



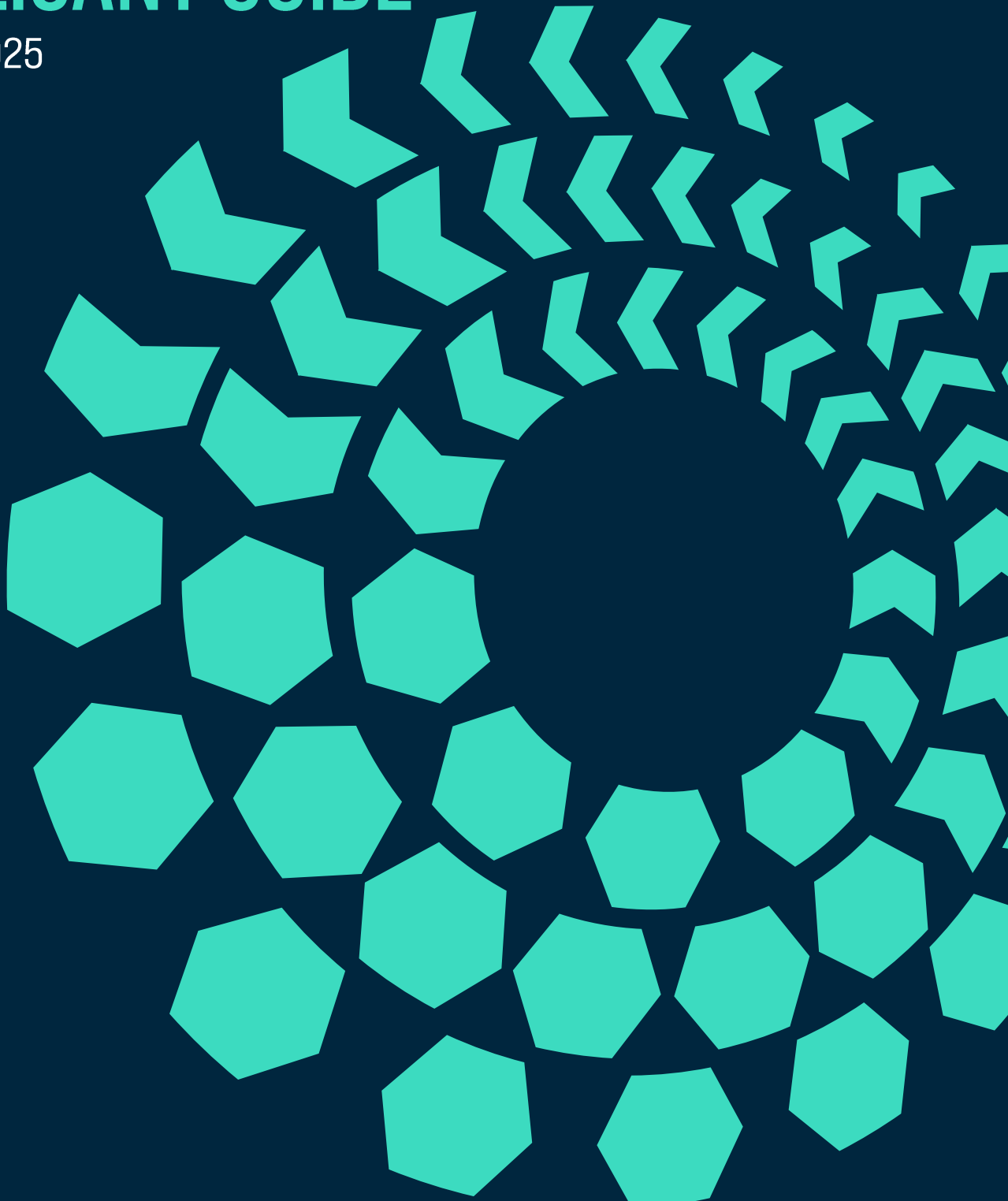
ISEP

Institute of Sustainability &
Environmental Professionals



EIA QUALITY MARK: APPLICANT GUIDE

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Contents

<u>1.</u>	<u>Introduction</u>	<u>2</u>
1.1	About the EIA Quality Mark	2
1.2	Is the EIA Quality Mark Right for Your Organisation?	3
<u>2.</u>	<u>ISEP Contact Details</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>3.</u>	<u>EIA Quality Mark Fees</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>4.</u>	<u>A Step by Step Guide to the Application Process</u>	<u>4</u>
4.1	Submission of Application	4
4.2	Review of Application	5
4.3	Outcome of Application Process	6
<u>5.</u>	<u>The Benefits of Joining the EIA Quality Mark</u>	<u>7</u>
5.1	Marketing	8
5.2	Accessing Environmental Statements	8
<u>6.</u>	<u>Further Information and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)</u>	<u>8</u>
	<u>Appendix A: EIA Quality Mark Commitments</u>	<u>11</u>
	<u>Appendix B: Membership Fee Schedule</u>	<u>12</u>
	<u>Appendix C: EIA Quality Mark COM1-6 Review Criteria</u>	<u>13</u>
	<u>Appendix D: EIA Quality Mark Grading System</u>	<u>18</u>
	<u>Appendix E: Commitment 7 Submission Guidance</u>	<u>19</u>
	<u>Document History</u>	<u>22</u>

1. Introduction

ISEP is the professional body for everyone working in environment and sustainability. This is a growing and evolving profession and we are committed to supporting, encouraging and improving the confidence and performance as well as the profile and recognition of all environment and sustainability professionals. At ISEP, we take a holistic or 'big picture' view of sustainability. For us, it includes impact assessment, environmental management and corporate sustainability and those working to tackle anything from climate change and reducing waste to driving efficiency and managing risk. We don't underestimate these challenges, but we believe that together we have a genuine opportunity to change things for the better.

For over 20 years, we have been providing resources and tools, research and knowledge sharing along with high-quality formal training and qualifications to meet the real world needs of members from their first steps on the career ladder, right to the very top. By doing this we raise the bar for professionalism in sustainability. Our 21,600 members are a diverse group and work in everything from business and industry and environmental consultancies to local government and academia. But what they have in common is a passion to make a real difference. A real impact. Together, as a community of environment and sustainability professionals, and as individuals in their workplaces.

