



**Textile
Exchange**

PUBLISHED SEPTEMBER 10, 2025
TE-MM-GUI-130-V1.0

TEXTILE EXCHANGE
STANDARDS



DEVELOPING THE MATERIALS MATTER STANDARD

2024 PILOTS AND WORKSHOPS
FEEDBACK SUMMARY

Document information

Document code

Document Code **TE-MM-GUI-130**

Version

Publication Date **September 10, 2025**

Document revision history

September 10, 2025 **V1.0**

Document revision notes

First Version

Copyright

© 2025 Textile Exchange. All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be copied, modified, distributed, reproduced, republished, (re-)posted, translated or transmitted in any manner or by any means to any media for publication or distribution, or for public or commercial purposes, without the express prior written consent of Textile Exchange.

You may download and use the published material as provided by Textile Exchange, on the condition that such use is for personal and non-commercial informational purposes only, does not modify the publication material, and retains all proprietary notices.

Cover Photo Credit (clockwise from the top): Joya Berrow, Joya Berrow, Matteo Capone

Disclaimer

English is the official language of Textile Exchange documents. For any questions related to the accuracy of the information contained in any translation, refer to the official English version. Any discrepancies or differences created in any translation are not binding and have no effect for auditing or certification purposes.

A. About the document

TE-MM-GUI-130 Developing the Materials Matter Standard: 2024 Pilots and Workshops Feedback Summary has been created after a longer form summary of *Materials Matter Standard* feedback was compiled. The original summary of feedback includes all comments received during two public consultation periods on the draft in 2023 (referred to as the draft unified standard versions 1.1 and 2.1 during the development process), and how the feedback was addressed in developing the *Materials Matter Standard Pilot V1.0*, released in May 2024. We encourage readers to consult this 2024 summary if they are looking for a more in-depth review of Textile Exchange's responses to this feedback process. You can find a link to review the draft 1 and 2 summary in section A1.

Following the draft 1.1 and 2.1 feedback summary, this document includes a summary of the *Materials Matter Standard* development process, including key takeaways from the pilots and workshops held globally between August and November 2024. Key takeaways from the pilot testing and workshops have informed the development of the *Materials Matter Standard V1.0*, which is to be released in December 2025.

If you feel that feedback you submitted was omitted or misrepresented in any way, we encourage you to contact us through our [standards feedback form](#) so that we can provide you with additional information.

A1. Document references

All organizations are subject to the criteria of the following documents, and it is essential that they are used alongside this document. All can be found at textileexchange.org/knowledge-center. Where a specific version of a document is referenced, this is to ensure clarity in referencing specific criteria and does not supersede mandatory implementation dates for future versions of the document. The latest version of referenced documents, including any amendments (such as calibrations), applies for those without a version number.

A1.1.1 [TE-MM-STN-101 Materials Matter Standard: Pilot Version](#) (TE-MM-STN-101)

A1.1.2 [TE-MM-GUI-108 Summary of Feedback on the Draft Materials Matter Standard](#) (TE-MM-GUI-108)

A2. Document definitions

Refer to the [Textile Exchange glossary](#) for definitions of terms used in this document.

NOTE: Please note that [TE-101 Terms and Definitions for Textile Exchange Standards and Related Documents](#) will not be updated going forward and will become obsolete alongside the mandatory implementation date of the *Materials Matter Standard* (TE-MM-STN-101). Therefore, TE-101 may still be referenced until the *Materials Matter Standard* becomes mandatory, but the Textile Exchange glossary (textileexchange.org/glossary) takes precedence in case of any contradiction or omission.

A3. Document feedback

You may submit feedback to Textile Exchange's standards system at any time via [this form](#) or by sending an email to standards@textileexchange.org.

B. About Textile Exchange standards

Textile Exchange is a global non-profit helping to drive beneficial outcomes for climate and nature across the fashion, textile, and apparel industry, right from the start of the supply system.

Our goal is to help the industry achieve a 45% reduction in the [greenhouse gas](#) (GHG) emissions that come from producing fibers and raw materials by 2030 (from a 2019 baseline). To achieve this, we maintain a holistic and interconnected focus, accelerating the adoption of practices that improve soil health, water, and biodiversity, while respecting human rights and animal welfare.

