SCIENCE BASED TARGETS

DRIVING AMBITIOUS CORPORATE CLIMATE ACTION

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the Development and Revision of SBTi Standards

Version 2.0

October 2026

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ABOUT SBTi

The Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi) is a corporate climate action organization that enables companies and financial institutions worldwide to play their part in combating the climate crisis.

We develop standards, tools and guidance which allow companies to set greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reductions targets in line with what is needed to keep global heating below catastrophic levels and reach net-zero by 2050 at latest.

The SBTi is incorporated as a UK charity, with a subsidiary SBTi Services Limited, which hosts our target validation services. Partner organizations who facilitated SBTi's growth and development are CDP, the United Nations Global Compact, the We Mean Business Coalition, the World Resources Institute (WRI), and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF).

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VERSION CONTROL

Version	Description	Approved by	Adopted by	Publication date
1.0	Initial version of Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the Development of SBTi Standards	Technical Council	SBTi Board of Trustees	April 11, 2024
1.1	Clarification of complaints' submissions	Compliance Director Chief Technical Officer	ELT	October 3, 2024
2.0	Improved clarity on SBTi Standards System structure following launch of CNZS V2.0 and Integration of Sector specifications procedures. Alignment with the *SBTi Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the Development and Revision of SBTi Methods, Metrics and Pathways, and the Recognition of Pathways V1.0*. Clarification of Standard review cycles. Expansion of implementation processes to address urgent measures. Introduction of SBTi Standard Principles. Clarity on outsourcing & consultants. Improved consistency across SBTi technical governance documents.	Technical Council	SBTi Board of Trustees	October 30, 2026

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1. INTRODUCTION

Purpose

1. The purpose of this Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the Development and Revision of Standards V2.0 (hereafter referred to as 'this Document') is to set out the process for developing, maintaining and revising SBTi Standards.

Scope

2. This Document covers the procedure to develop or revise SBTi Foundational and Sector Standards, and Sector Specifications developed independently of SBTi Methods, Metrics and Pathways.

3. Procedures regarding the development of Methods, Metrics and Pathways under the Methods, Metrics and Pathways Framework are out of scope of this document and are governed by the SBTi SOP for the Development and Revision of Methods, Metrics and Pathways, and Recognition of Pathways V1.0 (hereafter referred to as 'SOP MMP'). For revision processes and urgent measures, the SOP MMP makes reference to the procedures outlined in this Document.

Mission and Vision

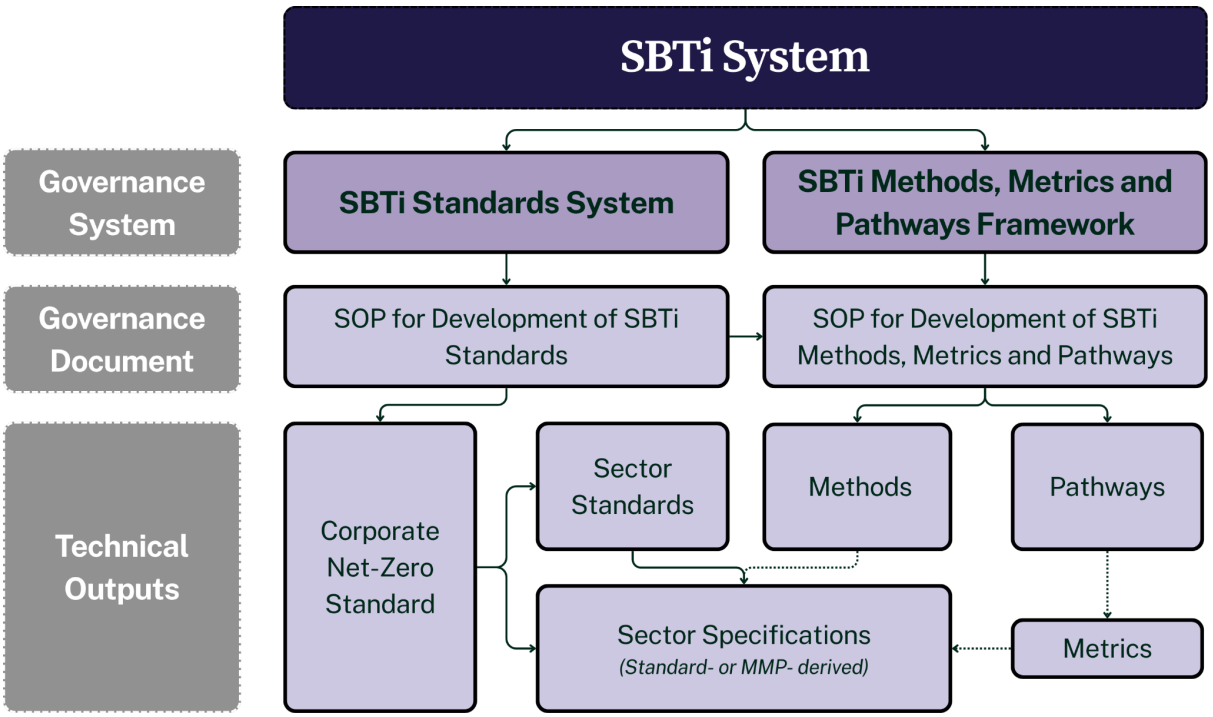
4. The development and revision of SBTi's Standards shall be informed by SBTi's mission and vision:[1]
    a. SBTi's vision is that "By 2050, the world will have transitioned towards a net-zero and equitable economy that serves the needs of the population within the limits of the planet";
    b. SBTi's mission is "to accelerate science-based corporate climate action consistent with achieving net-zero by 2050 or sooner. This will contribute to international efforts aimed at limiting temperature increase to 1.5°C by the end of the century".

Background: SBTi System

5. The SBTi System is the integrated framework of normative documents, technical resources, procedures, and governance arrangements through which the SBTi develops, maintains, and applies requirements, methods, and pathways for companies to set and take action against science-based targets.

6. The SBTi System includes the SBTi Standards System and the Methods, Metrics and Pathways framework, together with the related procedures, decision-making processes, and supporting documents that enable their development, revision, interpretation, and implementation.

[1] SBTi 2026–2030 Strategy, May 2026



SBTi Standards System

7. SBTi Standards are structured as a modular framework anchored by the Corporate Net-Zero Standard, which establishes the foundational cross-sector requirements applicable to all companies. The framework also includes Sector Standards and Sector Specifications, which establish sector-specific requirements where needed. Together, these documents comprise the SBTi Standards System.

8. The SBTi Standards System comprises the following normative documents:
   a. **Corporate Net-Zero Standard (**herein referred to as the '**Foundational Standard'):** Establishes the foundational cross-sector principles, requirements, applicability, and criteria for corporate net-zero target setting and implementation for any company worldwide in those sectors which are not covered by an SBTi Sector Standard. The Foundational Standard is the primary entry point for all companies unless otherwise specified.

   b. **Sector Standards:** A self-contained standard that establishes comprehensive requirements for those sectors with distinct ecosystems, regulatory environments, or structural deviations where the Foundational Standard may not act as an entry point. SBTi develops sector standards where distinct sector characteristics, accounting approaches, emissions sources, or transition pathways make interoperability with the Foundational Standard more complex and require a separate normative framework. The intent sections of the foundational Standard may be amended, and requirements of the Foundational Standard for emissions sources or activities may be modified, superseded or replaced, to reflect decarbonization for the sector .

c. **Sector Specifications:** Are used alongside the Foundational Standard and establish sector-specific requirements to supplement the Foundational Standard for sectors that remain highly interoperable, i.e. intent sections of the Foundational Standard apply, but require additional, modified, or superseding criteria. A Sector Specification serves as an extension of the Foundational Standard and does not constitute a standalone standard. They may be developed independently through Technical Department sector work, or concurrently with pathways development using the SOP MMP.

SBTi Standards System and Methods, Metrics and Pathways Framework

9. The SBTi Standards System – comprising the Foundational Standard, Sector Standards, and Sector Specifications – establishes the normative requirements applicable to companies, while the Methods, Metrics and Pathways Framework provides the relevant normative technical foundations necessary for setting targets.

10. Methods, Metrics and Pathways do not in themselves create normative requirements unless the standard requires use of a particular method or pathway, in which case these are considered normative. The development of all Methods, Metrics and Pathways is governed by the SOP MMP.

2. DEFINITIONS

The following definitions apply to terms used throughout this Document.

11. **Adoption:** Formal acceptance by the SBTi Board of Trustees of a document or Standard as the SBTi's, subject to publication and implementation.

12. **Approval:** Permission or authorization by the relevant SBTi decision-making body for a document, Standard, or technical output to proceed to its stated next step or use; for Standards, approval by the Technical Council authorizes presentation to the Board for adoption.

13. **Criterion:** A mandatory requirement (or collectively 'criteria', the mandatory requirements) that a company must meet to demonstrate conformity with an SBTi Standard, Sector Standard, Sector Specification, Method, or Pathway.

