



# Procedure for Revision of the Climate Neutral Certification Program

Vs 1.0 – October 2021

## Procedure for Revision of the CNG Climate Neutral Certification Program

Version 1.0 - October 2021

### Important notes and considerations:

- This document, the *Procedure for Revision of the CNG Climate Neutral Certification Program*, is applicable to any revision of the CNG Certification Program and/ or its core Program Documents (a.o. The Standard, Assurance Protocol and Trademark & Claims Procedure) for the period between 2022 - 2026.
- All Climate Neutral Certification Program Documents are fully reviewed at least every five years in accordance with the ISEAL Codes of Good Practices (however, an earlier review can be considered).
- All (draft) Program Documents including this document can be found on the CNG website: [www.climateneutralcertification.com](http://www.climateneutralcertification.com).
- This document is publicly available in English, which is the only official and binding version. If requested by multiple stakeholders, this document can be provided in another language.



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## 1 Introduction

Climate Neutral Group (CNG) has launched its revised Climate Neutral Certification Program on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2021 following a series of stakeholder consultations following the ISEAL Codes of Good Practise. In August 2021, CNG became an ISEAL Community Member.

As required by the ISEAL Codes, CNG shall periodically (at least every 5 years) review its Standard. However, CNG may decide to do so sooner. For instance, to make sure that the Standard reflects the most recent market developments, or because CNG's stakeholders have requested an updated version.

This document stipulates the procedure for any revision (being a regular revision, a non-substantial revision or an urgent revision) of any of the core Program Documents (either the Standard, Assurance Protocol or the Trademark & Claims Policy), further referred to as a '*revision trajectory*'. Other Program Documents, such as Terms of References<sup>1</sup>, the Reduction Plan Template, certain Annexes of the Standard<sup>2</sup> or the Complaints Procedure are excluded from this revision procedure and can be amended at any point in time.

CNG is committed to providing all stakeholders directly impacted by the Program Documents (or revisions thereof) with adequate and appropriate opportunities to contribute to the development and/or review process. All stakeholders are well informed transparently, about the process and allowed to share their opinion and feedback. All roles and responsibilities are stipulated to prevent any confusion or disputes. This document follows up on the 'spirit' of the '[Terms of Reference for the Development of the CNG Certification Program](#)', in which the importance of stakeholder involvement and the different types of stakeholders are clearly described.

Stakeholders wishing to provide feedback outside revision periods can submit their input directly to: [certification@climateneutralgroup.com](mailto:certification@climateneutralgroup.com). This input will be kept on record by CNG's Certification Team and considered for the next revision trajectory.

## 2 Different Types of Revision

### 2.1 Regular revisions

All Program Documents are reviewed and revised as deemed necessary and at least every 5 years. The procedural steps of this process are detailed in chapter 5. Before each revision trajectory, a specific Revision Plan with concrete milestones and deliverables is drafted and published online.

### 2.2 Non-substantial revisions

In case of a need for a non-substantive change to a Program Document, to clarify existing language, for example, there is no need for a formal revision process. However, there will be a notification of the change(s) in the subsequent revision process.

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<sup>1</sup> For instance, the Terms of Reference for the Development of the Certification Program, the Procedure for Revision of the Certification Program, or the Terms of Reference of the Advisory Committee.

<sup>2</sup> For instance, Annex 2 (Sector Benchmark Tool), Annex 3b (Permitted Calculation Methods) and Annex 7 (Self-Assessment).



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## 2.3 Urgent revisions

In case of a need for an urgent, substantive change that cannot be delayed to another regular revision trajectory, CNG’s Certification Team (together with relevant colleagues or internal working groups, as appropriate) develop a draft revision proposal. This proposal shall include (at least) the proposed textual changes, the reasoning and urgency for the change, and shall be published on the CNG website for a certain amount of time (t.b.c.). Directly affected key stakeholders shall be identified and notified of the proposal and informed about the procedure and time schedule to provide feedback. The final proposed text included the key stakeholder feedback shall be approved by the Advisory Committee before final publication and release.

