

Solar Stewardship Initiative **Claims & Communication Guide**

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Intellectual Property Notice

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The Solar Stewardship Initiative

The Solar Stewardship Initiative (SSI) works with manufacturers, developers, installers, and purchasers across the global solar value chain to collaboratively foster responsible production, sourcing, and stewardship of materials. The SSI's mission is to enhance end-to-end transparency, sustainability, and environmental, social and governance performance across the solar supply chain. Businesses actively involved in the solar value chain can apply to join the SSI and get certified 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 enhance supply-chain integrity in the global solar industry.
- Enable continuous improvement of ESG performance.
- Build confidence of regulators, customers, business partners and other stakeholders in the sustainability of the solar value chain.

About This Document

This Claims and Communication Guide provide comprehensive guidance on the claims process for stakeholders participating in the Solar Stewardship Initiative (SSI). It is designed to ensure transparency, accuracy, and consistency in handling claims.

The document outlines the eligibility of who can make claims, the types of claims supported, requirements, verification, dispute resolution and best practice recommendations.

This guide is intended as a living document, subject to updates as standards evolve and new best practices emerge. Stakeholders are encouraged to review it regularly to stay informed of the latest requirements and guidance.

Version History

Version	Date	Description
1.0	November 2023	First version issued as approved by the SolarPower Europe and SEUK Board.
1.1	March 2024	Additional language added
2.0	March 2025	Second version issued, reflecting the addition of the SSI Supply Chain Traceability Standard.
3.0	January 2026	Third version issued, clarification on claims and added sections on communication

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1. General Guidelines

The following general guidelines outline the foundational principles for making, verifying, and maintaining claims under the Solar Stewardship Initiative (SSI).

These guidelines ensure that all participants adhere to the SSI's standards for sustainability, transparency, and accountability.

AT A GLANCE

- **Only SSI Members can use SSI claims**
- **All communications referencing the SSI claims must be approved by the SSI Secretariat before publication by emailing contact@solarstewardshipinitiative.org. This includes for example statements about SSI membership and site certification against SSI Standards.**
- **The SSI Claims are only valid as long as the membership lasts. If a member cancels their membership, any SSI certification of their sites will no longer be valid.**
- **Do not imply SSI membership if the entity is not an active Member.**
- **Do not claim SSI certification before it has been granted.**
- **Do not suggest a broader certification scope (e.g. company-wide, group-wide, product-level, supply-chain-wide) than actually achieved.**
- **Do not claim that materials or products are SSI-certified, traceable, or “approved”.**

All written claims must avoid:

- **Wording implying advanced performance, leadership, or best practice.**
- **Any suggestion of full supply chain coverage or material-level traceability.**
- **Any implication of company-wide certification.**

1.1. Approval for use of the SSI claims

To ensure compliance with the SSI Standards, approval from the SSI Secretariat is required to make any claims related to the SSI unless otherwise specified in this document. That includes, but is not limited to, claims about SSI certification results and

SSI membership announcements. This applies to communications on social media and in press releases.

For a claim to be approved, please submit requests, including proposed text and logo use and placement, by sending an email to contact@solarstewardshipinitiative.org

1.2. Eligibility to make claims

Only SSI active members and approved Assessment Bodies (ABs) can make claims. For the purposes of this Guide, an **active SSI member** is an organisation whose SSI membership is **current and fully paid**.

Claims must be relevant to the participant's role and scope of operations within the solar energy value chain.

There are different types of claims and logos, depending on the membership categories and participation in the SSI assurance process (see section 2.1 "Types of logos"). Where an organisation previously held SSI-certified site(s) but is **no longer an SSI member**, any associated certification is **void**. This status will be clearly indicated on the SSI website, and **no SSI-related claims or logos may be used**.

In cases of temporary suspension, no future claims can be issued until the suspension is lifted.

1.2.1. Membership claims:

SSI Members in any category can use the SSI Member logo to indicate in their communications that they are members of SSI.

