

ISEAL Community Member System Overview

Organisation Name	Responsible Jewellery Council
Year	2022
Version	V1

1) The **STRATEGIES** our system employs to meet its sustainability objectives



‘Building trust in the jewellery and watch industry: Roadmap to 2030 and beyond’ (the “[2030 Roadmap](#)”) defines what the RJC wants to achieve with its members by 2030, through our standards and supporting activities.

The [RJC Code of Practices \(COP\) Standard](#) is a mandatory standard that defines the requirements for responsible business practices throughout the jewellery and watch supply chain for gold, silver, platinum group metals, diamonds and coloured gemstones and covering companies across the mining, refining, cutting and polishing, manufacturing and retail sectors.

The [RJC Chain of Custody \(COC\) Standard](#) defines an approach for companies to handle and trade gold, silver and platinum group metals in a way that is traceable and responsibly sourced, as well as third-party assured at every stage. COC certification is voluntary and complements the COP certification.

The 2030 Roadmap proposes a framework of actions for our industry, to inspire and guide RJC members on how they can work together to raise their ambition on sustainable development through the implementation of the RJC COP and beyond. Together with our members we want to achieve positive impacts in the areas of people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnerships (as defined in the supporting diagram). The long-term impacts are linked to specific provisions of RJC’s COP, as well as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG’s) that we consider to be a priority for the whole jewellery and watch value chain and where it is possible to us to collectively achieve the greatest positive impact. There are three impact pathways that align with RJC’s strategic priorities, that contribute to the achievement of these long term impacts:

Members First

We believe that by providing RJC members with the necessary standards and supporting tools, and creating peer learning opportunities within the industry, we can empower them to implement the COP, achieve certification, and affect change in their own operations and value chains. Through the addition of new provisions and strengthening of existing ones with each iteration of the COP, we can continually raise the bar on responsibility across the industry. By upholding RJC's standards and maintaining certification over time, members can be sure that their business is responsible, and is making a positive contribution to our impact areas as well as the priority SDGs.

Partnerships for Progress

Multi-stakeholder partnerships are critical for the achievement of the long term impacts defined in the 2030 Roadmap. RJC seeks to participate in global and regional partnerships, linked to priority SDGs, that have clearly defined action plans and outcomes, as well as appropriate performance monitoring mechanisms to track effectiveness and progress. By leveraging other stakeholder expertise, we can identify and implement new, innovative, and inclusive solutions to address the greatest sustainability challenges facing our industry to accelerate and scale up impact. Best practices and solutions will be shared across our member community, and the wider industry through trade associations and other industry organisations and supply chain initiatives to stimulate further action. Member-led partnerships will be encouraged at the local and value chain level with business partners to address the key sustainability topics that affect members' own operations. Larger companies are encouraged to partner with smaller companies in their value chains to support them on their own responsibility journey, by sharing knowledge, learning and solutions to challenges. Thereby effecting change in the wider industry. Over time, members will realise the business benefits of taking action such as improved financial performance, reduced risks and enhanced stakeholder relations.

Advocacy for Positive Change

RJC strives to be the voice of the industry on key sustainability topics through leadership, engagement, and advocacy. By engaging with key stakeholder groups such as government, NGOs, financial community, and other responsible sourcing initiatives, we aim to:

- communicate why sustainability is business critical and raise the ambition of the industry;
- mobilise collective action on sustainability that contribute to the achievement of the long-term impacts;
- improve awareness of how the RJC model serves as an effective risk management and performance improvement tool; and
- identify emerging sustainability risks and best practices.

Through continued engagement we can ensure that RJC and its standards continues to evolve to meet needs and expectations of stakeholders, and create an enabling environment that allows our members to thrive and prosper, by rewarding them for their responsible business practices. This can be achieved by fostering a supportive policy environment, improving the recognition/acceptance of RJC certification across stakeholder groups, and reducing audit duplication and costs where feasible. This way we can retain existing members, but also attract new members, thereby increasing RJC's reach within and impact on the industry.