## 3 Principles

To assure the Program Documents represent a balanced view of stakeholders and make the most possible impact, the following principles shall be adhered to throughout the revision process:

**Ambitiousness:** a program that is distinctive, sets the bar high (enough) to make an actual difference and to enhance impact;

*Versus*

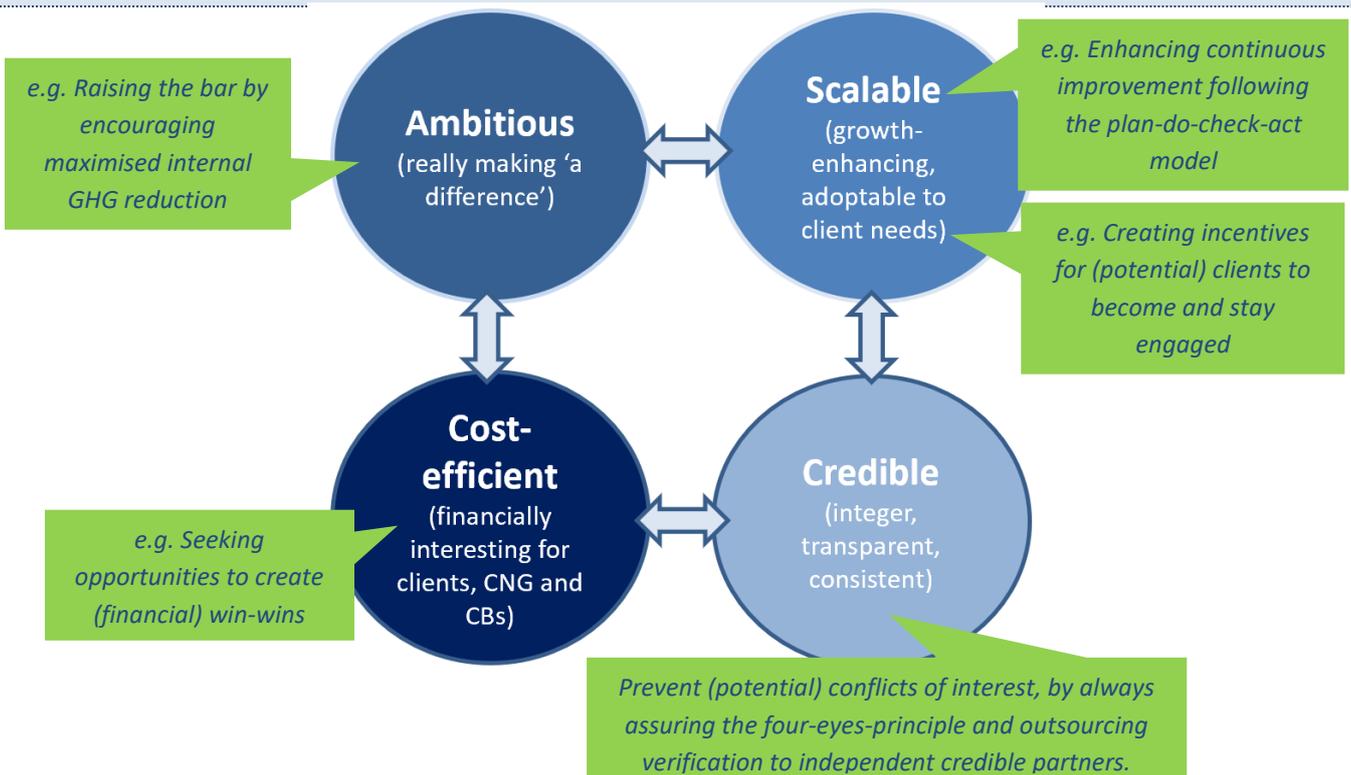
**Scalability:** a program that is sufficiently attractive, practical and flexible for (potential) clients, allowing for rapid uptake;

*Versus*

**Credibility:** a program with a certain degree of rigidity, strictness and consistency to protect the integrity and trustworthiness of the program;

*Versus*

**Cost-efficiency:** a program that is ‘value for money’ for all parties involved, with reasonable verification and certification costs for clients, while allowing CBs and CNG to cover their own operating costs.





