CONSULTANCY OPPORTUNITY

Terms of Reference

Interoperability Programme Manager

Contract term	7–9 months (Initial term, dependent on start date; subject to extension)
Time commitment	3–5 days per week, by agreement with the appointee, likely requiring 4–5 days initially, with decreased commitment over time
Start	As soon as possible following appointment
Location	Remote, with travel as required and agreed. Ideally one day/week in the London office.
EOI deadline	8 Nov

1. About ResponsibleSteel

ResponsibleSteel is the global multistakeholder standard and certification initiative for responsibly produced steel. Its International Production Standard combines greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions requirements with a broader range of environmental, social and governance requirements, supported by independent assurance.

2. Project background

Steel decarbonisation is increasingly shaped by multiple international and regional standards. Differences in emissions accounting, classification, disclosure, assurance and claims can create complexity for producers and buyers and can impede credible comparison across markets. ResponsibleSteel is developing interoperability mechanisms that allow standards to remain distinct while enabling GHG emissions performance and decarbonisation progress to be compared on a consistent, trusted basis.

In November 2025, ResponsibleSteel announced agreements with the China Iron and Steel Association (CISA), which operates the C2F Steel Standard, and Europe's Low Emission Steel Standard (LESS). Together, the organisations' memberships represent around 60% of global steel production. The partnerships aim to develop practical mechanisms for comparing GHG metrics and supporting credible equivalency GHG-related claims

Work with CISA has progressed through technical exchange, comparative analysis and workshops addressing emissions accounting, metrics, disclosure, transparency, assurance and potential pilot design. A parallel programme is being developed with LESS. ResponsibleSteel is also establishing a standalone GHG programme so that its GHG accounting, classification, assurance and claims system can be accessed independently of full certification against the ResponsibleSteel International Production Standard. The standalone GHG standard, based on Criteria 10.4, 10.6 and 10.7 of version 2.1.1 of the Production Standard (see GHG Fundamentals), will be the backbone of the interoperability mechanisms.

3. Purpose of the consultancy

ResponsibleSteel is seeking an experienced Programme Manager to accelerate and coordinate an integrated programme comprising three closely connected workstreams:

- delivery of a standalone ResponsibleSteel GHG programme;
- delivery of the interoperability partnership and work programme with CISA; and
- delivery of the interoperability partnership and work programme with LESS (the time commitment for this workstream will be dependent on future funding availability).

The consultant will provide overall programme coordination: translating objectives into a realistic delivery plan, coordinating technical and organisational inputs, maintaining momentum with partners, facilitating resolution around party discrepancies, managing dependencies and risks, identifying constraints or gaps and proposing solutions accordingly, preparing reports and papers for the Board and relevant committees, escalating programme–level decisions and seeking endorsement/advice from the relevant Senior Leadership Team member as needed, and ensuring that decisions and outputs are documented and progressed. Technical content will be developed by the ResponsibleSteel team, external experts and partner organisations; the Project Lead will be accountable for orchestrating these contributions into coherent and timely deliverables that are aligned with agreed outcomes.

4. Objectives

- Establish and maintain a single, integrated plan across the three workstreams, with clear outcomes, milestones, dependencies, owners and decision points.
- Advance the standalone GHG programme from its current position to an agreed, implementation–ready stage within the contract period.
- Maintain effective working relationships with CISA and LESS and convert partnership commitments into well–managed, mutually agreed programmes of work.
- Coordinate timely input and decisions from ResponsibleSteel staff, governance bodies, partners and external specialists.
- Identify and actively manage delivery, technical, governance, reputational and stakeholder risks.
- Prepare and circulate regular internal reports and those for the Board and relevant committees.
- Leave clear documentation, ownership and next steps so that delivery can continue smoothly after the contract ends.

5. Scope of work and responsibilities

The target completion date for the projects outlined in Sections 5.2, 5.3, and 5.4 is 30 June 2027. The delivery schedule is fully interdependent and remains contingent upon the progress of the ResponsibleSteel Production Standard Revision v.3.0, as well as the availability of funding for LESS interoperability programme.