Becoming a member of the SSI signifies a commitment to the SSI Principles, it does not guarantee that any member's site practices or supply chains are compliant with the SSI Standards. SSI Members may also use the associated written claims alongside the member logo (see Section 2.2 "Written claims").

1.2.2. Certified member site claims

Sites of SSI Members are only considered certified once they have undergone an independent assessment and achieved certification in line with the [SSI Assurance Manual](#), at which time they can make the certified site claims.

Certification is **conditional and time-bound**. A certification becomes **void** if:

- the organisation's SSI membership is **suspended or terminated**;

- a required **surveillance or follow-up assessment is not completed** within the timelines set out in the Assurance Manual; or
- the certification is formally withdrawn in line with SSI procedures.

If certification becomes void, this status will be clearly indicated on the SSI website, and no certified site claims or related logos may be used.

The certified member site claim may only be displayed on company websites, social media channels, flyers, marketing materials, corporate material (e.g., annual reports and sustainability reports), invoices, letterheads, and other contractual documents. No product-related claims are allowed, such as where a product comes from, that a product is produced in a certain way, or other origin or provenance claims.

Different **levels of SSI certification (Bronze, Silver, Gold)** allow for **different levels of claims and communication**. Members must ensure that any claim made accurately reflects the **certification level achieved** and remains within the scope authorised for that level.

Claims must always be **site-specific** and **Standard-specific** (ESG and/or Supply Chain Traceability).

- No product, origin, provenance, or material-content claims are permitted.
- No claims may be made if membership or certification status is suspended, ended, or void.

Examples of non-approved claims: "SolarCompany X is SSI certified". - The SSI does not certify companies, only sites.

Site certification does not guarantee that an entire company's supply chain is free from human and labour rights abuses, environmental degradation or governance issues.

1.2.3. Approved Assessment Body

Only ABs approved by the SSI to conduct assessments against the SSI Standards and listed on [the SSI website](#) are authorised to use the SSI assessment body logo (see p.12) and written claim.

Approval is **conditional**. An Assessment Body's authorisation to make SSI-related claims **ceases immediately** if:

- its SSI approval or membership is **not renewed, suspended, or withdrawn**.
- it fails to comply with mandatory SSI requirements, including **attendance at required trainings, calibration sessions, or certification-related briefings**; or
- its approval status is otherwise revoked in accordance with SSI procedures.

Where approval lapses or is withdrawn, the Assessment Body must **immediately discontinue** the use of SSI logos and claims. This status will be reflected on the SSI website.

The approved AB claim can be displayed on company websites, social media, flyers, marketing materials, corporate material (e.g., annual reports and sustainability reports), invoices, letterheads, and other contractual documents.

1.3. Accuracy and verifiability

All claims must be factually accurate and supported by verifiable evidence, such as certifications, audits, or documented data.

Misrepresentation, exaggeration, or omission of critical details is strictly prohibited.

Assessment Bodies and assessors **must not** publish, share, or disclose any information relating to:

- ongoing or completed SSI assessments;
- audit findings, observations, or conclusions;
- site visits, including photographs or descriptions; or
- certification status or outcomes

without prior written approval from the SSI Secretariat as set out in the SSI Assurance Manual.

This includes, but is not limited to, **social media posts (e.g. LinkedIn)**, website content, marketing materials, presentations, or public statements. Assessors are not SSI employees and must not claim to be, including on professional networking platforms such as LinkedIn. Assessors may only refer to their role as: *“Approved assessor for the SSI (through an SSI-approved Assessment Body)”* or equivalent wording approved by the SSI Secretariat. Assessors may only describe their role as acting **on behalf of an SSI-**

approved Assessment Body, in line with their approval status and the roles and responsibilities defined in the SSI Assurance Manual.

Any unauthorised disclosure, misrepresentation of roles, or premature or misleading communication may be considered a **non-compliance with the SSI Assurance Manual and Assessment Body approval conditions**, and may result in suspension or withdrawal of approval, in accordance with SSI procedures.

1.4. Alignment with SSI Principles

Claims must align with the SSI's Principles, including environmental sustainability, ethical sourcing, and social responsibility.