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## 4 Stakeholder Mapping

As a multi-stakeholder initiative, CNG wants to ensure that participation in the development and/ or review process reflects a balance of interests among parties involved and/ or impacted directly through the Certification Program. Different categories (and sub-categories) of stakeholders, each with their roles and interests have been defined and -as a starting point- names have been allocated to these categories based on CNG's current network of contact persons.

This stakeholder mapping is not static. More stakeholders can be added over time. CNG maintains a detailed database, with contact details, of all stakeholders and other interested parties.

<b>Category 1: Stakeholder Bodies</b>	
<b>Sub-category</b>	<b>Role in the development trajectory</b>
CNG's Shareholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide strategic direction for the organisation.</li></ul>
CNG's Executive Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Operational decision-making authority, responsible for daily management of the organisation.</li><li>• Oversees whether the organisational strategic direction is reflected correctly in the CNG Certification Program (and steers its content).</li><li>• Approves the final version of Terms of References, Procedures and all interim and final versions of the Program Documents (including the Standard, Assurance Protocol and Trademark &amp; Claims Policy).</li></ul>
CNG's Certification Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Coordinates content development of the CNG Certification Program, in alignment with this Procedure.</li><li>• Facilitates the Technical Working Groups.</li><li>• Accountable to the Advisory Committee and reporting to CNG's Executive Team.</li></ul>
CNG's Technical Working Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In-house, technical experts that co-develop the content of the Standard (i.e. requirement-setting for complex topics).</li><li>• Members hold detailed content discussions and seek opinions and advice from Advisory Committee members or external experts (when applicable).</li></ul>
Advisory Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• External, technical experts (senior representatives from -at least- stakeholder categories 2 and 3), appointed or elected as formal AC members, to take a seat for a certain duration.</li><li>• Members hold detailed content discussions at least twice per year and provide strategic advice to Technical Working Groups and the Certification Team.</li><li>• Approves the final version of Terms of References and all interim and final versions of the Standard, Assurance Protocol and Claims Policy, based on a detailed assessment of content and procedures.</li><li>• Final decision-making authority on stakeholder feedback in case consensus cannot be reached (with restricted overruling options by CNG).</li></ul>

*Note: CNG staff take a seat in the Advisory Committee but has no voting rights.*



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<b>Category 2: Key Stakeholder Groups</b>		
<b>Sub-category</b>	<b>Interest</b>	<b>Role in the development trajectory</b>
CNG Clients (already certified or interested in becoming certified, either for their organisation, product or service), such as Producers, Processors, Manufacturers, Traders, Retailers, E-commerce companies, Municipalities, NGOs	A program that reflects client needs, helps organisations to reduce emissions and become climate neutral, in a cost-efficient yet sufficiently credible manner.	<p><i>Feedback on Program Documents is <b>pivotal</b>:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in stakeholder events.</li> <li>• Invited to provide feedback during (public) consultation rounds.</li> </ul>
<b>Category 3: Key Content Resources</b>		
Certification Bodies (and potentially Accreditation Bodies)	A program that allows for credible verification and generates sufficient income for CBs to stay committed.	<p><i>Feedback on Program Documents is <b>highly desired</b>:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in stakeholder events.</li> <li>• Invited to provide feedback during (public) consultation rounds.</li> </ul>
Governmental, regulatory and/ or governance bodies	A program that is aligned with and allows for the practical execution of national regulations (derived from the Paris Agreement and forthcoming COP decisions).	
NGOs	A program that creates large-scale environmental (and social) impact to mitigate climate change.	
<b>Category 4: Appreciated Stakeholder Input</b>		
Consulting firms	A program that welcomes external technical expertise for the sake of requirement setting.	<p><i>Feedback on Program Documents is <b>optional</b>:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in stakeholder events.</li> <li>• Invited to provide feedback during (public) consultation rounds.</li> </ul>