Over the last 20 years, our internationally recognized standards covering the production of various fibers and raw materials have helped build integrity in the industry. Continuously aligning with the Credibility Principles set by the ISEAL Alliance and the adoption of the ISEAL Code of Good Practice strengthens our policies and procedures across organizational functions such as standard-setting, assurance, monitoring, evaluation, and learning. These practices ensure that our standards provide value, rigor, accessibility, and transparency.

All our standards are supported by an independent, third-party assurance model that supports organizations in consistently demonstrating and maintaining conformity while handling and trading their certified products, through an independently verifiable and impartial process.

BI. About the Materials Matter Standard

The *Materials Matter Standard* V1.0 is a voluntary standard for the responsible production and primary processing of raw materials used in the fashion, apparel, and textile industry.

The *Materials Matter Standard* aims to incentivize the transition of raw material production to preferred production systems, respect human rights and animal welfare, and drive beneficial outcomes for climate and nature. The *Materials Matter Standard* sets out to meet this objective by:

- Setting best practice expectations
- Driving positive outcomes
- Ensuring a level playing field
- Substantiating claims

The *Materials Matter Standard* is the foundation of a global certification model and provides a common goal and language while acknowledging the unique contexts of producers and processors, as well as their local communities and landscapes. A blend of practice-based and outcome-based criteria helps participating organizations receive acknowledgement for meeting core requirements and builds their capacity to measure results. At the same time, it gives brands and retailers that choose to source certified materials a way to speak confidently to consumers about them. By focusing specifically on the start of the supply chain, the *Materials Matter Standard* can ensure that there is a clear understanding of both the risks and the opportunities related to raw material production as well as ensuring that the perspective of those producing the materials is represented in global supply chains.

In the long term, the *Materials Matter Standard* can be used as a tool for producers and processors to understand how their activities impact the people and ecosystems around them, take steps to manage and mitigate risks, and identify where actions can lead to beneficial outcomes. In addition to the criteria for Materials Matter certification, there are optional leadership criteria that invite participating organizations to raise the bar through areas like regeneration, renewable energy, and textile-to-textile recycling.

B2. About the pilot and workshop process

From August to November 2024, Textile Exchange hosted 11 field pilots in eight countries. The objectives for pilot testing in 2024 were to (1) assess key questions on the feasibility and auditability of the standard criteria and (2) collect insights and feedback for standards system and assurance tools. These pilots and workshops allowed Textile Exchange to test key changes, assess the impact of the standard, evaluate the proposed data collection and monitoring, and prepare tools and supporting policies and procedures for transitions to the *Materials Matter Standard*.

Enabling credible claims through material sustainability standards



C. Materials Matter Standard development overview

C1. Document summary

This summary expands on the pilot and workshop feedback and its impact on the *Materials Matter Standard* development. This includes an overview of how the criteria were developed and validated for implementation across the industry.

C2. Criteria development

The development of the *Materials Matter Standard* is grounded in Textile Exchange's commitment to integrity, relevance, and continuous improvement. Since the work began in 2021, the criteria within the *Standard* have been refined through successive drafts informed by stakeholder input and real-world testing. This iterative approach has enabled the criteria to evolve based on stakeholder experience, emerging practices, and pilot feedback—ensuring it remains relevant and practical for today's supply chain context.

The *Materials Matter Standard* criteria are designed to be both ambitious and achievable, with the goal that each criterion is clear, auditable, and adaptable to different materials, geographies, and facility sizes. Supporting tools are in development to further aid adoption. Textile Exchange is committed to maintaining the system's relevance and quality as industry needs evolve.

Key elements of the development process included:

