

Equitable Origin Joins the ISEAL Alliance as First Member in Oil and Gas Sector

New York, N.Y. January 29, 2013 - Equitable Origin has completed the process for becoming an associate member of the ISEAL Alliance, making it the first member of the alliance from the oil and gas sector. Equitable Origin is a stakeholder-based initiative that aims to promote greater transparency and accountability in oil and gas exploration and production.

As the global association for social and environmental standards, ISEAL works to strengthen the effectiveness and impact of both established and emerging voluntary standard systems in a wide range of sectors, from water, agriculture and forestry to tourism, carbon and fisheries. ISEAL also works with companies, non-profits and governments to support their use of voluntary standards systems for meeting their sustainability targets.

“We are honored to join the ISEAL community and look forward to working with other members in ISEAL’s ongoing discussions about fostering credibility and scaling up the impacts of standards systems,” said David Poritz, Founder and President of Equitable Origin.

To qualify for associate membership, organizations must submit proof that their operational system meets ISEAL’s entry-level criteria, including demonstrating that their standard-setting activities align with ISEAL’s Codes of Good Practice.

ISEAL’s approval of Equitable Origin’s submission recognizes our carefully designed consultation process and governance structure. From the beginning, Equitable Origin’s activities have focused on consultation, involving a range of interested parties – from indigenous groups, academics and NGOs to government agencies, international organizations and financial institutions – to ensure that their views are taken into account. “We used the ISEAL criteria as a roadmap for what our consultation process should look like, as they are the leaders in good practices for standards development,” said Poritz. “Our approval as an ISEAL associate member is welcome recognition of our commitment to participation and inclusiveness.”

Equitable Origin’s role as the first initiative from the oil and gas sector to achieve ISEAL membership marks an important achievement in what is often considered a controversial sector. Speaking about the announcement, ISEAL’s Executive Director Karin Kreider noted, “Credible, market-based standards have a strong role to play in driving improved practices in the most challenging of industries. In sectors where the potential for negative impacts is large, we should be supporting those systems working to address key social and environmental issues.”

Associate membership is the first step along the path to full membership, which requires compliance with ISEAL’s Codes of Good Practice, including the Standard-Setting Code and the Impacts Code. ISEAL provides its members with a valuable forum where standard-setting organizations can come together to demonstrate the credibility of their systems and share lessons and experiences to help promote good practices.

“ISEAL provides an important set of ‘touchstones’ for transparency and credibility,” noted Michael E. Conroy, member of the Equitable Origin Board of Directors (and an ISEAL subscriber). “We are delighted that our initial efforts to build the Equitable Origin system have met the requirements for becoming an ISEAL associate member and we look forward to working with ISEAL’s codes, experience and technical support to complete the development of the system and become full members as quickly as possible.”



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Membership in ISEAL will help to confirm the value of the Equitable Origin system and will raise the initiative's profile and increase its credibility moving forward. Henry Cabria, Secretary General of OPIAC (The Organization of Indigenous Peoples of the Colombian Amazon), one of Equitable Origin's partner organizations in Colombia, said, "ISEAL's recognition of Equitable Origin's commitment to good practices in standards development reaffirms our belief that Equitable Origin and the EO100™ Standard will play a crucial role in fostering constructive dialogue around the impacts of oil and gas exploration and production on Indigenous Peoples."

About Equitable Origin:

Equitable Origin was established in 2009 to create a new norm for oil and gas exploration and production through an independent certification, certificate trading and ecolabel system that rewards responsible practices relating to social, environmental, good governance and safety performance. Extensive consultation with the oil and gas industry, leading international NGOs focused on oil and gas production, and indigenous communities affected by oil and gas exploration and production led to the development of the EO100™ Standard. The Standard focuses on six principles: corporate governance, accountability and ethics; human rights, social impact & community development; fair labor and working conditions; indigenous people's rights; climate change, biodiversity & environment; and project life cycle management.

For more information about Equitable Origin visit: www.equitableorigin.com

For more information about ISEAL visit: www.isealalliance.org



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