We believe in the power of sustainability to make a real and positive difference for individuals, businesses, communities, society and ultimately our planet. And there's never been a more important time to focus on sustainability issues. In short, it's an eventful time to be a sustainability professional. We believe that together we can change perceptions and attitudes about the relevance and vital importance of sustainability as a progressive force for good. Together we're **transforming the world to sustainability**.

This guide is designed to provide organisations interested in applying to join ISEP's EIA Quality Mark with an understanding of:

- The EIA Quality Mark
- The application process
- Expectations required of registrants to the EIA Quality Mark
- The benefits of gaining the EIA Quality Mark

The Guide does not include a copy of the EIA Quality Mark Application Form; which must be requested by enquiring at: corporate@isepglobal.org, or Tel: 01522 540 069. This is to ensure all prospective registrants to the EIA Quality Mark have read and understood the EIA Commitments their organisations will be signing up to before starting the application process.

If after reading this Guide you have any questions about the EIA Quality Mark please do not hesitate to contact ISEP, see [Section 2](#) for details.

1.1 About the EIA Quality Mark

The EIA Quality Mark is a scheme operated by ISEP that allows organisations (both developers and consultancies) that lead the co-ordination of statutory EIAs in the UK to make a commitment to excellence in their EIA activities and have this commitment independently reviewed. The EIA Quality Mark is a voluntary scheme, with organisations free to choose whether they are ready to operate to its seven EIA Commitments (see [Appendix A](#)).

For organisations that qualify to apply for the EIA Quality Mark, an application to join the scheme will see ISEP review randomly selected examples of your Environmental Statements (ES) or Environmental Reports¹ and

¹ Since 2017 Environmental Statements (ES) in Scotland are now called Environmental Reports (ER). For the purpose of this document the term ES is used throughout the document to refer to both ES and ER.

undertake interviews with senior staff and EIA team members. Organisations that are successful in their application will continue to have their EIA performance reviewed on a regular basis. Further to this, they commit to undertaking activities with ISEP designed to improve EIA practice; including submitting all the UK statutory ES they produce to ISEP and contributing to good practice in impact assessment through activities such as authoring articles, speaking on webinars and participating in working groups to produce guidance.

The benefits of membership range from enhanced marketability from the value generated by having the quality of your EIA activities regularly independently reviewed to access to an online library of UK ES. Beyond this all registrants to the EIA Quality Mark gain access to the articles, case studies and presentations that will be produced by the other 50+ registrant organisations. This online library of EIA information will provide a valuable resource in keeping your EIA teams up-to-date with the latest developments in the field.

To find out which organisations have already gained the EIA Quality Mark visit:
<https://www.isepglobal.org/corporate-programmes/eia-quality-mark/registrants/>.

1.2 Is the EIA Quality Mark Right for Your Organisation?

The EIA Quality Mark has been designed to be accessible to different types of organisations including large multi-disciplinary consultancies, small environmental specialist consultants and developers in both the public and private sectors. However, there are minimum requirements that an organisation must meet to qualify to apply for membership, which are set out below:

- **The EIA Quality Mark is only open to those organisations that co-ordinate (lead) the EIA process and the production of Environmental Statements (ES).**
Organisations that are only used as sub-contractors to produce topic chapters for EIA co-ordinated by another organisation cannot apply for the EIA Quality Mark.
- **The applicant organisation co-ordinate statutory EIA for developments in the UK. The applicant organisation co-ordinate statutory EIA for developments in the UK.**
Organisations that only co-ordinate non-statutory environmental assessments (not formally considered to be Statutory EIA) of project impacts, or those that do not co-ordinate EIA in the UK are not able to apply. Presently the scheme is aligned to UK case law and consenting processes which may differ to those used overseas in other countries.
- **Applicant organisations must have completed at least one statutory UK ES, that their company co-ordinated, in the past 3 years.**
EIA Quality Mark Commitments 3 to 6 are tested through the review of an organisation's recent ES. If a back-catalogue does not exist ISEP cannot judge an applicant's performance sufficiently to award membership.

Further to the above, applicants should have internal capacity to deliver, ideally three, topic specific assessment chapters (e.g. noise, ecology, water, energy, air quality, etc) alongside being responsible for the co-ordination of the EIA process. This is to ensure an applicant's ES that are reviewed contain evidence of the applicant organisation's abilities in terms of both co-ordination and assessment. If applicants cannot meet this expectation, during their assessment process greater emphasis would be put on any issues and weaknesses arising that relate to their coordination activities.

2. ISEP Contact Details

If you have any queries, then please contact the Corporate Partnerships Team via:
corporate@isepglobal.org or by calling 01522 540 069.

3. EIA Quality Mark Fees

Applicants will be required to pay their application fees once their EIA Quality Mark application to ISEP has been processed. Where applicants are successful, they will then be required to pay an annual renewal fee each year. These fees are used to fund the application and annual renewal processes, as well as funding the scheme's administrative and operational costs. It should be noted that application fees are non-refundable. Full details of the EIA Quality Mark's fees can be found in [Appendix B](#) (EIA Quality Mark Fees Schedule).

Please note that as the EIA Quality Mark registration term runs from April to April each year, should an applicant be accepted onto the scheme prior to April of any given year, when the registrant renewals take place in April the applicant will then be invoiced for their first renewal along with existing registrants. This timeline may be something to consider when submitting the application.

4. A Step by Step Guide to the Application Process

There are four steps to the application process:

- Reading this Applicant Guide and deciding that your organisation wants to apply to join the EIA Quality Mark,
- Completing and returning the application form and EIA Quality Mark Agreement to ISEP,
- Reviewing your application to ensure all documents have been submitted and the relevant fees paid, followed by technical review of ES and telephone/online interviews (see section 4.2),
- The final step involves ISEP reviewing the outcome of the review stage to determine whether an applicant has met the requirements to pass the application process, whether an improvement plan is needed, or whether the application has failed to meet the EIA Quality Mark standards (see section 4.3).

On receipt of a valid submission ISEP aims to complete the standard application process (review and outcome) in 12 weeks. However, where ISEP requires an applicant to produce, submit and agree an improvement plan before they are accepted onto the scheme, a maximum of a further 12 weeks will be added to the application process.

