



SCIENCE
BASED
TARGETS

DRIVING AMBITIOUS CORPORATE CLIMATE ACTION

TIMBER AND WOOD FIBER PATHWAY REVISION TERMS OF REFERENCE

Version 1.0

March 2025

ABOUT SBTi

The Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi) is a corporate climate action organization that enables companies and financial institutions worldwide to play their part in combating the climate crisis.

We develop standards, tools and guidance which allow companies to set greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reductions targets in line with what is needed to keep global heating below catastrophic levels and reach net-zero by 2050 at latest.

The SBTi is incorporated as a UK charity, with a subsidiary SBTi Services Limited, which hosts our target validation services (together with SBTi, the “SBTi Group”). Partner organizations who facilitated SBTi’s growth and development are CDP, the United Nations Global Compact, the We Mean Business Coalition, the World Resources Institute (WRI), and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF).

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The SBTi reserves the right to revise this document according to a set revision schedule or as advisable to reflect the most recent emissions scenarios, regulatory, legal or scientific developments, and GHG accounting best practices.

“Science Based Targets initiative” and “SBTi” refer to the Science Based Targets initiative, a private company registered in England number 14960097 and registered as a UK Charity number 1205768.

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VERSION HISTORY

Version	Change/update description	Publication date
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1. INTRODUCTION

This Terms of Reference describes the key information related to the timber and wood fiber pathway revision project. The timber and wood fiber pathway is one of the [SBTi Forest, Land and Agriculture Science-Based Target-Setting Guidance](#)'s (SBTi FLAG Guidance) pathway for FLAG target-setting. The project will be carried out according to the SBTi's [Standard Operating Procedure \(SOP\) for Development of SBTi Standards](#).

2. OBJECTIVES

The objective of the timber and wood fiber pathway revision project is to revise and release an updated timber and wood fiber near- and long-term pathway under which companies will be able to set FLAG science-based targets for their land-based emissions associated with timber and wood fiber¹.

3. STEPS FOR DEVELOPING THE TECHNICAL OUTPUTS

The technical output revision process aims to be transparent in decision-making, striving for input from any interested stakeholder through public consultation and more targeted stakeholder outreach to enable the widest possible consideration of content.

Based on the [Standard Operating Procedure \(SOP\) for Development of SBTi Standards](#), the following steps will be followed for revising the technical output:

- Initiation: Scope, objectives, risks and operational considerations;
- Research: Assessment of the key technical issues and pathway development;
- Drafting: First draft structure and content of the project deliverables;
- Consultation, including public consultation and pilot testing: Stakeholder input and consensus building around key issues and approach;
- Approval: Formal decision-making processes;
- Implementation: Publication, outreach and capacity building;
- Monitoring and Evaluation: Gaining feedback and learnings from implementation and evaluating for future guidance, refinement or workstreams.

Please refer to the [Timeline](#) section below for details on the approximate timing of each development phase.

¹ Please note that as standards development is an iterative process, with multiple rounds of stakeholder input and deliberation, project objectives are subject to change.

4. SCOPE

4.1 Applicability

The timber and wood fiber pathway revision will apply to companies worldwide. In line with FLAG-C8, the revised pathway will be applicable to companies in the forest and paper products sector or with emissions related to timber and wood fiber accounting for 10% or more of their FLAG emissions (gross, excluding removals).

The timber and wood fiber pathway covers the land-based emissions and removals associated with forestry production and aligned with the boundaries of the FLAG Guidance, including land use change emissions, land management emissions and carbon removals and storage.

Only land-based emissions and removals occurring on working lands within a company's value chain are included within the scope of the pathway, in line with the FLAG Guidance criteria.

The scope of the timber and wood fiber pathway revision project encompasses the following key activities:

- Gather and develop insights to inform the SBTi on the timber and wood fiber pathway;
- Align with corporate accounting for timber and wood fiber-related emissions and removals and;
- Provide a revised near- and long-term 1.5C pathway for land-based emissions associated with timber and wood fiber.

