



**BUILD**  
BUILDING YOUR  
SOCIAL VALUE  
POSITION



## **SILVER AWARD**

Your Step-by-Step Guide

*"Consumers want demonstrable proof of sustainability claims from the brands they purchase from. At ACI Group, we want to help our customers and suppliers ensure that any sustainability claim is measured from the outset."*

**Karsten Smet, Director, ACI Group**

# 1 | Welcome

We're glad you've decided to continue your accreditation journey with us. The Silver SVQM marks a significant step up – taking your original pledges to the next logical stage. At this level, we ask you to provide the evidence to show your commitments are generating positive, meaningful impact for society. Silver accreditation is a sought-after achievement.

## Your organisation will build:

- › Evidence to demonstrate your commitments in action – from case studies to management information.
- › A forecast of the annual social value you are delivering, against the initial pledges.
- › An understanding of how internal and external stakeholders perceive your social impact.

## Benefits to you:

- › Provide robust, meaningful evidence in response to social value tender questions.
- › Win business across sectors, based on the strength of your social value commitment.
- › Build genuine credibility and reputation with customers, clients, stakeholders and investors.
- › Differentiate your organisation with employees and future talent – as an ethical, sustainable business that is brilliant to work for.
- › Showcase your award externally – a Silver Award celebrates demonstrable social impact.

## ↳ Purpose of the Audit

- › To evidence the extent to which your organisation is achieving, or making progress towards, its pledges and key value indicators.
- › To independently review and verify that your social value processes, activities and claims meet the required standards of the Mark.
- › To understand how social value within your organisation is perceived and experienced by key stakeholders.
- › To build up and review the evidence required to 'score' your organisation and award an accreditation, if appropriate.

## ↳ Stakeholder Engagement

The following stakeholders are engaged during the audit, through a series of 1-hour interview sessions. This allows the Auditor to independently verify claims made by the organisation and to understand how Social Value is understood and experienced by different parts of the organisation.

