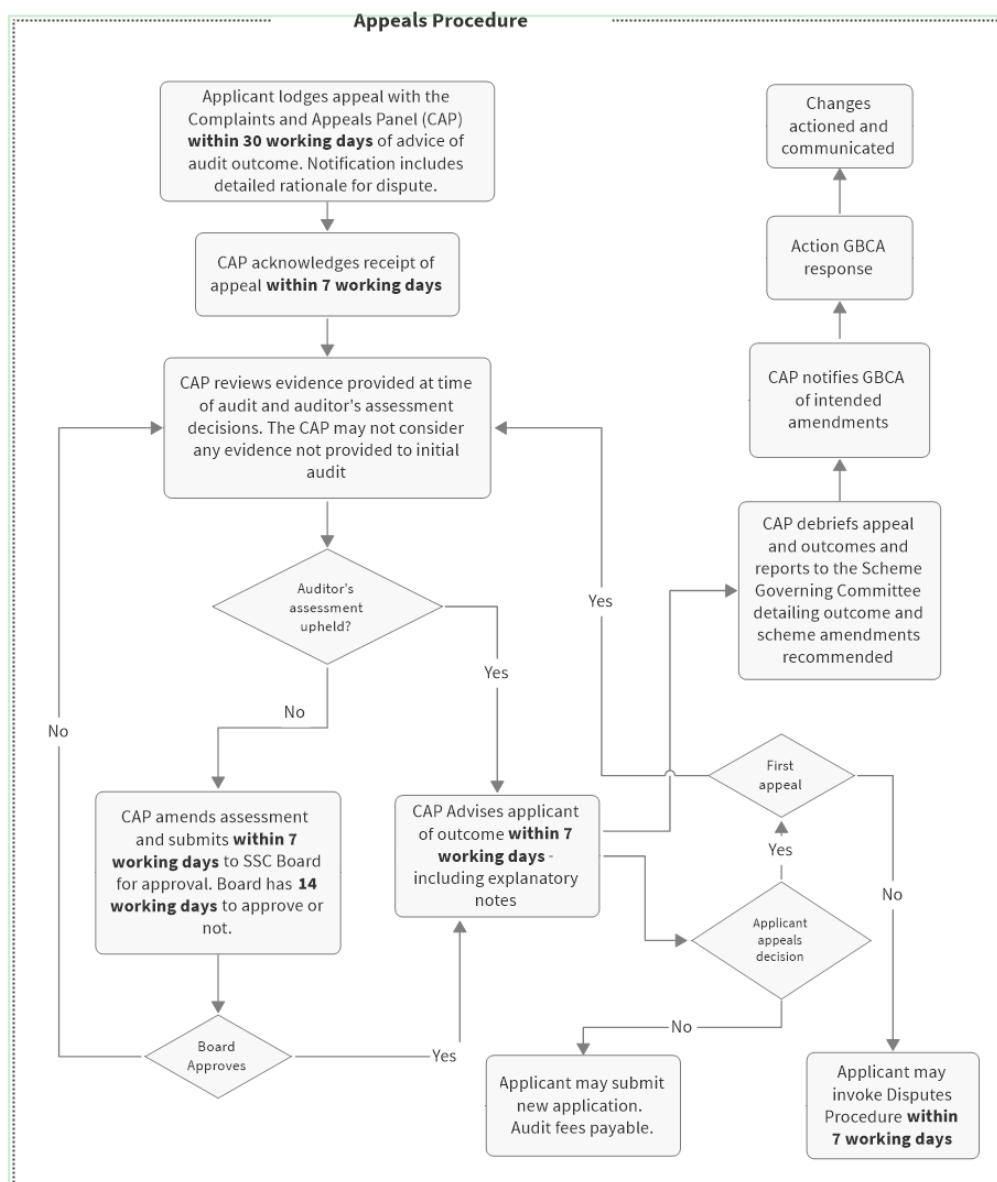


Figure 5: Appeals Procedure

The Appeals Procedure is available on the SSC website for registered users along with contact details for registering an appeal.

5. Responsible Products Value Recognition

The SSC Programme is a recognised initiative under the Green Building Councils of Australia and New Zealand (GBCA & NZGBC) Responsible Products Guidelines. Certification to each SSC Certification level have corresponding Responsible Products Values (RPVs) that meet the requirements of the Green Star Responsible Products Credits under the 'Responsible' category in the Green Star rating tools.

The recognised value of the SSC Programme (version 0.7) in terms of RPVs under the Green Star Buildings NZ rating tool is outlined below and may be subject to change, at which time this document will be updated, and all Clients advised.

SSC Certification level	Green Star Responsible Products Value (RPV)	Green Star Responsible Products Rating	Green Star Credits
Bronze	4	Can contribute towards a 'Good practice product' when combined with other initiatives	Can contribute to Credit Achievement when combined with other initiatives
Silver (With EPD)	14	Good practice products	Credit Achievement
Silver (No EPD)	10	Good practice products	Credit Achievement
Gold	18	Best practice products	Exceptional Performance

Green Star Responsible Products Values are issued by the GBCA and are subject to their terms, conditions, rules, and any further review or changes they make to their Responsible Products Guidelines or rating system.

Further information on performance under Green Star ratings and the Responsible Products Guidelines is accessible on the GBCA website: <https://new.gbca.org.au/green-star/the-responsible-products-program/> or in the Green Star Submission Guidelines.

6. Definitions and Abbreviations

Term	Definition
Applicant	An entity that has signed up to the SSC Programme but has not yet achieved certification
ASI	Australian Steel Institute
Audit Portal	The SSC on-line portal where audits are established and transacted and where records of all current and previous are kept and available.
CAR	Corrective action request pertaining to a non-conformance identified during the audit assessment
Certified Company	A Client company whose site(s) have been audited and certified under the SSC Programme
Client	The steel business or company, including the steel manufacturing or processing site(s) under management that are seeking certification to the SSC Certification Programme
EPD	Environmental Product Declaration, an independently verified and registered document that communicates transparent and comparable data and other relevant environmental information about the life-cycle environmental impact of a product
ESG	Environmental, Social and Governance: a term regarding sustainability performance of a company or organisation, specifically management of environmental and social impact
GBCA	The Green Building Council of Australia
Governing Committee	The committee overseeing the processes and procedures of the SSC Certification Programme including impartiality, appeals and complaints, and certification approval
Multi-site Organisations	Organisations seeking SSC Certification that oversee and manage multiple steel manufacturing, fabrication, or processing sites that are operated under the same NZBN
NZBN	New Zealand Business Number, used to identify companies applying for site certification
NZGBC	The New Zealand Green Building Council
Responsible Products Guidelines	GBCA's framework that outlines criteria for scoring how 'responsible' a product is and is currently used to recognise initiatives that a product or manufacturer can comply with for the purposes of contributing to a Green Star certification. For more information, visit the GBCA website: https://new.gbca.org.au/green-star/the-responsible-products-program/
Site	A steel manufacturing, fabrication, and/or processing site or facility managed by the Company or business applying for SSC certification

Term	Definition
SSA	Steel Sustainability Australia, refers to entity and business unit created by the ASI and assigned as the management body of the Steel Sustainability Australia certification programme
SSC	Steel Sustainability Council Inc
SSC Certification	Certification achieved under the Sustainable Steel Council Inc (SSC) Certification Programme
SSC Programme or the Programme	The Sustainable Steel Council Inc (SSC) certification programme
SSC website	https://www.sustainablesteel.org.nz/ssc-certification/