5.1 Integrated programme management

- Review existing agreements, analyses, plans, decisions and draft materials, and rapidly establish the current status of each workstream.
- Develop and maintain a strategic and integrated delivery plan covering RASCI, milestones, dependencies, resource requirements, responsibilities, governance and critical decisions.
- Set up proportionate project controls, including an action and decision log, risk and issue register, document management arrangements and concise progress reporting.
- Plan and facilitate internal and partner meetings; prepare agendas and papers; host or otherwise arrange the meetings; record decisions and actions; and follow through to completion.
- Coordinate inputs from ResponsibleSteel colleagues and other contributors, identifying capacity constraints or gaps early and proposing practical solutions.
- Ensure alignment across the technical, assurance, chain of custody and traceability, claims, governance, communications and implementation elements of the programme.

- Provide concise advice and recommendations to the relevant Senior Leadership Team members and escalate matters requiring senior or governance decisions.
- Member Interoperability Working Group: define (with support) the terms of reference; recruit members of the group; convene when necessary; prepare agendas and papers; host the discussion; record decisions and actions; and follow through to completion.

5.2 Standalone GHG programme

- Coordinate the definition of the intended users, value proposition, scope, minimum viable offer and key performance indicators (KPIs) for the standalone GHG programme, ensuring alignment with ResponsibleSteel's mission and goals.
- Coordinate development of the GHG programme document architecture, including extraction and publication of applicable GHG accounting and classification requirements, assurance approach, chain of custody and traceability, claims and communications, governance, eligibility criteria and operating processes.
- Establish the documentation framework, including required technical, procedural and governance documents; assign ownership and review routes; coordinate drafting, consultation and approval; and maintain the quality and consistency of programme deliverables.
- Develop an implementation roadmap covering pilots, auditor or assurance-provider readiness, supporting tools and guidance, communications, infrastructure development requirements, resourcing and launch dependencies.
- Oversee and drive the implementation roadmap, coordinating stakeholders and monitoring progress to ensure milestones, action items and intended programme outcomes are achieved and delivered on schedule.
- Ensure the programme design supports, and is informed by, interoperability work with CISA and LESS.
- Initiate and ensure the coordination of the development of the longer term funding model for the programme.

Deliverables and Milestones: ResponsibleSteel standalone GHG certification ready to launch by end Q2 2027 (The readiness of the launch encompasses the following deliverables: GHG Standalone Standard (Fundamentals for GHG Emissions Accounting and Classification revision), GHG Assurance Manual, GHG Calculation Tool, materials for auditors, Claims Rules, CoC and Traceability Rules, Pilot Design, Implementation and Findings, Communications collateral etc.)

5.3 CISA interoperability workstream

- Act as ResponsibleSteel's day-to-day coordination lead for the CISA work programme, in close collaboration with the designated senior relationship owner and technical leads.
- Maintain a jointly agreed plan, timetable, meeting cadence, responsibilities and record of decisions with CISA.
- Coordinate technical work on relevant differences and alignment between ResponsibleSteel requirements and C2F, including accounting boundaries, metrics, classification, disclosure, assurance, chain of custody and traceability, and claims.
- Progress proposals for practical interoperability mechanisms, including any agreed co-calculation or conversion tools, governance and resourcing arrangements and pilot audit design.
- Prepare and coordinate workshops, auditor training, site level pilot and production line pilot, stakeholder engagement and internal or external decision materials as required.
- Coordinate the set up of a parallel assurance system in China, in accordance with China's data security laws.

Deliverables and Milestones::

Interoperability Programme with CISA ready to launch by Q2 2027 (The readiness of the launch encompasses the following deliverables/milestones: Interoperability Assurance Manual, Co-Calculation Tool, Mechanism of Joint Governance with CISA, Materials for Auditor, Claims Rules, CoC and Traceability Rules, Pilot(s) Design, Implementation, Findings, Communications collateral etc.)