14. **Expert Advisory or Working Group:** A group of external technical experts with in-depth knowledge of global climate change mitigation and/or expertise in science-based target setting or sector decarbonization from diverse perspectives that provides advisory input to the SBTi in the context of a standards development process. Advisory or Working Groups may establish subgroups that focus closely on specific topics within the standard development or revision.The constitution, scope, purpose and duration of any Advisory or Working Groups is governed by a Terms of Reference (ToR), which is prepared by SBTi, approved by the Chief Technical Officer (CTO), and made publicly available.

15. **Foundational Standard:** A normative document establishing the foundational cross-sector principles, requirements, applicability, and criteria for corporate net-zero target setting and implementation for any company world-wide in those

sectors which are not covered by an SBTi Sector Standard. The Foundational Standard acts as the primary entry point for all companies unless otherwise specified.

16. **Full/extensive revision:** A revision covering the full or an extensive scope of a Standard or sector specification and results in a change to the overall scope, intent, expected outcomes or level of ambition of that normative output or a substantial part of it.

17. **Group exception:** A formally approved allowance for a defined group to depart from an existing requirement under specified circumstances or for a specified period, without changing the underlying requirement. Group exceptions may be interim measures, intended to be in place only until a standards review or revision or another relevant date to be determined by SBTi.

18. **Limited revision:** A revision that affects the scope, intent or application of a requirement but touches only one or a few interrelated criteria or a small sub-group of companies, and has no or a very limited impact on ambition or intended outcome of the criteria under revision.

19. **Method/Target-setting method:** A mathematical formula or algorithm that uses a relevant metric and eligible pathway to determine a benchmark, threshold, allocation, or desired performance level for setting and tracking a target.

20. **Metric/target-setting metric:** A quantifiable indicator used to assess, manage, compare, and communicate climate-related performance and to express the variable against which target-setting methods and pathways operate.

21. **Non-substantive revision:** A revision that does not change the intent or applicability of a Standard or instrument, does not introduce or alter normative obligations, and does not carry significant risk; it may include editorial corrections, clarifications, technical corrections, administrative updates, or other very limited changes.

22. **Normative:** Prescriptive SBTi elements or documents that contain requirements companies shall follow to conform with applicable SBTi Standards, Sector Standards, Sector Specifications, Methods, Metrics and Pathways.

23. **Pathway/mitigation pathway:** A quantitative trajectory of change in a climate-relevant variable over time, based on an internally consistent set of assumptions, and for SBTi use, consistent with science-based net-zero outcomes and applicable eligibility criteria.

24. **Project Team:** The group led by SBTi staff responsible for delivering the operational tasks required to deliver a project under the applicable SBTi procedure, potentially drawing members from multiple departments.

25. **Requirement:** A need or expectation stated in a normative SBTi document that a company must fulfil where applicable.

26. **SBTi Scientific & Technical Advisory Network (STAN)** has an SBTi Expert

Advisory function and consists of an agile, on-demand roster of external technical and climate science experts appointed in their individual capacities to provide targeted, independent evaluation of the technical foundations of the Methods, Metrics and Pathways framework. The STAN serves exclusively in an advisory capacity to ensure scientific rigour, as well as support broad consensus, and actionability; it holds no formal decision-making or governance authority. The STAN members shall strictly adhere to the ToR, SBTi Code of Conduct, conflict of interest protocols, antitrust and data handling policies, ensuring that unpublished methodologies, deliberations and draft findings remain confidential.

27. **SBTi-recognized Validation Body (hereafter referred to as 'Validation Body'):** A qualified assurance provider recognized by SBTi to perform conformity assessments of target submissions against applicable SBTi Standards; where SBTi Services is the recognized provider, it acts in this role.

28. **Sector Specification:** A normative extension to the Foundational Standard that adds, modifies, or supersedes sector-specific criteria while remaining interoperable with the Foundational Standard. It is not a standalone Standard, but each set of Sector Specifications for a sector are presented in their own Sector Specification sheet clearly outlining how they interact with the Foundational Standard.

29. **Sector Standard:** A self-contained SBTi Standard for a sector with distinct characteristics that establishes comprehensive sector-specific normative requirements for sectors with distinct ecosystems, regulatory environments or structural deviations. A Sector Standard may modify, supersede, or replace relevant Foundational Standard requirements within its scope.

30. **Standard:** A normative document established through an authorized process, that sets criteria and guidelines to provide consistent requirements and expectations within its defined scope. In this document, Standards refers to Foundational Standards and/or Sector Standards.

31. **Standard Project:** (or "project" in this Document): The development or revision of SBTi Standards, Sector Standards or Sector Specifications in the context of this Document.

32. **Substantive revision:** Those that change the intent or applicability of the Standard or instrument, or significantly impacts the manner in which entities conform with the Standard, or involve significant risk. These are categorized as full/extensive or limited-scope revisions according to their impact.

33. **Suspension**: The formal, temporary invalidation of a specific normative clause or section of an adopted Standard for all users, due to systemic or operational flaws, scientific evidence no longer supports the clause, the clause conflicts with the current scientific evidence, or it causes unintended negative outcomes for the environment or people. A suspension may serve as an interim measure until a Standard review or revision, or another relevant date to be determined by the SBTi.

34. **Technical Work Plan:** A time-bound plan of approved Technical Department projects, including development, revision, and maintenance of the SBTi System and their indicative timelines

35. **Urgent limited revision:** An urgent substantive amendment to elements of an existing Standard required to ensure the Standard's continuing relevance and effectiveness in meeting its objectives, outside of the Standard's regular revision cycle, pending further review and consultation. This process results in an update to the Standard without changing the overall structure or intended outcomes of the Standard. Urgent limited revisions are restricted to the smallest scope possible and exist only as an infrequent and exceptional measure.

36. **Urgent measures:** Measures taken by SBTi to urgently address specific and limited elements of an existing normative output or its application. Urgent measures are justified by exceptional circumstances that require time-sensitive action and preclude the use of the regular revision process, with the intent of evaluating and mitigating unintended negative consequences on any affected stakeholders. These measures include but are not limited to: urgent limited revisions, suspensions, and group exceptions.

37. **Validation Requirements:** The evidence, information, and verifiable control points required during validation to determine whether a target submission conforms with applicable SBTi Standards, Sector Specifications, Criteria Assessment Indicators, and Minimum Evidence Requirements.

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Key responsibilities for the development and approval of SBTi Standards and Sector Specifications are summarized below.

SBTi Board of Trustees

38. The Board of Trustees is the governing body responsible for managing the SBTi Charity's business.

39. In relation to the standard development process, the Board is responsible for:
    a. Formal adoption of this Document.
    b. Consideration and formal adoption of SBTi Standards and Sector Standards.
    c. Approving the SBTi Strategy and Technical Work Plan.
    d. Ensuring the integrity and credibility of the SBTi standards development, in line with its vision, mission, strategic goals, and this Document.

40. The Board reserves the right to reject a standard approved by the Technical Council and presented. The Board shall not amend the standard; it may request further elaborations, clarifications or information from the Technical Department and Technical Council, or postpone a decision. The decision will be clearly communicated to the Technical Council and be based on criteria which include, but are not limited to, a) legal considerations, b) alignment with SBTi's mission, vision,

strategy, policy and related programs, c) organizational costs, and d) timing. Relevant information regarding conflicts of interest and loyalty shall be declared, including whether any trustees' organizations have substantially contributed to the standards, before any decision about adoption is taken by the Board.

SBTi Executive Leadership Team and CEO

41. The Executive Leadership Team (ELT), led by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), is the senior management body of SBTi responsible for operational leadership and resource stewardship across the organization.

42. In relation to the standard development process, the ELT is responsible for ensuring adequate funding and resources are available for standard development and revision projects, consistent with the approved Technical Work Plan, and for assessing and mitigating technical project risks.

SBTi Technical Council

43. The SBTi Technical Council is an independent deliberation and technical decision-making body, with delegated authority from the Board, to review and approve SBTi standards and other normative documentation, according to this Document, and acts exclusively in the public interest.[2]

44. In relation to the standards development and revision process, the Technical Council is responsible for:
    a. Reviewing and deciding on the normative elements of the SBTi framework, including SBTi Standards and associated normative documents, in accordance with this Document and the Technical Council ToR.
    b. Advising the SBTi on the development and maintenance of SBTi Standards, as requested by SBTi.
    c. Engaging with the SBTi and Advisory and Working Groups, as appropriate, to support technical deliberations.
    d. Approving this Procedure for submission to the Board for final adoption.
    e. Serving as the escalation body for complaints relating to the standards development process where initial responses from the SBTi Technical Department are unsatisfactory.[3]

45. Further details on the Technical Council's governance, roles, responsibilities, operating procedures, and member obligations are provided in the Technical Council ToR and Technical Council Code of Conduct.