- **Cross-functional collaboration:** Ongoing coordination across Textile Exchange teams—including Standards, Assurance, Strategy, Climate and Nature Impact, and Stakeholder Engagement—has helped us to ensure that the criteria strike a balance between technical rigor, auditability, and real-world applicability.
- **Stakeholder input:** Beyond International Working Group (IWG) contributions, the criteria were shaped by feedback from public consultations, pilots and workshops, and subject matter experts in environmental science, chemical management, animal welfare, and human rights and livelihoods. Stakeholder input was also gathered during the 2024 pilots and workshops.
- **Iterative refinement:** Multiple rounds of drafting incorporated learnings and feedback to strengthen feasibility, consistency, and clarity. This iterative process aimed to create criteria that are ambitious yet implementable, moving the industry forward while reflecting operational realities.
- **Feasibility assessment:** Feasibility was assessed by subject matter experts, targeted consultations, and independent analysis. The criteria were assessed for their auditability and wording, and structure was streamlined across criteria. Pilots and workshops conducted in 2024 further tested the criteria's applicability in real-world settings.
- **Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL):** A comprehensive MEL framework has been developed to accompany the *Materials Matter Standard*. It will support long-term evaluation of the standard's performance, including indicators such as the number of certified sites, land under certified practices, nonconformities, and adoption by marginalized producers. The organizational Theory of Change has articulated the role that the standards system plays in supporting our goals for the industry along with learning from any potential positive or negative consequences. The MEL framework has been designed to inform strategic learning and evaluate how the standard contributes to shifts in material production systems and beneficial outcomes for climate and nature over time.
- **ISEAL alignment:** Textile Exchange is working to continually improve our system, including through the adoption of the *ISEAL Code of Good Practices for Sustainability Systems*. *ISEAL's Code of Good Practice* underpins our policies and procedures for organizational functions such as standard-setting, assurance, monitoring, evaluation, and learning. These practices ensure that our standards provide value, rigor, accessibility, inclusiveness, and transparency.

C3. How we've tested the Materials Matter System

Considering the complexity and diversity of global supply chains and material production systems, Textile Exchange undertook extensive stakeholder engagement—including targeted expert reviews and structured pilot tests—to evaluate how the criteria perform in real-world conditions, not just in theory.

Rather than relying on a one-time consultation, the process emphasized ongoing feedback loops, ground-level testing, and a cross-sectional view of industry realities to inform refinement. The key components of this process included:

1. Pilots

The 2024 pilot phase was designed to meet two core objectives: (1) assess the feasibility and auditability of the *Materials Matter Standard* criteria across a diverse set of conditions representative of certification program scopes, and (2) gather insights to refine standard implementation tools, assurance tools, and supporting system components. These pilots covered recycled materials and all animal materials included in *Materials Matter Standard*, and allowed Textile Exchange to test the clarity, practicality, and certification alignment of the criteria.

For animal materials, farm group managers and internal auditors actively participated, providing valuable feedback. Pilots in South Africa and Australia prompted follow-up virtual meetings, where additional stakeholders were invited to comment on specific criteria that raised questions during pilot testing. Key focus areas included:

- Clarity of criteria and means of verification
- Applicability to different materials and contexts
- Feedback on the pilot audit checklist
- Insights on audit time, capacity, and resource feasibility
- Definitions (such as small farms, communal farms, by-product reuse)

Feedback from pilot sites was thoroughly reviewed and used to inform multiple rounds of refinement.

2. Regional workshops

Twelve regional workshops were held between August and October 2024 in New Zealand, Australia, Peru, Italy, and South Africa. These in-person sessions enabled Textile Exchange to engage directly with producers, processors, farm group managers, certification bodies, and local coordinators—especially those often underrepresented in large-scale consultations.

Discussions addressed criteria feasibility, definitions, supply chain dynamics, and barriers to implementation. Animal material sessions focused on human rights and livelihoods, animal welfare, and land management. Participants expressed strong interest in the criteria's practical implications and shared insights on the acceptability and feasibility of requirements.

These workshops fostered two-way learning: Textile Exchange collected contextual feedback, while participants gained a deeper understanding of the *Materials Matter Standard* vision and certification pathway. Insights from these sessions led to adjustments in criteria.

3. Field visits and observational audits

Beyond pilots and workshops, Textile Exchange conducted multiple field visits to observe operational practices in diverse contexts. These visits included observational audits and informal site walkthroughs to better understand infrastructure, staffing, and recordkeeping variability. These observations informed improvements to criteria language, audit expectations, and the development of support tools.

4. Expert engagement and alignment for strategic collaboration

To ensure alignment with global best practices and identify opportunities for innovation, Textile Exchange collaborated with industry subject matter experts and researched key frameworks. The Materials Matter criteria were developed with input on chain of custody, animal welfare, environmental performance, and human rights. The impact of this engagement with industry experts for criteria development is evident in Principle 2 and Principle 5:

Principle 2: Human Rights and Livelihoods draws from international frameworks such as the *United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights* (UNGP), the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP), and International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions. A risk-based approach ensures criteria are both comprehensive and contextually applicable.

