

A photograph of a male worker in a blue long-sleeved uniform and a green cap, focused on operating a complex textile machine. The machine has a control panel with a screen and various buttons. In the background, there are industrial structures, including a conveyor system with green lights and spools of thread. The scene is set in a well-lit factory environment.

Sustainable Apparel Coalition

SAC Higg FEM Training Protocol

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Sustainable Apparel Coalition
PO BOX 237
San Francisco, CA 94104

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Introduction

Sustainable Apparel Coalition (SAC) is the apparel, footwear, and textile industry's leading alliance for sustainable production. The Coalition develops the Higg Index, a standardized suite of tools for all industry participants to assess social and environmental value chain performance.

Among the suite of tools, the Higg Facility Environmental Module (Higg FEM) is a holistic self-assessment tool that evaluates the environmental performance of facilities that produce textiles and apparel. Facilities or other Higg FEM users, that wish to learn more about the Higg FEM Verification process and technical aspects of the Higg FEM can utilize the professional training services of Higg FEM Trainer Bodies and their associated FEM Trainers.

This Protocol specifies procedures, rules, and requirements for authorized Higg FEM trainings.

This Protocol applies to SAC Approved FEM Trainer Bodies and Trainers.

What is a Higg FEM Training?

A Higg FEM training is a training event that provides education and capacity building to learners on the requirements, use, and technical environmental sustainability content of the FEM. FEM Trainings must utilize relevant SAC approved training materials (following terms of use regarding edits and attribution) made available by the SAC in addition to other supplemental training materials developed by Trainer Bodies. Higg FEM Trainings can be provided in-person or online.

Additional details and requirements of FEM trainings are listed in the Protocol below and apply to both in-person and online training except where otherwise indicated.

Promotional seminars or marketing/sales presentations are **not** considered a Higg FEM training. The SAC does not place any restrictions on who can provide marketing information on FEM Verifier or Trainer Body services. However, these events must not provide instruction, guidance or education on the use or technical content of the Higg FEM. Additionally, FEM approved trainer materials must **not** be used, in full or in part, for promotional seminar or marketing presentations. Trainer Bodies should check with the Training Program Manager if there is any question regarding the classification of a training. Violation of this rule can lead to revocation of Training Body status and other repercussions related to copyright infringement.

Eligibility of FEM Trainer Bodies and Trainers

Only Higg FEM Trainers can provide authorized Higg FEM Trainings. The SAC approves Higg FEM Trainer Body organizations (TB) and Higg FEM Trainers based on detailed criteria SAC members have aligned on through the extensive member engagement process. Details on the criteria and process to become a FEM TB and/or Trainer can be found here: <https://www.sumerra.com/programs/sac/sac-fem-training-program/>

All FEM Trainers must be associated to a single TB. A list of Higg FEM Trainer Bodies can be found here: <https://howtohigg.org/higg-fem-verification-program/list-of-approved-fem-trainers/>

Every year, trainers must take action to maintain their FEM Trainer status. This is accomplished through the Trainer Status Maintenance (TSM) program. The TSM program is designed to ensure that FEM Trainers develop and enhance their professional sustainability and training knowledge and skills during their tenure as a Trainer in the Higg FEM program. The TSM program primarily emphasizes direct training experience but also gives credit for professional development activities related to environmental sustainability or training development/delivery. Details on the TSM program can be found here: <https://www.sumerra.com/sac/tsmprogram/>

SAC Trainer Code of Professional Conduct

All Higg FEM TBs and Trainers are expected to adhere to the Trainer Code of Professional Conduct, which can be found [here](#). Failure to do so may result in loss of FEM Trainer Body/Trainer designations as per the terms of the Trainer Body Agreement.

FEM Training Procedures

1. Facilitation of Higg FEM Trainings

The provision of Higg FEM Training services and the facilitation of trainings are coordinated directly between the organization requesting the training and the Higg FEM Trainer Body. The SAC or the Training Program Manager (TPM) are not involved in the pricing, negotiation, or scheduling process of Higg FEM Trainings. Contracts for Higg FEM Training services are entered into by the Trainer Body and individual or organization requesting the training.