SBTi Technical Department

46. The SBTi Technical Department is the operational and research body led by the Chief Technical Officer (CTO) that is responsible for the development, revision and maintenance of the SBTi Standards System.

47. The Technical Department is responsible for:

[2] As per SBTi Technical Council ToR
[3] As per SBTi Complaints and Appeals Policy

a. Developing and publishing the SBTi Technical Work Plan.
b. Developing, revising and maintaining SBTi Standards and associated normative documents in accordance with the procedures set out in this Document.
c. Conducting or commissioning research and incorporating learnings from past processes and the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL system) to inform standards development.
d. Defining the stakeholder map for standards development processes and guiding the stakeholder engagement process to ensure input from target stakeholder voices.
e. Supporting the Technical Council and its sub-committees in their deliberations.
f. Convening internal feedback, piloting, and review processes and external Advisory Groups and Working Groups to inform development of a standard.
g. Managing the substantive aspects of public consultations, including reviewing and responding to stakeholder feedback, revising drafts in response to consultation, and preparing consultation response summaries.
h. Preparing implementation support materials including explanatory documentation, training materials, and responses to technical queries, including invoking procedures for formal interpretations when necessary.
i. Conducting regular reviews of SBTi standards and formally reaffirming a standard where a scheduled review concludes that no revision is necessary.

48. The CTO leads the Technical Department and, in that capacity, is responsible for ensuring that the work of the Technical Department follows this Document and meets organizational quality standards. The CTO also holds individual gate-keeping authority at key steps in the standard development process, including but not limited to providing approvals before Technical Council review. The CTO may arrange for clear delegation of some Technical Department tasks and/or process and project management oversight to other SBTi teams and/or for the delegation of his or her own responsibilities under this procedure to another SBTi staff person.

SBTi Scheme Integrity and Operations Team

49. The Scheme Integrity and Operations (SIO) team is led by the Chief Integrity & Partnerships Officer (CIPO) responsible for maintaining the integrity and consistency of SBTi's scheme governance framework. In relation to the standard development and revision process, the SIO team is responsible for:
    a. Maintaining, reviewing, and revising this Document, and submitting proposed revisions to the Technical Council for approval and the Board for adoption.
    b. Maintaining associated scheme governance policies referenced in this Document, including the Deviation and Exception Policies.
    c. Ensuring that all relevant teams and team leaders understand this Document and their responsibility in applying it.
    d. Supporting the Technical Department with interpretation and application of this and other scheme governance documents.

e. Ensuring consistency across standards and scheme policies and assessment of the implications and feasibility of standards content from the perspective of assurance, claims, interoperability, and recognition.
f. In collaboration with the Legal Department, maintaining and operating the SBTi's concerns and complaints system for standard-setting, including defined timelines for acknowledgment, investigation, and resolution of complaints, with escalation as appropriate.
g. Ensuring, by own efforts or by delegation, that records required under this Document are maintained for the minimum period outlined in the Record-keeping and accessibility section and are available for review on request.
h. For guiding periodic assessment of the effectiveness, efficiency, and compliance of the standard-setting and revision processes, as part of SBTi's MEL framework and to support organizational effectiveness more generally.

4. APPROACH TO SBTi STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT AND REVISION

Objectives

50. In general, the objective of SBTi Standards is to provide requirements to corporates and financial institutions (i.e. non-state actors) to set and implement targets to mitigate their value chain emissions and to align business practices with the transformation needed to reach net-zero emissions at the global level by 2050 or sooner, contributing to international efforts aimed at limiting temperature increase to 1.5°C by the end of the century.

51. The specific objectives for each Standard development or revision process are determined at the start of the process. These objectives are captured in internal project planning and Project Initiation Documents and in a public-facing ToR (ToR) for each Standards development or revision process.

Principles to guide SBTi technical development and decision-making processes

52. SBTi technical decision-making processes should be designed to ensure the integrity, credibility and rigour of technical decisions, while enabling decisions to be made efficiently and at the appropriate level. The following principles provide a basis for determining the process to be followed for the development and approval of SBTi technical decisions:
    a. **Integrity and impartiality:** Technical decision-making should ensure rigour, legitimacy, independence and impartiality, with appropriate mitigation of potential conflicts of interest, including those arising from internal or external financial or commercial interests to protect impartiality.
    b. **Proportionality:** The development and approval process should be proportionate to the normative impact, number of affected stakeholders, complexity and risk of the technical decision.

c. **Timeliness:** Technical development and decision-making processes should enable timely decisions that respond in an agile manner to changes in the ecosystem, unintended outcomes and unexpected circumstances, stakeholder needs and feedback, while balancing the need for appropriate rigour and credibility.
d. **Stability**: Technical decision-making should respect the importance to companies and others who rely on the Standard of ensuring stability and predictability over the short and medium-term.
e. **Transparency**: The technical decision-making process should be transparent and inclusive, with clarity on opportunities for and response to stakeholder engagement and efforts made to engage affected and interested stakeholders.
f. **Continual improvement**: Technical decision-making should be guided by an understanding of desired impact and outcomes of the normative outputs and informed by evidence-based stakeholder feedback, operational experience, and scientific evidence.

Drafting of SBTi Standards

53. SBTi Standards:
    a. Shall be drafted so that conformity with the Standard can be assessed for any entity within the scope of the SBTi Standard Framework, minimizing the need for subsequent modification or adaptation;
    b. Shall be drafted to minimize confusion and ambiguity in interpretation;
    c. May be expressed in terms of process, monitoring, performance, or outcome requirements, such that validation requirements can be generated, and validation occurs based on these;
    d. Shall state what needs to be achieved (requirements) and guidelines for adherence to the Standards, including at which point in the validation cycle these requirements apply;
    e. Shall be undertaken without bias, favoritism or partiality towards a technology provider or patented item;
    f. Shall ensure that relevant intellectual sources are appropriately attributed or cited;
    g. Shall include or reference a glossary of key terms required to guide consistent interpretation and implementation;
    h. May include components that are applicable to specific categories of users that will be identified as such.

Requirements

54. The requirements specified in SBTi Standards and Sector Specifications shall:
    a. Be developed to be applicable to entities operating in corporate and financial sectors, and entities in a specific sector or cluster of subsectors;
    b. Be consistent with the objectives and principles of SBTi Standards stated in this Document and consistent with the ToR developed for the project;
    c. Be informed by the best available science from authoritative sources, such as Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), International Energy

Agency and similar or related sources, and best practice in climate target setting and climate mitigation at the time of Standard development;

d. Include relevant quantitative and qualitative metrics to deliver on the objective of the SBTi Standards and Sector Specifications;
e. Be auditable, verifiable and/or measurable;
f. Be clearly understood by relevant stakeholders;
g. Be designed to meet or exceed the requirements in the countries where the Standard or Sector Specification is applied, including at a minimum meeting all regulatory requirements as applicable;
h. Be designed to support accurate, specific and transparent claims supported by evidence, avoiding misleading statements or claims;
i. Be developed in accordance to the process described in this Document;
j. Aim for compatibility with other relevant external standards and frameworks.

Minimum content and structure

55. SBTi Standards and Sector Specifications shall specify:
    a. The formal status of the document (i.e., whether for consultation or approved for use or withdrawn), version and change history (including process [SOP #57] and category of change [substantive/non-substantive SOP #58]);
    b. The date or period of the draft being consulted, if applicable;
    c. The approval date and, for revised versions, any applicable transition period before the updated version takes effect;
    d. The corresponding version of the SOP that has been followed;
    e. SBTi contact information;
    f. A statement to the effect that the approved English language version is authoritative and prevails in the event of inconsistency with a translation;
    g. The date by which the Standard or Sector Specification may be reviewed, which shall be no less than one year and no more than five years after its approval;
    h. A description of adherence to applicable laws and regulations;
    i. The objectives and scope of the Standard or Sector Specification; and
    j. A general description of the validation process and any other information necessary for the interpretation and application of the Standard or Sector Specification.
    k. The intended claims that may be made by validated companies, including the relevant policies they shall adhere to, where applicable.

Language & Translations

56. The working language for SBTi Standards is English. As appropriate, the SBTi shall arrange translations of SBTi Standards into languages other than English. Translated versions of a Standard are for information only. In case of doubt the official English language version of the SBTi Standard shall be deemed definitive.

5. OVERVIEW OF PROCESSES IN THIS STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

57. The following processes are outlined in this Document:
    a. **New development:** The process for developing new Foundational Standards (e.g., the SBTi Corporate Net-Zero Standard), Sector Standards, and Sector Specifications.
    b. **Revisions:** The process for making revisions to existing Standards and Sector Specifications.
    c. **Interpretations:** The process for issuing definitive or provisional interpretations of an existing requirement.
    d. **Urgent measures:** The process for making adjustments (suspensions, group exceptions, or urgent limited revisions) to normative requirements outside a normal review cycle.
    e. **Withdrawals:** The process for withdrawing a standard or other normative document.