4.1 Submission of Application

Organisations that wish to apply to join the EIA Quality Mark should contact the Corporate Partnerships Team (corporate@isepglobal.org) to request an application form. ISEP will issue all applicants with two copies of the EIA Quality Mark Agreement, which must be signed by a senior employee of the applicant organisation and returned alongside the application form. At the end of the application process, where an applicant has been found to meet the required standards, ISEP will counter sign these Agreements which will then act as the contract between both parties in relation to the organisation's registration to the scheme.

The submission process also requires several other documents to be sent through to ISEP in electronic copy format. Applicants should ensure all the following items are submitted at the time of application - if any documents are missing or the relevant fee is not submitted alongside the application form ISEP will not be able to start reviewing your application:

Submission items:

- Completed EIA Quality Mark Application Form,
- Two copies of the EIA Quality Mark Agreement signed by a senior member of the applicant organisation (prior to application, copies are available upon request),

- **ES Back Catalogue:**
The ES back catalogue is made up of the UK Statutory ES that the applicant organisation co-ordinated for a set length of time (ISEP only accept ES in electronic format as part of the EIA Quality Mark). The length of the ES back catalogue to be submitted varies between small and large producer applicants²:
 - Small producers - all relevant ES, submitted alongside an application for consent, in the 3 years prior to application.
 - Large producers – all relevant ES, submitted alongside an application for consent, in the 18 months prior to application.
- An electronic copy of company logo as either a high-resolution JPEG or EPS file:
Where applicants are successful in gaining registration to the EIA Quality Mark their organisation's logo will be used by ISEP to create their membership certificate and also on their profile on ISEP's website.
- Electronic copies of the applicant organisation's current Quality Management System (e.g. ISO 9001) and Environmental Management System (e.g. ISO 14001, EMAS, etc.) certificates where relevant.
- **Payment of Application Fee:** For your organisation's appropriate Application Fee please see [Section 3](#) and [Appendix B](#). **Please do not send payment with your completed Application Form.** After ISEP have received and reviewed your Application Form they will contact your main contact to arrange payment of the application fee, including the relevant VAT.

4.2 Review of Application

About the EIA Quality Mark Review Panel

ISEP has outsourced the assessment aspects of the review process, which consist of ES reviews and staff interviews, to external contractors.

These contractors make up the EIA Quality Mark Review Panel. The Panel have strong EIA knowledge, capabilities and experience and they will be allocated the assessments of EIA Quality Mark registered organisations. All Panel members have considerable experience of EIA practice, but are not full-time staff members of a registrant to the EIA Quality Mark or working for a company that is currently eligible to apply for membership of the scheme. The Panel work in academia, are independent consultants or work for small consultancies, not undertaking EIA co-ordination in the UK. Further to the above, all review reports will be quality checked by one of ISEP's Quality Review Panel, following the initial review process.

Panel members are obliged to highlight any potential conflict of interest related to either the registrant organisation, its EIA staff or the randomly selected ES they are assigned to review. However, registrants are also encouraged to highlight potential conflicts of interests between their activities and Panel members. If you believe there is a potential conflict of interest between your organisation and any of the Panel members, please highlight this to ISEP by contacting ISEP's Corporate Partnerships Officer via: corporate@isepglobal.org.

ISEP's Panel will conduct the telephone/online interview assessments and desk-based ES reviews to determine the organisation's compliance with respect to the scheme's Commitments 1 through to 6 (please see Appendices A and C for more information on these assessment areas).

To enable the selection of interviewees, each registrant should provide to ISEP a list of EIA staff using the ISEP excel template³. The list of EIA staff should include any staff that coordinate or author any sections of ES. Staff or contractors that are only providing survey data, GIS mapping, or technical appendices do not need to be listed. Any staff that are involved in writing any EIA element of the ES or coordinating the EIA or production of the ES should

² Smaller producers = organisations that typically working on three (3) or less ES/ER annually are considered to be small producers. Larger producers = organisations that are typically working on four (4) or more ES/ER are considered to be large producers.

³ ISEP will provide the template to applicants.

be included. For the avoidance of doubt this list should include environmental topic specialists (e.g., ecologists, landscape architects, archaeologists, etc that are authoring ES chapters).

Following the interviews and ES reviews, the Panel member will review the findings and grade the applicant's overall compliance to the Commitments and write up their findings in a summary report. This report will then be quality checked by one of ISEP's Quality Review Panel. Where the report indicates that the applicant's compliance with any of COMs 1-6 has been graded as either 'Concerns' or 'Fail' ISEP will contact the applicant to discuss the next steps (see Section 4.3) in line with the grading guidance set out in [Appendix D](#).

About the grading system

The EIA Quality Mark uses a traffic light grading system with green representing a Pass, yellow highlighting Concerns and red representing a Failure to reach the expected standard. This system is used to score each of the assessment criteria, with the scores assigned being used to provide the overall grade in terms of compliance with each of the seven (6) EIA Commitments. Full details of this grading system are presented in [Appendix D](#).

Commitment 7: Improving EIA practice – We commit to enhance the profile of good quality EIA by working with ISEP to deliver a mutually agreed set of activities, on an annual basis, and by making appropriate examples of our work available to the wider EIA community.

Commitment 7 is rather different to the other six Commitments in that it relates to future actions that an applicant commits to delivering, rather than being reviewed during the application process. All registrants to the scheme agree to undertake a minimum level of activity with ISEP during each year of their registration to help to improve EIA practice, in areas such as community support, effective decision-making, project design, environmental protection, etc. Registrants are welcome to undertake additional activities beyond the minimum highlighted below, so if you would like to discuss this commitment prior to application please contact corporate@isepglobal.org, or calling 01522 540 069. The minimum activity level is defined as follows:

The registrant agrees to complete at least three (for small producers) and four (for large producers) of the following on an annual basis:

- Produce an impact assessment related article.
- Produce an impact assessment case study.
- Present as a speaker on an impact assessment related webinar or event.
- Provide a Chair person to an Impact Assessment Working Group.
- Provide a Steering Group Member to the Impact Assessment Network Steering Group.
- Provide a lead author to an IEMA Impact Assessment Publication; or
- Other contribution as agreed with IEMA at the Annual Review Meeting.