Principle 5: Processing Facility builds on the *Global Recycled Standard* (GRS) and Textile Exchange worked with [Apparel Impact Institute \(AI\)](#) and [Zero Discharge of Hazardous Chemicals \(ZDHC\)](#) to enhance chemical and wastewater management. Alignment with [the Higg Facility Environmental Module \(Higg FEM\)](#) is being pursued for facilities in facilities in Tiers 1–3.

5. Targeted outreach

In 2023 and 2024, over 100 one-on-one calls were conducted to assess feasibility, traceability, and audit readiness criteria. Stakeholders included farms, processors, and brands of various sizes.

There were a lot of questions, particularly around human rights and livelihoods. In early 2025, follow-up outreach was conducted with pilot participants to share revised criteria and confirm feasibility, reinforcing transparency and responsiveness.

Targeted outreach and engagement were also conducted with strategic recycling stakeholders. This included one-on-one calls with 25 of the largest textile recyclers that engage with Textile Exchange, with further webinars and consultation periods with over 200 recycling stakeholders to gather feedback. The priority topics for these stakeholders included recycled content thresholds for transaction certificate issuance, recycled content for on-product claims, and the use of chemicals within the recycling process.

6. Ongoing stakeholder engagement

Additional engagement methods included:

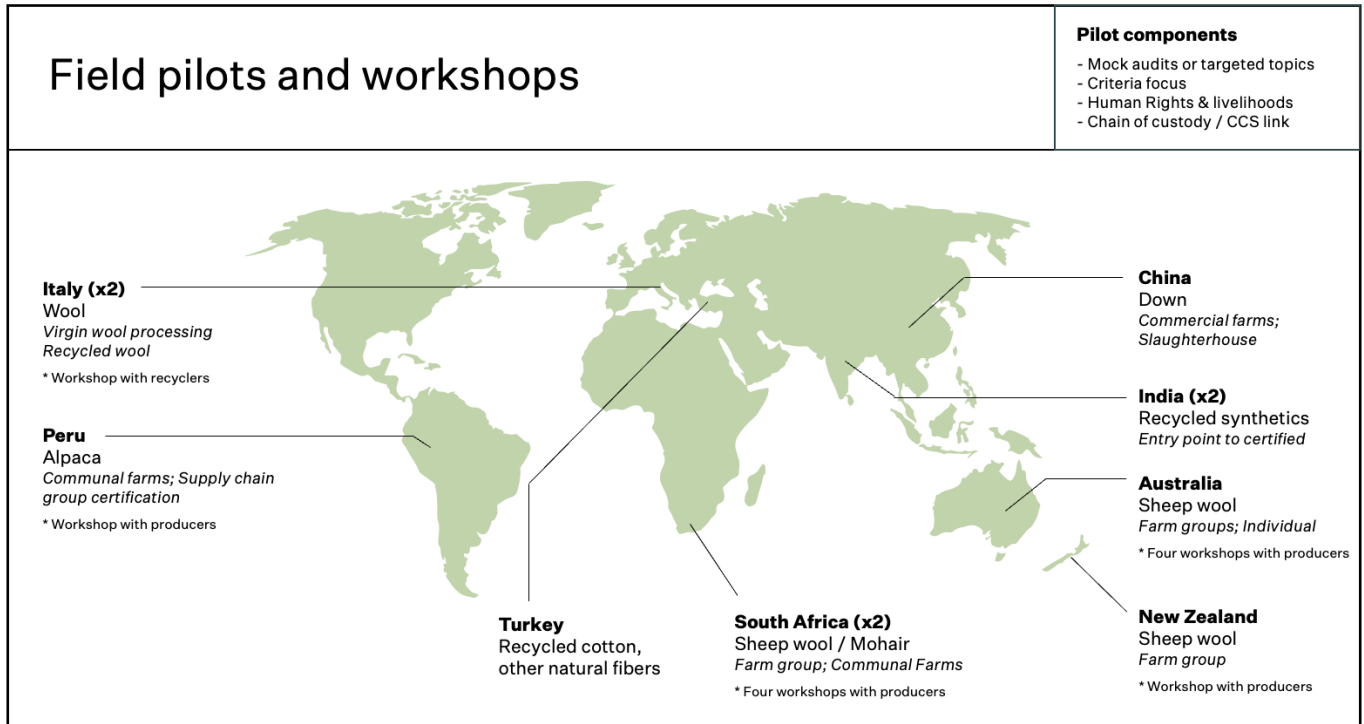
- Webinars and public Q&As
- Interactive roundtables and regional workshops
- Public consultation periods (over two thousand comments reviewed)
- Iterative feedback from the International Working Group (IWG)

Themes included site-level expectations, labeling, and assurance.

