

## ISEAL Assurance Code – Interpretation of Clause 5.1.2

Public Version 2 – May 2015

### Clarification Required

In practice, how does a standards system show compliance with clause 5.1.2 of the ISEAL Assurance Code?

### Relevant Requirements

#### ISEAL Assurance Code

5.1.2 Standards system owners shall ensure that, in addition to the requirements in this Code, scheme requirements for the assurance process conform or are equivalent to ISO standards 17065 or 17021, except where the imposition of ISO norms would hinder the objectives of the standards system by restricting practices used in some models of assurance. In these cases, it is the prerogative of the standards system owner to determine an alternative assurance management system that is appropriate to the scale, intensity, and market for the products or services that are within the scope of the standards system. The alternative management system shall be designed so as to fulfil the intent of the Principles of Assurance (Section 4).

NOTE: Standards system owners are required to comply with all other aspects of the Assurance Code, regardless of the approach taken.

#### ISO/IEC 17065: 2012 and ISO/IEC 17021:2011

These standards are relevant for this interpretation in their entirety

### Interpretation

The intent of this ISEAL Assurance Code clause is to reinforce that standards systems are required to seek compliance of their certification bodies with relevant ISO standards for certification unless they can justify why certain topics in the ISO standard are not appropriate for their scheme. In those cases, we aim to ensure that members' assurance programmes are robust and effective and operate as consistently as possible with what is intended through ISO standards.

ISEAL members will be required to provide evidence in the Assurance Code Checklist of how they address each of the topics in ISO/IEC 17065 or ISO/IEC 17021. The Checklist will be amended to include these topics, except where the topics are already sufficiently covered by clauses in the Assurance Code (see Annex 1).

Where the standards system requires certification bodies to be accredited to one of these two ISO standards, they can include this in the checklist as sufficient evidence against each of the topics. Where they have determined that certain topics in these standards restrict their systems from achieving their objectives, they shall include a justification in the evidence column for the respective topic. In all other cases, they shall provide evidence as per the format of the Checklist.

Additional guidance has been developed by ISEAL as part of the implementation of this interpretation, including guidance on what is acceptable evidence for fulfilling each ISO topic, and guidance on what constitutes an acceptable justification for a deviation from ISO requirements (e.g. whether an ISO requirement supports the goals or objectives of the scheme). Please see Annex 1 below and the Assurance Code Scorecard and Checklist v4 May 2015 – available at [www.iseal.org/compliance](http://www.iseal.org/compliance)

## Annex 1: Requirements incorporated into Assurance Code Checklist

Item #	Requirements	ISO/IEC 17065	ISO/IEC 17021	Evidence to be provided ( <i>clause numbers refer to existing criteria in the Assurance Code</i> )	Link to evidence <sup>1</sup> or Justification of non-applicability <sup>2</sup>
1	Standard system requires assurance providers to be legally incorporated entities.	4.1.1	5.1.1	Sample contract with assurance provider with legal incorporation clause identified.	
2	Assurance providers have legally enforceable agreements for the provision of certification with their clients	4.1.2	5.1.2	Sample contract with assurance provider with requirement for legal contracts with client identified.	
3	There are procedures in place for managing use and misuse of claims and labels	4.1.3	5.1.2	Copies of procedures for managing use and misuse of claims.  <i>NOTE: Supplementary evidence is provided through Assurance Code clause 6.7.2 (Fraud or Misrepresentation).</i>	

<sup>1</sup> Evidence should include the relevant documents and specific clauses, where relevant. Reference to ISO 17065 or ISO 17021 accreditation is also sufficient.

<sup>2</sup> Information can be provided here to justify why a particular element of ISO 17065 hinders a scheme from achieving its intended objectives.

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8	<p>There is a policy on the use of the certification mark or logo and on the ways of referring to the certification granted</p> <p><i>NOTE: For further guidance, please refer to the ISEAL Claims Good Practice <a href="http://www.iseal.org/claims">www.iseal.org/claims</a></i></p>	4.6	8.1	Copy of policy for managing and licensing use of mark or logo.	
4	<p>Management steps have been taken to ensure impartiality in the assurance process</p> <p><i>NOTE: Where a standard system both manages the scheme and provides assurance services there should be demonstration of a clear separation of these two functions.</i></p> <p><i>Standards systems should use ISO 17021 section 4.2 and or ISO 17065 section A.2 as guidance.</i></p>	4.2	5.2	Evidence is provided for Assurance Code clauses 5.2.2, 5.2.3, 5.2.4. <b>No further evidence required.</b>	N/A
5	Assurance providers have financial stability required for their operations (e.g. reserves, insurance)	4.3	5.3	Clause identified where requirements specify that all assurance providers have available resources to maintain their operations on an ongoing basis.	
6	There is a policy on non-discrimination of services offered	4.4		Clause(s) identified in requirements for assurance providers that all applicants for certification are to be treated equally.	

