Remote Auditing Good Practices: Introduction to ISEAL draft guidance

30 March 2021
Housekeeping

The session is being recorded and will be shared on the ISEAL webpage

INTRODUCE YOURSELF
- When you join, edit your name and add your organization in brackets - e.g. Robert (ISEAL)
- To do this, simply click on the “Participant button”
- Next, click on “Rename” next to your name in the Participant list

HOW CAN I ASK A QUESTION / COMMENT?
Please keep yourself muted when not speaking
1. Raise your virtual hand from Participants list tab OR
2. Pop the question in the chat box

TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES?
Reach out to Anja (ISEAL) in the chat box or write an email to anja@isealalliance.org
## Agenda

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14:00 – 14:05</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Welcome and project overview</td>
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<tr>
<td>14:05 – 14:50</td>
<td>Remote Auditing Good Practice Guide</td>
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<td>Interactive plenary session</td>
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<tr>
<td>14:50 – 15:10</td>
<td>Q&amp;A about Guidance</td>
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<td>15:10 – 15:15</td>
<td>Break</td>
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<td>15:15 – 15:45</td>
<td>The search for Good Practice – Break-outs</td>
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<td>Smaller group discussions focused on areas where big questions remain</td>
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<td>15:45 – 15:55</td>
<td>Report back to plenary</td>
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<td>15:55 – 16:00</td>
<td>Next steps</td>
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Today’s objectives

› Familiarization with draft guidance
› Exploration of challenging areas
› Identification of good practices
› Sharing of experiences
Project Overview

Remote auditing good practices

› Project started July 2020, supported by IDH
› Support sustainability assurance to operate credibly and effectively under crisis conditions
› Very active learning community, across sectors, organizations, ISEAL and non-ISEAL participants
› All outputs publicly available, including NEW Draft Guidance for Consultation
› For more information:
  isealalliance.org/about-iseal/our-work/remote-auditing
Project Activities (phase 2)

- **Background research** on integration of technology and data in remote audits
- **Good practices** for remote auditing – draft guidance to be finalized by June
- Practical **pilots** help inform guidance and inspire organisations on your own journeys
- **Learning journey** amongst sustainability systems for peer learning and alignment
Breakout Groups (choose 1 option)

1. Hybrid audits: issues requiring on-site, certification status, efficiencies
2. Building risk profiles: approaches, effective data use, integrity implications
3. Remote worker interviews: limitations, good practices, technology options

Change your name to include number 1-3!
ISEAL Guidance v0.1 – Outline

› **Scope:** Remote auditing practices for all sustainability systems and their assurance providers

› **2. Audit policies and procedures**
  • Setting the rules for when and how remote auditing can take place

› **3. Audit implementation**
  • Steps in the remote audit process

› **4. Data and technology**
  • Effective integration and management of data and technology
ISEAL Guidance v0.1 – Development

› Review of 40 publicly available procedures from 19 sustainability systems
› Practices mapped against 34 assurance topics
› Areas of potential alignment identified
› Examples of interesting or more detailed practices identified

› Rather than prescribing how to do something, guidance suggests what should be considered and provides examples of how systems have approached each topic
2. Audit Policies and Procedures

› Adapting the existing system
  • Derogations and extensions

› Policies on when to allow remote audits
  • Audit-type vs scenario vs data-driven
  • Risk assessment to inform approach to remote
  • Initial certification, surveillance, full re-certification, chain of custody
  • Hybrid audits
Do you allow fully remote initial audits in your system?

- Yes: 15
- Yes, with conditions: 5
- No: 1
What conditions need to be in place for a fully remote initial audit to be feasible?

- On-location audit within 1 year
- Technology
- Follow up on-site audit required as soon as safe to do so
- Technology
- There has been an onsite conducted recently on Zero Tolerance issues
- Risk assessment technology
- Completed a desk-based review of evidence in advance.
What conditions need to be in place for a fully remote initial audit to be feasible?

- Outcome of questions in a risk matrix
- Connectivity
  - This should be a recertification and no new certification
- on-site audit within 1 year
  - Good and reliable tools
- Follow-up audit onsite within 6 months
  - uncertainty about global pandemic :)
  - Usually not 1st audit. Unless can do with Videocall (during Covid)
What conditions need to be in place for a fully remote initial audit to be feasible?