58. Revisions may be substantive or non-substantive:
    a. **Substantive revisions** are those that change the intent or applicability of the Standard, Sector Specification or other normative output (e.g., see section 7), or involve significant risk. These are categorized as full/extensive or limited revisions according to their impact.
        i. **Full/extensive revisions:** Revisions that cover the full or an extensive scope of a Standard or Sector Specification and result in a change to the overall scope, intent, expected outcomes, or level of ambition of the normative output or a substantial part of it. These apply to SBTi Standards or Sector Specifications.
        ii. **Limited revisions:** Revisions that affect the scope, intent, or application of a requirement, but apply only to one or a few interrelated criteria, or affect a small sub-group of companies. These either have no or a very limited impact on the ambition or intended outcome of the criteria under revision. These apply to Standards, Sector Specifications, and methods, metrics and pathways.
    b. **Non-substantive revisions** are revisions that do not change the intent or applicability of a Standard or instrument, or how compliance is validated. Non-substantive revisions may be used to correct an error or make a non-normative edit, and do not carry significant risk.

59. This Document first addresses (in section 6) the development and full or extensive revision of an SBTi Standard (Foundational Standard or Sector Standard). Section 7 explains modifications to this process that are applied in the case of new development or full/extensive revision of a Sector Specification. The remaining sections explain the process for other revisions, urgent measures, and withdrawals.

6. DEVELOPMENT OR FULL/EXTENSIVE REVISION OF AN SBTi STANDARD

Process overview

60. The process for the development or full or extensive revision an SBTi standard has the following general steps:
    a. Background research
    b. Project initiation
    c. Drafting, public consultation, and feasibility assessment
    d. Approval and adoption
    e. Implementation

    Following the process and throughout the life of the standard, SBTi undertakes:
    f. Monitoring, evaluation and learning
    g. Regular reviews of the standard

Background research

61. The nature and timing of the research undertaken for each standard development or full or extensive revision process will vary and include the collection of input from internal and external sources. This work is typically undertaken by the Technical Department; it may be outsourced externally under Technical Department management, however oversight and the SBTi's final technical decision-making authority remain with the Technical Department, in alignment with this Document.

62. The SBTi compiles and analyses relevant data and information to inform the development or revision project. This includes, at a minimum::

    a. Learnings from monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) activities, including own and independent researcher assessments of the effectiveness of the SBTi standards, outcomes of implementation, and the occurrence of any unintended negative effects;
    b. Assessments of company and financial institution conformity with, or progress against, SBTi standards;
    c. Feedback received from companies, validation bodies, and other stakeholders, particularly in relation to the effectiveness, implementation, and scope of SBTi standards;
    d. Any urgent substantive revisions, and any identified needs for non-urgent substantive revisions, since the last revision of the standard, and any list of needed non-urgent revisions, clarifications, interpretations and guidance;
    e. External research and industry best practices, including assessments of emerging sustainability risks and opportunities; and
    f. Changes to relevant legislation or science across the scope or intended of the standard.

63. In addition, the Technical Department shall review relevant SBTi standards, as well as consider related external standards, frameworks, and initiatives, to identify areas of overlap, promote alignment and consistency, avoid unnecessary duplication, and ensure coherence with existing good practices.

64. Throughout the standards project, the Technical Department may produce or compile internal or external research papers or other research-focused technical outputs to feed into development of the draft standard.

Project Initiation

Project Scoping

65. The Technical Department initiates a project to develop or revise a standard based on the results of a review of an existing SBTi standard [Regular Review] or on an identified gap or need for a new normative technical output. Assessments of the need for the revision of a standard, or the development of a new standard may come from:
    a. A new strategy or theory of change;
    b. Routine work planning within the Technical Department;
    c. Regular standard review and revision cycles;
    d. Monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) activities;
    e. Complaints, concerns, and queries regarding a standard.

66. The Technical Department develops a Project Initiation Document that shall include:
    a. The rationale for the proposed project;
    b. The project's scope, objectives, and expected impact;
    c. A description of the identified need and an assessment of whether it can be addressed through the development or revision of a standard
    d. An assessment of relevant risks, proposed mitigation measures, where appropriate;
    e. Any available research and objective evidence supporting the project, and
    f. The proposed SBTi Project Team.

    For a revision process, the Project Initiation Document shall indicate the parts of the Standards that are subject to revision.

67. The relevant Heads of the Technical Department and CTO shall evaluate the Project Initiation Document according to at least the following criteria and decide whether to recommend approval of the project to SBTi's Executive Leadership Team:
    a. *Strategic alignment*: Alignment of the project with SBTi's mission, vision and strategic goals, and the objective of SBTi standards;
    b. *Impact*: Assessment of the impact of the project in terms of addressing greenhouse gas emissions from key sectors or activities;
    c. *Need*: Assessment of whether the project addresses a significant gap in available standards or identified problem with existing SBTi standards;
    d. *Risks*: Evaluation of potential risks related to the development or implementation of the standard, unintended consequences, threats to the achievement of the SBTi objectives and mission, and proposals on how to mitigate or correct them;
    e. *Feasibility*: Assessment of the operational and technical feasibility of implementing the project based on, amongst others, availability of funding and resources and availability of underlying emission pathways and methods.

68. The CEO may decide to consult the Board of Trustees before approval of the project.

Project Terms of Reference

69. Once a project receives internal approval to proceed, the Project Team shall develop a ToR for the development or revision of the standard. The ToR shall include:
    a. The proposed scope of the standard and the intended geographic application;
    b. An explanation and justification of the need for the standard or standard revision (including how the proposed standard complements and does not duplicate existing standards);
    c. The impact in environmental, and where relevant and applicable, social, and economic terms that the standard seeks to achieve and how those are linked to SBTi's intended outcomes and theory of change;
    d. An assessment of potential risks in implementing the standard and how to mitigate these, including:
        i. Identification of factors that could have a negative impact on the ability of the standard to achieve its outcomes;
        ii. Unintended consequences that could arise from its implementation;
        iii. Possible corrective actions that could be taken to address these potential risks.
    e. The intended claims that the standard may substantiate;
    f. A summary of the intended approach to stakeholder engagement [SOP #73] and the planned approach to pilot testing and/or otherwise testing the feasibility and auditability of the standard [SOP #89 - 91].
    g. An overview of the technical decision-making procedures for the project (consistent with the requirements of this Document), including how decisions are made and by whom at various steps of the process
    h. The Project Team may engage stakeholders or technical partners in the development of the ToR and shall reference any stakeholder input in its development.

70. The draft standard ToR shall be shared with the Technical Council for approval, after review and approval by the CTO and CIPO.

71. Projects shall be announced on the SBTi website together with a summary of the project process, including the final ToR, timelines, and opportunities for stakeholder contribution.

72. The Project Team may prepare additional explanatory documentation to support stakeholder understanding of the draft standard during the consultation.

Stakeholder mapping and engagement

73. During this project initiation phase, the Project Team shall develop or update a stakeholder engagement plan outlining the strategy for involving stakeholders and using stakeholder input throughout the project. The plan will include:

a. a stakeholder analysis to identify, based on the project's scope, stakeholder groups that have an interest in or could be affected by the project.
b. stakeholder participation goals and measures for tracking engagement with groups of stakeholders, which can be evaluated over time with the goal of achieving broad and balanced participation in the project and reaching underrepresented stakeholders.
c. an updated stakeholder contact list covering targeted stakeholder groups, including underrepresented and potentially disadvantaged stakeholder groups where relevant, as well as representatives of organizations responsible for related standards and frameworks.
d. an accessible mechanism, available throughout the project's duration, on the SBTi website that defines clear project contact routes and allows new stakeholders to independently register their interest and opt-in to the project's contact list.
e. methods of engagement (e.g., consultations, workshops, surveys, working groups, piloting, focus groups, direct outreach, open comment periods) and the timeline for engagement activities. The SBTi has flexibility to adopt the forms of stakeholder engagement it deems most appropriate for achieving the desired stakeholder input and representation for each standard development or revision process, provided that the overall approach respects the stakeholder consultation periods and other requirements specified by this Document.
f. a plan for informing all stakeholders via all relevant communication channels of the intention to develop or revise a standard, direct them to the information that is available on the SBTi website, and encourage their participation in the process, and
g. a plan for how stakeholder inputs will be balanced, assessed, and counted to ensure inputs based on quality, equality and evidence of representativeness, as well as scientific alignment and usability.

74. The Project Team may choose to include Advisory or Working Groups as part of the stakeholder engagement plan. An advisory or working group is a group of external technical experts with in-depth knowledge of global climate change mitigation and/or expertise in science-based target setting or sector decarbonization from diverse perspectives that provides advisory input to the SBTi in the context of a standards development process. Advisory or Working Groups may establish subgroups that focus closely on specific topics within the standard development or revision.The constitution, scope, purpose and duration of any advisory or working groups is governed by a ToR, which is prepared by the SBTi, approved by the CTO, and made publicly available.