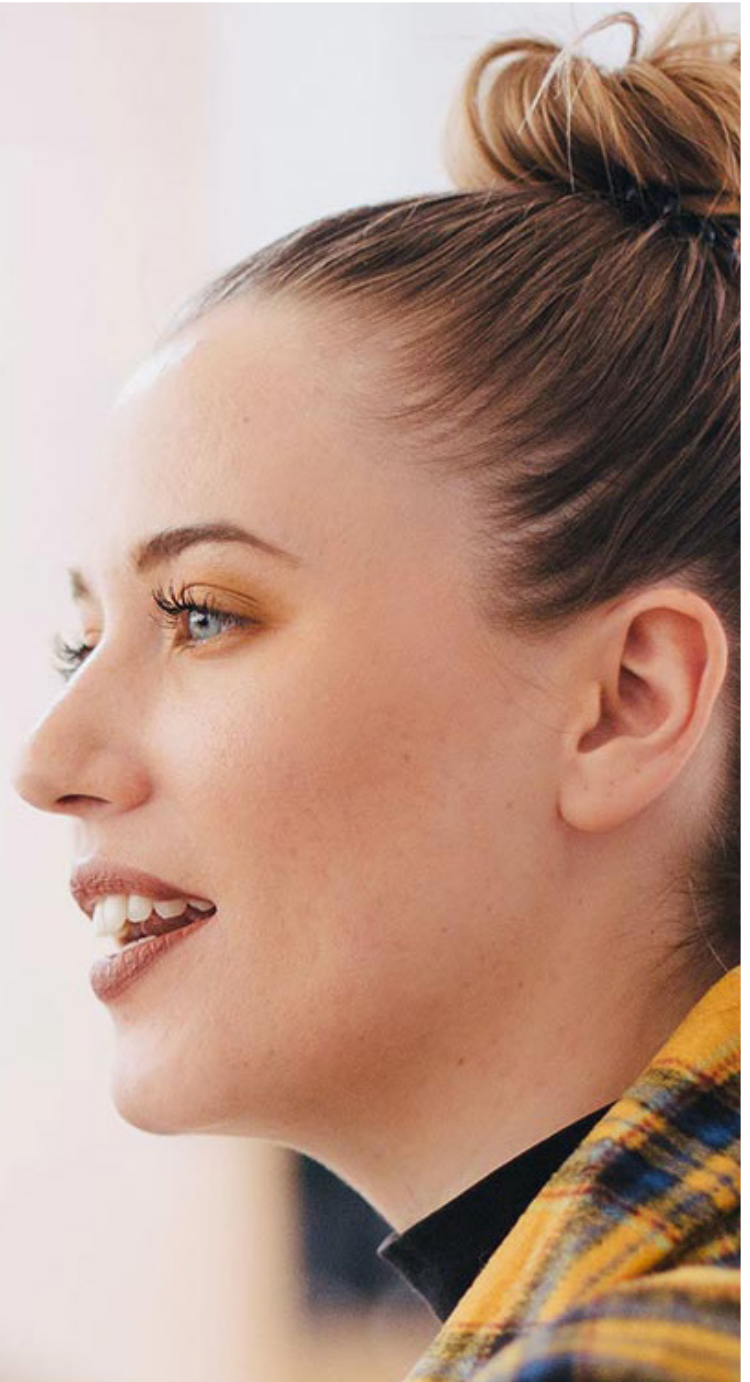
**Session 1** – SV Sponsor

**Session 2** – SV Lead

**Session 3** – HR, Training and Development

**Session 4** – Contract Manager or equivalent

**Session 5** – Specific to the organisation





## 2 | What you can expect from us

**The award is licensed by Social Value Quality Mark CIC – an independent Community Interest Company that exists to uphold the highest standards of values-led business. We challenge rigour, celebrate progress and drive local spend. SVQM operates an independent Oversight Panel who will review your evidence and either confirm successful accreditation, or give reasons why the award has been declined.**

Many clients also opt to receive consultancy – enhancing their chances of success. We offer this through our strategic partnership with the Social Value Business. SVB is a founding member of Social Value Quality Mark CIC, meaning they have a deep understanding of the accreditation framework and are uniquely well placed to guide you. However, as a true independent, we recognise ‘whole of market’ solutions.



### ↳ Oversight Panel

The Oversight Panel plays a crucial role in helping us to maintain and uphold the highest levels of transparency and trust. Our Panel ‘dip tests’ 20% of all audits for consistency. This ensures a degree of separation, ensuring we can defend the outcome of our audits and show that they are fair, legitimate and transparent. Our panel members represent a diverse range of skills, backgrounds, sectors and interests – but all are united in having a passion for, and detailed experience of, social value and/or compliance.

# 3 | The Audit Process

You will be assessed based on the evidence you provide under each **Review Category**

Our auditor will send you a list of **Review Questions** that correspond to the Categories at least 14 days in advance

Each Category is weighted in order of priority. These **Percentage Weightings** will be applied to arrive at a final score.

Each Category also has a **Standard** – this is our view of best practice and informs what the Auditor looks for.

## Silver Accreditation - Review Categories and Weightings

### Plan

*Category Standard: 'Social value planning is effective, robust and aligned to business goals and values. The right processes, skills, knowledge and infrastructure exist to create, measure, monitor and report social value.'*

This category focuses on your approach to the planning of social value within your organisation.