For further details on the qualifying activities for Commitment 7 see [Appendix E](#).

Annual Review Meeting – a key part of the EIA Quality Mark scheme is an annual review meeting with ISEP whereby the registrant has an opportunity to review the outcomes of any ES reviews and interviews, discuss impact assessment practice and policy developments, review the organisations status as a small or larger producer, and category status. In addition, the annual review meeting provides an opportunity to proactively plan the commitment 7 activities with ISEP for the year ahead.

4.3 Outcome of Application Process

In the end there are two potential outcomes to an application to the EIA Quality Mark – Pass or Fail. However, in relation to each Commitment reviewed during the application process an organisation can be graded as Pass, Concerns or Fail, as set out in Section 4.2.

Improvement Plan:

Where any of the Commitments are graded as concerns the applicant will be required to develop an improvement plan, which must be accepted by ISEP before their application will be considered to have passed. If ISEP is unable to accept the initial improvement plan submitted by an applicant they will be given another opportunity to enhance it; however, if the enhanced plan is still not of an acceptable standard their application will be considered to have failed. Applicants will have a maximum of 12 weeks, from the date they are informed of the need for an improvement plan to develop that plan and get it accepted by ISEP. ISEP will contact any applicant that is required to submit an improvement plan to discuss the content and format of the plan with an applicant to maximise the chance of its acceptance.

Pass:

Where an applicant is successful in their application ISEP will sign both the EIA Quality Mark Agreement, submitted at the beginning of the application process, and the registrant's EIA Quality Mark Certificate, which will be posted to the newly registered organisation. On becoming a member of the EIA Quality Mark, a registrant will also receive an email from ISEP confirming their success and be provided with a Welcome Pack, which includes copies of the logo and other information related to their registration. All registrants to the EIA Quality Mark will have their ongoing compliance to the scheme's Commitments checked on a regular basis, as according to the following categories set out below:

- **Category 3:** Registrants who demonstrate repeated good performance will be placed in the Category 3, whereby we conduct a full Commitment 1-6 review every 3 years - unless prompted to assess sooner (e.g., a notable change within the organisation such as a merger, or complaints concerning the organisation or its EIA practice).
- **Category 2:** Registrants who received Revised grades or had completed an Improvement Plan in the past 2 terms, and/or had not had an environmental statement review conducted recently, will be placed in the Category 2 and will be subject to an assessment every other year until performance reaches the desired level.
- **Category 1:** Those currently under an Improvement Plan would be placed in the Category 1 and subject to assessment each year until performance reaches the required level.

On an annual basis ISEP will also request a Declaration from all registrants regarding their ongoing commitment to quality and providing details of any notable complaints, key personnel changes, significant organisational changes (e.g., divestiture/mergers, etc.). All registrants' categories will be reviewed annually as part of the Annual Review Meeting.

Fail:

Where an application to the EIA Quality Mark is not successful ISEP will provide the applicant with the findings of the compliance reviews and discuss the areas that led to failure. If the applicant is concerned that their application has not been handled appropriately, they can appeal. As with other levels of ISEP membership applicants to the EIA Quality Mark have the right to appeal ISEP's decision. This process will follow the general appeals process set out in ISEP's appeals procedures, as amended, which are available to applicants upon request.

Registrants will also be required to pay annual fees to renew their membership to the scheme, as set out in [Appendix A](#).

5. The Benefits of Joining the EIA Quality Mark

The EIA Quality Mark has a number of registrants benefits that ISEP wants all members to make the most of so as to enable registered organisations to further improve the quality of their EIA services. The scheme's benefits include:

- Recognition of the quality of a registrant's EIA activities through authority to use the EIA Quality Mark logo on its marketing materials and the EIA Quality Mark Statement on the ES it has led the production of (Exclusive to EIA Quality Mark Registrants)
- The use of marketing materials that explain the benefits to developers from appointing an EIA Quality Mark registrant to undertake their EIA; as well as EIA related referrals when ISEP is approached by third parties seeking advice on contracting EIA services (Exclusive to EIA Quality Mark Registrants)
- Online access to the ES reports held in the EIA Quality Mark online repository (Exclusive to EIA Quality Mark Registrants), as well as access to an increasing library of EIA articles, case studies, guidelines and presentations (Exclusive to EIA Quality Mark Registrants and/or ISEP Members).

Registrants will also gain other exclusive benefits such as early information about developments in the EIA field that ISEP becomes aware of and opportunities to work with ISEP to develop EIA related documents. The sections below provide further information on the scheme benefits exclusively available to registrants.

5.1 Marketing

ISEP will undertake various marketing activities to raise awareness of the EIA Quality Mark amongst developers across sectors as well as with consenting authorities. Registrants can contact ISEP to discuss the scheme's marketing activities and where appropriate co-ordinate activity between ISEP and registrant marketing activities. However, ISEP believes that one of the most effective ways to promote the EIA Quality Mark amongst developers and your potential clients is to provide registrants with EIA Quality Mark marketing materials. As such, ISEP has produced a short guide to commissioning EIA that is provided to registrants to enhance their existing EIA marketing activities. The guide sets out the advantages that a client can gain by recruiting an EIA Quality Mark registrant.

Beyond this, ISEP operates a referrals system where we pass on the contacts details of organisations that deliver environmental services when we receive requests for such information either from our members or wider companies. Where ISEP is contacted, by an individual or organisation, seeking EIA services we will refer them to the EIA Quality Mark pages on our website (<https://www.isepglobal.org/corporate-programmes/eia-quality-mark/registrants/>). These pages provide a profile of each EIA Quality Mark registrant, including their contact details, and a link to ISEP's Guide to Commissioning EIA.

5.2 Accessing Environmental Statements

All registrants to the EIA Quality Mark are entitled to access the Environmental Statements (ES) stored in the EIA Quality Mark online repository. The EIA Quality Mark online repository is a collection of ES submitted by organisations registered to the scheme. The repositories store of ES will continue to grow as the scheme progresses and registrants submit the statutory UK ES that they have completed each year. Access to the EIA Quality Mark library are exclusively available to registrants and individual ISEP members.