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## 5 Procedure for Regular Revision

### 5.1 Description of the revision process

At the start of each revision trajectory, CNG's Certification Team collects all input received to date to systematically review and cluster in thematic topics or issues. Based on this input, proposition papers or a very first draft of the Program Document(s) are developed. This can be input from:

- Feedback generated during the audit and certification process, e.g., from already certified or potentially new clients, Certification Bodies or external consultants;
- Formal client feedback generated through the annual Client Satisfaction Research;
- The Impact and Performance Review, conducted annually by CNG;
- New (inter)national regulations and guidelines, e.g., new regulation resulting from the COP, country legislation, ICROA guidelines, ACM guidelines, ISEAL Codes);
- Market developments and trends, e.g., sector benchmarks and sector guidelines;
- CNG staff members and Internal Working Groups;
- The Advisory Committee and any other stakeholder as defined in the '[Terms of Reference for the Development of the CNG Certification Program](#)'.
- Other schemes operating in the same domain;
- The literature.

Draft versions are shared with stakeholders for their input during different feedback consultation rounds. New input obtained during these rounds is then used by CNG's Certification Team to develop a newer release. The revision process can consist of multiple rounds of stakeholder consultation, whether online (e.g. via an online questionnaire or feedback forms) or face-to-face (e.g. during a stakeholder event). The number of consultation rounds depends on the complexity of input brought forward by stakeholders and the speed at which consensus can be achieved. A minimum of 1 formal public consultation (of 60 days) for all selected stakeholders is obliged as per the ISEAL Codes of Good Practise. However, in the case of complex thematic topics or issues, a second or even a third round of consultations may be advisable (with a flexible duration). It can also serve the process to start with a restricted consultation with a smaller group of key stakeholders, for instance, to obtain high-level consensus or feedback on first propositions or first drafts. In addition, and usually, more towards the end of the revision process, pilots can be initiated to test the feasibility of certain assumptions to validate if the envisioned change works in practice and contributes to the envisioned goal.

As soon as it has been decided that a revision trajectory will be initiated, CNG's Certification Team develops a so-called '*Revision Plan*', making the below procedural steps concrete with actual deadlines, accountable persons and deliverables. This Revision Plan shall also include a justification for the revision and provide a summary of anticipated changes.

For each consultation round, all stakeholders should be timely informed in writing (e.g. through a newsletter or personal mail), and a formal notification announcing the consultation should be available on the scheme owner's website, indicating instructions and the deadline for submitting feedback. It is crucial to carefully choose the timing of a consultation round, i.e. consultations scheduled during the summer holidays or Christmas season will not harvest the anticipated input.

After each consultation round, CNG's Certification Program collects, reviews and integrates (where possible) all input received into a newer release of the Program Documents. An overview called the '*Input Status Form*'



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summarising accepted and rejected input, is prepared and published online. Interim drafts are shared with the Advisory Committee before public release and the final versions will be formally endorsed by the Advisory Committee.

The below overview gives a holistic picture of the procedural steps for the revision process, but as mentioned above, some are optional and can be left out. Likewise, if steps are left out, also the number of version releases reduces correspondingly.