The questions will typically cover:

- Your governance, such as having a Board level sponsor and Social Value lead
- Whether you have a clear plan / strategy
- Alignment of clear measures against your commitments
- How you engage, map and measure your stakeholders and partners
- Training, knowledge sharing and communications

15%

### Demonstrate

*Category Standard: 'Social value plans and policies are being consistently implemented with clear positive, measurable impact, and are managed for continuous improvement.'*

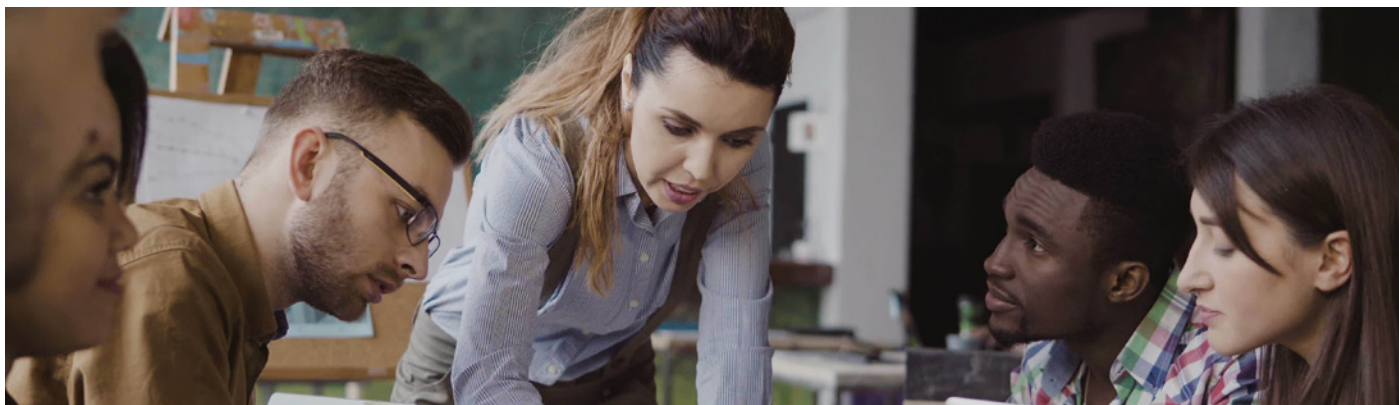
This category focuses on how you've gathered data and information to evidence your progress against your social value pledges and Key Value Indicators.

The questions will typically cover:

- Stakeholder engagement and consultation
- Your social value policies and their implementation
- Understanding of social value mapping and measurement
- Stakeholder trust in the organisation
- Your positive and negative outcomes
- Your approach to paying employees and suppliers

33%





## Calculate

*Category Standard: 'Financial and non-financial value is measured and calculated ethically, transparently and legitimately. Both negative and positive value created through the delivery of goods and services can be audited and reported.'*

This category focuses on the process of using your data and information to calculate the direct, indirect and hidden value.

The questions will typically cover:

- The value of positive and negative outcomes against your pledges
- Income by location
- Supply chain value by size, location and business type
- Employee and customer footprint

33%

## Report

*Category Standard: 'Both negative and positive value is accurately and fairly reported, together with insights that enable continuous development. Trust levels are captured and reported by stakeholder group.'*

This category focuses on the transparency and legitimacy of your reporting against your social value pledges and key value indicators.

The questions will typically cover:

- Fairness, accuracy and transparency of reporting
- Approach to reporting both positive and negative outcomes
- Clear reporting definitions – e.g. of stakeholders, Social Value pledges, Key Value Indicators
- Clear referencing of sources and data to recognised standards
- Conclusions around continuous improvement / development

12%

## Eco System

*Category Standard: 'Stakeholders, suppliers, partners and communities are consulted and engaged with ethically and transparently. Social impact can be clearly demonstrated by audience.'*

This category focuses on the extent to which your social value approach has influenced and benefitted your supply chain and partners.

The questions will typically cover:

- Changes experienced by stakeholder group
- Influence of the organisation and its networks
- Evidence of trusted relationships
- Ethical decision-making when engaging with suppliers/partners
- Existence of a supplier Social Value Charter or equivalent

7%



## The types of evidence we request

**It is the responsibility of the organisation to upload all supporting documentation to your Teams folders (access to be provided by Social Value Quality Mark CIC) by the agreed date. Failure to do so may lead to the audit needing to be rescheduled and additional cost incurred.**

The documents required vary between clients. However, to support you with your preparation, the following list gives an indication of the types of evidence we look for.

