

# ISEAL Code of Good Practice: proposed approach to compliance and the transition period

May 2023

## Introduction

The revision and integration of the ISEAL Codes of Good Practice into one Code of Good Practice enables a holistic view on system credibility, which provides an opportunity to improve the value of Code Compliant status for ISEAL Code Compliant organisations and their stakeholders.

This document provides an overview of the proposed approach to compliance with the Code and the transition period. It has been updated to respond to feedback received in the consultation on the first draft of the Code. It aims to support stakeholders to provide informed feedback on the Code requirements in the second draft that is [open for consultation](#) from 31 May to 30 July. We also welcome feedback on the compliance approach and transition period itself.

## Proposed approach to compliance

### What will remain unchanged

- › Claims of Code compliance by ISEAL Community Members applying for or having applied for ISEAL Code Compliant status will only be allowed when the scheme has undergone independent evaluation(s) against the full programme.
- › For a newly participating scheme, a time limit of four years will apply from the point of application to completing the evaluation process.
- › Organisations that are ISEAL Code Compliant will be subject to independent evaluation(s) against the full scope of the Code every four years.
- › Compliance criteria that allow for yes/no determinations of compliance by independent evaluators will be maintained, with guidance to support compliance made available.
- › Current levels of transparency regarding evaluation results and the timing of upcoming evaluations will be maintained.

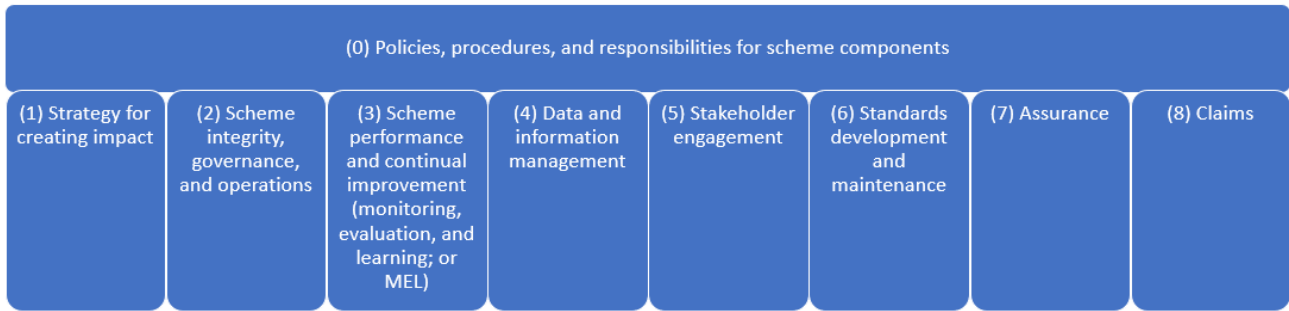
### Future evaluation scope

We are proposing two options for the approach to evaluations and the scope that they cover. The final approach would include one of these options, or a combination of both.

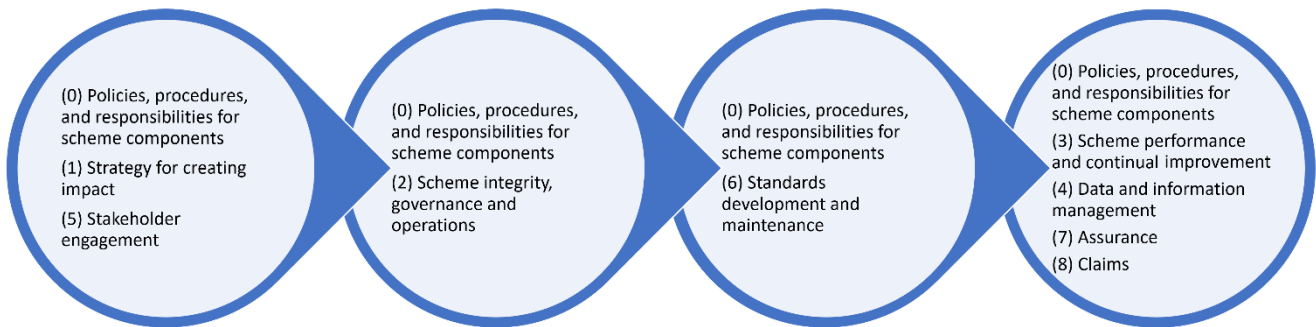
#### *Partial scope evaluation option*

Partial scope evaluations would involve a series of partial evaluations that cover groupings of Code chapters or clauses. The second draft of the Code has nine chapters that follow a logical order for scheme implementation. However, the sequence of evaluations could differ from the order of the Code.