6. Further Information and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

ISEP has identified several frequently asked questions (FAQ) the answers to which are set out below. However, if you would like further information about the EIA Quality Mark beyond that set out in this guide please use the following:

- **General queries** - ISEP's website (<https://www.isepglobal.org/corporate-programmes/eia-quality-mark/registrants/>) provides information on the scheme, its benefits, current registrants, etc.

- **Application queries** - To find out more about the application process, inquire about making an application, or check progress on an existing application then please contact the ISEP Corporate Partnerships Officer at: corporate@isepglobal.org or Tel: 01522 540 069.

FAQs:

Who are the EIA Quality Mark registrants?

Currently the EIA Quality Mark scheme is only open to those organisations that co-ordinate (take the lead on) statutory UK Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) and lead production of the associated Environmental Statements (ES). As such the scheme is available to both consultancies and those developers that undertake EIA on a regular basis; please visit <https://www.iema.net/corporate-programmes/eia-quality-mark/registrants/> to find out who is currently registered.

Is there a link between registration to the EIA Quality Mark and being a Corporate Partner of ISEP?

No. Registrants to the EIA Quality Mark do not need to be an IEMA Corporate Partner in order to be part of the scheme.

Who reviews my application to the EIA Quality Mark?

ISEP is responsible for accepting your application and makes the final decision on the grades related EIA Commitment compliance. However, ISEP has outsourced the assessment process under Commitments 1-6 to external contractors with strong EIA knowledge and capabilities. These contractors make up the EIA Quality Mark Review Panel, further information on who they are can be found in Section 4.2 of this guide.

The contractors who make up the EIA Quality Mark Review Panel are not full-time staff members of any registrants to the EIA Quality Mark or a company eligible to apply for membership of the scheme. As such the contractors are from small consultancies, not undertaking EIA co-ordination in the UK; sole traders; and academia.

Before contractors undertake any review work related to the EIA Quality Mark they will be trained by ISEP in the scheme's review tools and grading system. Further to this all review reports will be quality checked by one of ISEP's Quality Review Panel. Contractor performance will be reviewed on a regular basis and ISEP will liaise with its contractors, both individually and as a group, to ensure quality is maintained on an on-going basis. ISEP will also listen to feedback from applicants and use this information, as appropriate, to maintain contractor performance.

Is there an appeal process?

Yes. ISEP's membership appeal process can be used to appeal where an applicant feels they have cause to challenge ISEP's decision not to allow them to join the EIA Quality Mark scheme. However, we hope that in many cases discussion held between ISEP and the applicant during the application process will provide the opportunity to come to a mutually agreed way forward.

Where this is not successful the membership appeal process will be open to applicants who fail to become registered to the EIA Quality Mark. If a registrant has a complaint about the scheme, or the operation of its application process, which cannot be resolved through discussions with ISEP, they should contact: corporate@isepglobal.org.

Once registered to the EIA Quality Mark scheme will my organisation be expected to submit every Environmental Statement / Environmental Report we complete?

Yes. As part of the EIA Agreement registrants are required to submit every statutory UK Environmental Statement / Environmental Report that they complete to ISEP. All registrants should submit a copy of their ES to ISEP within 7 working days of the ES being submitted to the relevant authorities. However, registrants may make a request to ISEP to delay the submission of an Environmental Statement, where registrants wish to do this they should initially contact the ISEP Corporate Partnerships Officer at corporate@isepglobal.org.

Which organisations are currently registered to the EIA Quality Mark?

The scheme launched on 18th April 2011 with 39 registrants made up of consultancy organisations and our first developer registrant – the Environment Agency’s National Environmental Assessment Service (NEAS). At the time of the 10th Year Anniversary on 18th April 2021, there were 58 registrants. To find out more about these registrants and to get an up-to-date list of members of the scheme please visit: <https://www.iema.net/corporate-programmes/eia-quality-mark/registrants/>.

Appendix A: EIA Quality Mark Commitments

EIA Quality Mark Commitments:

1. **EIA Management** – We commit to using effective project control and management processes to deliver quality in the EIA we co-ordinate and the Environmental Statements we produce.
2. **EIA Team Capabilities** – We commit to ensuring that all our EIA staff have the opportunity to undertake regular and relevant continuing professional development.
3. **EIA Regulatory Compliance** – We commit to delivering Environmental Statements that meet the requirements established within the appropriate UK EIA Regulations.
4. **EIA Context & Influence** – We commit to ensuring that all EIAs we co-ordinate are effectively scoped and that we will transparently indicate how the EIA process, and any consultation undertaken, influenced the development proposed and any alternatives considered.
5. **EIA Content** – We commit to undertaking assessments that include: a robust analysis of the relevant baseline; assessment and transparent evaluation of impact significance; and an effective description of measures designed to monitor and manage significant effects.
6. **EIA Presentation** – We commit to deliver Environmental Statements that set out environmental information in a transparent and understandable manner.
7. **Improving EIA practice** – We commit to enhance the profile of good quality EIA by working with ISEP to deliver a mutually agreed set of activities, on an annual basis, and by making appropriate examples of our work available to the wider EIA community.

Appendix B: Membership Fee Schedule

ISEP EIA Quality Mark - Membership Fee Schedule

The following fees will apply to applicants and registrants to ISEP's EIA Quality Mark. All charges set out in this schedule are exclusive of VAT and any other taxes or duties that shall be charged in addition at the rates in force at the time.

Application fees:

All organisations applying to join the EIA Quality Mark are required to pay the appropriate application fee set out below.

There are two levels of application fee to the EIA Quality Mark which are based on the level of EIA activity undertaken by the organisation applying for membership. The application fee payable is based on the number of full, statutory UK ES (not addenda or Supplementary Environmental Information, etc.) co-ordinated by the applicant in the 12 months preceding their application. The fees are:

- **Smaller producers** - those that have submitted three (3) or less ES are considered to be small producers and are charged an application fee of **£2,420 +VAT**
- **Larger producers** - those that have submitted four (4) or more ES are considered to be large producers and are charged an application fee of **£3,025 +VAT**

Annual Renewal fees:

All registrants to the EIA Quality Mark are required to pay the appropriate annual renewal of their membership fee set out below.