- Details of your service outcomes – for example, trust, satisfaction and advocacy scores and client testimonials.
- Details of your engagement outcomes – for example, employee engagement scores, attrition rates and exit interview data.
- Details of mandatory and non-mandatory training and development – for example, HR training records.
- Details of your operational and strategic relationships with partners and suppliers – for example, partnership, charity and supply chain agreements.
- Evidence of supply chain spend – for example, a supply chain map showing the amount spent locally, regionally, nationally.
- Activities delivered within the community, the people engaged and how they have benefitted. This could be evidenced through photos, case studies and testimonials.
- Details of how social value is influencing your culture, development and decision making – for example, through Board minutes, strategy papers and evidence of 'decision gates' (a documented process for ethical decision making).
- Evidence of positive communication, consultation and engagement – for example, through a stakeholder map, social value communications plan and strategic communications.
- Details of any codes, charters and initiatives – for example, The Prompt Payment Code, Mental Health at Work, Good Business Charter.



# Audit Scoring

Each of the audit questions are assigned to categories and hold a 'weighting'. This weighting will be applied to the score given to each audit response. To be awarded the Social Value Quality Mark Silver, you are required to research a minimum weighted threshold score of 80%.

## Scoring

The auditor will review your evidence provided (data and information) and through stakeholder research, to seek to answer the audit questions successfully. (overleaf)

The Auditor will assess your response and score accordingly.

### 1 – Full Compliance

The client has completely satisfied the auditor that they have met the requirements and have successfully answered the research question.

### ½ – Partial Compliance

The client has satisfied the auditor that they have meet the requirements in area, but not in full. There are either gaps in evidence or a lack of clarity in a response.

### 0 – Non Compliance

The client has failed to provide adequate/suitable evidence to support claims.

The score for each question will be added together and recorded on the audit spreadsheet. This will create a weighted score for the theme areas.



## Mandatory Questions

Each theme areas have several mandatory questions, that MUST be answered satisfactorily. If the organisation is scored anything less than full compliance. The organisation will fail the audit.

On receiving your application, Social Value Quality Mark CIC then has a 2-week window to review. We will let you know if further information is required, giving you the opportunity to submit further evidence. We'll then either confirm successful accreditation, or the reasons why we've declined your award.



# 4 | Pre-Audit Option

If you're unsure whether your organisation is likely to achieve Silver, you can apply for a pre-audit. This identifies gaps in your evidence, management, understanding and processes ahead of an official audit. You'll also receive an action plan based on the findings, to give you a greater chance of success.

For the pre-audit, we ask for a reduced list of documents and evidence in support of the Audit Categories described.

## ↳ Stakeholder Engagement

The following internal stakeholders are also engaged during the pre-audit, through a series of 1-hour online sessions.

**Session 1** - SV Sponsor

**Session 2** - SV Leader

**Session 3** - HR and Training and Development

**Session 4** - Contract Manager

**Session 5** - Specific to the organisation



## Outcome

You will be presented with a 'findings review' and action plan to support your organisation's progress towards the qualification threshold of 80% compliance against the standards.

Example:

Area of Review	Findings and Observations	Recommended Action	Rating
Calculating Value	<p><i>There is limited evidence to suggest that the organisation has a clear approach to translating outcomes into meaningful impact, and therefore, the calculation of value is not possible.</i></p> <p><i>No evidence of a connection between the delivery of activities against Key Value Indicators and what is being measured.</i></p> <p><i>This is considered an area of noncompliance.</i></p>	<p>a) <i>An urgent review of the approach to calculating value using a recognised social accounting methodology. Adopt the principles of a financial measure that stakeholders will consider legitimate.</i></p> <p>b) <i>Define the legitimate (government recognised/ industry-leading) source of financial metric that is used to calculate value.</i></p>	Red



# 5 | Supported accreditation (optional)

The team at Social Value Business are invested in your journey – through our collaboration, they want you to be successful and will work with you on the evidence you need to demonstrate the Silver standard. You'll be matched with a specialist who understands your sector and can tailor elements of the approach to meet your needs.



