

# Solar Stewardship Initiative

## Principles

v.1.1 | March 2025

# The Solar Stewardship Initiative

The Solar Stewardship Initiative (SSI) works with industry participants including manufacturers and buyers of solar photovoltaic modules, as well as other stakeholders including civil society, NGOs, intergovernmental institutions, international financial institutions, academics and independent experts with human rights and environmental expertise to collaboratively foster responsible production, sourcing, and stewardship of materials in the solar value chain. The SSI's mission is to enhance sustainability and environmental, social, governance (ESG) performance, as well as end-to-end transparency across the solar supply chain. Businesses actively involved in the solar value chain can apply to join the SSI and have their sites assessed against the SSI Standards.

The SSI's core objectives are to:

- Ensure the energy transition is just, inclusive, and respects people's human rights.
- Establish mechanisms to create supply-chain transparency, ensuring integrity in the global solar industry.
- Enable continuous improvement of ESG performance and level of transparency.
- Prepare the industry for relevant upcoming laws and regulations on ESG, transparency and responsible supply chains.
- Build confidence of regulators, customers, business partners and other stakeholders in the sustainability of the solar value chain.

## About this document

The SSI Principles, Standards and all actions are aligned with established European law and internationally recognised standards and frameworks, including:

- EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive
- UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights
- OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises on Responsible Business Conduct.

The SSI Principles and Standards do not act as a replacement for EU, national and other legislation on sustainable supply chains, nor does SSI membership negate a business' liability to comply with law and perform its own environmental and human rights due diligence. The SSI and its Standards intend to support the effective implementation of relevant legislation.

Disclaimer: This version of the SSI Principles has been prepared specifically for publication on the SSI website. It contains the same material commitments as the legally binding Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed by SSI Members when joining the SSI.

## Version history

Version	Date	Description
1.0	November 2023	First version issued, as approved by the SSI Board.
1.1	March 2025	Version 1.1 issued after editorial changes were implemented, as approved by the SSI Board in March 2025.

## 1. SSI Principles

The present agreement (the “SSI Principles”) defines the modalities for joining the SSI, as well as the rights and obligations of the members (hereinafter the “SSI Member”) adhering to the SSI Principles.

By signing the SSI Principles, the SSI Member accepts the terms of membership as further set out in the Annexes to the SSI Principles and commits to:

- Conduct its operations in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations. If national law conflicts with the regulations set out in the [SSI Standards](#), as updated and supplemented from time to time (the “Standards”), the SSI Member will seek ways to meet the higher requirement, where possible.
- Respect human rights in its operations and commit to implementing enhanced due diligence when sourcing raw materials from high-risk and conflict areas.
- Apply the Standards in its operations and encourage the adoption of the Standards along its supply chain.
- Where applicable, complete an assessment of its performance measured against the Standards for at least two (2) production sites (where applicable), within 12 months of signing the SSI Principles and commit to continuously expand this scope to add more sites.
- Not make any misleading or unsubstantiated claims, statements or reports about being certified against the Standards until confirmed, and in accordance with [the SSI Claims Guide](#).
- After being certified in accordance with the SSI Principles, and where applicable, continue to comply with the Standards and continuously improve its performance against all provisions through regular assessments and reporting mechanisms, and communicate progress to the SSI Secretariat and other stakeholders.

## 2. The SSI Standards

The SSI has been designed to clearly set out expectations for ESG practices, and supply chain transparency. Its purpose is to strengthen confidence in how the materials and products in the solar value chain are manufactured and used. It aims to establish and

communicate verifiable information on ESG practices and transparency of businesses along the length of the solar supply chain.

SSI programme is based on two standards:

- [The SSI ESG Standard](#), published in October 2023
- [The SSI Supply Chain Traceability Standard](#), published in December 2024

Both SSI Standards complement each other and are mandatory for the SSI Manufacturer Members. Both Standards apply to the full silicon value chain from quartzite mining through metallurgical grade silicon and polysilicon to ingots and wafers to cells and modules.