If a training event needs to be cancelled, TBs must adhere to their organization's standard cancellation policy. This policy **must** be clearly communicated to attendees prior to scheduling trainings.

2. Registration of Higg FEM Trainings & Public Training List

FEM Trainer Bodies or Trainers must register all Higg FEM trainings provided by FEM Trainers. Training must be registered here: https://fs26.formsite.com/Sumerra/SACTrainingReg/form_login.html

The TPM publishes a list of training events with permission of the TB/Trainer. The purpose of this list is to allow other facilities/groups to view and inquire about public FEM trainings in their region. TB/Trainers can indicate on the training registration form whether they wish to add a training to the public list. Trainers are not required make training information publicly available and registered trainings will not be published without permission.

The Public Training List of open Higg FEM Trainings can be found here:

<https://www.sumerra.com/programs/sac/sac-fem-training-program/available-training/>



A unique reference number will be created for each registered training. Trainers **must** keep track of this number and provide it to attendees along with a feedback survey link noted below.



Failure to properly register trainings may result in loss of FEM Trainer Body/Trainer designations as per the terms of the Trainer Body Agreement.




3. Promotion/Marketing of Trainings

Higg FEM TBs and Trainers may promote/market their training events provided that all promotional and marketing materials align with the requirements and guidance set forth in the terms of the Trainer Body Agreement, Trainer Body Logo Use Guidelines, and other relevant SAC guidance and expectations including the use of copyright materials or images.

4. Training Feedback


Higg FEM Trainers must provide opportunities for anonymous feedback that is linked to their training (by filling out a post training form that includes providing a main contact). During training, Trainers should provide their training registration number (available after completing training registration) and the following link to an anonymous survey to all training attendees.

Upon completing the training registration, a dedicated survey link will be sent to the training contact. If needed, this general link can also be used: <https://fs26.formsite.com/Sumerra/SACPostTrainingSurvey/index.html>.

-  Trainers **must** provide attendees with the training registration number to include on their feedback surveys.
-  Feedback surveys are required for both in-person and online training.
-  Failure to provide opportunities for attendees to provide anonymous feedback directly to the TPM/SAC may result in loss of FEM Trainer Body/Trainer designations as per the terms.

5. Post Training Form

It is the responsibility of the lead Trainer to ensure that a Post Training form is completed once the training has been conducted. If possible, one contact from the trainees should be nominated in the form to provide overall feedback on the training event.




-  After registering a training, the Trainer contact will receive an email with a link to the Post Training Form. Trainers **must** use this link to access the form as it is linked to the event registration.

6. Higg FEM Training Certificates

Official Higg FEM Training Certificates are available for order from the SAC. Trainers are able to order official certificates for trainees (facility company and individual) using the **Post Training Form**. The cost of each certificate type is listed below:


- Individual Certificate (includes attendees' name): USD 25 per certificate
- Company Certificate (includes companies' name): USD 500 per certificate


If TBs or Trainers want to offer certificates or they are requested by attendees, the fees for this should be communicated to the attendees and added to the cost of training.


-  After registering a training, the Trainer contact will receive an email with a link to the Post Training Form. Trainers **must** use this link to access the form as it is linked to the event registration.
-  Trainers should only allow certificates for those who have fully attended the training session(s) and completed all required coursework and activities as determined by the trainer.
-  For certificates, the Trainer must provide the following information for each trainee: Given Name, Surname, and Email address (certificates will be emailed directly to the trainee). A template is provided in the **Post Training Form**

7. Training Duration

The duration of Higg FEM trainings will depend on the depth and coverage of the agreed upon training scope between the FEM Trainer Body and the organization or individual requesting the training. There is no limit to the minimum or maximum duration of a FEM Training. The minimum duration of FEM Trainings eligible for a certificate is four (4) hours. This applies to both in-person and online training.