The renewal fee applicable is based on the number of statutory UK ES co-ordinated (submitted with an application for development consent) in the preceding 12 months. For example, for a renewal in April 2026, the ES from between April 2024 to April 2025 will be used as the basis for invoicing:

- **Smaller producers** - those that have submitted three (3) or less are considered to be small producers and are charged a renewal fee of **£1,210 +VAT**
- **Larger producers** - those that have submitted four (4) or more are considered to be large producers and are charged a renewal fee of **£1,815 +VAT**

Appendix C: EIA Quality Mark COM1-6 Review Criteria

COM1: EIA Management

A) EIA Process

- i) Effectively managing EIA project control processes.
- ii) Ensuring consistent EIA quality across the organisation.
- iii) Understanding the influence of the organisation's EIA services.

B) ES Production

- i) Ensuring consistent ES quality across the organisation.
- ii) Delivering quality control to individual ES.

C) Sub-contractor Management

- i) Ensuring the quality of sub-contractors that contribute to the organisation's EIA services.
- ii) Ensuring the efficient delivery of quality input from EIA sub-contractors.

D) External EIA Communication

- i) Providing effective communications on EIA to clients.
- ii) Providing consistent direction on the approach to communicating with EIA stakeholders.

E) Management Systems

- i) A formally accredited management systems exist that can be seen to clearly link with the organisation's EIA activities.
- ii) The organisation does not operate a formally accredited management system, but it is clear that effective systems are applied to guide the delivery of consistent quality in its EIA services.

F) Competent Expertise

- i) From the information provided, has the ES been prepared by persons who are likely to be considered (in the opinion of the relevant authority or the Secretary of State, as appropriate) to have sufficient expertise to ensure the completeness and quality of the statement?
- ii) Does the Environmental Statement contain a statement by, or on behalf of the applicant, setting out how the expertise requirement has been complied with?

COM2: EIA Team Capabilities

A) Staff Recruitment, Induction & Mentoring

- i) Driving quality through EIA staff recruitment.
- ii) Ensuring new EIA staff deliver quality services.
- iii) Progressing EIA staff development through mentoring.

B) EIA Team Selection

- i) Delivering quality through effective EIA team selection processes.

C] Internal EIA Communication & Feedback

- i] Maintaining and updating EIA knowledge across the organisation.
- ii] Ensuring the organisation takes up and implements developments in EIA.

D] Performance Management and EIA Team Development

- i] Supporting EIA staff in maintaining appropriate professional membership.
- ii] Developing EIA staff competence.
- iii] Reviewing the on-going performance of operational EIA teams and individual EIA staff.

COM3: EIA Regulatory Compliance⁴

- A] Does the ES contain a clear section, or sections, providing a description of the development comprising information on the site, design and size of the development during construction and operation?
- B] Does the ES contain a section, or sections, that outline of the main alternatives studied by the developer and an indication of the main reasons for his choice, taking into account the environmental effects?
- C] Does the ES contain a clear section, or sections, that provides the data required to identify and assess the main effects which the development is likely to have on the environment?
- D] In the light of the development being assessed has the ES identified, described and assessed effects on the following sub-criteria:
 - i] Population and human health
 - ii] Biodiversity
 - iii] Soil
 - iv] Water
 - v] Air
 - vi] Climatic Change
 - vii] Landscape
 - viii] Cultural Heritage
 - ix] Material Assets
 - x] Major Accidents and Disasters
 - xi] Other
- E] Does the ES attempt to set out the interaction between the factors set out under COM3 D)?
- F] Does the ES contain a section, or sections, that describe the likely significant effects of the proposed development on the environment, including as reasonably required: direct, indirect, secondary, cumulative, short, medium, long-term, permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects?

⁴ A number of the criteria under COM3 cover similar subjects to criteria set out in COMs 4, 5 & 6, where this occurs there will inevitably be some overlap. However, the review of COM3s criteria is focussed on the presence / absence of the subject of the criteria, whereas the review of the similar criteria under the other COMs is focussed on the quality of consideration.

- G) Does the ES contain a clear section, or sections, that provides a description of the measures envisaged in order to avoid, reduce and, if possible, remedy significant adverse effects?
- H) Has a Non-Technical Summary been produced containing an outline of the information mentioned in COM3 A) to F)?
- I) Does the ES contain a section, or sections, that outline any difficulties encountered by the developer in compiling the information presented in the ES?

COM4: EIA Context & Influence

A) Scoping

- i) Has the ES been complied with a Scoping Opinion if one has been issued? (may not be applicable)
- ii) Has the ES clearly stated what environmental topics will be addressed and how this decision was reached?
- iii) Are the main sensitive receptors and their locations clearly identified with an explanation of the risks posed from the development?
- iv) Does the ES identify the environmental topics, raised during the scoping process, that will not be assessed and explain why they are not being considered further?
- v) For those environmental topics scoped into the EIA, is it clear that the assessment has focussed on sub-issues relevant to the proposed development effects on each topic?

B) Alternatives, including iterative design

- i) Does the ES set out the main alternatives / iterations that were considered at different points during the development of the proposal?
- ii) Are the main reasons, environmental or otherwise, for the selection of the proposal over distinct alternatives and design iterations easily identifiable?
- iii) Does the ES clearly indicate how the EIA process, environmental effects and consultee responses influenced the iterative design process that led to the proposed development?

C) Consultation

- i) Does the description of any consultation include an indication of those contacted, including statutory and non-statutory consultees, and the public?
- ii) Does the main text of the ES provide a summary of the main issues, pertinent to the EIA, raised by consultees?
- iii) Does the ES provide an indication of the main reasons for selecting the chosen option, including a comparison of the environmental effects?
- iv) Does the ES set out if any of the issues pertinent to the EIA raised by consultees will not be dealt with in the ES? If so, is clear justification set out as to why the issue was scoped out?

COM5: EIA Content

A) Baseline

- i) Does the ES describe the condition of those aspects of the environment that are likely to be significantly affected by the development?
- ii) Is the 'sensitivity'⁵ of the baseline environment clearly evaluated?

- iii) Where limitations in the baseline information exist, which could influence the assessment findings, are they easily identifiable?

