

PRESS RELEASE

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New Training Manuals Set the Bar for Credible Voluntary Standards

The ISEAL Allianceⁱ published today comprehensive guidance for good practice in voluntary social and environmental standard-setting and certification.

Business, governments and consumers all recognise the potential for voluntary standards and certification as effective market-based tools to drive forward positive social and environmental change. However, the credibility of these schemes is reliant upon:

- > standards that are developed in transparent, multi-stakeholder processes,
- > certification schemes that consumers can trust, and
- > relevant and high level performance criteria that achieve meaningful impacts.

Building on broad-based recognition of the **ISEAL Code of Good Practice for Setting Social and Environmental Standards**ⁱⁱ, the ISEAL Alliance is delivering a program of support to new and emerging voluntary initiatives across sectors that will ensure that the standards they develop are credible and result in meaningful impacts, with certification schemes and labels that consumers can trust.

Twenty-two new initiatives across a wide range of sectors including carbon offsetting, biofuels, cotton, tourism and mining have already formally expressed a desire to participate in the ongoing training and capacity building programⁱⁱⁱ, including The Carbon Trust, The Climate Group, BioTrade, the Better Cotton Initiative, the Sustainable Tourism Stewardship Council and the Association for Responsible Mining.

The manuals, published today, focus on setting standards, verification, governance and financial models. They provide practical information for setting up effective social and/or environmental standards in any sector and include examples from established social and environmental certification schemes such as Fairtrade, Organic and the Forest Stewardship Council.

The five training manuals are available free of charge on the ISEAL Alliance website at www.isealalliance.org/emerginginitiatives.

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Notes to Editors:

ⁱ ISEAL Alliance

The International Social and Environmental Accreditation and Labelling (ISEAL) Alliance is an association of leading voluntary international standard-setting and conformity assessment organisations that focus on social and environmental issues. Its seven existing members, compliant with the ISEAL Code, are:

- > Fairtrade Labelling Organizations (FLO) International
- > Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)
- > International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM)
- > Marine Aquarium Council
- > Marine Stewardship Council
- > Rainforest Alliance
- > Social Accountability International

www.isealalliance.org

ⁱⁱ ISEAL Code of Good Practice for Setting Social and Environmental Standards

The ISEAL Code of Good Practice for Setting Social and Environmental Standards is fast becoming the international reference for setting credible voluntary standards. It has been referenced by a range of governmental and inter-governmental guidelines as an acceptable measure of credibility for recognising voluntary standards. Recent references to the Code include:

- > FAO Guidelines on Ecolabelling of Marine Fishery Products (2005)
- > World Bank-WWF Alliance criteria for assessing forest certification schemes (2006)
- > European Parliament resolution of 13 March 2007 on corporate social responsibility

www.isealalliance.org/code

ⁱⁱⁱ Emerging Initiatives Program

The Emerging Initiatives program of the ISEAL Alliance provides an opportunity for social and environmental standards and conformity assessment organisations to build on existing knowledge and experiences. Credible programs are more likely to be taken seriously by stakeholders, recognised and supported by governments and industry, and have real impacts on the ground. Twenty-two organisations are already taking part through training workshops and information exchange. A full list of participating organisations is available at www.isealalliance.org/emerginginitiatives

Organisations and initiatives that are interested to participate should contact Patrick Mallet, Technical Director at <patrick@isealalliance.org>.