- No full certificate before onsite audit
- Ability to make key Documents available electronically
- Good outcomes in previous audits
- No high risk factors found in last audit
On what basis does your system determine client eligibility for remote audits?

- Defined per audit type (e.g., initial, surveillance): 3
- Combination of audit type and risk factors: 16
- Data-based risk assessment per client: 1
2. Audit Policies and Procedures

- Auditor training and qualifications
- Assurance providers – additional requirements
- Restarting on-site audits
  - Safety considerations
What additional skills do assessors need to conduct remote audits? (word cloud)
What additional responsibilities do you set for assurance providers in carrying out remote audits?

- Seek scheme owner permission for remote audit: 9
- Document why on-site audits not possible: 10
- Develop remote audit procedures: 11
- Train and qualify auditors for remote audits: 7
- Make lists of remote audits publicly available: 4
3. Audit Implementation

› Pre-audit planning
  • Technology
  • Client preparation and document sharing

› On-site support
  • Facilitators, experts and interpreters

› Assessment process
  • Adapting audit process
  • Duration
  • Decision-making and reporting

› Oversight
Do you use local on-site facilitators to support remote audits?

- No: 6
- Yes: 6
- Yes, under certain conditions: 3
What qualifications do local facilitators need to have?

- Social auditing under a similar scheme
- Ideally social auditors
- Language
- Translator maybe
- Knowledge of the scheme
- Social auditing - for interviews
- Industry knowledge
- Local language
- Technology troubleshooting skills (HoloLens or wearable tech)
What qualifications do local facilitators need to have?

- Independence
- No link with management
- Good questioning techniques
- Basic auditing understanding
- Independence, be able to speak the language of the workers
- Gender related
- Sense of the whole farm
- Most social aspects
- Anything that relies primarily on interviews e.g. forced labor, discrimination
What requirements in your standard can only be assessed in person?

- Decent work
- How fishers do their work carefully
- Child labor, forced and bonded labor
- Social provisions (worker interview, working hours, triangulation)
- Worker Interview and competency
- Visual inspections of workers' facilities
- Visual inspections and placing the requirement in perspective
- Safety
- Interviews with workers
What requirements in your standard can only be assessed in person?

- Sense of whole farm
- Parameter Survey
- Use of PPE in the fields
- Anything that relies primarily on interviews e.g. forced labor, discrimination
- Gender related
- Group dynamics during a group interview
- Work conditions (including signs of forced/bonded labor)
- Most social aspects
- You only see what you’re shown
What requirements in your standard can only be assessed in person?

- Smell (e.g. pollution)
- Intrinsic aspects like empowerment
- Random issues; such as levels/types of bycatch.
Do remote audit certification decisions come with any conditions? (choose all that apply)
4. Data and Technology

- Managing data
  - Good data management practices
  - Accessing client data
  - Privacy and consent
  - Data security
  - Publicly available information

- Technology
  - Selecting technology
  - Worker interviews
  - Remote locations and accessibility
Have you adapted your data management practices and data sharing agreements to accommodate remote audit data?

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<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not yet, but planning to</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>0</td>
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What good practices do you recommend for data collection and technology use in remote audits?

- Training
- Capture in report if audit is remote
- Trust and relationship between auditor and client
- do a trial run of technology with auditee before the remote audit
- Don't know yet, still learning!
- e-audit standard with scoring criteria
- Flexibility and openness
- Communication
- Standardise key data points
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<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<td>don't keep it after the audit unless what is needed as evidence for NC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sharing of knowledge and best practices - all in the same boat!</td>
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<td>Completed prior to audit</td>
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<td>identifying good secondary data sources</td>
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<td>additional quality control step</td>
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<td>Transparency in what data and what happens to it</td>
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<td>Audit tool that pulls data directly into a centralized system (no excel)</td>
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<td>Access</td>
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What good practices do you recommend for data collection and technology use in remote audits?

- Poor connectivity
- Trust (interviewees)
- Worker interview
- Access to controlled storage
- trust
What is the biggest challenge you have faced in implementing remote auditing approaches? (word cloud)
Next Steps

› Convening topic-based discussions with sustainability systems
› Consultation survey and project page: www.isealalliance.org/about-iseal/our-work/remote-auditing
› Distilling and integrating learning from pilots
› Virtual workshop in ISEAL Members’ Week – mid-June
› Remote Auditing Good Practices Version 1 finalised in June
Thank you!