B) Assessment

- i) Are the methods for establishing the 'magnitude'⁵ of effects on the receiving environment clearly defined?
- ii) Where the ES sets out a generic method for evaluating significance, is this applied throughout the ES? Where an over-arching approach is not followed are the specific methods used to evaluate significance for each environmental topic clearly justified?
- iii) Does the evaluation of significance consider the different stages of development (construction, operation) and relate the effects identified to the condition of the baseline environment?
- iv) Does the ES give appropriate prominence to both positive and negative effects relative to their significance?
- v) Does the ES identify the significance of effects that are anticipated to remain following the successful implementation of any mitigation described in the ES?
- vi) Is it clear that the EIA has considered inter-relationships in order to identify secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects?

C) Environmental Mitigation & Management

- i) Does the ES describe the measures proposed to be implemented to avoid, reduce, or offset significant adverse effects of the proposed development?
- ii) Is an attempt to indicate the effectiveness of the influence of the stated mitigation measures on the significance of the environmental effects provided?
- iii) Does the ES set out how mitigation measures are to be secured and implemented and with whom the responsibilities for their delivery lies?

COM6: EIA Presentation

A) ES Quality

- i) Does the ES make effective use of maps, figures, tables and diagrams? In particular covering:
 - i. the location of the site, its boundary and site layout;
 - ii. operational appearance (where available);
 - iii. main environmental receptors; and
 - iv. environmental effects (where visual representation is appropriate).
- ii) Is the proposed development site clearly described?
- iii) Are the anticipated timescales of construction, operation and (where appropriate) decommissioning of the proposed development clearly set out in the main text?
- iv) Is the ES presented in a manner that would allow a member of the public to logically locate the environmental information they were seeking?

⁵ The terms 'sensitivity' (COM5 A) ii) and 'magnitude' (COM5 B) i) are used as generic descriptors of the multitude of criteria that are used in EIA practice to evaluate significance.

- v] Are technical terms kept to a minimum, with a glossary (/ list of acronyms) provided?
- vi] Is the length of the main text of the ES appropriate to the: proposed development, sensitivity of the receiving environment and significant environmental effects identified?

B] Non-Technical Summary (NTS)

- i] Does the NTS provide sufficient information for a member of the public to understand the significant environmental effects of the proposed development without having to refer to main text of the ES?
- ii] Are maps and diagrams included in the NTS that, at a minimum, illustrate the location of the application site, the boundary of the proposed development, and the location of key environmental receptors?
- iii] Is it clear that the NTS was made available as a separate stand-alone document?

Additional Qualitative Review Comments

Notwithstanding the formal Criteria listed above are there any aspects that the assessor wishes to highlight and provide feedback to the registrant with respect to any particular assessment chapters or sections which are considered to be in the assessor's opinion either a). an especially poor example of practice or b). could be considered a potential exemplar of good practice?

Appendix D: EIA Quality Mark Grading System

The EIA Quality Mark Grading System

ISEP uses a traffic light system to grade the review findings for the EIA Quality Mark. The same system is also applied to score each of the criteria that contribute to the grade awarded to an EIA Commitment. The grades and scores awarded are as follows:

Pass: The review provided effective evidence of compliance with the requirements of the EIA Commitment / review criterion. Limited issues, inadequacies or omissions may be identified, but they do not amount to 'Concerns'.

Pass (Revised) [EIA Commitments only]: ISEP's initial review highlighted Concerns in terms of compliance against a number of the criteria under the EIA Commitment. The findings of a second review provided ISEP with sufficient evidence of compliance with the EIA Commitment. The issues, inadequacies or omissions identified in the first review should be examined to identify ways to enhance consistency in the organisations EIA practice.

Concerns: The review could not find sufficient evidence to award full compliance with the EIA Commitment / relevant criterion. Whilst the review found evidence of an attempt to meet the specific requirements the inadequacies, omissions or issues identified meant a 'Pass' grade could not be given.

EIA Commitments only - where this grade is awarded ISEP will seek feedback from the organisation on the cause of the issues that raised Concerns. As a consequence of the discussion the applicant is likely to be required to submit and agree an Improvement Plan with ISEP. The agreed improvement plan must be effectively implemented over the following 12 months.

Concerns (Revised) [EIA Commitments only]: The initial review highlighted Fail in terms of compliance with one or more of the criteria under an EIA Commitment. The findings of a second review provided ISEP with credible evidence of true effort to achieve compliance with the relevant EIA Commitment. Despite the second reviews findings the inadequacies, omissions or issues identified mean a Pass grade could not be awarded.

ISEP will seek feedback from the organisation on the causes of the issues that raised 'Concerns'. Based on these discussions the applicant will be required to submit and agree an Improvement Plan with ISEP. The agreed improvement plan must be effectively implemented over the following 12 months.

Fail: The ES review found significant omissions or inadequacies in relation to an EIA Commitment / relevant criterion and insufficient explanation to justify the failing identified.

EIA Commitments only – ISEP will seek feedback from the organisation on the cause of the 'Fail' and determine its action based on the findings of these discussions, which could include the requirement to submit an improvement plan, suspension or removal from the scheme.

N/A [Review criteria only]: The relevant criterion was not found to be relevant during the review, as such it has not been considered within the grading of the EIA Commitment it relates to.

Appendix E: Commitment 7 Submission Guidance

As part of the annual contribution to Commitment 7 the registrant agrees to complete at least three (for small producers) and four (for large producers) of the following on an annual basis:

- Produce an impact assessment related article.
- Produce an impact assessment case study.
- Present as a speaker on an impact assessment related webinar or event.
- Provide a Chair person to an Impact Assessment Working Group.
- Provide a Steering Group Member to the Impact Assessment Network Steering Group.
- Provide a lead author to an ISEP Impact Assessment Publication; or
- Other contribution as agreed with ISEP at the Annual Review Meeting.

Annual Review Meeting

Opportunities for Commitment 7 contributions will be discussed with registrants as part of the Annual Review Meeting, with ISEP providing a forward calendar of planned impact assessment activities to assist the registrant in identifying opportunities for contributing to the development of good practice.

