

PROCESS PROCEDURE 12, VERSION 02

Procedure for the development / revision of standards and related technical documents

Purpose	Describes the procedure to be followed for the development of a new and the revision of existing Donau Soja standards, and related technical documents, such as guidelines and annexes. It includes the governance and decision-making process for approval of new and revised documents, in line with the statutes of the Donau Soja Association ¹ .
Definition	Donau Soja Standards: Standards developed and owned by Donau Soja Association Standard Revision: Refers to any substantive changes to the quality standards and related technical documents such as guidelines and annexes ²
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1 Requests for the development/revision process

- 1.1 Requests for the development of a new or revision of one/several of the Donau Soja standards may be submitted at any time by any Donau Soja member, Donau Soja itself or interested party.
- 1.2 Such request shall clearly identify the standard(s) to be created/revised, describe the scope and content/revision of the standard and define the needs for a new standard or for the revision of existing standards.
- 1.3 At minimum, the Donau Soja standards will be regularly reviewed, at least every five years. Reviews shall follow the consultation and approval procedures described in this procedure.

¹ https://www.donausoja.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/DS_Statutes__Donau_Soja_30092021.pdf

² This procedure does not apply to minor revisions. A revision is considered minor if it does not substantially modify the scope and content of a document. Minor revisions include formatting, clarifications and corrections of misspellings or typos.

2 Approval/rejection of the development/revision process

- 2.1 Upon verification of the completeness of the request, Donau Soja shall submit the request to the Donau Soja Board and Presidium for approval.
- 2.2 The Donau Soja Board and Presidium may approve or reject the request for the development/revision of standards.
- 2.3 The verification of the request and decision to approve/reject the request shall take no longer than six months.
- 2.4 In case of rejection, the decision of the Donau Soja Board and Presidium shall be justified and documented and forwarded to the applicant.

3 Terms of Reference

- 3.1 At the outset of any standard development, Donau Soja shall write Terms of Reference, which shall include:
 - The proposed scope of the standard and the intended geographic application;
 - A justification of the need for the standard;
 - An evaluation of other standards operating or in development that meet all or part of the expressed need;
 - The expected social, environmental and economic outcomes the standard seeks to achieve and how these are related to Donau Soja's intended change;
 - An assessment of risks in implementing the standards and how to mitigate these;
 - A timeline including process steps, expected date of completion and publication;

4 Communication of the development/revision process and stakeholder outreach

- 4.1 At the outset of a standard development and revision process Donau Soja makes publicly available a summary of the process including a summary of Terms of Reference, timeline and opportunities for contribution and information on the decision making procedure. The information shall be published on the Donau Soja website.

5 Stakeholder identification and engagement

- 5.1 At the outset of a standard development and revision process Donau Soja develops and maintains a stakeholder mapping. The mapping identifies sectors that have an interest in the Donau Soja standards and key stakeholder groups within those sectors based on the standard's scope and its social, environmental and economic outcomes.

6 Facilitator and Standard Working Group (SWG)

- 6.1 At the outset of a standard development and revision process Donau Soja may decide to hire an external facilitator and/or constitute an ad hoc Standard Working Group (SWG) to participate in the process. The decision shall be based on the nature of the standard to be developed/revised, the potential challenges in the process and the capacity/availability of the Donau Soja staff, especially if:
- The development/revision requires advanced technical, environmental and/or socio-economic knowledge;
 - Difficult negotiations are expected among stakeholders.
- 6.2 The main responsibility of the facilitator will be to ensure that the development/revision follows this procedure and other Donau Soja governance rules (e.g. Donau Soja Association statutes, terms of reference).
- 6.3 The main responsibility of the SWG will be to provide Donau Soja with technical inputs and support the drafting and finalisation of the standard, procedure or guideline.
- 6.4 The SWG shall be open to Donau Soja Board and Presidium and Advisory Board members. The participation in the WG shall be based on the competence and experience of individuals in relation to the nature of the development/revision.

7 Development/Revision Process

- 7.1 Based on the request for standard development/revision, Donau Soja and/or the facilitator shall prepare a first draft of the standard, which follows the agreed scope and objectives of the development/revision. If a Standard Working Group was constituted, inputs may be collected from the SWG members to prepare the draft.
- 7.2 The first draft shall undergo a first round of public consultation for, at minimum 60 days. Donau Soja and/or the facilitator shall ensure that the public consultation is made public and widely communicated among Donau Soja members, certified operators, CBs and other partners. Upon completion of the public consultation, Donau Soja and/or the facilitator shall publish a synopsis of the consultation, including the inputs/comments received and how these have been addressed (fully or partly accepted, rejected, considered not relevant, etc.), along with a justification. The synopsis shall be publicly available until completion of the standard revision, and at minimum 6 months.
- 7.3 Following the first round of public consultation, Donau Soja and/or the facilitator shall prepare a second draft of the standard. If a Standard Working Group was constituted, inputs may be collected from the SWG members to prepare the draft.
- 7.4 The second draft shall be submitted to the Donau Soja Board and Presidium for review and approval.
- 7.5 Upon approval by the Donau Soja Board and Presidium, the second draft may undergo a second round of public consultation for, at minimum 30 days, in the following conditions:
- The process aims to develop a new standard (vs revision of an existing

standard); or

- Substantive, unresolved issues persist after the first consultation round, or insufficient feedback was received.

- 7.6 If a second round of public consultation is organised, Donau Soja and/or the facilitator shall ensure that the public consultation is made public and widely communicated among Donau Soja members, certified operators, CBs and other partners. Upon completion of the public consultation, Donau Soja and/or the facilitator shall publish a synopsis of the consultation, including the inputs/comments received and how these have been addressed (fully or partly accepted, rejected, considered not relevant, etc.), along with a justification.
- 7.7 Following the second round of public consultation, Donau Soja and/or the facilitator shall prepare the final draft of the standard. If a Standard Working Group was constituted, inputs may be collected from the SWG members to prepare the draft.
- 7.8 Additional rounds of public consultation may be organised whenever substantive, unresolved issues persist after the consultation round(s), or where insufficient feedback was received. If the case, these additional rounds shall follow the process described above.
- 7.9 The final draft shall be submitted to the Donau Soja Board and Presidium for review and approval. The Donau Soja Board and Presidium may approve the final draft as submitted or with modifications.

8 Publication

- 8.1 The approved final document shall be published on the Donau Soja website and circulated to all Donau Soja Members, certified operators, certification bodies and immediately after approval.

9 Entry into force

- 9.1 The new versions of the standards will come into effect on January 1st of the following year unless otherwise stated.

10 Record Keeping

- 10.1 All the documents generated during the standard development/revision process shall be kept for at least 5 years.