## 5.2 Procedural steps of the revision process

Step	Timeframe	Activity	Deliverable
1.1	Several months, TBD	<b>Preps work - by CNG's Certification Team:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and clustering of all input received to date (e.g. in thematic topics and/ or issues)</li> <li>Optional: Establishment of Technical Working Groups for specific topics and/ or issues</li> <li>Development of 'Revision Plan'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A high-level overview of main input and feedback received</li> <li>Technical Working Group established</li> <li>Revision Plan developed</li> </ul>
1.2	Several months, TBD	<b>Release VERSION 0.1 - by CNG's Certification Team:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of Position Papers or first (high level) drafts with specific focus on the thematic topics and/ or issues</li> <li>Cross-check on content with Advisory Committee and incorporate feedback</li> <li>Publish <b>VERSION 0.1</b></li> </ul>	<b>VERSION 0.1:</b> position papers or draft Program Document(s) published
1.3	1-2 months	<b>(Restricted) stakeholder event or online consultation:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare for stakeholder review round</li> <li>Timely communication to all selected stakeholders</li> <li>Generate stakeholder input</li> <li>Review input and prepare and publish Input Status Form</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Useful input (positive or negative) from stakeholders</li> <li>An overview summarising the accepted or rejected input (Input Status Form)</li> </ul>
2.1	Several months, TBD	<b>Release VERSION 0.2 - by CNG's Certification Team:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of draft Program Document(s)</li> <li>Cross-check on content with Advisory Committee and incorporate feedback</li> <li>Publish <b>VERSION 0.2</b></li> </ul>	<b>VERSION 0.2:</b> draft Program Document(s) published
2.2	1-2 months	<b>Stakeholder event or online consultation:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare for stakeholder review round</li> <li>Timely communication to all selected stakeholders</li> <li>Generate stakeholder input</li> <li>Review input and prepare and publish Input Status Form</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Useful input (positive or negative) from stakeholders</li> <li>An overview summarising the accepted or rejected input (Input Status Form)</li> </ul>
3.1	Several months, TBD	<b>Release VERSION 0.3 - by CNG's Certification Team:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of draft Program Document(s)</li> </ul>	<b>VERSION 0.3:</b> draft Program Document(s) published



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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cross-check on content with Advisory Committee and incorporate feedback</li> <li>• Publish <b>VERSION 0.3</b></li> </ul>	
<b>3.2</b>	1-2 months	<p><b>(optional) (restricted) stakeholder event or online consultation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare for stakeholder review round</li> <li>• Timely communication to all selected stakeholders</li> <li>• Generate stakeholder input</li> <li>• Review input and prepare and publish Input Status Form</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Useful input (positive or negative) from stakeholders</li> <li>• An overview summarising the accepted or rejected input (Input Status Form)</li> </ul>
<b>3.3</b>	Several months, TBD	<p><b>(optional) Pilot execution - by CNG's Certification Team:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek and appoint pilot partnerships</li> <li>• Develop pilot framework/ plan</li> <li>• Operationalise pilot framework/ plan</li> <li>• Validate assumptions</li> <li>• Review input from pilots</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pilot results published</li> </ul>
<b>4.1</b>	Several months, TBD	<p><b>Release VERSION 1.0 - by CNG's Certification Team:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of final Program Document(s)</li> <li>• Obtain formal approval from Advisory Committee</li> </ul>	<p><b>VERSION 1.0:</b> final Program Document(s)</p>
<b>4.2</b>	Agreed deadline	<p><b>Dissemination and Publication VERSION 1.0 - by CNG's Certification Team:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dissemination to all stakeholders</li> <li>• Publication on website</li> </ul>	<p><b>VERSION 1.0</b> disseminated to stakeholders and published</p>
<b>4.3</b>	Several months, TBD	<p><b>Transition Phase: Capacity building and translations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training CNG staff, clients, consultants and Certification Bodies on the content of <b>VERSION 1.0</b></li> <li>• Translation in desired languages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All relevant internal and external stakeholders fully prepared for implementation of <b>VERSION 1.0</b></li> <li>• <b>VERSION 1.0</b> translated in desired languages</li> </ul>
<b>4.4</b>		<p><b>Go live date</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal date from which <b>VERSION 1.0</b> becomes mandatory</li> <li>• Ongoing support for CNG staff, clients, consultants and Certification Bodies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>VERSION 1.0</b> implemented</li> </ul>



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## 6 Organisational Aspects

### 6.1 Governance

For a full overview of the governance system on CNG's Certification Program, please see the [CNG website](#).