To get started, they will:

- Ask you to agree a brief costed proposal.
- Issue a Terms of Engagement.
- Allocate a specialist from the team.
- Create a project plan and give you access to a shared Teams folder.

At Silver level, clients typically benefit from support to:



## PLAN

Create a strategy or action plan that sets out your ambitions and objectives, milestones and the resources you'll need to ensure success. SVB can support you to align this to emerging legislation, your business goals and the expectations of your stakeholders.



## MEASURE

Develop a social value framework that helps you report your social value consistently, year after year. Because SVB has detailed knowledge of 12 different methodologies, they can help you arrive at a framework that is right for your organisation.



## VALUE MAP

Capture your impact by stakeholder group, building your understanding of what your stakeholders want, need and value. This highlights positive impact and outcomes, together with areas of potential focus.



## DEVELOP

Develop specific areas of your strategy, whether it's appointing a charity partner or setting up a new social enterprise. If SVB can't help, they will connect you with partners who can, from Carbon planning specialists to community insight teams.



## REPORT

Figure out what, when and how to report, based on your social value measurement framework. This ensures your impact claims are robust, transparent and recognised.



# 6 | Presentation and communication

Once you've achieved Silver, we will present you with a personalised, sustainably sourced award bearing your company's logo.

Our Senior Communications Specialist will share an interactive toolkit to help you promote your achievement. This includes:

- Standard messages to use for press releases and internal communications.
- Links to the award logos.
- Image tiles for use on social media.
- Helpful hints and tips for communicating your award.

We will add you to a growing directory of companies choosing to stand out for the impact they create for society.



## Award Validity

Your award is valid for two years – after which you'll need to pay a small fee to re-audit and retain the licence, submit your application for the Gold Award or relinquish your rights to the accreditation.

We will book a 12-month review meeting to confirm your preference.



## Progressing to Gold Award

We aim for the accreditation process to equip you with the building blocks and enthusiasm to move up the levels – demonstrating an increasingly mature approach to sustainable, ethical business. The Gold Quality recognises true best practice – at this stage, you will have collected a full 12 months of evidence and will be ready to evaluate your impact and demonstrate the Gold standard.

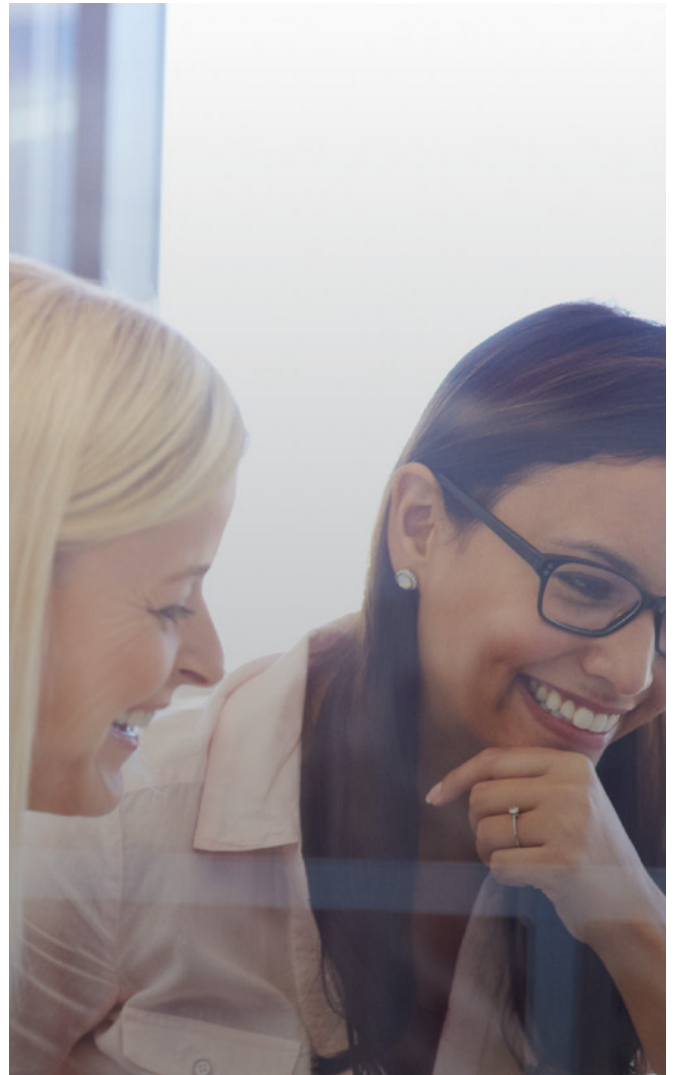
At Gold level, you'll be able to show impressive, demonstrable impact of your social value in action – helping you to grow investment, build reputation and win loyalty. Please ask us for an audit pack.



