

Strengthening sustainability standards systems to advance supply chain action on living wages

Project Briefing Note | August 2022

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 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 action 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.** This presents a unique opportunity to work with schemes to strengthen their systems with the aim to advance on these goals, and therefore, support the supply chain actors that schemes directly work with.

Since January 2021, ISEAL has been working directly with sustainability standards and voluntary schemes to strengthen their systems and processes to support credible supply chain action on living wages. A key part of this project was the establishment of a peer-learning Working Group to help schemes advance thinking and action collectively.

Building on this work, ISEAL is now commencing a second phase to this project to further **strengthen sustainability standards as strong partners to support supply chain action on living wages**, with support from IDH. The project will be developed in consultation with organisations involved in the IDH Roadmap on Living Wages' advisory committees including leading certification schemes, GIZ and others. Our overarching project goal is to strengthen credible voluntary sustainability systems as agents of change to support business and producer action on living wage improvements, in a gender inclusive manner.

Key project activities:

- Research with companies implementing living wage strategies and commitments on expectations from sustainability standards to support own action on wage improvement
- Developing a typology and framework for living wage claims, to structure and inform dialogue about credible claims amongst the actors involved in IDH's Living Wage Roadmap and to inform initial guidance on good practice.
- To facilitate peer learning and develop guidance for sustainability systems on various systems elements required to advance living wage goals and support business and producer action including on effective assurance and verification, measurement and reporting, standard-setting and credible claims.

Key engagement opportunities for companies and schemes:

- **If you are a sustainability standard or scheme**, join our System Strengthening for Living Wages (SSLW) Working Group to learn and interact with your peers
- If you are keen to work with us on credible claims, volunteer to participate in our credible claims task force to help develop the framework and test it
- Reach out for more information to Vidya Rangan (vidya@isealalliance.org) or Frankie Hewitson (frankie@isealalliance.org) for more details.