75. The Project Team may engage partners or external parties to run stakeholder engagement activities and gather stakeholder input on its behalf. These activities, the partners and parties involved, and the process through which resulting stakeholders will be fed into the public consultation process will be publicly disclosed in the project ToR or as part of broader project documentation publicly available to all stakeholders. Even when partners and external partners contribute to stakeholder engagement, SBTi remains responsible for monitoring and achieving,

across all stakeholder engagement activities, the stakeholder engagement and input goals for the standards development or revision project.

Drafting, public consultation, and feasibility assessment

Drafting

76. The Project Team drafts the new or revised standard, following the principles and requirements established in section 4.

77. Some drafting work may be outsourced to partners, consultants, or experts, under Technical Department management and oversight. In all cases the Technical Department remains responsible for the full draft and for ensuring that public consultation and technical decision-making processes meet the requirements of this Document.

78. When a draft standard is ready for public consultation, the Project Team prepares the documentation for discussion and approval by the Technical Council that includes:
    a. The project ToR.
    b. A preliminary draft of the standard to be submitted to consultation.
    c. The stakeholder engagement plan, including the engagement approaches to be used.
    d. Any relevant supporting documentation that explains and justifies the proposed requirements of the standard. This may include research papers, landscape analysis, feasibility studies and others.

79. After the documentation has been approved by the CTO in consultation with the ELT, it shall be submitted to the Technical Council.

80. The Technical Council assesses whether the draft standard is ready for public consultation. Considerations include:
    a. Whether the draft is aligned with the Principles of SBTi Standards [SOP #52], Drafting of Standards [SOP #53] and Requirements [SOP #54],
    b. Has followed an appropriate research and development process,
    c. Aligns with the project ToR scope and objectives, and
    d. Will satisfy the stakeholder outreach objectives.
    e. Public consultation for the development or revision of a standard may commence only after the relevant consultation draft (e.g., first, second, or any subsequent consultation draft) has been approved by the Technical Council. The Technical Council may suggest questions to include in the upcoming round of public consultation.

Public consultation

81. The public consultation shall be open to all, aiming to gather input from a balanced and diverse group of stakeholders, with knowledge or an interest in the subject matter, that reflects the viewpoints of different regions as well as different actors within the climate action ecosystem. The SBTi shall also proactively seek stakeholder contributions and provide appropriate opportunities to contribute and

will monitor achievement of the engagement goals set out in the stakeholder engagement plan.

82. The public consultation phase for a new standard shall include at least one round of 60 calendar days for comment submissions, and a second round of consultation of at least 30 calendar days. For a full or extensive revision, one consultation period of at least 30-60 days is required.

83. Where substantive, unresolved issues persist after the consultation round(s), or where insufficient feedback was received, the Project Team shall carry out additional rounds of public and/or targeted consultation, as deemed necessary.

84. If unresolved issues persist, the Project Team may also choose to:
    a. address controversial requirements as recommendations rather than normative requirements in the standard, or
    b. suggest a rescoping of the standard, in order for the specific issues to be addressed in a future version of the standard.

    These approaches enable further research and feedback on the topic/s, while allowing the rest of the standard to continue its development, approval and publication process. The re-scoped standard shall satisfy SOP clauses #53 and #54.

85. During public consultation, the Project Team is responsible for:
    a. Publishing the draft SBTi Standard for stakeholder consultation on the SBTi website, together with the tools and opportunities for collecting stakeholder input;
    b. Ensuring that the tools for collecting stakeholder input include secure channels, allowing stakeholders the option to submit their feedback confidentially upon request;
    c. Notifying stakeholders, via all relevant communication channels, of the public consultation, inviting comments on a new or revised draft standard, and keeping stakeholders informed of consultation timelines and potential changes to it;
    d. Monitoring participation and carrying out an analysis of the number and variety of stakeholders that have submitted comments, and determining whether comments have been received from stakeholders that are representative of all the key groups identified in SBTi's initial stakeholder analysis, including any groups that may be considered underrepresented or under-engaged;
    e. Addressing barriers faced by stakeholder groups (e.g., Small and medium-sized enterprises "SMEs" in certain regions, local communities, disadvantaged groups) who have been under-engaged or under-represented and proactively seek their contributions;
    f. Providing, where possible and considered appropriate by SBTi, translations of the public consultation documents in relevant languages; and
    g. Recording and classifying comments received in order to facilitate analysis and response to the comments.

86. At the end of each public consultation phase, the Project Team is responsible for:

a. Making publicly available all comments received during the consultation or, at a minimum, accurate summaries of these comments, along with an explanation of how each material issue was considered;
b. Notifying those who submitted comments that consultation results and responses have been published.
c. Analysing and considering the feedback in redrafting the standard, following the approach outlined in the stakeholder engagement plan.

87. SBTi may redact comments when there are reasonable grounds to do so, e.g., when there is a misuse of the public consultation (e.g., submission of hateful comments), or if it is necessary to protect personal data or other confidential information.

88. The Technical Department may seek feedback from the Technical Council on the consultation feedback received, possible risks and mitigating measures.

Feasibility assessment

89. When there is significant untested content in a new standard and/or there are significant changes introduced during standards revisions, the Project Team assesses the feasibility and auditability of the proposed or revised standard during the drafting and consultation phase. A basic feasibility assessment would include asking assurance providers to review the standard for feasibility of validation or auditing. New standards and full extensive revisions shall have a thorough assessment that looks at applicability or relevance of the requirements in different company settings, and shall include pilot testing.

90. The Project Team may issue a public call for, or invite relevant companies to, voluntarily support piloting the standard or validation processes or otherwise supporting feasibility or auditability assessments for the draft or revised standard.

91. Inputs from feasibility or auditability assessments and from any pilot testing may inform adjustments to the draft, if needed, and be summarized in the Basis for Conclusions report.

Approval and adoption

Technical Council approval

92. When the CTO decides that a standard is in its final draft form, the Project Team prepares a Basis for Conclusions report that:
    a. Summarizes the development process to date, demonstrates how the approved procedures have been implemented, and includes a clear description of any departure from the approved procedure together with the justification for any such departure;
    b. Explains the main technical issues and concerns raised during the process, and explains how these have been responded to, and how the standard conforms to SBTi principles and drafting [SOP #52 - #54].
    c. Includes an accurate summary of all comments received during the last period of consultation and feasibility assessments, if performed, and an

explanation of how each material issue was considered and taken into account in the final draft of the standard.

93. The Technical Council votes to approve the final draft of the standard or standard revision, following procedures established in the Technical Council ToR.

94. If the vote is not passed, then the Technical Council shall document its concerns and specify what actions it considers necessary to address these concerns.

95. When the Technical Council has approved a final draft, the Chair shall determine, in consultation with the CTO, what further non-substantive work, if any, is required before the draft standard is ready to be finalized for publication.

Board of Trustees Adoption

96. Once the Technical Council approves the standard, the CEO and CTO, on behalf of the Technical Council, submit the final draft standard and relevant documentation to the Board for consideration and formal adoption.

97. If the Board determines that this Document has not been fully adhered to, or that the proposed standard is not aligned with Board decision criteria [SOP #40] or project ToR, it shall document its concerns and specify what actions it considers necessary to address these concerns. The Board communicates this to the Technical Council's Chair and Vice Chair. The Chair and Vice Chair then determine with the CTO what actions should be taken. Any resulting changes to the standard shall be approved by the Technical Council [SOP #93] before the standard is resubmitted to the Board for final adoption.

98. The proposed standard shall become an official SBTi Standard only upon formal adoption by the Board of Trustees.

Implementation

Editing and publication

99. Once a final draft standard has been formally adopted, it is edited to ensure clarity and alignment with minimum content and structure requirements [SOP #55].

100. Non-substantive changes to a draft standard that are made at the editing stage are reviewed and approved by the Head of the relevant team within the Technical Department.

101. The SBTi Standard, together with any associated guidance, explanatory materials, and (in the case of a revision) a summary of the main changes from the previous version, shall be published on the SBTi website and made available for free download in a timely manner.

102. The publication shall be announced through the SBTi website and other relevant communication channels. The new or revised standard and relevant accompanying documents will be freely available and will be shared with the Validation Body.

Transition period

103. SBTi shall establish a transition period before a new or revised Standard becomes effective.

104. Where applicable, a transition period shall be provided for entities with validated targets, targets under validation, or active commitments to allow time to achieve conformity with the revised standard.

105. The transition period, including its effective date and any transition arrangements, shall be published on the SBTi website.

106. SBTi may provide guidance and/or training across relevant stakeholder groups and regions for which the new or revised standard is relevant.