During the project development, options for additional guidance or future requirements that the SBTi could implement for companies with significant forestry activities in their value chains may be identified. These could inform future projects.

4.2 Deliverables

The timber and wood fiber pathway revision includes the following deliverables, which will be made public to aid transparency and help engage stakeholders (with expected timelines that may be subject to change):

Interim deliverables

- Project Terms of Reference (this document).
- Synthesis Report Public Consultation and Pilot Testing Draft.
- Pathway Technical Foundation Paper Public Consultation and Pilot Testing Draft.
- Target-Setting Tool Public Consultation and Pilot Testing Draft.
- Basis for Conclusions Report.

Final deliverables

- Synthesis Report.
- Revised Target-Setting Tool(s).
- Revision of the SBTi FLAG Guidance to include the Pathway Technical Foundation Paper as an annex.

4.3 Exclusions

The following items are not within the scope of the timber and wood fiber pathway revision project and may be considered for future revisions of the timber and wood fiber pathway revision:

- Emissions outside the scope of the current FLAG Guidance including processing, transportation or land-based emissions from bioenergy production.
- The revised pathway is intended to align with the SBTi FLAG Guidance and criteria. As a result, the project is not expected to result in a revision of the SBTi FLAG Guidance.

4.4 Geographic application

The timber and wood fiber pathway revision aims to apply to organizations with emissions and activities worldwide.

5. JUSTIFICATION OF NEED FOR THE TIMBER AND WOOD FIBER PATHWAY REVISION

The SBTi is undertaking the timber and wood fiber pathway revision project for the following reasons:

- The use of the previous timber and wood fiber pathway for near-term FLAG targets has been [suspended](#) and;
- Long-term FLAG targets for forestry are not yet available.

As a result, there is no appropriate target-setting option for companies with significant FLAG-related emissions from timber and wood fiber to set FLAG targets.

When implemented, the revised timber and wood fiber pathway will address this lack of target-setting option by ensuring a revised pathway is available for companies with significant FLAG-related timber and wood fiber emissions.

In line with the SBTi FLAG Guidance, it is expected that the following companies will be required to use the revised timber and wood fiber pathway:

- Companies in the forest and paper products sector. In January 2025, 94 companies from the sector had either set science-based targets or had a commitment to set targets².
- Companies with emissions related to timber and wood fiber accounting for 10% or more of their FLAG emissions.

6. RELATED STANDARDS AND INITIATIVES

The SBTi is part of a growing ecosystem of standards and initiatives addressing corporate climate change action from different angles. The SBTi recognizes the value of working to harmonize with other actors in this ecosystem.

Within the scope of the timber and wood fiber pathway revision project, the following organizations are relevant to the extent of the project. This list is not intended to be exhaustive of all initiatives in this subject area.

- The [Accountability Framework initiative](#) (AFi) has produced a framework for companies to achieve ethical supply chains that protect forests, natural ecosystems and human rights. Timber and wood fiber is one of the most critical deforestation-linked commodities listed in the SBTi FLAG Guidance. Companies setting FLAG targets are recommended to align their no-deforestation commitment with the AFi guidance.
- The [Forestry Program](#) of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) provides resources on forests, sustainable forestry practices and forest products.
- The [Forest Stewardship Council](#) (FSC) develops standards for sustainable forestry and the sourcing of forest products throughout the value chain.
- [Global Forest Watch](#) (GFW) provides an online map and several other tools to monitor forests, identify impacts and analyze trends through time.
- The [Science Based Targets Network](#) (SBTN) develops science-based targets for nature both for companies and cities.

