



Textile Exchange  
Responsible Down Standard 2.0

# Supplier Toolkit



# Terms



**RDS** - applies to products that contain only RDS-certified down and/or feathers

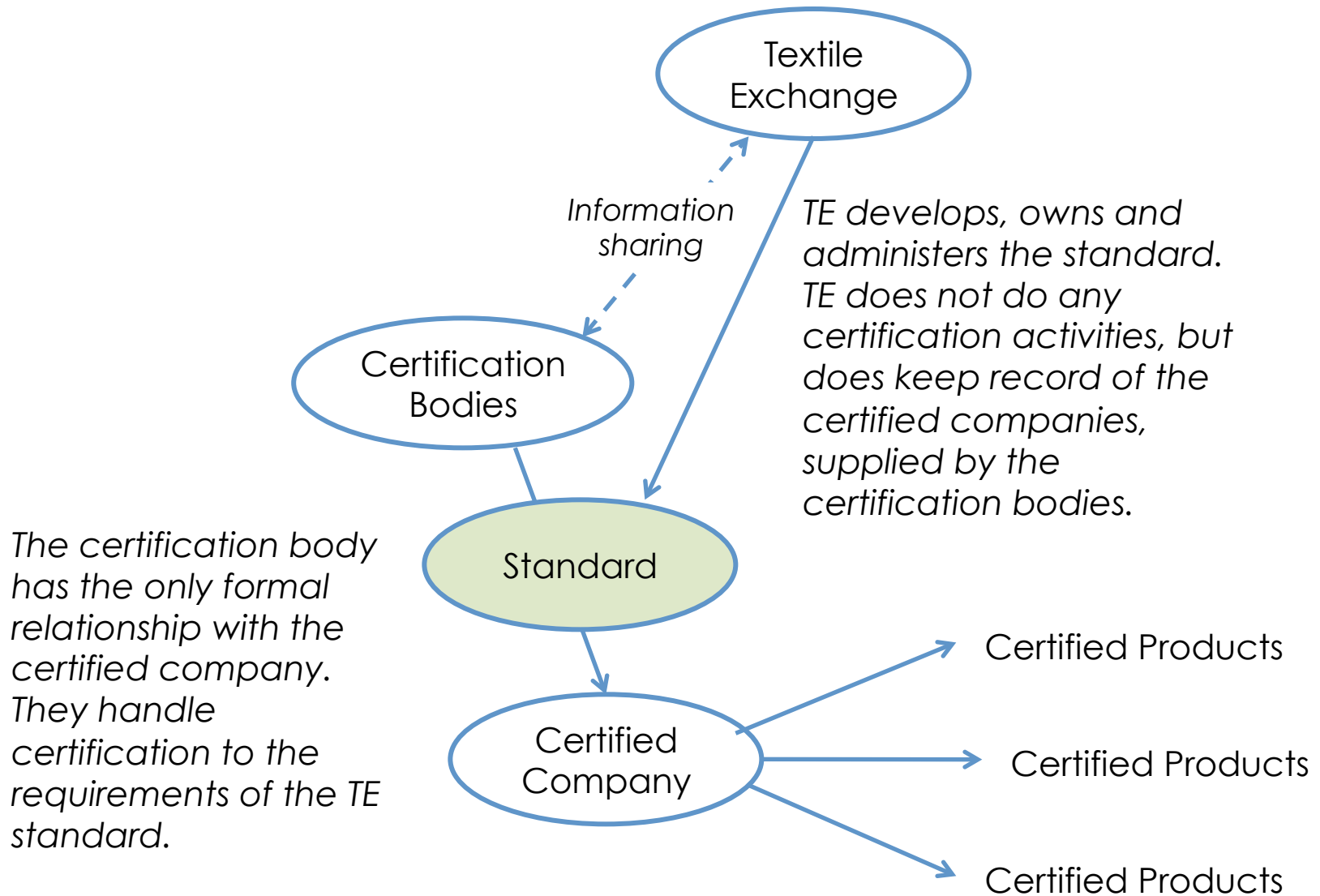
**Auditor** - the person doing the on-site inspection. He or she will work for the Certification Body directly or under contract, and send their findings to the Certifier.