2) A description of the STANDARD that our system has developed

The COP details management practices and processes to ensure responsible business including labour and human rights due diligence, health and safety, gender equality, non-discrimination and the environment, product integrity and disclosure, by either meeting or exceeding regulatory requirements, in addition to referencing legal instruments and international instruments relevant for the watch and jewellery industry. Third party auditors review the management practices and certification is granted if the organisation is compliant with the COP, assuring stakeholders, customers, suppliers, and business partners that they conduct their business responsibly. The 2019 COP is aligned with international best practice frameworks such as the OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains for Minerals from Conflict-Affected and High-Risk Areas and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

More importantly, COP certification can reduce risks and vulnerabilities in a company's supply chain, and improve management systems and operating procedures to strengthen the business, making it more resilient and sustainable. It simultaneously leads to better social and environmental conditions within the broader industry, bringing positive impacts for workers, communities, and the environment.

CoC certification is a strong system for companies in the precious metal supply chain via third-party verification of their segregation and materials control, seeking a point of differentiation and reassurance for their customers, consumers, and other stakeholders. This can add value to the watch and jewellery products and help protect and enhance jewellery brands.

By implementing the COP, members are actively contributing to the positive impacts defined in the Roadmap to 2030, as well as the SDGs, which have been mapped against the provisions of the COP. The 2030 Roadmap proposes new member performance metrics that will complement the data collected during audits on member's management systems and compliance with the COP. The metrics which are aligned with the long term impacts and priority SDGs will provide RJC with greater visibility of member's sustainability performance.

3) How we maintain **RESPONSIBILITY** for decisions taken about and by our system



A clear [governance](#) framework ensures operational integrity and maximises impact. The RJC Governance Model helps us to ensure all members are represented and our attention remains focused on the issues that matter most.

In addition, the role of the Standards Committee is to review and support the RJC management team with the development and creations of RJC standards. The Committee assists in the design and content of the standards and assesses the monitoring and evaluation program (Impacts). They can also discuss broader strategic issues as the need arises, particularly issues that have an impact on the standards. The Standards Committee comprises up to 14 industry members and up to 14 non-industry members to ensure a balanced stakeholder participation in the decision-making process.

Moreover, the RJC Assurance Committee provides technical advice and oversight of the ongoing evolution and maintenance of the RJC Assurance system. The Committee assists in the development of policies and procedures that relate to the audit process, certification of members and approval of third-party audit firms. The Assurance Committee comprises up to 7 RJC member representatives with up to 2 external experts.

Full details of the role and responsibility of the Standards Committee and Assurance Committee can be found in the [RJC Governance Handbook](#), as well as the approval of any standard and standard review by the RJC Board.

In 2021, the RJC established an ambitious SDG Taskforce to drive forward the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development whilst supporting members measure and report on progress with the 17 goals. The SDG Taskforce serves as an action platform for:

- coordination of action by various stakeholders on the SDGs related to the implementation of the COP;
- input into the development of RJC's 2030 Roadmap and supporting member metrics; and
- serving as a guide/framework for the wider watch and jewellery, gemstones and precious metals industries to implement and report on the SDGs.

4) How our system's design demonstrates a **COMMITMENT TO IMPROVEMENT**

To understand the effectiveness and the impact of our standard and supporting strategies within the jewellery and watch value chain, we have established a monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) [programme](#) which consists of:

Performance monitoring

Data is regularly collected from all members throughout their membership, primarily via membership forms, certification audit reports, and members surveys such as the post-audit survey. The majority of this data is housed and managed in our new CRM system which was launched in 2021. The new CRM system, which is under further development, will provide greater data analysis and visualisation capabilities. RJC's M&E Indicator Protocol specifies the indicators that enable us to track whether our strategies are resulting in the desired outcomes and impacts, as well as the method for collecting (performance monitoring versus in-depth evaluation).

To ensure the integrity of the data we process, RJC has established a Data Governance framework in 2021. The framework defines organisational roles and responsibilities for data governance at all levels of the organisation, as well as processes for data management which includes processes for how data is handled at each lifecycle stage from creation to destruction. Overarching processes related to data quality, protection and security are also covered in the framework documentation.