7. INTENDED SUSTAINABILITY OUTCOMES

In 2018, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) warned that global warming must not exceed 1.5°C above pre-industrial temperatures to avoid the catastrophic impacts of climate change. Business has a vital role to play in driving down greenhouse gas emissions and building the resilient, zero-emissions economy we urgently need. This action must be grounded in science. Science-based targets show companies and financial institutions how much and how quickly they must decarbonize to prevent the worst impacts of climate change.

A key criterion the SBTi uses in prioritizing the projects it chooses to undertake is the impact the project will have in addressing greenhouse gas emission-reduction from key sectors or

² [SBTi Target Dashboard \(Beta\)](#), accessed 08/01/2025.

activities. To that end, the timber and wood fiber pathway revision will address the lack of FLAG target-setting pathway for companies with significant forestry activities.

FLAG represents about 22% of net anthropogenic GHG emissions in tonnes of CO₂ equivalent (~13 GtCO₂e per year), with about half from agriculture and half from land use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF) (IPCC, 2022). In terms of mitigation, the land sector could contribute up to 37% of the emissions reductions and removals needed through 2030, and 20% through 2050 (Griscom et al., 2017).

8. INTENDED CLAIMS

As part of the timber and wood fiber pathway revision process, and in line with a broader piece of work on claims, the SBTi plans to develop claims guidance to supplement the SBTi's current [communications guidelines](#). The aim is that companies are enabled to make credible claims around the emission reduction targets that they have set and that have been validated by the SBTi, as well as claims around the achievement of those targets, where appropriate.

9. ENGAGEMENT

9.1 How to engage?

The SBTi values stakeholder input to inform the development of its technical outputs. There are a variety of channels through which stakeholders can engage with and input into the revision of the timber and wood fiber pathway.

- **Project feedback form:** Over the course of the whole project, any stakeholder is welcome to submit feedback on documents that have been released through the [FLAG feedback form](#). All feedback will be carefully considered and published on the SBTi website, with personal information removed. This form is not intended as a complaints form.³
- **Public consultation:** The timber and wood fiber pathway revision will go through a minimum of one round of public consultation (expected for Q4 2025). The consultation will last for a duration of 60 days. Through the timber and wood fiber pathway revision development process, the Project Team will host webinars for interested stakeholders to join and ask questions. Each webinar will be hosted twice to accommodate different time zones. During the consultation period, stakeholders will have the opportunity to submit feedback to the consultation questionnaire via a survey. These resources will be available on the [FLAG page](#).
- **Pilot testing:** The timber and wood fiber pathway revision will go through a pilot testing, to be conducted in parallel to the public consultation. This approach ensures

³ Please note that stakeholders who wish to submit complaints related to the SBTi existing standards or guidance documents, or standard development processes, including the Standard Operating Procedure for Development of SBTi Standards, may do so by emailing standardscomplaints@sciencebasedtargets.org.

that potential issues in target validation are identified early and that the revisions are thoroughly tested for effectiveness.

9.2 Who should engage?

The timber and wood fiber pathway revision Team welcomes input from all stakeholders with an interest in this project development, including but not limited to:

- Academic and research institutions
- Civil society organizations
- Technical experts
- Corporates
- Governments and regulators
- Standard-setting organizations
- Sustainability practitioners
- Associations
- Underrepresented groups that are affected by climate change and/or the implementation of our technical output.
- All other stakeholders with an interest in this project development

9.2 How to keep informed?

Stakeholders can stay up to date with the timber and wood fiber pathway revision development process, opportunities to provide input, and planned events by monitoring the [SBTi's website](#) for updates, signing up for the [SBTi newsletter](#), and following the SBTi on [X](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

For any general queries relating to the timber and wood fiber pathway revision project and how to engage please contact flag@sciencebasedtargets.org. For queries related to the target validation process or getting started with FLAG guidance, please contact info@sciencebasedtargets.org.

10. LANGUAGES

All documents relating to the timber and wood fiber pathway revision, including consultation drafts, will be published in English (this is the SBTi working language). The SBTi may translate the final deliverable into key languages to accommodate important regions within this sector. Further details will be communicated at a later stage.