**Certifier** - the person who reviews the results of the audit, cross-checks documentation and information, and who has the authority to grant certification

**Certification Body** - the organization that is authorized by the standard-owner to certify against the standard.

**Inspection** - the on-site audit against the requirements of the standard of the organization being certified

# Roles and Responsibilities



# RDS Supplier Toolkit

1. Read and understand the Responsible Down Standard.
2. Understand the requirements of your customer/s.
3. Determine the regions and the supply chains from which you will source the RDS down.
4. Decide who will pay for the certification.
5. Apply for certification at the certification body.
6. Sign contract with the certification body.
7. Coordinate with your customer's requirements.
8. Develop the training and certification plan.
9. Communicate with your supply chain about the certification.
10. Facilitate trainings.
11. Facilitate inspections, certification.

# 1. Read and understand the RDS

The first step in the process is to read the RDS and be sure that it meets your needs.

*\*\* THIS IS A CRITICAL STEP BEFORE YOU START ANYTHING \*\**

You can download the standard, as well as a PowerPoint presentation at [www.TextileExchange.org/RDS](http://www.TextileExchange.org/RDS). If you have any questions, contact [integrity@TextileExchange.org](mailto:integrity@TextileExchange.org).

To further understand the way that Textile Exchange standards work, you can also download the free Supplier's Certification Toolkit at [www.TextileExchange.org/content/certification-toolkit](http://www.TextileExchange.org/content/certification-toolkit).

## 2. Understand customer requirements

Look at the down and/or feathers that you will have to supply for your customer/s, and identify the types, qualities and if possible the rough quantities. Work closely with your customers to be sure you have a good understanding of their needs.