-  Individual “standalone” training sessions that are less than 4 hours are permitted, however learners are not eligible for a training certificate for this type of training session.


 It is permitted for FEM Trainings to be broken down into shorter training sessions (e.g., two 2-hour sessions) and still be eligible for a training certificate, however the full FEM Training course (minimum of 4 hours) should be packaged as a single training course with a single registration where learners have access to the all sessions that are a part of the training.


 If a certificate is to be provided, attendee must attend all of the training sessions that are a part of the full course.

8. Required Number of FEM Trainers

In-person trainings require a minimum of one (1) FEM Trainer for up to 20 attendees. Training groups of over 20 attendees require a minimum of one (1) co-trainer to be present. Note that the co-trainer does not have to be a FEM Trainer. There is no limit on the maximum number of attendees, however it is expected that Trainers maintain a group size that allows for sufficient interaction with individual attendees.

Online trainings of any size require a minimum of one (1) FEM Trainer and do not require a co-trainer, however it is expected that an appropriate level of support be provided for online trainings to facilitate interaction between trainers and attendees (e.g., support for interactive chat boxes and Q&A).

 Co-trainers for in-person trainings may provide logistical support only and **must not** lead any training material delivery or activities unless they are an approved FEM trainer.

 As noted in the Trainer Code of Professional Conduct, Trainers who are also FEM Verifiers **must not** conduct FEM Verification services for facilities where they have provided training in the same FEM cadence. An exception would be where the training was provided to a larger group audience about general topics and specific discussions or instruction was not directed to a single manufacturer or group of manufacturers that are owned and/or operated by the same manufacturing group.


9. Training Scope

The scope of FEM Trainings can be adjusted based on the target audience and/or training requestor's needs. In general, the scope of Higg FEM Trainings will cover one, or both of categories below:

FEM Introduction: Focused on introducing the Higg FEM intent, structure, sections/questions, levels, scoring, cadence, etc. Introductory courses provided by approved TBs must use the "SAC Materials" provided to FEM Trainers (See Section 10) and align with the webinar content [available here](#).

Topic or Section-Specific: Focused on provided education and capacity building on specific FEM subject matter. This can include a single FEM section/topic or cover multiple FEM sections/topics. Topic or section-specific training must use the "Support Materials" in whole or in part, which are allowed to be adapted as per the terms of use (See Section 10).

The SAC encourages TBs to create customized training courses which can cover sections of the Higg FEM, frequently observed challenges, verification insights, technical content, etc. The scope and focus of these courses will depend on the target audience and/or training requestor's needs.

 When registering trainings, Trainers are required to indicate the focus/scope of the training.

10. Use of Approved Training Materials

The SAC has developed and made available Training Materials that must be used by FEM Trainers when providing Higg FEM Training. SAC Training Materials must be used in accordance with the licensing and terms set forth in the Sustainable Apparel Coalition – Agreement of SAC Trainer Body (Agreement).

There are two types of base training materials that are made available to FEM Trainers; "SAC Materials" and "Support Materials". At minimum, all FEM Trainings must cover the relevant content included in these base materials as determined by the training scope. As per the terms of the Agreement, "SAC Materials" (i.e., the file titled *SAC-FEM3.0- Introduction Base Material*) cannot be modified and must be used as is for FEM Introductory training. The "Support Materials" can be adapted by FEM Trainers to add supplementary information and/or remix the information to best suit the training scope and audience.



Trainers may translate the Training Materials into local language(s) provided that the translation is contextually equal to the original text. All terms of the Agreement including those regarding copyright and attribution must still be complied with.



Trainer Bodies and Trainers should check with the Training Program Manager if there is any question regarding the use of SAC Training Materials.

11. Higg.org Trainer Demo Account

FEM Trainers are required to have live access the Higg.org platform during FEM trainings to ensure platform use can be effectively demonstrated. To do this, TBs/Trainers are required to have a Demo account on Higg.org.

The instructions to set-up a Demo account on Higg.org can be found on STEP platform.

