

ISEAL Credibility Principles Steering Group

Steering Group members

The ISEAL Credibility Principles Steering Group was formed in January 2020 to advise on the revision of the principles. The full terms of reference are included below.

The Steering Group is made of the following individuals:

Name	Organisation	Stakeholder group
Joana Barata Correia	Inter IKEA Group	Business
Rajeev Baruah	Consultant	Technical expert
CUI, Yan	China Association for Standardization	Public sector
Chisara Ehiemere	Field to Market	Non-member sustainability system
Santiago Fernández de Córdoba	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development	Multilateral organisation
Hando Hain	NEPCon	Non-member sustainability system
Evi Mateboer	Assurance Services International	ISEAL member
Jan Willem Molenaar	Aidenvironment	Technical expert
Katrin Oswald	WWF	NGO
James Sullivan	Consultant	Technical expert
Thomas van Haaren	Consumer Goods Forum	Business
Fallight, XU Qiuming	TÜV Rheinland	Assurance provider

Terms of reference – December 2019

Scope

These terms of reference cover the formation, responsibilities, aims and operation of the Steering Group with respect to the revision and approval of ISEAL's *Principles for Credible and Effective Sustainability Standards Systems* (Credibility Principles).

Responsibilities

The Steering Group is an advisory body whose main responsibility is to contribute to the revision of the Credibility Principles. Specific technical responsibilities of the Steering Group include:

1. Reviewing and providing input to the pre-release drafts of the Credibility Principles
2. Reviewing consultation feedback and seeking to resolve outstanding issues in the drafts
3. Providing a recommendation for approval on a final draft of the Credibility Principles

The Steering Group is also asked to raise awareness of, and drive participation in, the global consultation to revise the Credibility Principles.

Decision-making

The Steering Group makes a recommendation to the Technical Committee on whether to approve the final draft of the Credibility Principles at the close of the consultation.

The Technical Committee then makes the decision whether to approve the content based on the Terms of Reference for the Credibility Principles and the quality of the process followed.

The ISEAL Board makes a final decision whether to approve the Credibility Principles based on the quality of the process followed.

Aims of the revision

The revision of the Credibility Principles will draw on the findings of the review activities carried out in 2019. The goal is to ensure that the revised principles define and communicate the core values of credible and effective sustainability standards and related systems, improving the delivery of sustainability impacts. While the principles do not serve as a normative reference, they do represent the intended outcomes of ISEAL's Codes of Good Practice and guidance materials, and the revision aims to make this link clearer and stronger.

The revision also aims to extend the scope of the principles. The principles were originally designed to apply to voluntary sustainability standards systems. The revised principles will apply to sustainability standards and related systems. By related systems, we mean standards-like initiatives that define sustainability performance levels or improvement pathways; that measure, monitor or verify performance or progress; and that allow for claims. This can include emerging and innovative models such as data-driven approaches, improvement frameworks or landscape-level programmes.

Membership

The Steering Group will consist of 9-12 members representing a balance of expertise in credible and effective sustainability systems.

Members represent their own views and the interests of the stakeholder group they represent. They do not represent their organisations. Membership will include representation from the following interests:

- sustainability standards systems
- related systems adopting innovative models
- certification or accreditation bodies
- expert technical consultants
- non-governmental organisations
- users of sustainability systems (e.g. businesses, producer associations)

No more than 1/3 of Steering Group members will be employees of ISEAL members.

Application and appointment process

All members of the ISEAL Technical Committee are invited to serve on the Steering Group. The remaining members of the Steering Group will be selected through an application procedure.

In addition to ensuring a balance of stakeholder interests, Steering Group members will be selected for appointment by ISEAL on the basis of the following criteria:

- knowledge of and technical expertise in sustainability standards and related systems
- knowledge of and technical expertise in innovations in sustainability systems
- communications expertise
- current understanding of ISEAL's Codes and credibility tools
- commitment to ISEAL's mission
- geographic diversity and gender balance
- availability to participate in the four in-person and virtual meetings outlined in the anticipated schedule below and ability to work in English

Members are required to agree to the Chatham House Rule and complete a conflict of interest declaration at the outset of their service on the Steering Group.

Membership in the Steering Group is for the duration of the Credibility Principles revision process (estimated timeline: Jan 2020 – Dec 2020). Should a member need to resign from the committee, ISEAL may appoint a suitable replacement.

Operations and meetings of the Steering Group

The ISEAL Senior Manager, Membership & Services or a proxy ISEAL representative nominated by the ISEAL Senior Manager, Membership & Services will act as facilitator of the Steering Group and project manager.

The Steering Group will meet through a combination of in-person and virtual meetings. The proposed schedule of meetings is as follows:

- late January 2020 – virtual meeting to brief new members of the Steering Group on the review findings
- March 2020 – in person meeting to review first draft
- late August or early September 2020 – in person meeting to consider the feedback from the first consultation and review the second draft
- early December 2020 – virtual meeting to consider the feedback from the second consultation and review the final draft

Additional virtual meetings may be scheduled as necessary.

Where the costs are not sponsored by a member's organisation, ISEAL will reimburse the direct costs associated with participation in the meetings (travel, accommodation, subsistence). Time will not be reimbursed and there are no per diems or honoraria associated with membership of the Steering Group.

The Steering Group seeks to make decisions by consensus, with consensus defined as the absence of sustained opposition. When consensus cannot be reached, the group reverts to decisions by 75% majority.

Meetings will be held under the Chatham House Rule – that is that the notes will record statements made but will not be attributed. Outcomes of the discussions may be made publicly available, unless the discussion is specifically noted to be 'internal only' or if the speaker asks for their comment to be 'off the record'.

Further information

Please contact Caitlin Peeling, ISEAL's Senior Manager, Membership & Services with any questions on these terms of reference: caitlin@isealalliance.org.