11. RISK MITIGATION

The SBTi and governance bodies shall undertake a risk assessment alongside the technical outputs development, to identify potential risks in implementing the draft technical outputs and how to mitigate these (e.g., unintended consequences that could arise from the implementation of the Standard, factors that could have a negative impact on the ability of the technical outputs to achieve its objectives, and possible corrective actions that could be taken to address these potential risks).

12. LAUNCH

The final draft of the timber and wood fiber pathway revision is expected to be published according to the project timeline along with:

- Synthesis report;
- Revision of the SBTi FLAG Guidance to include the Pathway Technical Foundation Paper as an annex;
- The revised Target-Setting Tool(s).

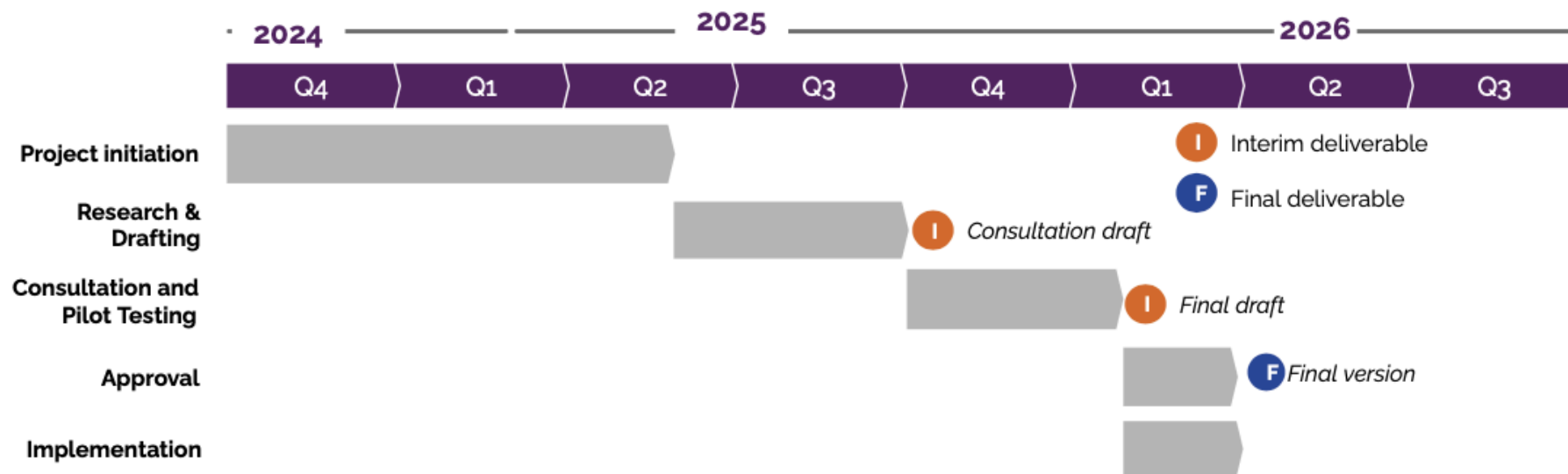
13. TRANSITION

Full details to support entities with validated targets, targets under validation, or active commitments to prepare for conformity to the timber and wood fiber pathway revision will be communicated in a timely manner before its launch.

14. EXPECTED TIMELINE

The tentative timeline for the timber and wood fiber pathway revision based on the phases outlined in the [Standard Operating Procedure \(SOP\) for Development of SBTi Standards](#) is shown below. This includes project deliverable milestones and periods for engagement (i.e. consultation). **Please note that these are expected timelines and are subject to change.**

Figure 2. Expected project timeline.



15. GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE AND DECISION MAKING

The [Standard Operating Procedure \(SOP\) for Development of SBTi Standards](#) sets out in detail the governance and decision making processes that apply to standards development and revisions.



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