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7	There is a procedure to ensure confidential information from clients is protected	4.5	8.4	Clause(s) identified in requirements for assurance providers that they have a procedure to ensure confidential information from client is protected. Requirement for oversight mechanism to check implementation of this procedure.	
8	Responsibilities within the assurance process are delineated and there are terms of reference for certification committees	5.1	6.1	Evidence is provided for Assurance Code clauses 6.1.1 (documented structure) and 6.3.1. <b>No further evidence required.</b>	N/A
9	There is a mechanism for stakeholders to provide input on matters related to managing impartiality	5.2		Evidence is provided through Assurance Code clauses 5.2.2; 5.2.3. <b>No further evidence required.</b>	N/A
10	<del>Assurance personnel are suitably competent, trained and evaluated and adequate records are kept</del>	6.1	7.1 – 7.4	6.3 (covered sufficiently by Assurance Code requirements)	
11	Assurance providers take responsibility for all activities outsourced to another body	6.2.2	7.5	Clause(s) identified in requirements for assurance providers where they are required to have responsibility for outsourced activities.  <i>NOTE: Supplementary evidence is provided through Assurance Code clause 6.3.</i>	

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12	There are clear application procedures and process for review of applications	7.2, 7.3	9.1	Evidence is provided through Assurance Code clause 5.2.1. <b>No further evidence required.</b>	N/A
13	<del>Assurance providers are required to have an evaluation plan that guides the assurance evaluation</del>	7.4	9.2 – 9.4	6.4.2 – 6.4.5; (covered sufficiently by Assurance Code requirements)	
14	Reviews and decisions on assessment findings are made by a party independent from the assessment	7.5	9.5	Clause(s) identified in requirements for assurance providers where it states that reviews and decisions on assessment findings are made by a party independent from the assessment	
15	Assurance providers retain authority for decisions related to certification	7.6	9.5	Clause(s) identified in requirements for assurance providers where it states that assurance providers retain authority for decisions related to certification.	
16	<del>Formal certification documentation is provided to the certified client</del>	7.7	8.2	6.4.11 (covered sufficiently by Assurance Code requirements)	
17	Where surveillance is required, there is a procedure in place	7.9	9.6	Surveillance procedure or requirements for assurance providers to have this in place.	
18	<del>Changes affecting certification are communicated to the client</del>	7.10	8.5	5.2.5 (covered sufficiently by Assurance Code requirements)	

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19	There are procedures for suspension, withdrawal, and termination of assurance	7.11	9.6.5	Procedures for suspension, withdrawal and termination of assurance, or requirements for assurance providers to have this.  <i>NOTE: Supplementary evidence is provided through Assurance Code clause 6.4.10, 6.5.1, (note 6.5.3 applies to group membership not to certification which is held by the group entity).</i>	
20	Records of implementing the assurance process are maintained	7.12	9.6.8	Records of implementing the assurance process are maintained and include the following:	Reference to section(s) in relevant procedure that requires assurance providers to have a policy for retention of records, which includes each of the following elements listed in rows 22-33. See below for evidence.
20	Records of implementing the assurance process are maintained and include the following:	7.12	9.6.8		

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20	>Records on the audit and other certification activities for all clients, including all organizations that submitted applications, and all organizations audited, certified, or with certification suspended or withdrawn.	7.12	9.6.8	Reference to section(s) in relevant procedure which includes maintaining records on the audit and other certification activities for all clients, including all organizations that submitted applications  <i>NOTE: Supplementary evidence for records for all organizations audited, certified, or with certification suspended or withdrawn already provided through Assurance Code clause 6.1.1, rows 66-67.</i>	
20	>Application information and initial, surveillance and recertification audit reports;	7.12	9.6.8	Reference to section(s) in relevant procedure which includes application information and initial, surveillance and recertification audit reports;	
20	>Certification agreement;	7.12	9.6.8	Evidence provided through Assurance Code clauses 5.1.2, 6.1.2, and 6.1.3. <b>No further evidence required.</b>	
20	>Justification of the methodology used for sampling of sites, as appropriate;	7.12	9.6.8	Evidence provided through Assurance Code clause 6.4.4. <b>No further evidence required</b>	
20	>Justification for auditor time determination	7.12	9.6.8	Evidence provided through Assurance Code clause 6.4.2. <b>No further evidence required.</b>	
	>Verification of correction and corrective actions;	7.12	9.6.8	Reference to section(s) in relevant procedure which includes verification of correction and corrective actions;	
	> Records of complaints and appeals, and any subsequent correction or corrective actions;	7.12	9.6.8	Evidence provided through Assurance Code clause 6.7.3. <b>No further evidence required.</b>	