Guidance on Articles

1. These are thought-pieces based on Registrant's EIA activities for inclusion in online media. These should be up to 700 words in length and submitted in a plain Word document. Article topics could cover but are not limited to, discussion of opinion on EIA practice, legislative issues, environmental topic issues, etc.
2. Registrants can view existing Commitment 7 articles here: <https://www.isepglobal.org/corporate-programmes/eia-quality-mark/eia-quality-mark-articles/> to ensure there is no duplication amongst topic ideas. Their final text can then be emailed to ISEP at: corporate@isepglobal.org.
3. To aid publishing the articles online, please adhere to the following:
 - Please consider text-based articles only - the publisher requires all images to be supplied separately as JPEG files, otherwise please refrain from including graphics with your article text. ISEP's article templates are not currently formatted to display tables, charts or other graphics.
 - If a Registrant's submission contains references to documents, please provide a link so readers can hyperlink directly to the online article.
 - Please use as much description in your article title as possible.
 - Please include a subheading and opening stanza before the main text.
 - Please ensure the author names and job titles are included in a byline after the main text.
 - Please supply 3 related topical tags with your article to aid online searches when published in Transform (e.g., construction, built environment, urban development).

****For article inclusion in the Online media or Printed media, please submit your articles to ISEP as normal to forward on for consideration.**
4. ISEP can accept EIA-related articles published in other journals as long as they uphold the sharing of good EIA practice and include a reference to ISEP's EIA Quality Mark. As such, it should be supplied to ISEP in Word format for use in their Commitment 7 template to remain consistent with other submissions.

5. If Registrants wish to publish their Commitment 7 article in other sources this is possible as long as it does not carry any detrimental content, remains consistent with the original submission, and is used solely for business purposes. However, as the piece was originally developed for Commitment 7 ISEP requests that it contains a reference to ISEP's EIA Quality Mark.

Guidance on Presentations

Commitment 7 presentations must be EIA-related and focused on sharing and improving good EIA practice. These can be completed through the following routes and existing submissions can be viewed here <https://www.isepglobal.org/corporate-programmes/eia-quality-mark/eia-quality-mark-webinars/> and <https://www.isepglobal.org/corporate-programmes/eia-quality-mark/eia-quality-mark-presentations/> to ensure there is no duplication or to gain new topic ideas:

1. Via ISEP's live EIA webinars:
If you have presented at or will be presenting in one of ISEP's EIA webinars, then please let us know so we can allocate this contribution towards your Commitment 7 requirements. These typically require 1 or 2 presenters to speak about a pre-determined topic and each speaker would usually present for 15-20 minutes each, depending on arrangements.
2. Through independent / in-house productions by the registrants:
This option requires a presentation to be recorded in the same way as above and to the same length but is produced in-house by the Registrant themselves.

These presentations must contain a reference to ISEP / the EIA Quality Mark within the slides. Registrants would develop and record their presentation using their in-house facilities and then submit the completed presentation to ISEP in PowerPoint, MP4 or WAV format for use on the Vimeo website where our presentations are uploaded.
3. By presenting at external events:
When requesting participation at external events to be counted as a Commitment 7 deliverable, ISEP must receive evidence that demonstrates the following:
 - These external presentations must promote ISEP and the EIA Quality Mark so if a Registrant is planning in advance please ensure this is factored into the development of the presentation.
 - External presentations under Commitment 7 must show an appropriateness of content relating to the wider EIA audience. Internal staff training seminars would not be accepted since this does not communicate to the wider audience.
 - Inclusion of the annotated speaker notes within the PowerPoint slides to add extra detail and context to the slides, allowing readers to better understand the presented topic.
 - As Commitment 7 submissions act as a resource to ISEP members, ISEP also require the Registrant's permission to upload the slides/presentation onto the ISEP website as is done with the articles and case studies.

Guidance on Case Studies

1. Unlike the deliverables above the EIA Case Studies are submitted by the registrant in final form, using the most recent pre-formatted case study template. The content should be confined to two sides of A4 and images only inserted where indicated.
2. ISEP promotes the theme of 'the added value EIA generates' and so these Case Studies are based on an EIA project the registrant has undertaken, and share the lessons learnt and key messages taken from the project to share with the wider EIA community.

They should be focused on a specific aspect of EIA practice that can be easily understood by other practitioners, such as community support, effective decision-making, project design, environmental protection, etc.

3. The over-arching theme for the case studies is 'the added value EIA generates', so could touch on areas such as project design, environmental protection, community support, decision-making, etc.
4. As these Case Studies are based on a registrant's EIA project, they do not need to be approved by ISEP before submission as they tend to be unique to the registrant and do not require a pre-agreed delivery date as long as they are received before the end of the term.
5. Whilst the subject matter should be based on a UK EIA project under current practice, if there is value in covering an international project, or a project that hasn't yet been completed, please contact ISEP before proceeding.

Guidance on Impact Assessment Network Activities

Where a registrant allows a member of staff to conduct significant Impact Assessment Network activities within paid working hours such as:

1. Acting as Steering Group Member of the ISEP Impact Assessment Network Steering Group (IASG). The IASG has 15 positions in three cohorts, which each cohort serving a fixed period of three years. Elections are held annually and are open to all ISEP members and EIA Quality Mark Registrants. For further information on IASG contact corporate@isepglobal.org.
2. Acting as Chair for an Impact Assessment Network working group. IA Working Groups are formed by the IASG for specific tasks, such as the development of topic-specific EIA guidance. For further information on IA working groups contact corporate@isepglobal.org.
3. Acting as a lead or key contributing author for an ISEP impact assessment publication. Lead or key contributing authors are those that have committed significant time to producing sections or editing ISEP impact assessment guidance or publications. For further information on qualifying contributions contact corporate@isepglobal.org.

Guidance on 'Other Qualifying Activities'

Please note that ISEP can also consider other impact assessment activities against registrants' Commitment 7 deliverables such as sponsoring or providing locations of their offices for use to host EIA events. As such, registrants that can offer the above may be awarded credit against their remaining Commitment 7 deliverables, all such activities should be agreed in advance with ISEP either during the Annual Review Meeting or by correspondence with corporate@isepglobal.org.

Document History

VERSION	DATE	REASON FOR CHANGE
1.0	July 2025	Original Version
1.1	August 2025	This version reflects minor changes to the first approved version, version 1.0.