



NSF Standards

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# **Criteria Development and Maintenance Policies for Global Electronics Council Projects**

May 1, 2025

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NSF Standards  
789 North Dixboro Road, PO Box 130140  
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48113-0140 USA  
Phone: (734) 769-8010 Email: [info@nsf.org](mailto:info@nsf.org)  
Web: [<nsf.org>](http://nsf.org)

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# **Criteria Development and Maintenance Policies for Global Electronics Council Projects**

Policies Developer  
**NSF**

Prepared by the  
**NSF Standards Department**

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## Revisions

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## Acronyms

The following list is provided as a reference for acronyms used within this document.

<b>EPEAT</b>	Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool
<b>GEC</b>	Global Electronics Council
<b>TC</b>	Technical Committee

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## Foreword

This document identifies the process followed by the Global Electronics Council (GEC) to develop criteria, revise criteria, and evaluate criteria for use in its ecolabels, including the EPEAT Program. GEC reviews GEC Criteria Development Process (P74) on an annual basis to determine if revisions are required.

This edition of the policies contains the following revisions, effective May 1, 2025:

- **Section 2.1.4:** TC voting member minimum term
- **Section 2.1.7:** Participation review and member termination
- **Section 3.2.1:** Proxy minimum notification time
- **Sections 4.6, 4.6.1:** Member resignation during balloting period

Suggestions for improvement of this policy are welcome. Comments should be sent to [standards@nsf.org](mailto:standards@nsf.org), or c/o NSF, Standards Department, PO Box 130140, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48113-0140, USA.

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## NSF Standards

# Criteria Development and Maintenance Policies for Global Electronics Council Projects

## 1 General

These policies are for the development of criteria for the exclusive use of the Global Electronics Council (GEC) utilizing a multi-stakeholder, voluntary, consensus-based process.

This process applies the following attributes of voluntary consensus:

- **Openness:** The procedures or processes used are open to interested parties. Such parties are provided meaningful opportunities to participate in criteria development on a non-discriminatory basis. The procedures or processes for participating in standards development and for developing the standard are transparent.
- **Balance:** The criteria development process should be balanced. Specifically, there should be meaningful involvement from a broad range of parties, with no single interest dominating the decision-making.
- **Due process:** Due process shall include documented and publicly available policies and procedures, adequate notice of meetings, sufficient time to review drafts and prepare views and objections, access to views and objections of other participants, and a fair and impartial process for resolving conflicting views.
- **Appeals process:** An appeals process shall be available for the impartial handling of procedural appeals.
- **Consensus:** Consensus is defined as general agreement, but not necessarily unanimity. During the development of consensus, comments and objections are considered using fair, impartial, open, and transparent processes.

### 1.1 Definitions

**consensus:** Substantial agreement by directly and materially affected interests that signify the concurrence of more than a simple majority but not necessarily unanimity. It requires that all views and objections be considered and that an effort be made toward their resolutions.

## 2 Participation and committee structure

Participation in the process shall be open to all interested parties and persons who are directly and materially affected by the criteria. There are no fees associated with participation. Participation is available through voting membership on the TC and by public review and comment on criteria.

## 2.1 Technical Committee

**2.1.1** NSF shall identify and assemble an external TC with knowledge of the product or issues. The TC shall include a maximum of twenty-one (21) voting members, with the TC Chair acting as the 21<sup>st</sup> vote in the event of a tie.

**2.1.2** The TC shall be comprised of stakeholders representing four (4) broad categories:

- **Manufacturers:** Manufacturers of products covered by the scope of the criteria and their trade associations.
- **Other industry:** Other businesses commercially engaged with the product such as:
  - suppliers and their trade associations
  - recyclers, repair organizations, asset management service providers and their trade associations
  - other types of businesses commercially engaged with the product.
- **Sustainability advocates and government policy:** Individual from a public agency (local, regional, state, federal, or international) with an environmental/sustainability mission or representative of a professional public/environmental health/safety organization, academia, or not-for-profit environmental organization.
- **Purchasers and ecolabel criteria users:** An individual whose organization purchases, uses, or specifies products or services covered in the scope of the criteria. User/consumers and their trade association representatives, institutional purchasers, third-party conformity assessment bodies (e.g. testing laboratories), and retailers are included in this membership classification.

The TC will strive for balanced representation of the above interest categories, defined as no one interest category representing more than 25% of voting members, including active recruitment of stakeholders to fill available TC seats.

If balanced representation is not achieved, weighted voting may be applied to achieve equal representation among the four (4) categories.