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	>Committee deliberations and decisions, if applicable;	7.12	9.6.8	Reference to section(s) in relevant procedure which includes committee deliberations and decisions, if applicable;	
	>Documentation of the certification decisions;	7.12	9.6.8	Reference to section(s) in relevant procedure which includes documentation of the certification decisions;	
	>Certification documents, including the scope of certification with respect to product, process or service, as applicable;	7.12	9.6.8	Evidence provided through Assurance Code clause 5.2.4 row 57. <b>No further evidence required.</b>	
	>Related records necessary to establish the credibility of the certification, such as evidence of the competence of auditors and technical experts.	7.12	9.6.8	Evidence provided through Assurance Code clauses 6.3.2, 6.3.3 and 6.3.4. <b>No further evidence required.</b>	
	>Audit programmes	7.12	9.6.8	Evidence provided through Assurance Code clauses 6.1.1, rows 62 and 63. <b>No further evidence required.</b>	
	Assurance providers have a complaints and appeals procedure in place.	7.12	9.6.8	Clause(s) identified in requirements for assurance providers that they have a complaints and appeals procedure in place.	
20	Assurance providers have an operational management system in place that is documented.	7.12	9.6.8	Requirements for assurance providers to have ISO 9001 or have a management system for consistent operations that is approved by top management and that is made available at least to all staff.  <i>NOTE: Supplementary evidence is provided through Assurance Code clause 5.2.1</i>	

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20	Assurance providers have document and record control procedures.	7.12	9.6.8	Clause(s) identified in requirements for assurance providers where document and record control procedures are stated.	
20	Assurance providers conduct management reviews at least once a year.	7.12	9.6.8	1. Clause(s) identified in requirements for assurance providers where frequency of management reviews is stated; AND 2. Requirement for oversight mechanism to check implementation.	
20	Assurance providers conduct internal audits at least once a year.	7.12	9.6.8	1. Clause(s) identified in requirements for assurance providers where frequency of internal audits is stated; AND 2. Requirement for oversight mechanism to check implementation.  <i>NOTE: Supplementary evidence is provided through Assurance Code clause 5.2.4.</i>	
20	Assurance providers take corrective actions to manage any non-conformities in their operations.	7.12	9.6.8	1. Clause(s) identified in requirements for assurance providers that state corrective actions are taken to manage any non-conformities in their operations; AND 2. Requirement for oversight mechanism to check identification and remediation of non-conformities.	

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21	Assurance providers have a complaints and appeals procedure in place	7.13	9.6.6 & 9.6.7	Requirements for assurance providers to have ISO 9001 or have a management system for consistent operations that is approved by top management and that is made available at least to all staff.  <i>NOTE: Supplementary evidence is provided through Assurance Code clause 5.2.1</i>	
22	Assurance providers have an operational management system in place that is documented	8.2	10	Requirements for assurance providers to have ISO 9001 or have a management system for consistent operations that is approved by top management and that is made available at least to all staff.  <i>NOTE: Supplementary evidence is provided through Assurance Code clause 5.2.1</i>	
23	Assurance providers have document and record control procedures	8.3, 8.4	10	Clause(s) identified in requirements for assurance providers where document and record control procedures are stated.	

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24	Assurance providers conduct management reviews at least once a year	8.5	10	<p>1. Clause(s) identified in requirements for assurance providers where frequency of management reviews is stated; AND</p> <p>2. Requirement for oversight mechanism to check implementation.</p>	
25	Assurance providers conduct internal audits at least once a year	8.6	10	<p>Clause(s) identified in requirements for assurance providers where frequency of internal audits is stated; Requirement for oversight mechanism to check implementation.</p> <p><i>NOTE: Supplementary evidence is provided through Assurance Code clause 5.2.4.</i></p>	
26	Assurance providers take corrective actions to manage any non-conformities in their operations	8.7	10	<p>1. Clause(s) identified in requirements for assurance providers that state corrective actions are taken to manage any non-conformities in their operations; AND</p> <p>2. Requirement for oversight mechanism to check identification and remediation of non-conformities.</p>	

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27	Assurance providers take preventive actions to avoid or minimize any non-conformities	8.8	10	<p>1. Clause(s) identified in requirements for assurance providers that state preventive actions are taken to avoid or minimize any non-conformities; AND</p> <p>2. Requirement for oversight mechanism to check preventive actions taken.</p> <p><i>NOTE: Supplementary evidence is provided through Assurance Code clause 5.2.4.</i></p>	