



Living Wage Working Group for Certification and Auditing Systems

A peer-learning space for sustainability standards and schemes to support system strengthening to advance on living wage goals

There is growing commitment from supply chain and policy actors to advance action towards delivering living wages for workers around the world. Voluntary sustainability standards and similar schemes continue to be widely adopted by businesses (upstream and downstream) as approaches to advance on decent work and living wage goals. Until recently only a few leading standards systems were pioneering action on living wages and supporting company and producer actors to advance on wage improvements and close gaps. However, this situation is rapidly changing, with a growing number of schemes with global reach, in key sectors, now integrating living wage goals in their strategies.

Since May 2021, ISEAL, with support from IDH, has been running a Working Group to support schemes think through and strengthen their systems to support living wage action. Over the last year, our sessions have covered standard-setting, auditing challenges, in-kind benefits and wages for piece-rate workers, gender and data democratization (see below for the full list). Building on the momentum gained through last year, the Working Group is back to continue this learning journey for schemes.

Objectives

The working group (now with a new name) aims to open the conversation on concepts related to all elements of system-building and strengthening that support the delivery of living wage strategies. In the coming year, we aim to dive deeper into defining solutions for challenges such as effective wage auditing and verification, credible claims linked to living wages, measurement and reporting on wage improvements and develop guidance around standard-setting and claims. The Group will work through peer learning, sharing expert insights and distilling solutions to common challenges. We will also explore opportunities for alignment and collaboration between schemes and between schemes and supply chain actors (producers and downstream companies) in this space.

Meetings and commitment

The Working Group will meet once in two months, on the last Wednesday of the month. Our first meeting will start on the 28th of September 2022 with subsequent meetings every two months. Meetings will take place virtually and usually last one and a half to two hours. Proposed topics include:

- Credible claims to support living wage action
- Strengthening wage verification, auditing and assurance
- Gender inclusive approaches to living wage action
- Good practice in monitoring, measurement and reporting on wage improvement work

- Effective standard-setting for advancing living wage goals
- Collaboration and alignment between schemes

Getting involved

We are keen for all sustainability systems with an interest in living wages and wage improvement strategies to get involved in the working group. We think this group would be particularly relevant for living wage leads as well as technical staff working on different system elements as mentioned above. The agenda for working group meetings will be shared at least two weeks in advance of sessions so schemes can decide on staff participation.

To join the group or for more information, contact: vidya@isealalliance.org & frankie@isealalliance.org

Working Group sessions covered from May 2021 to May 2022 (recordings and slides available on request)

- June 2021 | **Standard-setting and implications for assurance** (speakers from ISEAL, IDH, Sedex, Union for Ethical Biotrading, Aquaculture Stewardship Council, Sustainably Grown)
- July 2021 | **Tools and approaches for assessing prevailing wages** (speakers from IDH, Fair Labor Association, Social Accountability International)
- September 2021 | **Hybrid models of wage verification** (speakers from ISEAL, Heartwood LLP consultants and Assurance Services International and FLO-Cert).
- November 2021 | **Understanding and auditing in-kind benefits as part of wage verification** (speakers from the Anker Research Institute, Fair Labor Association).
- December 2021 | **Wage auditing and verification in the context of piece-rate workers** (speakers from Ethical Trading Initiative, Goodweave)
- January 2022 | **Learnings from 10 pilots on the use of the IDH Salary Matrix and verification guidelines** (speakers from ISEAL)
- April 2022 | **Democratising wage data to support wage improvement strategies** (speakers from CNV, Banana Link and IDH)
- May 2022 | **Exploring gender considerations in living wage** (speakers from International Labor Organisation, Business and Social Responsibility – BSR)