The names of voting members and the organizations they represent are publicly available.

**2.1.3** Any individual may apply for membership on the TC by completing an application. Membership applications will be reviewed by NSF and the Chair, and members selected based on several factors: (1) technical competency and qualifications; (2) balance of stakeholder interests; (3) geographic representation; (4) date of receipt of application; and (5) participation in a recent or concurrent process.

When determining eligibility based on technical competency, the area of expertise of applicants may be taken into account in order for the TC to have expertise across the range of topics covered by the criteria. Manufacturers may be chosen to reflect the product types covered by the scope of the criteria, and suppliers chosen to reflect different materials and components in the covered products. NSF may consider participation in recent or concurrent processes to provide an opportunity for maximum participation.

An organization shall only have one voting member on the TC, unless the individuals represent different stakeholder categories (e.g. manufacturer and purchaser) or for government agencies, qualified individuals represent different interests.

**2.1.4** Each TC member is requested to serve a minimum one-year term. When a TC member resigns or is otherwise unable to serve, all applications on file for the applicable interest category shall be considered for filling the vacant applicable position.

**2.1.5** The TC shall be responsible for:

- voting on approval of all proposed criteria
- ensuring that sustainability impacts identified in the relevant State of Sustainability Research developed and issued by the GEC are properly addressed in the criteria
- developing and maintaining criteria in accordance with these policies and the *GEC Criteria Development Process*<sup>1</sup>
- attending and participating actively at meetings and reviewing documents
- returning ballots within prescribed deadlines
- providing technical expertise
- abiding by the NSF *Antitrust Guide*
- conducting themselves in a professional manner that is courteous, respectful, and consistent with the principles of the consensus process.

**2.1.6** The TC is open to observers. Participating organizations are limited to two representatives per organization, including voting members and observers on the TC. Any individual may apply to be an observer by completing an application.

Observers of the TC receive documents provided to the TC, such as meeting agendas and updates to the full draft criteria document. TC observers may only observe meeting discussions, unless invited by the TC Chair to contribute to the meeting, either verbally or electronically. TC observers submit comments through the public consultation process.

The Chair, possibly at the recommendation of NSF, may invite technical experts, known as “invited experts,” to join a TC meeting for the express purpose of providing technical expertise on a discussion topic. TC members and observers may also request of the Chair that a specific technical expert attend a meeting.

**2.1.7** Meeting attendance, voting records, and other participation shall be reviewed by the Secretariat and Chair on at least a semi-annual basis.

A TC member may be terminated for the following: if they are considered inactive, i.e. returns less than 75% of ballots, and/or misses three consecutive meetings (proxies are excluded from this count). A TC member whose change in employment affects their voting interest may also be terminated. These changes must be reported to NSF.

## **2.2 Secretariat**

An NSF Standards staff member shall serve as the Secretariat for the TC and shall be responsible for:

- overseeing compliance with these policies
- providing administrative services to the TC and assist them in performing their duties

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<sup>1</sup> If a conflict arises with requirements set forth in the GEC Criteria Development Process and this document, precedence is given to this document in regard to the management process of the Technical Committee.

- documenting actions and decisions made by the TC
- distributing TC meeting agendas 14 days in advance of the meeting
- distributing documents relevant to the business of the TC, including posting approved TC meeting minutes on the publicly available workspace
- responding to public comments
- performing other functions as required by these policies.

## 2.3 Technical Committee Chair and Vice Chair

The NSF Secretariat will appoint a Chair to facilitate the meetings of the TC. A Vice Chair may also be selected to assist the Chair or act in the Chair's absence.

The Chair shall be responsible for:

- facilitating TC meetings with a goal of reaching agreement on draft criteria
- ensure that all members are given the opportunity at meetings to express points of view
- ensure that decisions are clearly formulated and made available in written form by the Secretariat for confirmation following the meeting.

## 3 Project initiation and meetings

### 3.1 Project initiation

The criteria development process is initiated upon the request of GEC, following the delivery from GEC of a State of Sustainability Research report that provides a science-based foundation for the development of criteria, a defined project scope, and a draft of proposed criteria.

### 3.2 Meetings

NSF will convene meetings to review and consider modifications to draft criteria. Meeting agendas will be distributed at least 14 days in advance of meetings.

