Dear Reader,

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have the potential to be a huge catalyst for companies to embed sustainability at the core of their business strategy. These 17 goals and 169 targets are about truly measuring the impact of business on crucial challenges such as poverty, climate change, social justice and gender equality.

ISEAL membership comprises 21 sustainability standards systems, which develop their programmes using a multi-stakeholder process that delivers clear and meaningful requirements. And, as the joint ISEAL and WWF report states, “a credible sustainability standard is more than a logo on a product: it is run by an independent organisation that ensures compliance, maintains the integrity of the system and has a clear mission-driven focus on sustainability.”

So, we mustn’t underestimate what it takes to really commit to a high level of credibility. Sustainability standards offer a solution that is concrete and ensures that market claims are supported by practice, while the independence of both the standard setting and assessment process is safeguarded. Ultimately, through this practical and focused approach, standards can contribute to multiple SDGs and deliver real business benefits. And, we mustn’t forget the core reason for developing a standard through a multi-stakeholder process: it allows the concerns of those most affected to be taken on board.

By the end of 2016, ISEAL reached 135 subscribers in our larger community, more than 80 of which are emerging standards systems that are starting to become operational and are working in new and exciting sectors. We hope many will choose to become members in the future.

However, no matter what path they take, it is essential that they not only demonstrate the impact of their standard but also use insights to improve their programmes. Delivering real and lasting change does not come about through the work of one actor alone. I have watched the work of the Global Living Wage Coalition (GLWC) over the last few years. Six sustainability standards came together to further empower and protect workers through their standards. This is an unprecedented collaboration that will scale up their impacts on the workers of the world. A flow of good quality information is vital when seeking to achieve any impacts and the project is taking real steps to ensure this, as we’ve seen from the benchmarking reports that have been released over the last year. You can read more about the GLWC in this report.

After two decades, the drive to innovate and expand for the good of social and environmental responsibility is still burning brightly. I am ever grateful for all the dedicated people and many partners that we work with, who are such passionate advocates and committed change-makers, playing a huge part in transforming sectors and regions.

BRITTA WYSS BISANG,
BOARD CHAIR

Foreword
Dear Reader,

Looking back, I don’t think anyone would argue that 2016 wasn’t a year of change and challenges. You couldn’t ignore the major political changes and, at the same time, we witnessed some major shifts in business attitudes towards sustainability.

The effects of the Paris Agreement at COP21 and the approval of the Sustainable Development Goals permeated businesses, governments and financial institutions, and we saw a substantial global increase in interest in sustainability issues. Moreover, reports continued to emerge highlighting the benefits of a sustainable business model along with the rise in investors scrutinising their portfolios for sustainability to protect themselves against growing risks.

Our new four year strategy – launched in 2016 – centres on our collaborative work to ensure that ISEAL and its members continue to scale up and address the most pressing problems the world faces. Through the year we expanded our work to support standards in their effort to respond to evolving needs and expectations, and increase their value, effectiveness and impacts.

Our ‘Making a real mark’ campaign brought together our members to illustrate what is unique about our approach and the breadth of our reach. A credible, transparent, democratic and independent approach to driving sustainable practice on the ground knits together our members, despite working in a wide range of commodities and sectors.

In the summer of 2016 we launched our new website, www.standardsimpacts.org, which hosts a wealth of evidence of the difference made by ISEAL members. Back in 2015 we conducted an online survey with businesses, which said there was a strong business case for sustainability standards, however, they lacked evidence to convince decision makers of the impact of standards. I hope this website will make a big contribution to addressing this problem. As we develop deeper relationships with the research community, the body of independent evidence will continue to grow.

In 2016 we launched our work to drive innovation in standards systems. This work responds to the recognition that the impact and value proposition of standards systems is evolving, and that standards and assurance may look very different in five to ten years. We look forward to collaborating with a wide range of stakeholders on this topic in the coming years.

In 2017 we mark 15 years of the ISEAL Alliance. Our members have made a phenomenal difference over those years: from the tens of thousands of company commitments and actions, to the positive small and large changes made by production-based communities working with sustainability standards.

The years ahead will be marked by our collective efforts to meet the global goals. Our members are rising to the challenge and will be building on a history of achievement.

I would like to thank our members for their dedication and vision. Thanks also go to the ISEAL Board for their constructive contribution and support of ISEAL’s new strategy, and especially to our funding partners for their wonderful support.

KARIN KREIDER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
ISEAL Credibility Principles

The Credibility Principles represent ten core values upon which effective sustainability standards are built. They were developed through a year-long consultation that engaged a diverse group of more than 400 stakeholders.