The nine chapters of the Code are:



The sequence of the chapters or clauses evaluated would be planned to align to the logical order of presenting evidence for evaluation, with additional adjustments made to account for the scheme’s maturity and needs. For example:



### Full scope evaluation option

The full-scope evaluation option would require a complete evaluation of Code chapters 0 – 8 to be conducted once every four years.

### Commonalities between approaches

The focus of both evaluation approaches would be on system design (e.g., focused on requirements that look at the choice of approach, at required policies and procedures, etc.). These evaluations would be conducted as a desk-based review of evidence supplied by the scheme.

The approach taken would be determined by ISEAL, in dialogue with the organisation. An upcoming pilot and further research will inform this decision-making process.

### Maintaining compliance

To maintain compliance, surveillance assessments would be conducted that focus on the quality of implementing Code requirements, and learning and improvements found from system reviews. These would take place in addition to full scope evaluations, at a frequency that accounts for what Code Compliant Members need to support continual system improvement. We would intend to incorporate these assessments into the existing processes ISEAL maintains to monitor improvement plans and progress of ISEAL Community Members - the ISEAL Community Monitoring Procedure. We would intend to use these assessments to help identify where and when schemes plan to respond to learnings and which system aspects will change. Surveillance assessments would only be conducted once an organisation is ISEAL Code Compliant.

### Improving the programme

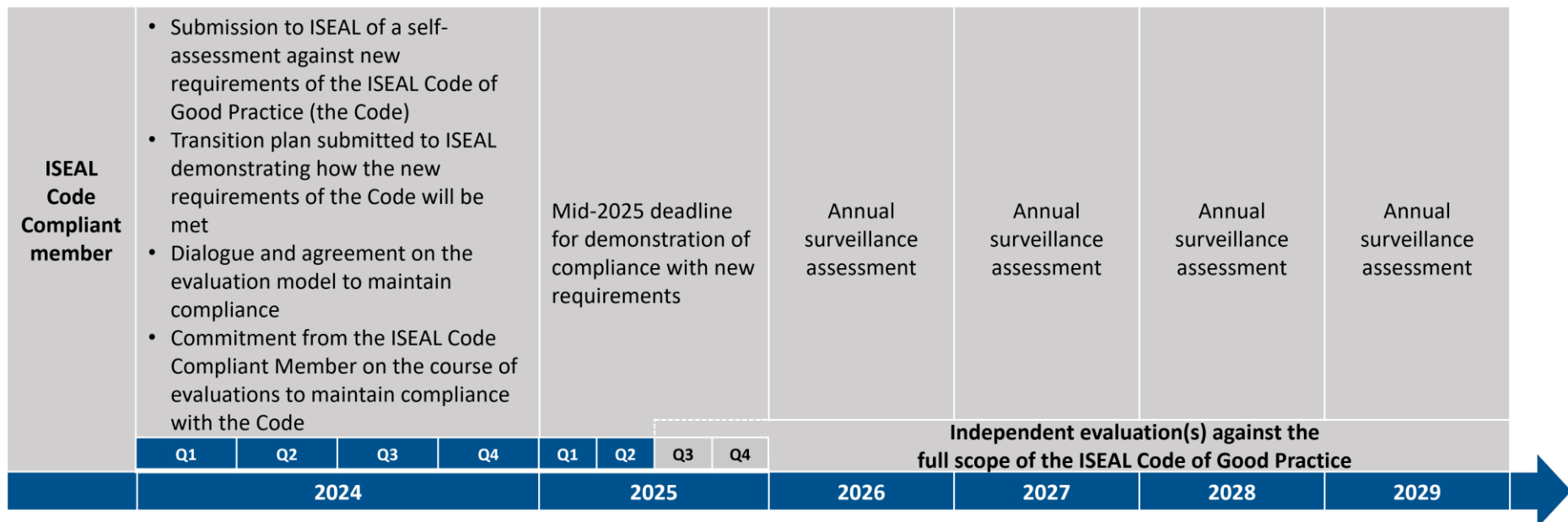
ISEAL would continue to explore and introduce evaluation techniques that support the assessment of how effectively Code requirements have been implemented, such as staff and key stakeholder interviews, and sampling approaches to reviewing documentation. We would also use learnings from partial scope and full scope evaluations to help identify the optimum sequencing of evaluations and to inform updates to the compliance programme.