12. Higg FEM Training Quality Assurance

The SAC reserves the right to conduct quality assessments of FEM training provided under the FEM Trainer designation. All FEM Trainings (in-person and online) are subject to announced and unannounced visits by SAC representatives including the TPM.

Additionally, TBs are subject to management systems assessments that review the internal policies and procedures TBs have in place to ensure the quality of Higg FEM Trainings conducted by their trainers. The procedure for Assessing Trainer Bodies' (TB) Internal Management Systems is provided in **Appendix I**.



TBs and Trainers are expected provide access to relevant information (e.g., training schedules, policies and procedures or other documentation) for the purposes of conducting these activities upon reasonable request from the SAC or TPM.

Appendices

Appendix I - Assessing Trainer Bodies' (TB) Internal Management Systems

Trainer Body Assessments review the policies and procedures TBs have in place to ensure the quality of Higg FEM Trainings conducted by their Trainers. This procedure defines how the Trainer Program Manager (TPM) conducts TB assessments.

Procedure

1. Selecting TBs for assessment

- 1.1. All TBs will be subject to a management assessment. Both 2nd and 3rd-party TBs are included.
- 1.2. Additional assessments may be conducted periodically and/or be based on TB performance.

2. Assessing Trainer Bodies

- 2.1. The scope of the assessment is the TB's Higg FEM Training program.
- 2.2. The TPM assesses:
 - The TB's policies and procedures on Trainer competence
 - The TB's policies and procedures on training for Trainers
 - The TB's policies and procedures on internal quality, including training performance review
 - The TB's practices for calibrating Trainers to ensure consistency, both within the TB and with external requirements
 - The TB's practices for ensuring auditors act ethically
- 2.3. Assessments are conducted remotely. The TPM requests documentation from the TB and may schedule teleconference meetings to review material with TB management personnel or FEM Trainers. Once the TPM requests documentation, TBs have 14 days to submit the requested documentation to the TPM.

3. Reporting

- 3.1. The outcomes of TB assessments are recorded in a standard report form.
- 3.2. Outcomes of TB assessments are shared with TBs so they can take steps to address gaps in their programs.

4. Corrective Action

- 4.1. If the TPM finds significant gaps in the TB's program, the TB will be required to take corrective action to address those gaps.
- 4.2. TBs that do not take corrective action may be subject to disqualification of their TB status and the status of all associated Trainers.

Responsibilities

TPM: Select TBs for assessment in coordination with the SAC; ensure this procedure is consistently followed; qualify staff as TB assessors.

TPM TB Assessor: Conduct TB assessment in line with this procedure and generate report.

SAC: Select TB's for assessment in coordination with TPM.

TBs: Provide information and documentation, as requested by the TPM

Appendix II – List of Useful Links

<p>SAC Trainer Code of Professional Conduct https://howtohigg.org/higg-fem-training-program/trainer-code-of-professional-conduct/</p>
<p>Details on the criteria and process to become a FEM TB and/or Trainer: https://www.sumerra.com/programs/sac/sac-fem-training-program/</p>
<p>Public list of Higg FEM Trainer Bodies: https://howtohigg.org/higg-fem-verification-program/list-of-approved-fem-trainers/</p>
<p>Details on the Trainer Status Maintenance (TSM) Program: https://www.sumerra.com/sac/tsmprogram/</p>
<p>FEM Training Registration Form: https://fs26.formsite.com/Sumerra/SACTrainingReg/form_login.html</p>
<p>List of public (open) Higg FEM Trainings: https://www.sumerra.com/programs/sac/sac-fem-training-program/available-training/</p>
<p>Generic link to Post Training Survey Form (Please use dedicated link provided when possible) https://fs26.formsite.com/Sumerra/SACPostTrainingSurvey/index.html</p>

Appendix III – List of Abbreviations

FEM	Higg Facilities Environmental Module
SAC	Sustainable Apparel Coalition
TB	Trainer Bodies
TPM	Training Program Manager