“When we ensure transparency in our requirements, and have oversight of the supply chain using standards, we are better managing our risks.”

CLAUS TEUMANN PETERSEN, VICE PRESIDENT, GROUP ETHICS FOR PANDORA

© PANDORA
Collaboration has been at the heart of ISEAL for more than a decade through joint projects on poverty, living wage, pesticides and other global challenges. Over the last year we’ve seen many examples of ISEAL members working in partnership to drive efficiencies and using their combined reach to improve the practices of tens of thousands of companies and the lives of millions of people.

“Interoperability is an area that can make a big difference and ISEAL is an important framework for improving how different systems can work together as well as with governments and other institutions.”

RENZO MORI JUNIOR, POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH FELLOW, CENTRE FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN MINING, UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND

Together we’re making a real mark

In 2016 we launched a new campaign to share how together ISEAL members are making a real mark and continuing to deliver impact. Our members work across a range of commodities and sectors, and their reach grows every year. While a lot has been achieved, our work is more important now than ever.

The online campaign illustrated what lies behind our labels, highlighting how we complement the work of other private and public sector bodies to get the best results. We work with all affected stakeholders, in open and democratic processes that lead to meaningful change. And, our independent, transparent verification processes make sure the changes that happen are real.

Read more about our collective efforts and watch a one-minute video on how ISEAL members are making a real mark at www.iseal.org > Our community > Making a real mark

Coalition delivers new global living wage benchmark reports

The Global Living Wage Coalition (GLWC) is an initiative made up of six sustainability standards working to improve wage levels in certified supply chains. Through its collaborative efforts the coalition hopes to see standards systems help drive structural change in supply chains to ensure workers are paid a living wage. Now, 20 benchmark and wage studies are underway. In 2016, the GLWC released benchmark reports for Brazil, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, India and rural Kenya, which joined the reports for Dominican Republic, Malawi, peri-urban Kenya and South Africa.

For more information about the coalition and to find out how to get involved and support or use the benchmarks, please visit www.globallivingwage.org
Delivering impacts and business case information on sustainability standards

Our 2015 business surveys found that businesses wanted more impacts information on sustainability standards. So, in 2016, we launched a new website, www.standardsimpacts.org, which provides evidence and information on the impact and business case of ISEAL member standards.

The website features interviews with businesses, reports from credible sources, as well as videos and other multimedia resources that demonstrate the impacts of certification on people and the planet.

Eight members sign pesticides agreement

In May, eight ISEAL members signed an agreement to work together to reduce the use of pesticides. Independent reports have confirmed that certified farms excel in a range of environmental, social and economic characteristics compared to non-certified farms. However, pesticides are still widely used, including those considered hazardous because of their acute or chronic toxic effects. This agreement shows how standards can work together to collectively drive bigger impact on significant issues.
In late 2016, ISEAL members and experts came together for the data and technology event, Spark!, where we shared the best and most promising ideas from inside and outside the standards community. With 100 attendees, the event kick started collaboration inside the ISEAL community and signalled the beginning of the journey for the sustainability standards movement to work rapidly and collectively on all aspects of data.

Participants discussed how standards can add greater value to the information we collect and how that can be used to accelerate improvements to help meet the challenges of going to scale. The event provided valuable insights, which have informed the design and development of the innovations and members’ learning programme and the focus of ISEAL’s data related activities.

Innovations fund

An innovations fund was established to support ISEAL members, working together and with other organisations, to test new and innovative solutions to driving sustainability at scale. The launch of the fund saw two grant application rounds, resulting in six projects funded. These include investigating and testing a real-time audit management platform for forest certification, developing a pesticide database, and digitally collecting common farm data elements to contribute to interoperability and avoid double counting.

In 2016 we launched innovation task forces with ISEAL members, aimed at tackling the complex problems of assessing and managing risk and driving continual improvement. Moving forward, the task forces’ work will inform our understanding of challenges that can be addressed through a dedicated innovations fund and help us to take bold steps to improve the effectiveness and value of sustainability standards.

ISEAL’s data and technology event, Spark!

Data is transforming how we drive sustainability through value chains. Once analysed, this data offers valuable information about critical sustainability issues, such as forced labour and deforestation, and can help focus resources.

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Over the last year we have been working with the private sector to help businesses understand how sustainability standards can help them contribute to the 2030 Agenda as well as consulting governments and policy makers to integrate the use of sustainability standards in their SDG monitoring. In addition, working with WWF, we collected evidence for a new report to illustrate how sustainability standards can help companies meet the SDGs and realise significant benefits.