## Transition period

The transition period will extend from the publication date of the Code, currently anticipated to be January 2024, for a duration of 18 months. During the transition period we intend that:

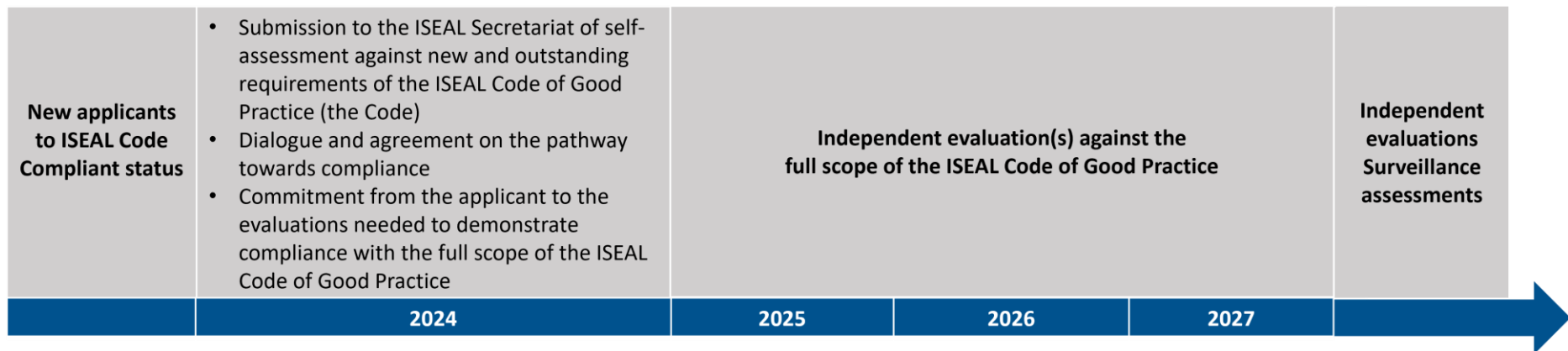
**Existing ISEAL Code Compliant members** would maintain their ISEAL Code Compliant status on the basis that:

- they resolve any outstanding non-compliances identified against the previous versions of the Codes (i.e., independent evaluations conducted before January 2024)
- within six months of publication, they submit to ISEAL a self-assessment against areas of the Code that are either new or different from the existing Codes of Good Practice; the self-assessment would include identifying the changes needed to ensure compliance with the Code
- within 12 months of publication, they submit to ISEAL a transition plan for implementing the identified changes by the end of the transition period; within 18 months of publication, they submit evidence that the transition plan has been implemented
- over the subsequent four-year period, they commit to evaluation(s) that demonstrate their compliance against the full scope of the Code



**ISEAL Community Members in the process of becoming ISEAL Code Compliant would:**

- within six months of publication, submit to ISEAL a self-assessment against areas of the Code that are either new or different from the existing Codes of Good Practice already assessed, identifying the changes needed to ensure compliance with the Code
- during the transition period, work with ISEAL to establish a sequence of evaluations that takes into account their self-assessment and identified changes
- complete independent evaluations to the full scope of the Code within four years of the initial application to become ISEAL Code Compliant to achieve ISEAL Code Compliant status



**New participants in the compliance programme would:**

- have their needs be assessed through dialogue and a supporting self-assessment against the full scope of the ISEAL Code of Good Practice, with ISEAL supporting on determining the most suitable phasing and timing of evaluations through the Code
- complete independent evaluations to the full scope of the Code within four years of their application to become ISEAL Code Compliant