### **Types**

- ducks
- geese
- down
- feathers

### **Qualities**

- fill power
- color

### **Quantities**

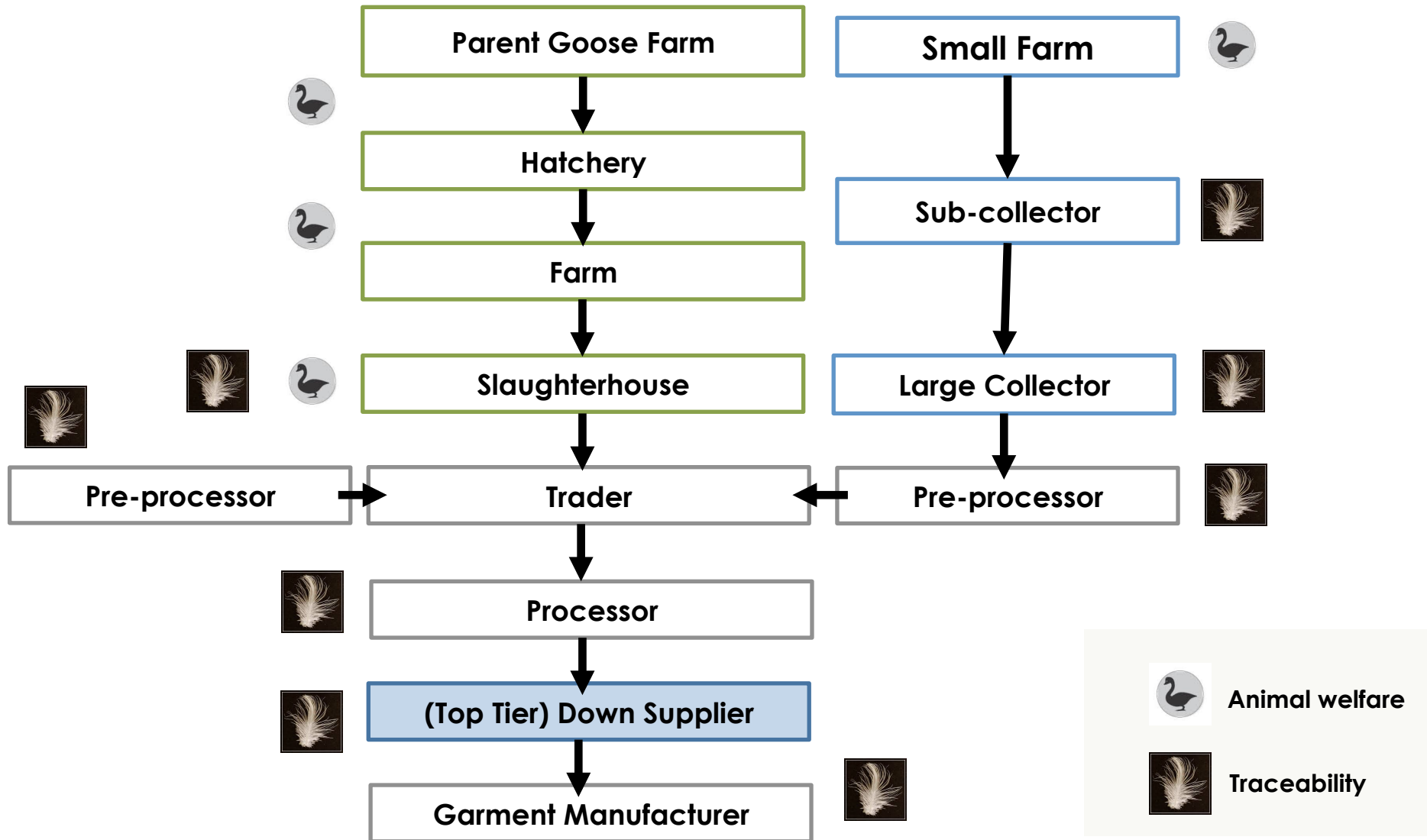
### 3. Determine sourcing region/s

If you do not know the identity and location of your supply chain, then you can work with the certification body to map out where the sites are. This step will involve mapping out your supply chain back to the farm level.

If you already have a good idea of the types and qualities of down that you will want to have RDS certified, then you may want to focus only on the sources of that particular down.

# Down Supply Chain Map

## Industrialized Food Channel      Collector Channel





## 4. Decide who will pay for the certification.

You may choose to pay for the certification of the rest of your supply chain/s. This means that you will own the scope certificates of each company.

If you want your supply chain companies to pay for their own certification, then it is critical that advise them of the process very early, and connect them with the certification body. You should also share this document with them.

If you would like more information about this, please contact [Integrity@TextileExchange.org](mailto:Integrity@TextileExchange.org).

# 5. Apply for certification

You can apply by using the certification body's standardized application form, which will be available at their website or upon request.

The application form will ask for basic information on the supply chain (type of supply chain, production and processing units, addressed, type of products).

The certification body will then review the application and return a proposal for the yearly inspection and certification fee.

## ***Did you know?***

- We recommend the supply chain to undergo education on RDS. This can be a shorter 'information' session on the content of RDS given by the certification body.
- If you would like to have in-depth information on how to comply with RDS, consultants recommended by the certification body and TE can help you, as the certification body cannot consult on sites that it will certify: this is considered a conflict of interest.

## 6. Sign certification contract

At this point (or earlier) you must sign the contract with the certification body. This will outline the sites that will be certified, the total cost, and the timelines.

\*\* Note that the certification body will not start any inspections until this is signed, so any delays may have an impact on the delivery of certified product in time to meet the needs of your customer/s.

## 7. Coordinate with your customer's requirements.

Work with the certification body to use the information from the supply chain mapping, as well as the needs of your customer, to identify which areas to concentrate on for certification. You may even have parts of your supply chain that are already certified.

As you get further information about the timing and costs of certification, communicate with your customers as they may want to revise their sourcing strategy based on price and timing.

