



Job Description

Head of Standards & Assurance

March 2026

Location: Candidates based in UK preferred – role is largely remote, with regular weekly co-working in London encouraged (one day per week). Non-UK based candidates will also be considered.

Reports to: Director of Programmes

Direct reports: Two, possibility for growth in the team

Hours per week: Full time, with occasional flexibility required for international calls/events

Type of contract: Permanent

Salary: Competitive, depending on experience

Deadline: Rolling

Role Summary

Purpose of the role

The Head of Standards & Assurance (HSA) is accountable for the **credibility, clarity, and operational effectiveness** of ResponsibleSteel's standards and assurance system—ensuring they are robust, implementable globally, aligned with ISEAL good practice, and continuously improved based on evidence and stakeholder feedback.

This role provides strategic leadership across:

- **Standards governance and revision** (Production Standard and related normative documents, oversight of process for Chain of Custody, claims/logo rules and related developments)
- **Assurance system design and integrity** (Assurance Manual, auditor competence/training, oversight mechanisms, exceptions/complaints where applicable)

- **Assurance system delivery** (Overall ownership, oversight and implementation of consistent audits and certifications)
- **Development and implementation of MEL programme for ResponsibleSteel** (finalising MEL framework, ensuring data collection, progressing qualitative analyses, supporting with incorporation of learning in overall system design)

The HSA works as part of the Programmes team, responsible for the technical components of ResponsibleSteel's standards system.

ResponsibleSteel

ResponsibleSteel is a not-for-profit multi-stakeholder membership organisation founded to bring together industry along the steel value chain, civil society and other experts to maximise steel's contribution to a sustainable future. To date 13% of global steel production capacity falls within membership and we continue to grow.

Through the collaborative development of our international standard, we have built a consensus on what sustainability looks like for steel – including the impacts of mining, production, the scrap metal supply chain, greenhouse gas emissions, water use, workers' rights, human rights, and biodiversity. Steel sites producing over 140 million tonnes of steel, representing approximately 6.4% of global production, and employing over 250,000 workers are already certified against our Standard, with a large pipeline of sites across the world preparing for audit. We currently have over 160 members from across the steel industry and throughout the world.

Our values

At ResponsibleSteel we work in a way that is underpinned by our common values:

Respect: Working together to deliver impact with passion and mutual trust, valuing our time and allowing ourselves the space to reflect, rest and recharge.

Integrity: Saying what we do and doing what we say, taking responsibility for our own actions even when no one is looking, learning and growing as we go.

Transparency: Communicating clearly, honestly and openly in a timely manner in all we do.

Collaboration: Engaging with those affected, listening to understand, and co-creating bold strategies to deliver greater impact.

Responsibilities

Working within the Programmes team, you will be responsible for multiple important areas of work within ResponsibleSteel, including:

Key responsibilities

1) Strategic leadership and governance

- Set and deliver the multi-year roadmap for standards and assurance development (major revisions, maintenance updates, interpretations/clarifications where applicable).
- Serve as senior technical adviser to the CEO/Senior Leadership Team and governance bodies (e.g., Standards, Assurance and Claims Committee, Board), supporting balanced, transparent decision-making.
- Ensure ResponsibleSteel's system remains aligned with recognised good practice (e.g., ISEAL codes and credible assurance norms) and is future-fit for evolving market and policy expectations.
- Lead on demonstrating ISEAL Code Compliance status.

2) Lead standards development, review and revision

- Lead end-to-end standards processes: scoping, research, drafting, impact/feasibility testing, consultation design, comment resolution, approvals, and publication.
- Oversee the quality and coherence of normative content across: requirements, mandatory guidance, annexes, definitions, claims and logo guidance.
- Commission and manage technical work (e.g., expert groups, consultants, research partners) to strengthen evidence and address complex topics.

3) Own assurance system design and integrity

- Maintain and improve the Assurance Manual and related system documentation (including audit methodology, sampling, competence requirements, reporting, nonconformities, and decision rules).
- Ensure the effective digitalisation of the Assurance programme, gaining efficiencies and enabling scale.
- Lead ResponsibleSteel's approach to assurance partner management and integrity, including interfaces with accreditation/assurance oversight mechanisms and continuous improvement.
- Ensure the system supports consistent, credible outcomes across regions and assurance bodies, with clear interpretation pathways.