107. SBTi will establish internal procedures for responding to stakeholder queries about the new standard in a timely manner.

Monitoring, evaluation and learning

108. Once a project has been finalized, the Project Team shall evaluate the project implementation against the key elements of the Project Initiation Document, which includes but is not limited to, scope, justification, objectives, deliverables, expected timelines, and a detailed resource plan.

109. Improvement actions related to procedures and organization, templates, and documents, as well as staff and responsibilities may be identified as necessary. Lessons learned from the project shall be shared within the SBTi and with the Technical Council.

110. Throughout the life of the standard, SBTi shall monitor and evaluate the adoption, reach, use and effectiveness of the standard in achieving its objectives. This includes collecting feedback from stakeholders, validation bodies and relevant teams supporting entities in conforming to the Standards. Feedback from this monitoring, evaluation, and learning process will inform future review and revision of the standards.

111. Once a new or revised standard has been published, stakeholders may submit feedback through contact mechanisms presented on the SBTi website. SBTi shall develop internal procedures to continuously collect, record and acknowledge receipt of stakeholder feedback for consideration, at a minimum, in the next scheduled review or revision of the standard.

Regular Review

112. Within a maximum of five years and a minimum of one year from the publication date of a new SBTi Standard (or a standard that has undergone a full or extensive revision), SBTi shall oversee a formal review process to assess feedback received

on the standard, experience with adoption and use, and the standard's continuing relevance and effectiveness in meeting its objectives.

113. SBTi shall track and take into consideration the number and materiality of any urgent measures taken, repeated stakeholder complaints or concerns received, and other indications of problems with (part of) the standard and its implementation. These will inform the need for a revision before the end of the 5 year cycle.

114. If the review concludes that no revision is necessary, the SBTi shall formally reaffirm the Standard and publicly communicate the rationale for that decision.

115. If the review concludes that a revision is necessary, the SBTi shall follow the process for revisions outlined in this Document.

7. DEVELOPMENT OR FULL OR EXTENSIVE REVISION OF A SECTOR SPECIFICATION

116. This section defines the procedure for the new development or full or extensive revision of SBTi Sector Specifications. A sector specification shall be developed when a sector necessitates sector-specific criteria to functionally apply the Foundational Standard while maintaining overall alignment.

Determining the process to follow

117. If the development or revision of sector specifications is not prompted by or associated with the concurrent development or revision of a metric, method, or pathway, the project will follow the requirements of this Document.

118. If the need for the sector specification arises during the development of a new method or pathway under the SOP MMP; and the substantive normative criteria of the sector specification are derived from or directly dependent on the technical outputs of that pathway development process, then the development, review, and approval of the sector specification shall follow the pathway process set out in the SOP MMP. In this case:
    a. the process shall provide for a single combined round of public consultation, and
    b. a single Technical Council approval decision, covering both the pathway and the sector specification.

    In this case, Technical Council approval of the combined outputs satisfies the approval requirement for the sector specification.

119. Where a sector specification combines pathway-driven content with criteria that independently modify the Foundational Standard AND go beyond what the pathway outputs alone determine, the Technical Department shall assess which element is the primary driver for the development or revision of the sector specification. This will be made explicit in designing and justifying the consultation and approval process in the Project Initiation Document and ToR.

The process may draw from the processes in this document AND the SOP MMP. The ToR in this case will be approved by the CIPO in addition to the CTO.

Approach to the development and revision of sector specifications

120. The development or full or extensive revision of sector specifications generally follows the principles and approach outlined in section 4, with a few additions:
    a. Sector specifications shall utilize the Foundational Standard as the primary entry point for users and shall not duplicate general normative requirements, background, or intent already covered by the Foundational Standard.
    b. The content of a sector specification shall be restricted to criteria that add to, supersede, or modify the Foundational Standard. This includes, but is not limited to: applicability thresholds, modified GHG accounting requirements, sector-specific metrics, modified options for applicable target pathways, and altered mandatory target coverage.

Process for development and full or extensive revision

121. The process for the development and revision of sector specifications shall follow the steps outlined in section 6. However, in keeping with the principle of proportionality, the process for sector specifications may be less extensive than the process for the development or full or extensive revision of foundational or sector standards. The process shall meet or exceed the following minimum requirements:
    a. **Stakeholder consultation period**: At least one round, for a minimum of 30 calendar days. Inclusion of a feasibility assessment.
    b. **Terms of reference:** The ToR is approved by the CTO, after the CIPO and the Technical Council has an opportunity to review and comment.
    c. **Approval of drafts and final:** The Technical Council approves the consultation and final drafts, following the procedures outlined in this Document including the preparation of an abbreviated Basis for Conclusions report.
    d. **Board adoption**: No Board adoption required.
    e. **Transparency and public information**: Stakeholders shall have access to the same types of information about the process and the draft and final outputs of the project as required by this Document for new standards development or full or extensive revision.

122. The ToR for the project shall cover all elements outlined in SOP clause #69, including but not limited to explaining the approach to public consultation and the technical decision-making to be applied for the project.

8. REVISIONS OF STANDARDS AND SECTOR SPECIFICATIONS

123. Revisions of SBTi Standards and Sector Specifications may be substantive or non-substantive, and of limited or extensive scope. Procedures for the revision generally follow the same steps as outlined above for new development or full or extensive revision. However, in keeping with the principle of proportionality (SOP #52), the process for revisions will vary based on the extent and implications of the revisions.

Substantive revisions

124. The SBTi may determine that there is a need for a substantive revision to an SBTi Standard or Sector Specification. Substantive revisions are expected to follow a scheduled review and/or be consolidated into an annual revision cycle, in order to provide stability for users of the standard and to facilitate the updating of related documents, tools, and communications vehicles.

125. Substantive revisions may include, but are not limited to, the following:
    a. *Introduction of new requirements*: The addition of new criteria, obligations, or expectations that companies shall meet. These changes may expand the scope or introduce new compliance points within the document.
    b. *Modification of existing requirements*: Revisions that alter the meaning, scope, or intent of existing requirements due to critical changes in accepted scientific thinking or impact evaluations. These changes can tighten, relax, or redirect how a requirement is interpreted or applied and can also affect what is considered compliant or non-compliant under the Standard.
    c. *Removal of requirements*: The deletion of existing provisions or requirements that previously applied. This may reduce the obligations of companies or address unintended effects on achieving the Standard's intent.
    d. *Methodological or technical changes*: Updates that introduce new methodologies, or adjust thresholds or metrics in a way that affects implementation or outcomes.
    e. *Scope expansion or reduction*: Changes that significantly alter the scope of the document, such as applying to new sectors, geographies, activities, or stakeholder groups or removing existing ones.
    f. *Introduction of new definitions or terminology with substantive impact*: The addition or modification of terms that influence the interpretation of key concepts or requirements within the document.

126. To prepare for a substantive revision, the Technical Department shall review this Document and determine whether and why the proposed revisions are full/extensive revisions [SOP #58a.i] or are limited revisions [SOP #58a.ii] and which parts of the SBTi Standard or Sector Specification that are subject to revision. This determination and its rationale shall be shared with the Technical Council Chair and Vice Chair.

127. Full or extensive revisions shall follow the process outlined in section 6. The process for more limited revisions shall follow the same steps, in an abbreviated fashion. The CTO may shorten and simplify the project initiation process for limited revisions. The drafting, consultation, approval and publication process for limited revisions shall meet or exceed the following minimum requirements:

a. **Stakeholder consultation period**: A minimum of a 30-day public comment period or public consultation period shall be applied.
b. **Terms of reference:** The CTO approves the ToR, after the Technical Council Chair and Vice Chair have an opportunity to review and comment.
c. **Approval of drafts and final**: The CTO approves the consultation draft and final draft, after reviewing an abbreviated Basis for Conclusions report. The CTO and the Chair may jointly decide to consult the Technical Council (or a Technical Council sub-committee) or seek approval of the Technical Council on limited revisions that are particularly controversial or risky to SBTi or its mission, that combine several limited revisions or different types of urgent revision, or where the Chair or Vice Chair does not agree that the revision is limited.
d. **Board adoption**: No Board adoption required.
e. **Transparency and public information**: Stakeholders will have access to the same types of information about the process and outcomes (albeit in abbreviated format) and to the draft and final outputs of the project as are required for new standards development or full or extensive revision. This includes publishing the ToR on the website and information about opportunities for stakeholders to participate in the public comment period.

Non-substantive revisions

128. The SBTi may determine that there is a need for a non-substantive revision to an SBTi Standard or sector specification. Non-substantive revisions are expected to be consolidated into an annual or semi-annual revision cycle, in order to provide stability for users of the standard and to facilitate the updating of related documents, tools, and communications vehicles.

