



**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)
BETWEEN
INTERNATIONAL ACCREDITATION FORUM (IAF)
AND
ISEAL ALLIANCE (ISEAL)**

This Memorandum of Understanding (“Memorandum”) represents a statement of intent by the ISEAL Alliance (ISEAL), and the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) (the Parties) to collaborate in the achievement of common objectives as described and on the basis outlined below.

Parties to the agreement

- **ISEAL** is the global membership association for sustainability standards and certification systems. ISEAL is a non-governmental organisation whose mission is to support ambitious sustainability systems and their partners to tackle the world’s most pressing challenges. With a focus on defining and advocating for credible practices, ISEAL drives sustainability impact and makes markets a force for good.
- The **International Accreditation Forum (IAF)** is the international organisation for accreditation bodies and other bodies interested in conformity assessment such as management system certification (using ISO/IEC 17021-1), product certification (using ISO/IEC 17065), certification of persons (using ISO/IEC 17024), verification/validation (using ISO/IEC 17029) and other similar conformity assessment. Its primary function is to facilitate trade, support regulators, protect consumers and the environment, and facilitate sustainable development by operating a worldwide mutual recognition arrangement among accreditation bodies in order that the results issued by conformity assessment bodies accredited by IAF members are accepted globally.

Background

The two Parties have agreed to cooperate through this Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) considering that:

- ISEAL is a global leader in defining and communicating what good practice looks like for sustainability standards, certification and validation & verification through guidance and credibility tools such as the Sustainability Systems Code of Good Practice. The four approaches ISEAL takes are to:
 - define credible practices for sustainability systems based on emerging global consensus;
 - convene forums for collaboration, sharing of experience and collective action;
 - deliver expertise, advice and training; and
 - facilitate and promote innovation to strengthen sustainability systems.



The goal of the ISEAL Code of Good Practice is to support sustainability systems to deliver positive social and environmental impact. The ISEAL Code of Good Practice covers the core functions of an effective sustainability system, including governance, standard setting, assurance, monitoring and evaluation, data management, and claims.

ISEAL hosts and supports a vibrant community of leading global sustainability systems committed to improve the effectiveness and sustainability impacts of their respective schemes. ISEAL sees the value of exposing a broader range of sustainability systems to the credibility criteria in their Code of Good Practice and to the potential benefits of joining the ISEAL Community.

- IAF promotes worldwide acceptance of certificates of conformity and validation and verification opinions issued by certification and validation/verification bodies accredited by Accreditation Body Members of IAF, and seeks to add value for all stakeholders through what we do and through our programs.

IAF brings together, on a worldwide basis, partner accreditation bodies and representatives of stakeholder groups that seek to facilitate global trade through the acceptance of accredited certificates of conformity and validation and verification opinions.

IAF develops and/or recognizes appropriate processes and practices for the conduct of conformity assessment worldwide and ensures their universal application by IAF Accreditation Body Members and their accredited certification and validation/verification bodies.

Sustainability is a critical global concern, and it is imperative for IAF to play an active and influential role in promoting sustainability both internally and within the wider context of accreditation and conformity assessment. The Sustainability Working Group of IAF ensures that sustainability efforts are well-coordinated, strategic, and impactful.

- ISEAL and IAF share an understanding of the importance of credible and effective practices and appreciate the value of collaborating to promote credible sustainability standards, certification and validation & verification.
- ISEAL and IAF share an understanding of the importance of accreditation provided by IAF members and see the value of collaborating to promote it.
- As one concrete activity to strengthen cooperation, ISEAL and IAF share the objective of defining a brochure that will describe and promote a set of principles and practices that credible sustainability schemes would be expected to meet.



