

# Checklist 1: Which standard is right for your company?

## A tool for decision-making

### Please note

This checklist offers guidance on what steps you have to take to become a member of a standard or to get certified.

### Set the parameters:

- Develop a basic understanding of the different types of standards there are.  
**Good to know:** In principle, you can differentiate between two types of standards. With "certification-based standards", the focus is on auditing suppliers and sub-contractors or your own company. With "participation-based standards", members benefit from opportunities to exchange experiences and implementing joint projects, e.g. supplier trainings. There are also standards that cover both approaches.
- Start by establishing which industry/industries and which stage(s) of the value chain the standard is intended for based on your risk analysis.
- Limit the number of possible standards by filtering for your requirements regarding type, industry and stage of the value chain by using the Standards Tool.  
**Good to know:** In practice, it may be necessary to combine multiple specific standards in order to support your due diligence processes sufficiently. When pre-selecting standards, make sure you also bear in mind that the number of standards in the Standards Tool will gradually increase so that over time it will capture all relevant standards.
- Finish by estimating the staff and financial resources available to you for implementing the due diligence process as a whole and for implementing the standards specifically.

### Calculate the cost of implementation:

- Draw up a list of requirements that the pre-filtered standards set for membership or certification. Start by looking at the profile of each standard in the Standards-Tool and then add supplementary information from the standards' websites to this list.  
**Good to know:** If you would like to better understand the requirements of a standard and how it works, take a look at the standard itself or the additional accompanying documents provided (e.g. code of conduct, guidance, implementation tools etc.).
- Check what steps need to be taken to apply for membership or certification.
- Find out what you have to do to maintain your membership (e.g. progress reports) or when certifications have to be reviewed and renewed, as well as how much this process costs in terms of time and money.
- Get an overview of the costs. You can start by looking at the information on a standard's website; for more detailed information, contact the standard organisation.  
**Good to know:** There may be one-off joining fees. Recurring costs include membership or licence fees for the label. Costs for audits, (re-)certification or other types of verification processes (audit processes, reporting requirements etc.) are generally recurring expenses.
- Your cost breakdown should also take into account the costs for implementation that you will have to pay as part of your due diligence process anyway in order to prevent or remedy violations (at the beginning and as required during participation/re-certification for the case of standards).
- Determine whether the costs for certification or the time required for the engagement are proportionate given the size of your company.

- Enquire with the standard organisation about how they can help your company with the on-boarding process in order to help you become a valuable member of the standard.
- Look to engage in dialogue with your (strategic) suppliers and customers, and clarify whether there is any possibility of (financial) support.

### Further information: The responsibility of business customers

When formulating their supplier requirements, business customers should also consider whether there is a need for accompanying support measures since the principle of "proportionality" must always be taken into account when implementing due diligence requirements. Last but not least, the size of the company is an important factor.

Support from business customers can, for example, take the form of a contribution towards implementation costs or favourable contractual and purchasing conditions.

Sharing the implementation costs is particularly worthwhile for large companies in Germany who fall under the German Supply Chain Act (LkSG) and who rely on the support of their suppliers when it comes to implementing their due diligence requirements along global value chains. As an SME, you should bear in mind that the costs and responsibilities of large companies cannot simply be passed on to you. Your customers have their own due diligence obligations according to the LkSG. This should act as the basis for conversations around fair "cost sharing", in particular with respect to measures such as audits or trainings in production countries or when setting up grievance procedures through standards in factories or on farms.

### Choose the right standard for you:

- Use the assessments in the "Standards Tool" to check the extent to which the pre-filtered standards will help you implement your due diligence process.
  - Check how robust the governance system of the pre-filtered standards is. You can do this using the "Credibility" filter in the Standards Tool and by answering the questions from Checklist 2.
  - Based on this assessment, decide on one standard or a combination of several.
  - Clear up any outstanding questions directly with the standard organisation.
  - Go through the onboarding process step by step and get your licence, certification or standards membership certificate.
- Good to know:** There can be many different ways to achieve certification or membership. You should account for a corresponding lead time and plan financial/staff resources for gathering information and the necessary coordination work.

### Still got questions?

Get in touch with one of our experts for free, confidential advice:

- Download your search results from the "[Standards-Tool](#)".
- E-mail us at [kontakt@helpdeskwimr.de](mailto:kontakt@helpdeskwimr.de) or give us a call on +49 (0)30 590099-430.