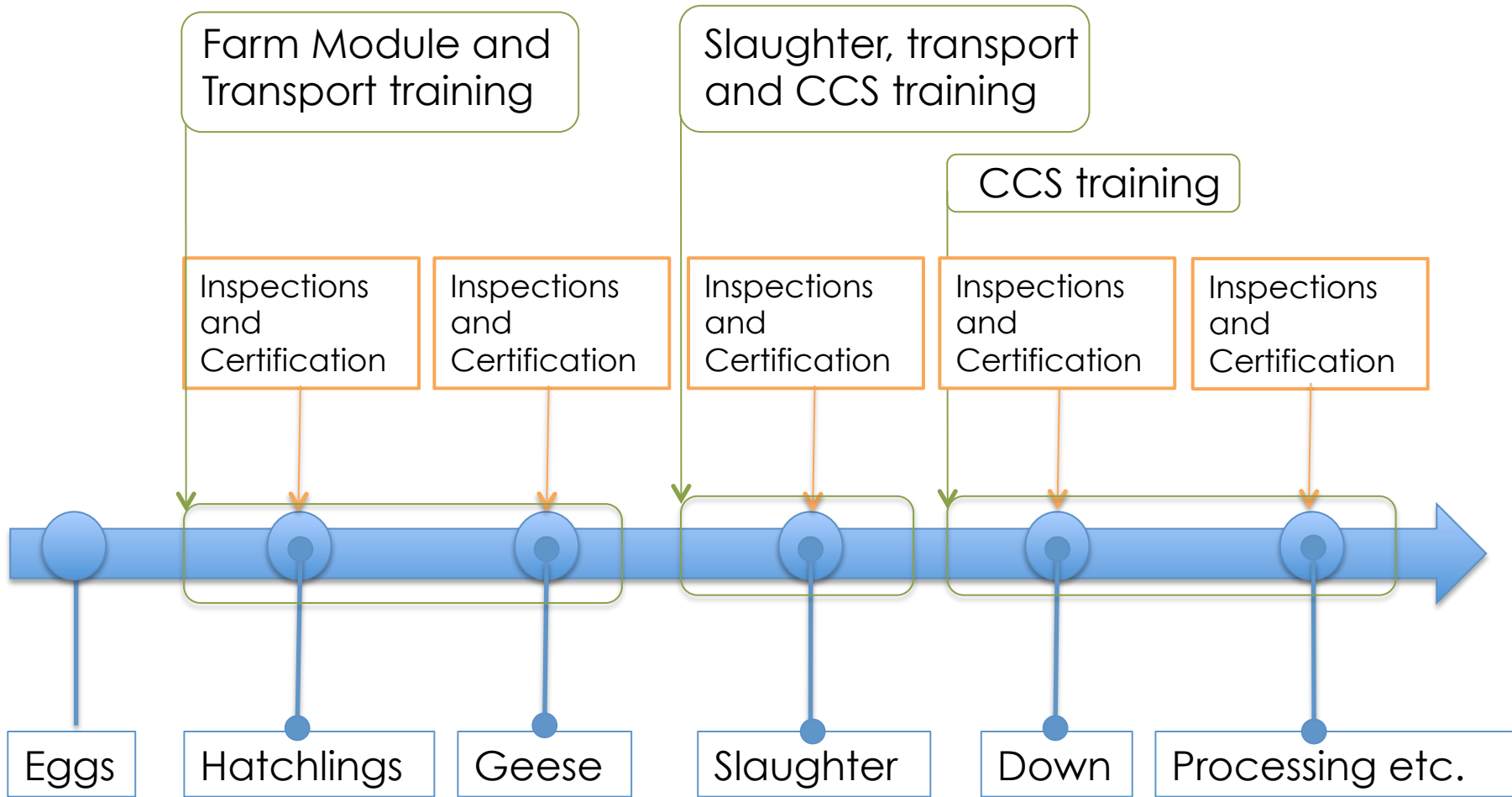
## 8. Create the training and certification plan.

The best way to ensure the success of the certification is to deliver trainings to the people/organizations that will be certified. Textile Exchange or the certification body can also provide support in many cases. You may choose to cover the costs of the training directly, or ask your suppliers to do so.

Work with any consultants to plan for training. Work closely with the Certification Body to map out a plan to audit the parts of the supply chain that will be meeting your needs. The timing of the trainings and audits will have to align with the movement of the hatchlings, geese and down along the supply chain.

### ***Did you know?***

- Because the RDS is an animal welfare standard, the certification will only apply to the products sourced from animals that have been successfully audited.



This is a simplified graphic to show that the trainings must be done before the inspections begin, and that the products must be certified before they move along the supply chain.

## 9. Communicate with your supply chain about the certification

It is critical that your suppliers are told that they will be required to be certified to the RDS well in advance. Be sure that your full supply chain is informed, and is aware of the timeline for trainings and inspections, as well as the requirements and enforcement of the RDS.

If you do not own the certification of your supply chain, then be sure that the names of the suppliers who are paying for their own certification are given to the certification body, and that they are in contact with their own suppliers.

# 10. Facilitate Trainings

Trainings are a critical success element for first-time certifications. Certification Body may be able to deliver the trainings, as they will have a deep understanding of the standard, and will be able to communicate in the local language. But a Certification Body is not allowed to directly train a company that they are intending to certify, as it is considered a conflict of interest. A consultant, recommended by a Certification Body or TE, may be the best choice.

Your role is to get your supply chain members to attend the trainings, and to urge them to ask questions if they have any areas of confusion.



# 11. Facilitate Audits

Give the Certification Body the support they need to get the accurate information they need, and access to the sites under certification.

Communicate openly and frequently with them.

# Textile Exchange Resources

Textile Exchange offers the following:

1. Copies of the RDS, the RDS Labeling and Logo Use Guide in multiple languages
2. Background information on the RDS development process
3. A place to submit your input for future versions of the standard
4. Certification Toolkit that explain the certification process in detail
5. Customized training and tool development
6. General support on questions about the RDS and its implementation

[http://ResponsibleDown.org/  
Integrity@TextileExchange.org](http://ResponsibleDown.org/Integrity@TextileExchange.org)



*Thank you for being part of the process of changing the feather and down industry.*