**3.2.1** A majority of voting members of the TC shall constitute quorum for conducting business. All decisions of the TC shall be reached by consensus, defined as substantial agreement of members, but not necessarily unanimity. If consensus cannot be reached by the TC, a decision can be made by agreement of two-thirds of the voting members in attendance or casting an electronic ballot, excluding abstentions (see Section [4.4](#)). A voting member of the TC can designate a proxy if they are unable to attend a meeting by notifying the NSF Secretariat 48 hours prior to the scheduled meeting. A proxy should be a representative from the member's organization; all other proxies are approved at the discretion of the Secretariat. A member may not assign a proxy for more than two consecutive meetings.

**3.2.2** A simple majority of voting members of the TC shall constitute quorum for review and approval of administrative tasks, such as the following (this is not an exhaustive list and may include additional activities):

- meeting summaries
- approval of the agenda

- straw ballots/polls.

### 3.3 Initial committee review and public comment

NSF will conduct an initial 60-day TC review of the draft criteria at the start of the project, along with a 60-day public comment period. Comments received are presented to the TC for consideration and action. Following TC deliberations, the official balloting process is initiated as described in Section [4.2](#).

### 3.4 Maintenance schedule/revision cycle

NSF recommends revising criteria at least every 5 years to ensure industry relevance.

## 4 Balloting

All proposed criteria actions shall be reviewed by the applicable TC via electronic ballot using the NSF Online Workspace (NOW).<sup>2</sup>

### 4.1 Ballot/correspondence preparation

The Secretariat shall submit the draft criteria for balloting to the TC. The Secretariat shall send ballots and other supporting documentation to TC members. The Secretariat, with support of the Chair, shall attempt to resolve all objections from the TC.

### 4.2 Ballot period and second public comment period

TC members shall be given a minimum of 30 calendar days from the transmittal date to return ballots. TC members shall be given a minimum of 14 calendar days from the transmittal dates to return subsequent recirculation/adjudication ballots.

Following the close of the initial TC review a second public comment period shall be conducted during the TC's official ballot period. Only proposed changes made by the TC shall be considered in-scope for this public comment.

### 4.3 Ballot options

Each member of the TC shall have one vote. The use of proxies is not permitted for the balloting. A member shall vote on each criterion/set of criteria in one of the following ways:

- Support the criterion/set of criteria as written (affirmative)
  - Submitting comment(s) when voting to support the criterion/set of criteria is optional. Comment(s) shall be considered discretionary.
- Do not support the criterion/set of criteria as written, (negative)
  - Reason(s) for a negative ballot shall be given and shall include specific wording on recommended action(s) to resolve objections.

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<sup>2</sup> <[standards.nsf.org](https://standards.nsf.org)>

- A negative ballot that is not accompanied by a written explanation shall be recorded as such and no further action shall be required.
- Abstain, with comment(s) optional.
  - An abstention ballot that is not accompanied by a written explanation shall be recorded as such, and no further action shall be required.

#### **4.4 Ballot results**

A two-thirds majority of the TC must cast a vote (counting abstentions) and at least two-thirds of those voting must approve (not counting abstentions) for the criterion/set of criteria to be deemed approved.

If responses from at least two-thirds of TC are not received in the allotted time period, the Chair shall determine whether the ballot shall be extended or re-balloted at a later date.

#### **4.5 Negative ballots and public comment**

Prompt consideration shall be given to all negative ballots and public comments. An attempt to resolve all negative ballots and public comments shall be made, and each submitter shall be advised in writing of the disposition of the negative ballot or comment and the reasons therefore. After receiving the written disposition, the submitter of a negative ballot shall be provided 14 calendar days to respond, reaffirm or revise the original ballot. The public commenter shall be provided 14 calendar days to respond, and if no continuing objection is received from the public commenter during this time period, NSF may consider the objection resolved.

**4.5.1** The Secretariat with the assistance of the Chair shall review and attempt to resolve negative ballots and public comments submitted for any criterion/set of criteria recommended for adoption. Only comments relating to the criterion/set of criteria under ballot shall be considered. The Secretariat and the submitter may determine that a negative ballot or public comment can be resolved without substantive change to the criterion/set of criteria.

**4.5.2** Resolution of negative ballots for any criterion/set of criteria which fail to receive affirmative ballots from at least two-thirds of the TC (not recommended for adoption) shall be addressed by the Chair as appropriate to reach consensus on the criteria.

**4.5.3** Each unresolved negative ballot/comment and attempt at resolution, and all substantive changes to the draft criterion/set of criteria, shall be submitted to the TC to afford members the opportunity to respond, reaffirm or change their votes; and public commenters shall receive a written response. At the completion of the TC review (adjudication) all negative ballots/comments shall be considered adjudicated.