1.5. Claims that don't follow these principles will not be accepted.

Independent third-party verification is required for specific types of claims (see section "Written claims")

Verified claims must include the name of the AB and reference the assessment scope and validity period.

1.6. Use of approved terminology

The SSI name, abbreviation and logos must never be used in a way that could:

- Suggest or imply SSI membership of an entity that is not an active SSI Member.
- Suggest or imply SSI certification before it has been achieved.
- Suggest or imply a larger scope of SSI certification (e.g. company-wide, group-wide, product-level, or supply-chain-wide) than an SSI Member has achieved.
- Suggest or imply that certain materials or products are SSI-certified traceable, or "approved"
- Exaggerate the level of performance associated with a certification level, including through qualitative terms (e.g. leading, best practice, fully compliant, risk-free) that are not explicitly authorised for that level.

- Use SSI membership or certification to support vague or misleading sustainability claims not included in this Guide (e.g. “ethical”, “clean”, “responsible by design”, “forced-labour free”)
- The names of the SSI logos may not be translated into other languages without also retaining the English version/s for reference.

1.7. Communication of claims

Claims must be communicated clearly, transparently, and in a manner accessible to intended audiences, such as customers, partners, or regulatory bodies.

Unauthorised use of the SSIs logos, certifications or trademarks is prohibited.

1.8. Monitoring and reporting

The SSI Secretariat actively **monitors the use of SSI claims and logos**, including through public communications, websites, marketing materials, and social media. SSI members and approved ABs are encouraged to establish internal monitoring processes to ensure ongoing compliance with claims requirements.

Any significant changes affecting a claim (e.g., changes in the supply chain or processes) must be reported promptly to the SSI Secretariat.

1.9. Raising a complaint about misuse

Non-compliance with the terms of this Guide can lead to the SSI withdrawing a member’s right to make a claim and use the SSI logos. It may also result in suspension or termination of the SSI membership. Legal recourse may be pursued for non-members.

Any inappropriate or potentially misleading or fraudulent claims or representations about SSI by either members or non-members should be immediately reported to the SSI Secretariat by sending an email to contact@solarstewardshipinitiative.org.

Where a **potentially inaccurate, misleading, unauthorised, or premature claim** is identified, the SSI Secretariat will **take the following approach**, in line with the SSI Assurance Manual, Assessment Body approval requirements, and the SSI crisis communications procedure:

1. **Preliminary review and investigation**

The SSI Secretariat will assess the facts and context of the claim and may request clarification or supporting information from the organisation, Assessment Body, or assessor concerned.

2. **Confirmation of non-compliance**

Where the investigation confirms that a claim does not comply with SSI requirements, the Secretariat will formally notify the concerned party.

3. **Warning and corrective action**

The concerned party will be required to:

- a. **immediately correct or withdraw** the claim.
- b. **cease any further unauthorised communication**; and
- c. implement any **corrective actions** requested by the SSI Secretariat within a specified timeframe.

Repeated, unresolved, or serious breaches may result in **escalated measures**, including suspension or withdrawal of certification, membership, or approval status, in accordance with SSI governance procedures.

Where relevant, the SSI Secretariat will manage external communications in line with the **SSI crisis communications procedure**, to ensure accuracy, consistency, and protection of the credibility of the SSI system. The [SSI Complaints and Appeals Mechanism](#) may also be used for this purpose.

1.10. Dispute resolution

Disputes or challenges to claims will be resolved according to [the SSI Complaints and Appeals Mechanism](#).

SSI members and approved ABs are expected to cooperate fully during investigations or audits related to disputed claims.

1.11. Compliance with applicable laws

All claims must comply with local, national, and international laws as well as industry-specific regulations.

SSI members and approved ABs are responsible for ensuring that their claims meet legal requirements in the jurisdictions where they operate.

2. Overview of SSI Logos and Claims

2.1. Types of logos

Type	Logo
SSI organisational logo	
SSI membership logo	
SSI ESG certified member site logo	

SSI Supply Chain Traceability certified member site logo	
SSI ESG and Supply Chain Traceability certified member site logo	
SSI assessment body logo	

2.2. Written claims

All written claims should avoid:

- Any wording implying advanced performance, leadership, or best practice.
- Any suggestion of full supply chain coverage or material-level traceability.
- Any suggestion of certification at company level.
- Any product-related or origin claims.