129. A non-exhaustive list of examples of non-substantive revisions includes:
    a. *Minor changes*: Minor alterations, edits, or updates to the document. These changes typically include correcting typographical errors, formatting inconsistencies, grammatical issues, or other editorial improvements.
    b. *Clarifications*: Provide an informative explanation of the intent of a requirement of an SBTi Standard, clearer or more concise language, improve the organization or structure of the document, or enhance readability without introducing new substantive requirements.
    c. *Technical inconsistencies*: Correcting factual inaccuracies, references, or citations within the document. These corrections ensure the accuracy and reliability of the information presented without modifying the document's main content.
    d. *Editorial or presentational changes*: Improving the document's visual presentation, layout, or style. These changes aim to enhance the document's readability, consistency, or aesthetic appeal without altering its substantive content.
    e. *Administrative updates*: Administrative changes, such as updating contact information, revising publication dates, or modifying reference numbers. These updates ensure the document remains current and aligned with administrative requirements or organizational policies.

f. *Minimal impact*: Non-substantive revisions have minimal impact on the document's overall requirements, obligations, or compliance. They do not introduce new obligations or remove obligations, change essential provisions, or significantly affect the document's intended purpose or application.
g. *Simplification or harmonization*: Simplify or harmonize the language or terminology used in the document.
h. *Consistency updates:* Maintain alignment and consistency following non-substantive changes to the Foundational Standard.

130. Non-substantive revisions do not follow the process outlined in section 6. They do not require a full Project Initiation Document, a ToR, or a public consultation period. Non-substantive revisions shall be approved by the CTO. Approval of the Technical Council and adoption by the Board are not required.

131. When there is reasonable doubt about whether a revision constitutes a non-substantive revision, an interpretation, or a limited revision, the CTO shall consult the CIPO and Chair and Vice Chair of the Technical Council to help inform this decision.

132. Any non-substantive changes shall be noted to stakeholders in the next revision cycle and published in a list of changes on the SBTi website.

133. The Chair and Vice Chair of the Technical Council will be informed of non-substantive revisions before publication.

Effect on review and revision cycles

134. Non-substantive revisions and limited substantive revisions do not affect the regular review and revision cycle but do require a new version number (e.g., V1.1) of the relevant Standard, to be issued and published on the SBTi website.

9. INTERPRETATIONS

135. An interpretation is a formally issued normative explanation of the intent or application of an existing requirement used to resolve an ambiguity or gap where the outcome affects conformity assessment, without introducing new requirements, or removing or substantively modifying the existing requirements.

136. Interpretations may be provisional if the SBTi identifies that the interpretation may need to be adjusted at a future date to align with an expected development (e.g., an upcoming regulatory change or update to the GHG Protocol Standard).

137. An interpretation shall not introduce, remove or modify a requirement, alter the scope or threshold of an existing requirement, or otherwise substantively change the obligations established by an adopted SBTi Standard, Sector Specification, or other normative output. Where the proposed outcome would have such an effect, the matter shall be addressed through the applicable revision procedure.

138. The need for an interpretation may be identified by the SBTi at any time. Reasons for issuing an interpretation may include, but are not limited to:
    a. Recurring queries received through contact mechanisms.
    b. Inconsistent application by Validation Bodies.
    c. Deviations or exceptions that indicate a generally applicable ambiguity.

139. The CTO in consultation with the Technical Department, shall decide when it is necessary to initiate an interpretation of an existing normative requirement in any SBTi Standard, Sector Specification, or other normative output.

140. The Technical Department is responsible for documenting the rationale for issuing an interpretation and for ensuring consistent decisions and boundaries between interpretations, limited revisions, and non-substantive revisions. The documented rationale, including the reasons for treating the matter as an interpretation, shall be shared with the Technical Council Chair and Vice Chair before drafting begins. When there is reasonable doubt about whether an interpretation is the appropriate route to take , the CTO shall consult the CIPO and the Chair and Vice Chair of the Technical Council to help inform this decision.

141. To initiate an interpretation, the Technical Department develops an Interpretation Paper that shall include a draft of the interpretation, a clear rationale for the interpretation, a risk assessment, and the proposed timing and decision-making approach.

142. The CTO shall inform the Technical Council Chair and Vice Chair of the planned interpretation. The CTO may decide to consult the Technical Council Chair and Vice Chair, or relevant Technical Council members on the substance of the interpretation during the drafting process.

143. Unless otherwise agreed with the Technical Council Chair, the final draft of the interpretation shall be approved by the CTO, after agreed internal reviews. The final Interpretation shall be shared with the Technical Council Chair and Vice Chair for information prior to publication on the SBTi website. Board adoption is not required.

144. Only an interpretation approved in accordance with this procedure and formally published by the SBTi has the status of an SBTi interpretation. Informal correspondence, technical-query responses, presentations, FAQs or other staff communications do not constitute interpretations and shall not establish normative precedent.

145. Approved interpretations shall be published in a publicly accessible format on the SBTi website and communicated to Validation Bodies and other affected stakeholders to support consistent application of SBTi Standards.

146. All interpretations shall be recorded and reviewed as part of the next applicable review or revision of the relevant SBTi Standard, Sector Specification, Method,

Metric, or Pathway. The SBTi shall determine whether each interpretation should be incorporated into the Standard, superseded or withdrawn.

10. URGENT MEASURES

147. Urgent measures may be taken by the SBTi to address time sensitive issues with specific and limited elements of a Standard, Sector Specification or Methods, Metrics and Pathways or its application. In keeping with the principles of timeliness and proportionality (SOP #52), the process for urgent measures is simplified and abbreviated.

Types of urgent measures

148. Urgent measures include:
    a. Urgent limited revision: An urgent substantive amendment to elements of an existing Standard required to ensure the Standard's continuing relevance and effectiveness in meeting its objectives, outside of the Standard's regular revision cycle, pending further review and consultation. This process results in an update to the Standard without changing the overall structure or intended outcomes of the Standard. Urgent limited revisions are restricted to the smallest scope possible and exist only as an infrequent and exceptional measure.
    b. Suspension: The formal, temporary invalidation of a specific normative clause or section of an adopted Standard for all users, due to systemic or operational flaws, scientific evidence no longer supports the clause, the clause conflicts with the current scientific evidence, or it causes unintended negative outcomes for the environment or people. A suspension may serve as an interim measure until a Standard review or revision, or another relevant date to be determined by the SBTi.
    c. Group exception: A formally approved allowance for a defined group to depart from an existing requirement under specified circumstances or for a specified period, without changing the underlying requirement. Group exceptions may be interim measures, intended to be in place only until a standards review or revision or another relevant date to be determined by SBTi.

Grounds for urgent measures

149. An urgent measure may be taken where waiting for a review (generally annual) process, or the regular revision process would cause serious, avoidable harm or where continuing to apply the provision would:
    i. Require companies or Validation Bodies to apply a requirement that has unintended legal or structural barriers to implementation, or is scientifically unsound;
    ii. Lead to actions, validations or public claims that would be difficult to correct later; or
    iii. Cause ongoing damage to the SBTi's credibility that would grow before a regular revision could be completed.

150. Possible grounds for urgent measures could include :

a. **Sudden threat to integrity and credibility:** A sudden development means continued use of the provision is undermining, or is about to undermine, trust in the SBTi's processes, impartiality or scientific rigour.
b. **Sudden legislative, regulatory or standard-setting developments:** New or updated national, regional or international legislation, regulation, standards or obligations have come into force, or will do so shortly, and complying with the provision would mean breaching them.
c. **Counterproductive effect on emissions:** Evidence shows the provision is producing no emissions benefit, or a negative one, and further targets validated under it would lock that outcome in.
d. **Incompatibility with the latest climate science:** A significant development in authoritative science or accounting frameworks (e.g. IPCC, GHG Protocol) makes the provision materially misaligned, and targets validated against it would stay misaligned for their full duration.
e. **Critical unintended negative consequences:** Evidence shows the provision is causing critical unintended harm or reflects a systemic flaw, such as enabling greenwashing, rewarding ineffective reductions, or pulling resources away from more effective climate action.
f. **Unforeseen external events or infeasibility.** An unforeseen external event (e.g. war or pandemic or force majeure), or evidence from stakeholders, shows the provision is no longer feasible to implement in one or more sectors or regions, so affected companies cannot set or keep validated targets.
g. **Critical gaps or ambiguities.** A critical gap or ambiguity in a Standard or normative output affects how it is applied or how conformity is assessed, and cannot be resolved through an interpretation.
h. **Identification of unintended errors or oversights that prohibit use of the** SBTi Standard, Sector Specification or other normative output, during the first year after publication

151. Issues that do not meet these conditions are handled through a scheduled review and/or are consolidated into an annual revision cycle. This includes revisions needed to address gradual changes in the science, general implementation difficulties and low adoption.

Process for urgent measures

152. SBTi may determine that there is a need for an urgent measure based on emerging evidence or concerns from stakeholders, technical experts, or the SBTi's regular monitoring activities.