Research

Each year, RJC commissions an external research team to conduct an in-depth evaluation to evaluate progress towards achieving the medium and longer-term impacts defined in our Roadmap. The research questions are determined based on trends identified in the data yielded through performance monitoring, as well as specific outcomes of material interest to external stakeholders. These potential research questions are discussed internally and agreed upon with the Executive Director prior to the development of the Terms of Reference. Upon completion of the project, the full research report is made publicly available on our website.

Reporting and learning

The Impacts team is responsible for presenting the results from the performance monitoring and annual research projects to the wider RJC management team annually, as part of the development of the internal performance monitoring report and external Annual Progress Report. Data and trends are reviewed collectively to facilitate learning, and identify opportunities to improve RJC's activities and strategies.

To enable us to demonstrate meaningful and measurable progress to our stakeholders, the RJC has also revised its performance monitoring framework to coincide with the launch of the 2030 Roadmap. A new set of Member ESG performance metrics has been developed that will be collected from members which are linked to priority SDGs and key provisions of the COP standard. By reporting publicly on ESG metrics linked to the SDGs, and integrating this into strategy and governance, companies are likely to address what is measured and create long-term sustainable value. ESG is business critical, and the RJC will prioritise engagement with key stakeholder groups such as government, NGOs, financial community and standards over the next decade to mobilise action on how the RJC model can contribute to improving ESG performance of the industry.

In addition, the purpose of the Assurance Department is to ensure a credible and quality audit, conducted by objective and competent RJC approved third-party auditors. The RJC Assurance system is continuously reviewed, updated and improved, by taking into account stakeholders' feedback, audit / assessments trends and any exceptions / incidents management. The Assurance role also integrates analytics and data insights to understand how Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) and auditors are performing and where improvements are needed. The CABs are required to conduct internal audits against the RJC procedure relevant to the audit process. Via the third-party independent Assurance Services International (ASI) oversight assessments, the CABs must demonstrate RJC specific implementation, in line with the [CAB & Auditor Accreditation Protocol](#). The RJC also holds regular roundtables where CABs are invited to attend and actively participate in the conversation and feedback exchange, sharing best practice and improvement opportunities.

The credibility and robustness of the Assurance system is maintained by a suite of policies such as the [Assessment Manual](#), [Complaints Mechanism](#), [CAB & Auditor Accreditation Protocol](#) and KPIs, and [Assurance Committee Terms of Reference](#), [Remote Audit Derogation](#), Risk Management Policy Framework and Risk Register across the organisation. The latter two establish quarterly team reviews and annual internal management reviews, as well as overall ownership, roles and responsibilities and risk treatments. These documents are subject to continuous improvement and regular reviews, based on stakeholder feedback and best practice.

Regular reviews of our standards ensure they remain fit for purpose (please see more details in the below section). A decision-making mechanism, including the composition of the Standards Committee, ensures that a reasonable stakeholder balance is in place.

5) How our standard is monitored and reviewed to ensure its **RELEVANCE**

Our inclusive and collaborative approach to standard setting, review and development detailed [here](#) keeps the RJC standards relevant and meaningful to businesses throughout the entire watch and jewellery supply chain and external stakeholders. Our standards review process is a minimum of every 5 years. The COP was last revised in 2019, and its next revision is due in 2024. Whilst the COC was revised in 2017, and the next revision is due in 2022.

We aim to ensure open and transparent consultations on the development and ongoing maintenance of our standards. This is achieved by holding a combination of webinars, teleconferences, and direct consultations to engage with stakeholders and members, ensuring that they have the opportunity to be actively involved in standard setting. Our standards public consultation includes at least two rounds of 60-day commenting period, with each round creating a summary of comments published to our website. More details can be found on our [RJC Standards Development and Harmonisation page](#).

Similarly, the Roadmap to 2030 and supporting member metrics were subject to a 3 month public consultation period in 2021. Consultation documents were made publicly available on the website, and external stakeholders invited via email and social media campaigns to comment on the proposals. Furthermore, RJC held numerous roundtable dialogues, targeting specific stakeholder groups (e.g. members, external stakeholders, audit firms). In total, RJC engaged with more than 150 stakeholders during the consultation period. A sample of 30 members and 2 audit firms were then selected to pilot the new member metrics proposed as part of the 2030 Roadmap to test the feasibility amongst a diverse membership. The results of the consultation and the pilot project are being considered as part of the finalisation of the 2030 Roadmap.