Colombia symposium

The Global Sustainability Standards Symposium in Bogotá, Colombia, brought together more than 250 business leaders, sustainability standards, NGOs and government representatives. Participants explored the business case for implementing sustainability, consumer perceptions of labels and certifications, and how to strengthen competitiveness through the adoption of good practices. The audience heard from panellists how certification can play a role in strengthening the competitiveness of companies, drive up profits and create long term growth. And, speakers highlighted how there is a growing appetite for sustainable investment, where sustainable initiatives, particularly those that are certified, benefit from positive social and environmental impact, risk mitigation and long term financial returns.

There is a huge benefit from organisations working together to address the complex issues we face. Our work with governments, businesses and NGOs is helping to drive sustainability improvements in emerging markets. However, ultimately, it is the commitments of businesses and buyers globally who work with and support producers to meet best practices and achieve certification that increases competitiveness and ensures resilient supply chains, while helping to deliver sustainability at all levels and at scale.

"Voluntary standards are one of the most exciting trade developments, providing a new level of engagement with the private sector on consumer and B2B products."

JOAKIM REITER, FORMER DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL, UNCTAD

New tool in China to help define ‘responsible’

In June, ISEAL and the China Certification and Accreditation Institute (CCAI), along with the South North Institute for Sustainable Development, launched the ISEAL Code of Good Practice for Setting Social and Environmental Standards to audiences in China.

The Standard Setting Code, as it’s commonly known, is of great value in the region as China sets out to create its own national standards for ethical or green products and services. China’s new thirteenth five-year plan emphasises green development and shared benefits, and the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative also sets an important tone for the development of responsible practices. The Code was shared in Beijing with more than 100 experts in a high level sustainability standards and certification development forum co-hosted by ISEAL and CCAI. Published by the China Standards Press, this is the first time that the Standard Setting Code has been officially available in Chinese.

Supporting businesses’ implementation of the SDGs

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) emphasise the role of the private sector in helping to tackle major development challenges. Since the introduction of the SDGs in September 2015 ISEAL has been working with members to build capacity and support the inclusion of the SDGs in their work. GlobeScan’s State of Sustainable Business survey reported that around one in three companies indicated they would use the SDGs to set their corporate targets. Multi-stakeholder sustainability standards are well-placed to support businesses’ implementation of the SDGs and act as a measure of progress against the goals.

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### Financials

As of 31 December 2016 - audited with comparative totals for financial year 2015

#### Income (in Euros)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Membership and Community</td>
<td>611,000</td>
<td>943,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>1,860,000</td>
<td>1,740,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundation</td>
<td>876,000</td>
<td>531,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate</td>
<td>62,000</td>
<td>158,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total income</strong></td>
<td>3,409,000</td>
<td>3,372,000</td>
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</table>

#### Expenses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness, Credibility and Learning Programme</td>
<td>973,000</td>
<td>1,082,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impacts Programme</td>
<td>769,000</td>
<td>560,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adoption Programme</td>
<td>914,000</td>
<td>804,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Organisation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Communications and Development</td>
<td>147,000</td>
<td>189,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance, Operations and Governance</td>
<td>248,000</td>
<td>305,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overhead</strong></td>
<td>3,051,000</td>
<td>2,940,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total expenses</strong></td>
<td>3,320,000</td>
<td>3,267,000</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

#### Surplus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Surplus</td>
<td>89,000</td>
<td>105,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reserves at start of year</td>
<td>389,000</td>
<td>478,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reserves at end of year</td>
<td>478,000</td>
<td>583,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Financials

Expenses

- Effectiveness, Credibility and Learning
- Impacts
- Adoption
- Communications and Development
- Finance, Operations and Governance
- Overhead

Income

- Membership and Community
- Government
- Foundation
- Corporate

Funding partners

In addition to our members’ financial and in-kind contributions, ISEAL also received generous support in 2016 from the following institutions:

- Cooperatieve Inkoop Vereniging Superunie (CIV Superunie)
- Deuter Sport
- Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
- European Forestry Institute (EFI)
- Ford Foundation
- Germany Federal Ministry for Economic Development and Cooperation (BMZ)
- IDH The Sustainable Trade Initiative
- IKEA
- Kingfisher
- Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DGIS)
- Precious Woods
- State Secretariat for Economic Affairs, Switzerland (SECO)
- Svenska Cellulosa Aktiebolaget (SCA)
- Tetra Pak
- The David and Lucile Packard Foundation
- The Walton Family Foundation
- UK Department for International Development (DFID)
- United Nations Environment Programme
Governance