- At an operational level the **Development Team (CNG's Certification Team)** and the **Technical Working Group(s)**, in particular, will be responsible for the development and/ or review of the content of Program Documents and requirement setting;
- At a strategic level the role of the **CNG's Executive Team** (and shareholders) is operational, i.e. to oversee and facilitate the development, implementation and management of the Certification Program.
- The **Advisory Committee** is composed of senior expert stakeholder representatives whose role is to represent the interests of their respective stakeholder group and has a general advisory and monitoring function. The Advisory Committee's and stakeholders' roles are focussed on the actual content of the program and making sure this represents a balanced of interests and serves the needs of the stakeholders to make the desired impact. Through stakeholder consultations, input is gathered and where no consensus is reached, the Advisory Committee is endorsed to vote. For more information on the role and obligations of the Advisory Committee, please refer to the Terms of Reference for the Advisory Committee.



CNG is currently establishing a separate Foundation ('Stichting') for its Certification Program, which is expected to be finalised after summer 2021.

### 6.2 Decision-making procedure

During a review trajectory, each stakeholder is given the chance to provide input on draft versions of the Program Documents via stakeholder events, (restricted) public consultation rounds, or pilot programmes. In the process of feedback and input review, analysis and incorporation, CNG's Certification Team take into account the views of all stakeholders, in particular those directly impacted and/or belonging to a 'weaker' stakeholder group, to reconcile any conflicting arguments.

CNG strives to reach consensus, which is defined as the absence of sustained opposition but does not require unanimity. Whenever a consensus is not possible decisions are taken by a majority vote with any dissenting views noted if wished. In the case of remaining opposed views that cannot be solved even in a voting round, the Advisory Committee, being impartial and transparent, has the final decision-making authority taking into account the overall benefit of the new Program and on the condition of proper justification for its decision to all



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stakeholders<sup>3</sup>. The objective is a balanced final version of the Program Documents that reflect the different stakeholders' interests and views.

The Advisory Committee has approved this Procedure for the Revision of the Climate Neutral Certification Program. As such, before each new interim release of new versions of Program Documents, the Advisory Committee reviews whether this Procedure was appropriately adhered to and then approves or rejects the new interim versions. The final versions of the Program Documents are formally endorsed.

## 6.3 Complaints management

Input on the content of any of the Program Documents will be dealt with through the Procedural Steps (see section 5.2). Decisions (whether or not to accept input) follow the decision-making procedure (see section 6.2).

Any procedural complaints (relating to how the Program Documents were revised or updated) can be submitted following the Complaints Procedure available on the [CNG website](#). CNG strives to reply to each complaint within two weeks. CNG strives to resolve the issue or provide alternatives within one month, depending on the issue. As per the ISEAL Codes of Good Practice, all complaints and resolutions will be documented. Decisions taken on complaints will be disclosed at least to the affected parties and made public if consented by at least the party filing the complaint.

## 6.4 Record keeping

CNG's Certification Team maintains proper document and version control and all documents are stored for a minimum of five years. Interim versions of Program Documents are indicated as e.g. vs 0.1, 0.2 or 2.1, whereas final versions for release are indicated as vs 1.0, vs 2.0, etc.

As per ISEAL's Codes of Good Practice, all input received from stakeholders during consultation rounds shall be documented. After each consultation round, the Certification Team periodically updates and publishes the Input Status Form, without mentioning the names of feedback providers. Pilot results are made available publicly in summary format. Agendas and minutes of meetings of Stakeholder Events shall be shared with all participants and stakeholders.

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<sup>3</sup> As per the Terms of Reference of the Advisory Committee (vs 0.1), CNG's Executive team reserves the right to overrule decisions made by the Advisory Committee, but only in case it can demonstrate evidence that the outcome of the decision made will (negatively) impact CNG's overall business integrity or business model.