#### **4.6 Member resignation during balloting period**

**4.6.1** If a member resigns from the TC during the balloting period and has not voted, the member shall be removed from the TC and not be included in the ballot calculations. If a member submits an affirmative vote and then resigns, the vote shall be recorded and counted. If the member submits a negative vote and then resigns, a reasonable effort shall be taken to adjudicate the negative ballot, e.g., the negative ballot shall be circulated to the relevant TC balloting group for consideration. Reasonable effort shall be taken to offer the right of appeal, and in the records for the ballot, the Secretariat shall document the actions taken to resolve the negative vote.

**4.6.2** If a member resigns during the balloting period, the open seat may be filled at the discretion of the Secretariat and the Chair.

## 5 Appeals

If an objector, including public review objectors, wishes to appeal any procedural matter of the TC, they shall notify the Chair of their intent to exercise this right within 15 business days after the date of notification of action or at any time with respect to inaction. Appeals shall be handled by the TC. Appellants shall document their concerns and submit them to the Chair for action. As warranted, the Chair shall take appropriate action to protect all rights of the appellant, up to and including the formation of an ad hoc group from the TC membership that is reflective of the stakeholder balance requirements, and which shall be tasked with finding an equitable resolution to the appellant's concerns.

## 6 Patents

A criteria document may include the use of a patented item, if it is considered that technical reasons justify this approach.

## 7 Commercial terms and conditions

Provisions involving business relations between buyer and seller, such as guarantees, warranties, and other commercial terms and conditions, shall not be included in a criterion. The appearance that a criterion endorses any particular products, services or companies shall be avoided. It is generally not acceptable to include proper names or trademarks of specific companies or organizations, acceptable manufacturer lists, service provider lists, or similar material in the text of a criterion or in an annex (or the equivalent). Where a sole source exists for essential equipment, materials or services necessary to determine compliance with a criterion, it is permissible to supply the name and address of the source in a footnote or informative annex as long as the words "or equivalent" are added to the reference. In connection with the determination of whether products or services conform to one or more criteria, the process or criteria for determining conformity can be standardized as long as the description of the process or criteria is limited to technical concerns and does not include what would otherwise be a commercial term.

## 8 Editorial revisions

The Secretariat and Chair may editorially revise (without TC review) criteria to ensure that requirements are clearly stated.

Editorial revisions shall not affect the intent or requirements of the criteria. Examples of substantive changes that would not be considered editorial are:

- "shall" to "should" or "should" to "shall"
- addition, deletion, or revision of requirements, regardless of the number of changes
- addition of mandatory compliance with referenced standards.

## **9 Recordkeeping**

### **9.1 Maintenance**

**9.1.1** General records, including, but not limited to, draft criteria, ballots, meeting summaries, or related information relative to review, revision, reaffirmation, or withdrawal of a criteria document shall be retained for at least five years, or until the next full revision of the document, whichever comes later. Records related to a document that has been withdrawn shall be retained for at least five years from date of withdrawal.

**9.1.2** The published criteria shall include a clear statement of the intent to consider requests for change, and information on how and where to submit such requests. Procedures shall be established for timely, documented action on each request for change, and no portion of the criteria document shall be excluded from the revision process.

## **10 Disclaimers**

Participation in NSF's protocol development/maintenance activities by regulatory agency representatives does not constitute endorsement of NSF or its protocols by the member's governmental agency or any of its subdivisions.

## **11 Protocol publication style**

### **11.1 Metrication**

**11.1.1** Metric units shall be used in all criteria documents.

**11.1.2** When inch-pound units are the primary units, "soft metrication" shall be used when providing metric units as equivalent. The intended tolerance, when not otherwise specified, shall be based on the inch-pound unit.

**11.1.3** When a tolerance is not specified, conformance to the requirement shall be determined using the rounding method per ASTM E29-06b.<sup>3</sup>

### **11.2 Requirements versus recommendations**

NSF shall meet the general requirements to develop or revise criteria under SOP #4434: *Development, Review and Approval of Program Documents*.

**11.2.1** The word "shall" is used for mandatory language and "should" is used for recommendations and other discretionary language.

**11.2.2** No requirements (i.e. use of the word "shall") may be expressed in definitions, notes, footnotes, or informative annexes.

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<sup>3</sup> ASTM International. 100 Barr Harbor Drive, PO Box C700, West Conshohocken, PA 19428-2959. <[astm.org](https://www.astm.org)>



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For more information, contact:  
[standards@nsf.org](mailto:standards@nsf.org)

789 N. Dixboro Road Ann Arbor, MI 48105 USA  
[nsf.org](http://nsf.org)