

U.S. Hemp Authority®

Guidance Procedures Revision Terms of Reference

Introduction

The U.S. Hemp Authority® Certification Program assures compliance with its Guidance Procedures, which are created with the intention of enabling the hemp industry to self-regulate and promise to consumers, government agencies, and other stakeholders that hemp dietary supplements, food, and cosmetic products bearing the U.S. Hemp Authority® Certified Seal meet expectations of product safety and quality. The Guidance Procedures are revised periodically in order to work in tandem with the growth and rapid development of this new industry and to respond to stakeholder concerns. The decision to undertake a revision to the Guidance Procedures is made by the U.S. Hemp Authority Board of Directors; and the revision itself is carried out by the U.S. Hemp Authority® Technical Committee, which operates under its own established [Terms of Reference](#).

In line with best practices for creation and revision of certification standards, these Terms of Reference for revision of the Guidance Procedures are shared with stakeholders and the public for comments to foster greater acceptance of the rationale for undertaking the revision, and to help assure that the proposed scope of the revision meets stakeholder and consumer expectations to the greatest degree possible. Comments from stakeholders and the public may affect the Board's mandate to the Technical Committee regarding which topics may or may not be considered as part of the revision process. Opportunities for stakeholders and the public to be informed of the process and to engage in it are made transparent through the U.S. Hemp Authority's [website](#).

Revision Scope

The U.S. Hemp Authority® Board of Directors considers the following aspects as possible for inclusion in the Technical Committee's revision of the Guidance Procedures, and seeks comments from stakeholders and the public on the same as to their merit:

- Additional language to emphasize the intention and desired outcomes of the Certification Program and the promise of the U.S. Hemp Authority® Certified Seal;
- Clarification of wording of certain Procedures to mitigate the possibility of subjective and therefore inconsistent interpretation of those Procedures;
- Distinction between actual Certification requirements and suggested guidance to operators;
- Streamlining of Procedures to reduce redundancy, increase readability, and increase audit efficiency;
- Clarification of the responsibilities of the Certification Program and the obligations of Certified Companies with respect to broader regulatory topics (*i.e.* those that extend beyond the hemp sector to all industries more generally), including current Good Manufacturing Practices, product safety, and truth in labeling;
- Clarification of equivalence recognition of other certification standards with the Guidance Procedures to increase compliance efficiency and reduce the burden on Certified Companies;

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- Clarification of supply chain verification and sourcing requirements to better enable Certified Companies to assure the Guidance Procedures are met across the entire chain;
- Expansion of scope to include and/or clarify opportunities for Certification of pet products and over-the-counter topical drugs; and
- Consideration of additions to Certification requirements and/or suggested guidance with respect to environmental responsibility.

In addition to the above, the consultation of these Terms of Reference with stakeholders affords the opportunity for additional topics to be suggested.

Timeline for the Revision

The U.S. Hemp Authority® foresees the revision proceeding on the following schedule:

- **Beginning of May 2020** – publication of these U.S. Hemp Authority® Guidance Procedures Revision Terms of Reference for stakeholder feedback
- **May – June 2020** – 1st draft of a revision to the Guidance Procedures by the Technical Committee
- **July – August 2020** – initial public comment period on the revision
- **September 2020** – consideration of public comments by the Technical Committee, with possible additional revisions
- **October 2020** – final public comment period on the revision
- **November 2020** – publication of the final version of the revised Guidance Procedures (v3.0)

Reporting and Accountability

Following each public comment period, the Technical Committee will publish a summary of the public comments received, along with an explanation of how the public comments were handled with respect to the revision.

A Summary of Changes document will accompany the new version of the Guidance Procedures, along with a stated required date of compliance by Certified Companies.