*"Having our ambitions verified by the Social Value Quality Mark is the first step in assuring we have a robust and impactful programme – essential not just for winning new business, but for delivering for our communities."*

Phillipa Green

Social Responsibility Director,  
CGI



# 7 | Audit Preparation

## Frequently Asked Questions

It is essential that organisations make the necessary preparations for the audit. Good preparation enhances your chances of success and makes it less likely that you will need to re-audit, thereby incurring further charges.

### **Q) What's the difference between Silver and Gold accreditation?**

A) The Silver Award recognises a state of transition...you've made your pledges and are now in the early stages of delivering against them. Silver is weighted more heavily towards planning, demonstrating and calculating – ensuring you get the building blocks in place.

At Gold, as well as expecting a full 12 months of evidence, we also introduce the categories of Performance Management and Trust – asking you to show how social value is becoming embedded within your culture.

### **Q) Will I receive a copy of the questions prior to the audit?**

A) Yes, they will be supplied 14 days prior to the audit.

### **Q) Will I have a chance to discuss the questions prior to the audit?**

A) Yes, your auditor will contact you at least 14 days prior to the audit, to discuss the audit in general, the audit process and to cover off any questions you might have.

### **Q) Are there any questions that are more important than others?**

A) All questions are important, however there are several pass/fail questions for which you will need to show sufficient evidence, or will otherwise fail the audit. These will be clearly marked on receiving the questions.

### **Q) What do I need to prepare ahead of the audit?**

A) You will need to provide evidence to support compliance against each of the audit questions. This could take the form of documents or a list of stakeholders with whom we can hold discussions.

### **Q) How should we provide our evidence?**

A) Please upload your information and documentation to the Teams folder, provided.

### **Q) What if I cannot provide the information?**

A) You will have 5 working days to provide missing or requested data, documents and information, from the date of the audit.

### **Q) What will the Auditor require?**

A) All of our audits now take place virtually by videoconferencing unless otherwise requested. The only things we need are your uploaded evidence and your availability for the virtual audit meeting.

### **Q) Who will need to be in attendance?**

A) The Social Value lead within your organisation will need to be present, and selected individuals will need to be available by phone or video call.

### **Q) When will we be informed of the outcome?**

A) Your Auditor will inform you of the outcome within 21 days of the audit.

### **Q) Can we appeal the decision?**

A) Yes. You can appeal the outcome of the audit within 10 working days. Your grounds for appeal must be sent to [info@socialvaluequalitymark.com](mailto:info@socialvaluequalitymark.com). Our independent Oversight panel will consider your appeal and provide a decision in writing within 21 days.



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For further information and advice, drop us a line:

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