Travel / meetings: Travel to China may be required

5.4 LESS interoperability workstream

- Act as ResponsibleSteel's day-to-day coordination lead for the LESS work programme, in close collaboration with the designated senior relationship owner and technical leads.
- Agree and maintain a practical joint work plan, meeting cadence, responsibilities, dependencies and decision process with LESS.
- Coordinate comparative and technical work on GHG accounting, classification, assurance and claims, drawing out both alignment and material differences.
- Progress the design and documentation of agreed interoperability and equivalency mechanisms, including any supporting tools, pilots and governance arrangements.
- Coordinate engagement with relevant producers, buyers, assurance providers and other stakeholders where this is needed to test feasibility and credibility.

Deliverables and milestones:

The timeline and volume of deliverables of RS Interoperability Programme with LESS has yet to be confirmed as it is subject to the availability of funding (The readiness of the launch encompasses the following deliverables/milestones: Interoperability Assurance Manual, Co-Calculation Tool, Mechanism of Joint Governance, Materials for Auditor, Claims Rules, CoC and Traceability Rules, Pilot Design, Implementation, and findings, Communications collateral etc.)

5.5 Stakeholder, governance and communications support

- Map the stakeholders and governance bodies whose input, review or approval is required, and build these steps into the programme plan.
- Prepare clear, decision-ready papers, briefings, presentations and progress updates for internal leadership, governance bodies and partners.
- Support consistent external messaging about what interoperability does and does not mean, working with ResponsibleSteel's communications team.
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality and ensure sensitive draft positions and partner discussions are handled carefully.

6. Expected deliverables

#	Deliverable	Expected content	Indicative timing
1	**Mobilisation and diagnostic**	Rapid review of existing materials; confirmed objectives, governance, stakeholders, constraints and priority decisions.	Weeks 1–2
2	**Integrated programme plan**	A maintained plan for all three workstreams, including milestones, dependencies, owners, decision points, resources and partner interfaces.	Initial plan by end of Week 2; maintained throughout

#	Deliverable	Expected content	Indicative timing
3	**Project controls and reporting**	Drive the delivery of Section 5.1 requirements. Responsibilities include managing the action/decision log, risk and issue register, meeting rhythm, document structure and concise written progress updates.	Established by end of Week 2; ongoing
4	**Standalone GHG programme**	Drive the delivery of Section 5.2 requirements by directly contributing content and coordinating cross-functional inputs. Responsibilities include coordinating the programme design and documentation advanced to the agreed end-state, with implementation/pilot roadmap and outstanding decisions clearly recorded.	By contract end; interim milestones to be agreed
5	**CISA Interoperability Programme**	Drive the delivery of Section 5.3 requirements by coordinating cross-functional inputs and directly contributing content where required. Responsibilities include managing the technical, pilot, governance and/or decision outputs delivered or advanced in line with the joint plan.	By contract end; interim milestones to be agreed
6	**LESS Interoperability Programme**	Drive the delivery of Section 5.4 requirements by directly contributing content and coordinating cross-functional inputs. Responsibilities include managing the agreed technical, pilot, governance and/or decision outputs delivered or advanced in line with the joint plan.	Timeframe tbc – interim milestones to be agreed (funding dependent for delivery (coordination may not be needed in this timeframe))
7	**Handover and forward plan**	Final status, decisions, risks, document index, recommended next steps and clear ownership beyond the consultancy.	Final two weeks

Acceptance criteria: Major milestone deliverables will require sign off from Director of Programmes, and necessary governance approvals

7. Ways of working and management arrangements

Contracting organisation: ResponsibleSteel

Project Sponsor / reporting line: Amy Jackson, Director of Programmes

The consultant will work as part of a distributed international team and will be expected to operate with a high degree of autonomy, while seeking direction promptly where strategic, technical or governance choices are required. The working pattern may be between three and five days per week, depending on the contractor's availability and the agreed delivery plan. Availability should be sufficiently consistent to maintain partner relationships and programme momentum.