4) Assurance quality management, learning and continuous improvement

- Establish (or strengthen) a risk-based quality and learning programme using audit insights, stakeholder feedback, complaints/allegations signals, and market intelligence.
- Oversee the revision of the auditor training development and overall oversight of standards system related content on the Learning Management System (LMS)
- Drive calibration activities (e.g., auditor/CB webinars, guidance, FAQs, interpretation notes) to reduce inconsistent auditing.

- Embed monitoring, evaluation and learning loops to improve ease of implementation and impact over time.

5) Stakeholder engagement and external representation

- With cross-organisational support, lead technical engagement with members, NGOs, trade unions, assurance providers, downstream users, and policymakers—especially during revisions and high-sensitivity topics.
- Represent ResponsibleSteel in relevant initiatives and peer forums (e.g., benchmarking, recognition, harmonisation discussions), building credibility and alignment.

6) Monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL)

- Lead the finalisation of the framework to further develop and implement ResponsibleSteel's MEL programme, in line with the ISEAL Code
- Oversight of ensuring data collection and analyses
- Progressing qualitative analyses
- Supporting with incorporation of learning in overall system design

7) People, budget, and project leadership

- Lead, coach and develop a high-performing team; set priorities, ways of working, and delivery discipline.
- Own budgets for standards/assurance workstreams; manage resourcing plans and consultant procurement.
- Run complex projects with strong documentation, decision logs, and transparent stakeholder communications.

8) Cross-Organisational

- Provide technical inputs to assurance, claims, monitoring and evaluation, digitalisation, advocacy, and membership engagement activities as required.
- Support cross-functional projects where standards expertise is needed, ensuring alignment between standards, assurance, and claims frameworks.

9) Other responsibilities

- Contributing to relevant grant management and reporting
- Participate in relevant external events relevant to the role and to ResponsibleSteel
- Provide inputs as required to other functions of the ResponsibleSteel Secretariat including programmes, external advocacy, public affairs, digitalisation, and other areas

Qualifications, Experience and Skills

Essential

- Significant senior leadership experience in standards, assurance, certification, or audit-based systems, ideally within a multi-stakeholder or membership-based context.
- Proven track record leading complex standards revisions and public consultation processes, balancing credibility, governance integrity, and practical implementation.
- Deep understanding of assurance system design and quality management, including audit programmes, competence frameworks, oversight mechanisms, and risk-based controls.
- Experience designing and applying Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) approaches to strengthen standards and assurance systems.
- Ability to analyse audit data, stakeholder feedback, and system performance trends to drive continuous improvement. Strong governance experience, including advising boards or committees and operating transparently in multi-stakeholder decision environments.
- Demonstrated ability to translate complex technical and stakeholder input into clear, robust normative requirements and guidance.
- Excellent strategic, analytical, and problem-solving skills, with the ability to assess technical options and their operational implications.
- Highly developed communication and facilitation skills, with confidence engaging and building trust across industry, civil society, assurance partners, and diverse international audiences.
- Strong organisational and project leadership skills, with the ability to manage multiple priorities while maintaining rigour and attention to detail.
- Demonstrated commitment to sustainability, integrity, and continuous improvement.

Desirable

- Experience in heavy industry (e.g., steel, mining, aluminium, cement), climate/industrial decarbonisation, or responsible sourcing due diligence.
- Experience working within, or aligned to, the ISEAL Code of Good Practice or comparable voluntary sustainability standard systems.
- Familiarity with chain of custody systems, claims models, and product integrity controls.
- Experience with digital systems that support assurance and claims integrity (e.g., registries, audit data systems, traceability or verification workflows).
- Familiarity with monitoring, evaluation, and learning approaches in standards systems.
- Experience undertaking feasibility testing, scenario analysis, or structured technical option assessment.
- Experience engaging with international stakeholders, including in China and/or India.

To Apply

Please submit your expressions of interest to Dan.Bond@acre.com.

Please note that you must have authorisation to work in your designated country of employment.

Benefits

Benefits and compensation vary per region and are competitive with local prevailing employment practices.

Regardless of location, ResponsibleSteel Secretariat members receive generous holiday allowance, a flexible approach to working hours and location, equipment stipends to ensure they are well-equipped wherever they may be working, and paid sickness and emergency leave.

Hiring Statement

ResponsibleSteel is committed to building a diverse and inclusive team. We are committed to attracting, developing and retaining exceptional people, and to creating a work environment that is dynamic and rewarding and enables each of us to realise our potential. Our work environment is safe and open to all employees and partners, respecting the full spectrum of race, colour, religious creed, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, political affiliation, ancestry, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, and all other classifications protected by law in the locality and/or state in which you are working.