The RJC operates a risk-based system for member assessment frequency and method, based on compliance performance, as defined in the [Assessment Manual](#). The oversight assessment of CABs by ASI is also risk based, considering the number of audits and performance trends, as per CAB KPIs. In addition, The RJC has clearly defined eligibility criteria for auditors ([CAB & Auditor Accreditation Protocol](#)) and members ([RJC Commercial Member Application Guidance](#) and [Form](#)).

In addition, external stakeholders can access the [Complaints Mechanism](#) as input mechanism. The Assurance system change protocol also defines clear procedures on who can provide input for and during assurance system changes and how the latter are managed, systematically reported and published. The main groups actively included are the auditors (via dedicated Roundtables) and all members of the RJC Assurance Committee. Other stakeholder may be consulted by RJC on an ad hoc basis during changes to the system.

6) How the standard is **IMPLEMENTED**

The wording of all standards requirements allow a consistent interpretation and application of the standard (including only language that is clear, specific, objective, and verifiable). [Guidance](#) documentation, [templates](#) and member training, including a training desk are available to support the understanding and correct application of the RJC standards. In addition, the RJC created a number of member dedicated

[toolkits to support implementation](#), such as a COP Self-Assessment, Risk Assessment, Small Business and Retailer Sustainability Toolkits, Due Diligence Toolkits for Diamonds & Coloured Gemstones and Precious Metals, Human Rights Due Diligence toolkit and a Gender toolkit. Moreover, the RJC regularly hosts a number of educational webinars covering topics such as COP 6 Human Rights & COP 7 Supply Chain Due Diligence and circularity within jewellery design.

As previously mentioned, the RJC has a clearly defined assurance structure and systems, using approved independent CABs as 3rd party auditors followed by formal certification by the RJC. Auditor training is provided while auditor RJC knowledge is subject to assessments to ensure competence and alignment of auditors when assessing RJC members against the standards. As part of the CAB approval process and oversight, the CABs are required to conduct internal audits against the RJC procedure relevant to the audit process. Via the ASI oversight assessments, the CABs must demonstrate RJC specific implementation and competence, in line with the [CAB & Auditor Accreditation Protocol](#), which also includes relevant procedures for remediating CABs non-conformities.

The [Assessment Manual](#) provides detailed guidance on the audit and post-audit process and certificate issue, on identifying, grading, documenting and addressing non-conformities, on onsite and offsite audit days, on sampling for workers interviews and multi-site organisations, auditing outsourced contractors, use of external experts and interpreters and much more. The certification team review a sample of the audit reports received, to ensure compliance with the Assessment Manual and to check consistency in interpretation of the standards. All issues are addressed with the audit team and program managers prior to issuance of certification.

The RJC has a publicly available [Complaints Mechanism](#) that also includes appeal avenues, and the same is required contractually from both ASI and all approved CABs.

The membership agreement, the Assessment Manual, as well as the [Brand Manual](#) provide clear and explicit rules on adequate claims and use of the RJC logo by members. The type of claims certified members can make is restricted to COP certification, logo use and optional provenance claims. Product related claims are restricted to COC certificate holders only. Materials, statements and claims made by RJC related to its M&E system, outcomes and impacts, are reviewed by the Impacts Team and Executive Director prior to publication for accuracy. RJC's Impacts Team has expanded over the past year in recognition of the importance of impact measurement and reporting. As such, the responsibility for developing RJC's Annual Progress Report, which is the main channel for communicating progress to external stakeholders, lies with the Impacts Team with support from other departments. For all data reported publicly, records of the raw data and calculations are stored on our document management system in case any challenges from external stakeholders.

The RJC has a documented management system, including all required quality management elements up to exception management (i.e. remote audit during the COVID-19 pandemic). The procedures are controlled, reviewed and improved on a continuous basis. The RJC risk management has been referenced in section 4.