### 3. SSI Membership

In order to become and continue to be an SSI Member, the candidate SSI Member must comply with the admission requirements as outlined in [the Policy of Association](#).

Upon admission the SSI Member will benefit from the membership benefits.

### 4. Updates of the Standards

The Standards may be amended or supplemented occasionally. The SSI Secretariat will communicate any such amendment or supplement to the SSI Members. Unless an SSI Member notifies the SSI Secretariat within 30 days following such written communication, the SSI Member shall be deemed to have accepted the amended Standards. If the SSI Member notifies the SSI Secretariat that it does not accept the amended Standards, such SSI Member shall cease using any claims related to SSI membership or certification (as described in [the Claims Guide](#), its SSI membership shall be terminated, and its sites or products shall no longer be considered certified under the SSI Standards.

### 5. Breaches of the SSI Principles

Any stakeholder of the SSI can file a formal complaint with the SSI Secretariat against a SSI Member, or against any individual associated with the SSI Member, that is suspected of breaching the SSI Principles, using [the SSI Complaints and Appeals Mechanism](#).

The SSI Board shall have the right to suspend or terminate an SSI membership and the associated rights and benefits, if a breach of the SSI Principles is established.

## 6. Confidentiality

Certain materials and information exchanged in the context of the SSI may be subject to confidentiality obligations as outlined in separate agreements with SSI members.

## 7. Antitrust

SSI Members undertake to fully comply with all applicable laws, including antitrust and competition laws in relation to the SSI.

Without limiting the scope of the foregoing, the SSI Members commit in particular to the following:

- The SSI's mission is to further develop a responsible, transparent and sustainable solar value chain and it does not engage with matters relating to the SSI Members' commercial strategy, such as pricing, terms or conditions of sale, production or sales levels, salaries, customers or suppliers. No recommendations of any kind related to the SSI Members' commercial strategy shall be made in the context of the SSI.
- The SSI Members are fully aware of the concerns, under applicable competition laws, raised by the exchange of competitively sensitive information, including, but not limited to, (i) current or future pricing or costs, (ii) supply requirements, (iii) strategies or policies related to purchasing, costs, new products, markets, or competition; (iv) analyses or formulas used to determine costs, prices, output, or (v) information on actual and potential trading partners. The SSI Members anticipate that no such competitively sensitive information is required to be exchanged in the context of the SSI. If, however, it would appear that the exchange of any such information between the SSI Members would be indispensable, the exchange shall at all times be strictly limited to such information that is necessary and proportionate to pursue the mission of the SSI and the SSI Members shall establish in advance appropriate safeguards for the sharing of such information, in order to ensure compliance with competition laws.
- The SSI Members agree that any meeting in the context of the Solar Stewardship Initiative shall be held in compliance with best practices for meetings with competitors. SSI Members should not hesitate to voice any concerns they may have regarding the conduct of others at meetings that are convened in the context of the SSI.

→ Participation in the SSI is on a voluntary and non-exclusive basis. Participants furthermore remain free to apply higher sustainability standards than the Standard.

## 8. Annex

The following Annexes are available on [the Core Documents page](#) of the SSI website:

1. SSI Policy of Association
2. SSI ESG Standard
3. SSI Supply Chain Traceability Standard
4. SSI Claims Guide
5. SSI Governance Terms of Reference
6. SSI Complaints & Appeals Mechanism
7. SSI Recognition Process
8. SSI Assurance Manual
9. SSI Assessment Body and Assessor Approval Procedure

## Intellectual Property notice

The present document was drafted and issued by the Solar Stewardship Initiative (referred to as 'SSI') in November 2023.

All copyrights in this document are held by the SSI. Copying, adapting, publishing or otherwise using this document or the content thereof, other than for the purpose mentioned in this document, without the explicit authorization by the SSI, will be considered a copyright infringement. The SSI reserves all rights in that regard.

The words "SSI", "Solar Stewardship Initiative" and the logos included in this document are trademarks of the SSI. They may only be used with the explicit consent of the SSI and subject to the conditions set by the SSI. All other use of those signs will be considered a trademark infringement. The SSI reserves all rights in that regard