1. Scope of the MOU

- 1.1 ISEAL and IAF play relevant and complementary roles in ensuring credibility and reliability of certification schemes and validation and verification programs in the sustainability area.
- 1.2 ISEAL and IAF agree on the objective of creating a brochure that describes additional elements that should be present in credible sustainability certification schemes and validation & verification programs to provide regulatory bodies with confidence that different schemes/programs in sustainability share a common foundation of credible practices.
- 1.3 The Parties agree:
 - 1) ISEAL and IAF are committed to identify opportunities to collaborate on promoting awareness and uptake of credible practices for sustainability standards, certification and validation & verification. To that end, IAF invites ISEAL to participate in the work of the IAF Working Group on Sustainability.
 - 2) ISEAL and IAF aim to collaborate on sustainability-related issues, and share an objective of agreeing with the relevant stakeholders to additional elements that should be present in credible sustainability certification schemes and validation & verification programs.
 - 3) ISEAL and IAF are committed to promoting the use of these additional elements for sustainability certification schemes and validation & verification programs so as to develop more effective mechanisms to improve sustainability performance. Credible schemes/programs must be based on accepted conformity assessment practices that help ensure consistency, competence and impartiality of approach.
 - 4) ISEAL and IAF are committed to work collaboratively to develop and agree on the content of a brochure on credible practices for sustainability systems. The brochure will be co-branded.
 - 5) ISEAL authorizes IAF and its members to use the brochure as informative input to the evaluation of schemes/programs in the sustainability area. Evaluation against practices in the brochure and any resulting claims or communications shall not result in any claims of ISEAL Code compliance or infer in any way an endorsement by ISEAL.
 - 6) ISEAL and IAF are authorized to carry out training activities for IAF members and organizations on all topics relating to the brochure and will collaborate to ensure consistency and quality of training.



- 7) IAF is committed to raising awareness among its members to follow practices in the brochure. IAF also encourages its members to promote ISEAL Community Membership for sustainability schemes that are seeking peer support and resources to strengthen their sustainability system.
- 8) IAF and ISEAL will invite their members to explicitly refer to the brochure when conducting advocacy activities with local Governments and Authorities having the scope of promoting certification schemes and validation & verification programs.
- 9) ISEAL and IAF may collaborate on the creation of other communications, documents or requests for information concerning the ISEAL Code of Good Practice or the IAF system of accredited conformity assessment as agreed by both parties.

2. Implementation and structure

- 2.1 This MoU shall come into force upon its signature by the ISEAL Executive Director and the IAF Chair, and will remain in force until terminated in accordance with the provisions hereafter defined.
- 2.2 This MoU is not intended to create any legal relationship between the parties, rather a spirit of cooperation on matters related to sustainability certification and validation & verification.
 - It does not constitute an agreement or commitment by any of the Parties to provide financial or any other support for any specific theme, activity, project, or operation.
 - Specific arrangements for individual activities will be set forth in a written document or work plans to be jointly formulated by the Parties if needed.
 - Nothing in this Memorandum will be construed as creating a joint venture, an agency relationship, or a legal partnership among the Parties.
 - Nothing in this Memorandum will restrict any of the Parties from entering into similar arrangements with third parties covering the same or similar subject matter, areas or activities as are the subject matter of this Memorandum.
 - Nothing in this Memorandum is intended to be or should be construed as a waiver of the privileges and immunities of the Parties or its officers and employees, whose privileges and immunities are hereby specifically reserved.
 - This MoU is not intended to imply that IAF MLAs or accreditations issued by IAF members, or schemes/programs deemed accredited by IAF and/or IAF members, are equivalent to those recognized by ISEAL.



- This MoU does not imply that ISEAL Alliance Community members and their schemes/programs have been endorsed by IAF unless they comply with the requirements found in *IAF PL 3: Policies and Procedures on the IAF MLA Structure and for Expansion of the Scope of the IAF MLA*.
- The Parties recognize the importance of protecting and respecting each other's intellectual property rights. This Memorandum, therefore, does not grant any Participant the right to use materials belonging to, or created by, the other Parties. The Parties will agree in writing on the ownership and use of any intellectual property deriving from activities under this Memorandum.
- The Parties expect that this Memorandum and information with respect to the collaborative activities contemplated herein will be publicly disclosed. Such disclosure will be made in accordance with the Parties' respective disclosure policies. The Parties plan to consult with each other concerning the manner and form of any acknowledgement of the other Parties' support regarding the activities. Neither Party will use the name, emblem, or logo of the other Party, or any abbreviation thereof, without the prior written approval of the other Party.

2.3 To facilitate the implementation and maintenance of this MoU, Liaison Officers will be appointed by each Party to represent their respective organisation's interests and to communicate information of relevance to the Areas of Cooperation and for the mutual benefit of this MoU.

3. Commencement, termination and period of operation

- 3.1 This MoU, in particular the areas of cooperation, will be reviewed at least every five years.
- 3.2 Relevant work programs to implement the MoU will be agreed upon by the Parties from time to time and reported on, as appropriate, within each organization.
- 3.3 This MoU may be terminated by either of the parties upon three months written notice.



4. Signatures

Signed on behalf of

Karin Kreider

Karin Kreider, Executive Director
ISEAL Alliance (ISEAL)

Emanuele Riva

Emanuele Riva, Chair
International Accreditation
Forum (IAF)

Signed on: 2024-05-16