D. Pilot and workshop takeaways

Learnings from pilot testing and regional workshops

Pilot testing of the *Materials Matter Standard* criteria began in April and concluded in November 2024. Most pilots were organized with certification bodies that followed a more traditional audit approach, but some were conducted as meetings to test the logic of specific criteria. All pilots included Textile Exchange team members to capture direct learnings alongside certification body auditor findings.



A major benefit of these activities was the opportunity for Textile Exchange content leads and decision-makers to engage directly with certified organizations and certification bodies. The pilots created a safe space for open discussion on complex or sensitive topics, enabling deeper learning from all perspectives.

D1. Key learnings from the pilots and workshops

Human rights and livelihoods

The pilots revealed that more targeted engagement was needed. First, we noted the importance of engaging outside of farm or facility walls, to address extended community impacts (with local communities, Indigenous Peoples, contracted labor providers, and workers), which we did through a series of offsite interviews in key producing regions (including South Africa, New Zealand, Australia, and India). We also worked with our internal fiber experts to engage farm groups on the feasibility and clarity of our criteria. In particular, we addressed feedback from farm groups and outlined the specific due diligence responsibilities of group members versus group managers. Key insights that refined our approach to human rights and livelihood criteria in the *Materials Matter Standard* are set out below.

- Certified organizations and auditors participating in the pilots suggested that we revise farm and processing facility definitions and include clearer tiered expectations based on organizational capacity. As a result, we now have three categories of definitions for farms (small, medium, and large) and two categories of definitions for processing facilities (small and large), based on the number of workers they directly hire (see refined definitions in the [Textile Exchange glossary](#)). In the *Materials Matter Standard* V1.0, there are general criteria and sub-criteria using these farm and processing facilities definitions.

- We needed to refine expectations in specific sections of Principle 2, specifically regarding human rights due diligence, working conditions, health and safety, and recycled supply chains. For instance, in the *Materials Matter Standard* V1.0, we specified expectations for human rights risk assessments and engagement. These extended to direct suppliers and the ways organizations are to work with contracted labor providers to manage, prevent, and, wherever relevant, remedy risks related to their workers. We substantially revised criteria specific to recycling facilities, embedding related recommendations in their broader due diligence responsibilities. We also sought and embedded feedback on the feasibility of health and safety measures in rural—often isolated—areas where materials are produced (such as health checks, access to drinking water, and protective equipment).
- Unique guidance and templates are needed for farms and processing facilities to implement Principle 2. Certification bodies voiced the need for clearer instruction on evidence-based auditing in informal settings, and more generally on the type of documentation to collect prior to and during site visits to improve audit comprehensiveness overall. These supporting documents live outside of the *Materials Matter Standard* V1.0 itself and will be made available on our website.

Animal fibers

The pilots confirmed that our criteria for land use and animal welfare were largely aligned regarding goals, acceptability, and achievability for our animal fiber stakeholders. However, there were topics that required further consideration, some of which led to changes and others which did not.

Changes that were made following the pilots included:

- Adjusting the minimum weaning age for sheep and goats to a level that protected the welfare of these animals but was also achievable for producers.
- Replacing the contractor declaration with requirements for an orientation meeting when contractors arrive on a farm—shifting the outcome from a piece of paper that may be signed by someone who isn't even on the farm—to ensure that all those who might handle animals are aware of the expectations for a certified site.
- Allowing communal farmers to carry out euthanasia and on-farm slaughter by exsanguination (following best practice guidance) in recognition of the challenges facing these farmers in accessing suitable tools that allow pre-stunning.
- Making pain relief a recommendation rather than a requirement for communal farmers to reflect the economic challenges that affect this group.
- Communal farmers are currently unable to access pain relief medicines due to a lack of licensed products. If pain relief were licensed in the future, a requirement for its use which did not take account of the challenges faced by these producers would simply mean that communal farmers would not be able to be certified because they are unlikely to be able to afford pain relief.
- Increasing the maximum time off water for alpaca prior to shearing—in greater alignment with the maximums for sheep and goats—to account for a previous misunderstanding that the time off water starts when animals are penned or housed overnight, not from the time in the morning when shearing commences.
- Removing the leadership criterion that set a maximum acceptable wrinkle score for breeding sheep but adding a consideration of wrinkle scores as part of the required breeding strategy.
- Clarifying the acceptable use of hunting dogs when non-lethal control of animals that pose a risk to human-wildlife coexistence has failed, allowing the use of dogs to flush wildlife to an experienced shooter, but not to chase and kill other animals.