The consultant will participate in regular progress meetings with the Project Sponsor and relevant workstream leads. The frequency and format of reporting will be agreed during mobilisation. Work may involve meetings across European and Chinese and occasionally Australian time zones.

8. Duration, location and level of effort

Duration: Up to nine months from the agreed start date. The initial term of this engagement is established on the target that all key deliverables will be completed on or before 30 June 2027, and acknowledging the wrap up and handover timelines required.The Consultant and the Organisation acknowledge that the project timeline and delivery dates are highly interdependent and remains contingent upon the progress of the ResponsibleSteel Production Standard Revision v.3.0, as well as the availability of funding. Should delays or alterations occur in any of those processes, the delivery schedule for the Consultant's deliverables shall be adjusted accordingly in coordination with the Consultant, and without penalty.

In the event an extension of the contract duration becomes necessary due to schedule alterations, any extension shall be formalised via a written amendment.

Level of effort: 3–5 days per week, to be agreed with the selected appointee. Applicants may propose a working pattern that reflects their availability and delivery approach.

Start date: as soon as possible following appointment.

Location: remote. Limited travel may be required, subject to prior agreement.

Travel expectations and expenses: (Travel expenses will be reimbursed in accordance with ResponsibleSteel's Corporate Policy)

9. Required experience and capabilities

Essential

- Strong track record of leading complex, multi-workstream projects with interdependent technical, stakeholder and governance components.
- Demonstrated ability to translate broad objectives into practical delivery plans, establish proportionate project controls and drive actions through to completion.
- Experience coordinating inputs from busy senior and technical colleagues without direct line-management authority.
- Strong partner and stakeholder management skills, including the judgement and diplomacy required to sustain progress where organisations have different mandates, systems or perspectives.
- Ability to understand and organise technically complex material and turn it into clear decisions, outputs and communications for different audiences.
- Excellent written and spoken English, including concise drafting of plans, briefings, meeting records and decision papers.
- Ability to work independently, manage competing priorities and operate effectively across cultures and time zones.

Desirable

- Technical or policy expertise in the iron and steel sector, GHG accounting and assurance, industrial decarbonisation, sustainability standards or certification systems.
- Experience designing or implementing a standard, verification, certification or claims programme.

- Experience of interoperability, mutual recognition, equivalency, harmonisation or comparative standards analysis.
- Experience working with Chinese and/or European industry associations, standards bodies or public-policy stakeholders.
- Relevant project or programme management qualification.
- Language: Mandarin language skills are an advantage.

10. Expression of interest

Interested individuals or organisations should submit:

- a concise expression of interest outlining their understanding of the assignment and proposed approach;
- a CV or relevant organisational profile, including examples of comparable assignments (an individual is preferred, however if the applicant is an organisation, CVs must be submitted for all proposed team members);
- their proposed availability and preferred working pattern within the 3-5 day range;
- a fee proposal that clearly delineates the fee structure and allocation of effort for overall management and each individual workstream (Clauses 5.2, 5.3, and 5.4). A fixed-cost arrangement is preferred for the initial contract term (Note: In the event that the actual workload for any individual workstream falls below the initial estimates, the overall compensation for that workstream may be proportionately reduced, subject to mutual agreement between the Organisation and the Consultant); the monthly rate in the event of contract extension and any applicable taxes; and
- contact details for two relevant referees, or confirmation that these can be provided on request.

Submission deadline: 8 November 2026

Submission method: Please complete this form

Maximum length / format: EOI of no more than 3 pages, each CV of no more than 2 pages (3 with references)

ResponsibleSteel may invite shortlisted applicants to an interview and may request presentation of the proposed approach, and clarification of availability or fees. ResponsibleSteel reserves the right not to appoint if no submission adequately meets the requirements of the assignment.

11. Further information

Partnership announcement: Landmark agreements link majority of world's steel production under global and regional standards for low-emission steel

CISA project update: Reflections from China: building interoperability across global standards

CISA workshop update: Advancing interoperability: ResponsibleSteel and CISA convene in Shanghai