153. The Technical Department evaluates the supporting evidence for the urgent measure and creates a draft ToR for the proposed measure. To ensure the process remains transparent, credible, inclusive, and impartial, the ToR shall include:
    a. The choice of urgent measure (limited revision, suspension, or group exception) and the effective period
    b. A clear rational for the choice and confirmation that the measure is restricted to the tightest scope possible;
    c. A risk and urgency assessment against SOP clauses #149 and #150 above;

d. The proposed decision-making and stakeholder engagement approach and timeline.

154. The CTO and CIPO jointly approve the decision to move forward with an urgent measure as well as the ToR. The CTO shall inform the Technical Council Chair and Vice Chair of the planned urgent measure and provide an opportunity for them to comment on the ToR.

155. When there is reasonable doubt about whether an urgent measure (or about what type of urgent measure) is the appropriate route to take, the CTO and CIPO shall consult the Chair and Vice Chair of the Technical Council to help inform this decision. The CTO may decide to consult the Technical Council Chair and Vice Chair, or relevant Technical Council members on the substance of the urgent measure during the drafting process.

156. The process to be followed for urgent measures shall meet the following minimum requirements:
    a. **Stakeholder consultation period**: A minimum of a 30 day public comment period shall be applied.
    b. **Terms of reference:** The CTO and CIPO approve the ToR, after the Technical Council Chair and Vice Chair have an opportunity to review and comment.
    c. **Approvals of draft and final**: The CTO approves the consultation draft and final draft, after reviewing an abbreviated Basis for Conclusions report. The CTO and the Chair may jointly decide to consult the Technical Council (or a Technical Council sub-committee) or seek approval of the Technical Council on limited revisions that are particularly controversial or risky to SBTi or its mission.
    d. **Board adoption**: Not required
    e. **Transparency and public information**: Stakeholders will have access to the same types of information about the process and outcomes (albeit in abbreviated format) and to the draft and final outputs as are required for new standards development or full or extensive revision. This includes publishing the ToR on the website and information relevant stakeholders of the public comment period.

157. In rare circumstances of extreme urgency, the CTO and CIPO may, after consultation with the Technical Council Chair and Vice Chair, grant interim approval to a draft urgent measure before public consultation. In such cases, a public consultation period shall be held following the interim approval, and the measure shall only be considered for permanent approval following this public consultation period. Affected stakeholders shall be notified and public information shall be made available on the transition arrangements and treatment of any actions taken under the interim decision. The final draft and supporting documentation for interim measures are submitted to the Technical Council Chair and Vice Chair for information before publication.

158. Approved urgent measures shall be published in a publicly accessible format on the SBTi website and communicated to Validation Bodies and other affected stakeholders to support consistent application of SBTi Standards.

11. WITHDRAWAL OF AN SBTI STANDARD OR SECTOR SPECIFICATION

Effect of new version on existing version

159. When a revised version of an SBTi Standard or Sector Specification is published, SBTi shall decide whether it supersedes the preceding version on its effective date, or both versions will remain effective for a period of time.

160. SBTi shall specify a transition period running from the date of publication to at least the effective date of the revised standard, during which entities may continue to operate under the preceding version.

161. The transition period, the date of publication, and the effective date shall be clearly stated on the face of the new version and communicated through official SBTi publication channels.

162. Superseded versions shall be archived and clearly marked as superseded, with their version number and the effective date of the superseding version. Archiving does not restore any operative status to a superseded version.

Withdrawal without succession

163. In specific circumstances, an SBTi Standard, Sector Specification, or other normative output may be withdrawn without being replaced by a successor version. Withdrawal without succession is distinct from supersession: the Standard ceases to exist as part of the SBTi System and is not replaced by an updated version.

164. Withdrawal without succession may only be initiated on one or more of the following grounds:
    a. The Standard or Sector Specification has become irrelevant because the sector, methodology, or scope it covers has been fully absorbed into another SBTi Standard of broader application;
    b. The scientific or technical basis of the Standard or Sector Specification has been found to be untenable and cannot be credibly revised to correct the deficiency within a reasonable timeframe;
    c. Withdrawal is necessary for strategic or reputational reasons and no replacement Standard or Sector Specification is ready or scheduled for publication.

165. The Technical Department and Scheme Integrity Team may prepare a proposal to withdraw an SBTi Standard, Sector Specification, or other normative output without succession. The proposal shall include a documented analysis setting out:
    a. the grounds for withdrawal under SOP clause #164;
    b. The proposed withdrawal date and mechanism;
    c. a risk assessment;

d. the implications for entities currently holding targets or commitments validated under the Standard;
e. the proposed transition arrangements; and where applicable, any interim guidance to be issued, and
f. the proposed decision-making and stakeholder engagement approach and timeline

166. The proposal to withdraw a Standard without succession, and the proposed transition arrangements, shall be subject to a public consultation of no fewer than thirty (30) days. The consultation shall be open to all affected stakeholders, including entities holding validated targets under the Standard or Sector Specification, and the consultation report shall be made publicly available.

167. The decision to withdraw a Standard without succession requires consultation with the Technical Council and adoption by the Board of Trustees. The Board decision shall record the grounds for withdrawal, the consultation summary, and the effective date of withdrawal.

168. Upon adoption of the withdrawal, the Technical Department shall:
a. Publish a notice of withdrawal stating the effective date and the grounds, through official SBTi channels;
b. Set an effective date of withdrawal that allows a transition period of no fewer than twelve (12) months from the date of publication of the notice, unless the grounds under SOP clauses #164.b or #164.c require an earlier effective date, in which case the rationale for a shorter period shall be stated in the withdrawal notice;
c. Issue guidance, where practicable, on the treatment of targets and commitments validated under the withdrawn Standard during and after the transition period;
d. Archive the withdrawn Standard, clearly marked as withdrawn, with the withdrawal decision, the date of publication of the notice, and the effective date of withdrawal, and maintain it as a publicly accessible record.

12. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Review of procedures

169. This Document shall be reviewed at minimum after 1 year following publication, and at maximum after 5 years to ensure continued alignment with its objectives and SBTi mission and vision.

Stakeholder Concerns and Complaints

170. Please refer to the SBTi Complaints and Appeals Policy for further information on complaints and appeals.

Standards feedback and stakeholder input

171. Any stakeholder may provide feedback on SBTi Standards, Sector Specifications, Methods, Metrics, Pathways, tools and guidance at any time by emailing

info@sciencebasedtargets.org or the relevant sector email address listed on the SBTi website.

172. Aggregated stakeholder feedback is considered in the review and revision of SBTi Standards, Sector Specifications, and any other normative outputs .

Record-keeping and accessibility

173. The SBTi shall ensure the following documents are made public, at a minimum on the SBTi website:
    a. this Document
    b. Technical Work programme
    c. ToR for the standard project
    d. Synopsis of consultation comments and how they were addressed
    e. The standard or technical document itself
    f. How to receive comments, questions or complaints, and the SBTi Complaints and Appeals Policy.

174. The SBTi shall ensure that the following records are kept for at least ten years for each Standard development process, and are accessible for review on request:
    a. The final approved version of the SBTi Foundational or Sector Standard

175. The SBTi shall ensure that the following records are kept for at least five years from the date of publication for each Standard development process, and are accessible for review on request:
    a. Copies of drafts of the SBTi Standard circulated for public consultations, and of the final approved version of the SBTi Standard;
    b. Names and affiliations of organizations, groups and/or individuals invited to comment on the SBTi Standard during each stage of its development or revision, following Data Privacy and Confidentiality Policy as applicable;
    c. Names and affiliations of the members of the Technical Council, Advisory or Working Groups, and invited experts who participated in the review and revision of each draft of the SBTi Standard;
    d. Copies of all comments received on drafts of the SBTi Standard circulated for formal review;
    e. A synopsis of the comments received in response to each draft of the SBTi Standard circulated for formal review, together with an explanation of how the comments were subsequently taken into account;
    f. A copy of the policies and procedures that guided the Standard development activity at the time;
    g. A description of and explanation for any departures from the published Procedure for Development and Revision of SBTi Standards;
    h. The final Basis for Conclusions report on the implementation of this document, which was considered by the CTO, Technical Council or Board, showing how the procedure was implemented;
    i. All formal decisions of the Technical Council in relation to the development and approval of the SBTi Standard.

13. PROCEDURAL DEPARTURES IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

176. Significant departures from these procedures and policies shall be approved by the CIPO and Chair of the Technical Council, with escalation to the Board Chair in case of disagreement. This only occurs in very exceptional circumstances when conformity to the procedures is not possible for reasons beyond the control of the Technical Council or the Technical Department.

177. The Technical Department shall document any such departures in writing and include a description and explanation in any report submitted to the Technical Council and/or Board (as per this SOP) when approval of the final revision, new standard or sector specification, urgent measure, or interpretation is sought.