ISEAL Board of Directors as of 31 December 2016

- Hans Joachim Droste, Forest Stewardship Council
- Anne-Marie Fleury, Responsible Jewellery Council
- Andreas Kratz, Fairtrade International
- Rik Kutsch Lojenga, Union for Ethical Biotrde
- Guntars Laguns, Accreditation Services International
- Fraser Simpson, Bonsuco
- Ana Paula Tavares, Rainforest Alliance / Sustainable Agriculture Network
- Darrel Webber, Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil
- Britta Wyss Bisang, Board Chair, UTZ

A special thanks to the ISEAL Board members whose service ended during 2016

› Andre de Freitas, Rainforest Alliance / Sustainable Agriculture Network
› Melanie Ruten-Sueltz, Global Coffee Platform

© Sustainable Agriculture Network
A special thanks to the ISEAL Membership Committee members whose service ended during 2016
André de Freitas (Board Liaison) Rainforest Alliance / Sustainable Agriculture Network
Ana María Garzón Sustainable Agriculture Network / Rainforest Alliance
Khoo Hock Aun Roundtable on Sustainable Biomaterials

ISEAL Finance Committee
Bertjan Bouman Union for Ethical BioTrade
Richard Cook Social Accountability Accreditation Services
Michelle Morton SHE

ISEAL Technical Committee
Manoj Bhatt GoodWeave
Peter Feilberg NEPCon
Etienne Kuzang Accreditation Services International
Cassio Franco Moreira WWF

ISEAL Stakeholder Council
Bimal Arora Centre for Responsible Business

Mike Barry Marks & Spencer
Karin Bogaers Ahold Delhaize
Barbara Bramble National Wildlife Federation
Fatima Cardoso Solidaridad
Alastair Child Mars Global Chocolate
Lena Dahl Tetra Pak
Crystal Davis Global Forest Watch, WRI
Alan Knight OBE ArcelorMittal
John Laidlow HSBC
Jeff Malcolm WWF
Adriana Mejia Cuartas Independent

Euan Murray The Sustainability Consortium
Khalid Nadvi University of Manchester
Lucian Peppelenbos IDH The Sustainable Trade Initiative
Greg Priest Inter IKEA Group
Philipp Schukat Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
Dr. Li Tienan China Standards Conformity Assessment Company (CSCA)
Bruce Wise International Finance Corporation
Feriel Zerouki De Beers Group

© Responsible Jewellery Council

Governance as of 31 December 2016

ISEAL Membership Committee
Graham Bruford Marine Stewardship Council
Sönke Fischer Accreditation Services International
Bas Geerts Aquaculture Stewardship Council
Mona Karraoui Golf Environment Organization
Elena Schmidt Roundtable on Sustainable Biomaterials
Nicolas Viart Bonsucre
Anne Marie Fleury (Board Liaison) Responsible Jewellery Council

ISEAL Finance Committee
Simon Hunt Independent
Thomas Müller-Bardey Global Coffee Platform
Ron van Leeuwen UTZ
Fraser Simpson (Board Liaison) Bonsucre

ISEAL Technical Committee
Sönke Fischer Marine Stewardship Council
Graham Bruford Accreditation Services International

ISEAL Stakeholder Council
Stefan Salvador Forest Stewardship Council
James Sullivan Independent
Andreas Kratz (Board Liaison) Fairtrade International
Matthew Wemban-Smith (Chair) Independent

A special thanks to the ISEAL Technical Committee member whose service ended during 2016

Malcolm Fox Equitable Origin

© Responsible Jewellery Council
ISEAL in numbers

ISEAL Secretariat
While this annual report focuses on our important work at ISEAL representing the sustainability standards movement, we thought you might also like a snapshot of the ISEAL Secretariat.

- **26 people**
- **17 languages spoken**
- **144 t**
- **£1088 cost of offset CO₂ in 2016**

Based in:
- 1 x Beijing
- 1 x Toronto
- 1 x British Columbia
- 22 x London
- 1 x Brussels

Our membership and community

- **21 Full members**
- **135 Subscribers in community**
- **84 Standard-setting organisations in community**

Our staff values

- **COURAGE**
- **CONNECTION**
- **INSPIRATION**
- **EMPOWERMENT**
- **WELL-BEING**
- **SUSTAINABILITY CHAMPION**