The pilots allowed valuable face-to-face discussion time for stakeholders to engage with the proposed criteria, while promoting transparency around the decision-making process. This includes where feedback was considered, but did not result in changes.

Topics where changes were not made included:

- There were concerns in Australia about the potential barriers to certification under the *Materials Matter Standard* because of changes relating to certification of wool from flocks that have recently ceased mulesing. The Materials Matter Standard requires certified organizations to segregate wool from sheep that were mulesed prior to certification and only allows wool from non-mulesed sheep to be marketed as certified.
- In Australia and New Zealand, a change was suggested to “recommend” the use of pain relief until suitable products were available more widely, rather than “require” it when available. Currently, the *Materials Matter Standard* requires pain relief to be used when available, which means that only some producers must use this to be certified, whereas others can be certified without use of pain relief. Textile Exchange is committed to the highest standards of animal welfare across global supply chains, so rather than remove this requirement for certification, we will instead look to recognize groups that are using pain relief through the scope certificate process.
- In multiple regions, allowable means of wildlife control when non-lethal control is ineffective were discussed. Some producers wished to use “soft-hold” leg-hold traps, pointing out that certain state or government agencies use these. The decision was made to continue to prohibit this kind of trap because there are still negative effects on wildlife that are caught in these.
- The use of poison for invasive species also received a lot of comments, but there were often related to a misunderstanding that this was only an acceptable option for invasive species when non-lethal control fails.

Down

Textile Exchange has received extensive feedback on down and will be responding in full to these learnings in due course.

Recycling and processing facilities

Overall, most criteria under the processing facility principle, covering recycling and primary processing for other materials, were on track during the time of testing pilot criteria.

One constraint of the *Global Recycled Standard* (GRS) is that its chemical management requirements were originally designed for downstream tiers of the supply chain. We received positive feedback on the shift to focus criteria more appropriately on Tier 4, including for processing manmade cellulosic fibers (MMCFs) from recycled feedstocks. We also obtained feedback during pilots that there is visible and clear alignment with Zero Discharge of Hazardous Chemicals (ZDHC) and that implementation concerns are being addressed. There was a common question around output testing, and stakeholders highlighted the need for more clarity on areas such as the parameters, frequency, limit values, test methods, which Textile Exchange will manage by allowing organizations to determine the testing regime through material and process risk assessments.

Important learnings emerged around the need for extensive explanations of certain criteria, which increased the audit effort. This was particularly true for human rights and livelihoods criteria and, to a lesser extent, leadership criteria, which do not necessarily need to be part of the audit evaluation. These insights highlight areas where additional tools and educational materials could support smoother implementation of the *Materials Matter Standard* and reduce audit duration and cost.

Audit processes

An important benefit of the piloting activities was gaining insight into how certification bodies and auditors prepare for audits, including what is evaluated pre-audit versus during the audit, and what is reviewed through documentation versus on-site inspections. These learnings were crucial as we prepare for the new certification body training program under the *Materials Matter Standard* and define competency requirements for auditing the *Materials Matter Standard* at Tier 4 versus the *Content Claim Standard* (CCS) at Tiers 1–3.

A common theme across pilots and workshops was the feedback on duplication across verification systems. While this presents challenges for certified organizations, it also offers some potential future benefits for joint audits or recognition. This insight will be valuable as we enter the next phase of developing the recognition framework.

Leadership and recommended practice criteria

The pilots highlighted the need to review and clarify our approach to nonmandatory criteria before finalizing the *Materials Matter Standard*. This learning led to the creation of two types of nonmandatory standard criteria.

4. **Recommended Practice:** Non-mandatory criteria which represent beneficial outcomes when followed. Certified organizations will be evaluated against these criteria as part of their audit, even if they choose not to fully adopt the recommended practices.
5. **Leadership:** Non-mandatory criteria that goes above and beyond the other criterion types. Certified organizations can opt-in to being audited to these criteria by making a request to their certification body.