Member logo	Written claim for Members
	<p>"[Member/Associate member name] is a member of the Solar Stewardship Initiative."</p> <p>"[Member/Associate member name] is proud to be a member of SSI and a supporter of the SSI Principles."</p> <p>"[Member name]" is committed to the SSI Principles and to have its sites independently assessed against the Solar Stewardship Initiative Standards to support responsible practices in the solar value chain.</p>

Organisations may issue a public announcement once their **SSI membership has been formally approved. Membership announcements should communicate commitment,**

not achievement.

Achievement of site-certification may only be communicated once it has been independently verified through the SSI assurance system.

Membership announcements may:

- state that the organisation has **joined the Solar Stewardship Initiative**;
- describe the SSI as a **multi-stakeholder initiative** promoting responsible, transparent, and sustainable solar supply chains; and
- explain the organisation's **motivation for joining** and its commitment to the SSI Principles

Membership announcements must **not**:

- imply or state that the organisation or any site is **SSI-certified**, unless certification has already been achieved.
- imply that participation in the SSI guarantees outcomes such as “ethical”, “responsible”, or “forced-labour-free” products.
- refer to future or intended certification as if it were already granted; or
- suggest preferential treatment, endorsement, or approval by the SSI.

Certified site logo	Written claim for certified sites
	<p>"[Site name, site type] is a certified site of the Solar Stewardship Initiative and complies with the SSI ESG Standard."</p> <p>"As of [year], the [Site name, site type] site is certified [Gold, Silver, Bronze] against the Solar Stewardship Initiative ESG Standard."</p> <p>"As of [year], the [Site name, site type] site has been recertified against the SSI ESG Standard, upgrading its compliance from [Bronze/Silver] to achieve [Silver, Gold] level certification."</p> <p>Bronze: "This site conforms with essential SSI ESG requirements."</p> <p>Silver: This site demonstrates established implementation of SSI ESG requirements."</p> <p>Gold: "This site demonstrates advanced conformance with SSI ESG requirements."</p>

	<p>"[Site name, site type] is a certified site of the Solar Stewardship Initiative and complies with the SSI Supply Chain Traceability Standard."</p> <p>"As of [year], the [Site name, site type] site is certified against the Supply Chain Traceability Standard of the Solar Stewardship Initiative, achieving [Gold, Silver, Bronze]-level certification."</p> <p>"As of [year], the [Site name, site type] site has been recertified against the SSI Supply Chain Traceability Standard, upgrading its compliance from [Bronze/Silver] to achieve [Silver, Gold] level certification."</p> <p>Bronze: "This site meets SSI Traceability Standard requirements"</p> <p>Silver: This site demonstrates established traceability systems in line with SSI requirements."</p> <p>Gold: "This site demonstrates advanced traceability practices in line with SSI requirements."</p>
	<p>"[Site name, site type] is a certified site of the Solar Stewardship Initiative and complies with the ESG and Supply Chain Traceability Standard."</p> <p>"[Site name, site type] is a certified ESG and Supply Chain Traceability Standard site of the Solar Stewardship Initiative since (year)."</p> <p>"[Site name, site type] is certified SSI ESG and Supply Chain Traceability Standard and has achieved (Gold, Silver, Bronze)."</p> <p>"[Site name, site type] has been recertified to the SSI ESG and Supply Chain Traceability Standard and has achieved (Gold, Silver, Bronze)."</p>

Approved Assessment Body logo	Written claim
	<p>"[Assessment Body name] is an approved assessment body for the Solar Stewardship Initiative."</p>

When a member's site achieves SSI certification, a press release should clearly state the site name, the SSI Standard certification level (Bronze, Silver, or Gold), and include the SSI boilerplate.

To request high-definition versions of the logos or to submit a written external communication for approval, please contact contact@solarstewardshipinitiative.org.