



Sustainable  
*Eel* Group

# The SEG Standard

## Claims and Labelling Procedure

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### Versions Issued

Version No.	Date	Description of Amendment
1.0	4/7/18	Initial
1.1	21/1/20	Amendment for immediate compliance with ISEAL Claims Credibility Good Practice Guide
2.0	1 /12/2022	Amendments after experience since 2020, and in readiness for 2023 standard review
2.1	20/8/2023	Review during ISEAL Code Compliant project, and including new EelGroup logo
2.2	5/12/2023	Minor corrections
2.3	1/11/24	Change to registered address

This document is the property of the Sustainable Eel Group. It is effective from the date above.

For further information please see:

[www.sustainableeelgroup.org](http://www.sustainableeelgroup.org)

Or contact us at:

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## 1. Purpose

1.1 This document describes the rules and guidelines related to claims and labels, primarily for SEG certified eel, but with some reference to the Eel Stewardship Fund (ESF) labels. The aims of this guide are to:-

- protect the value and integrity of the SEG logo and
- assist businesses and individuals in developing packaging and marketing materials that promote the sustainability aspects of their products, practices, or services in relation to trade of SEG certified eel.

1.2 Specifically, this document:

- Clarifies and explains what certification under the SEG standard means,
- Defines how businesses may use the SEG logo off product,
- Defines how businesses may use the SEG logo on product,
- Define how certified eel and eel products must be identified or labelled – using SEG or ESF labelling,
- Describes the relationships between the responsible organisations.

1.3 This guide defines what the SEG standard, certification and labelling means and what claims can be made under what circumstances.

## 2. Applicability and responsibility

2.1 This Guide is for use by SEG, the Eel Stewardship Association (ESA), Conformity Assessment Bodies, Clients assessed under the SEG standard, the organisations running the labelling schemes, the commercial eel sector, retailers, consumers, NGOs and anyone with an interest in the eel sector in Europe.

2.2 It is published on the page [SEG Standard System](http://www.sustainableeelgroup.org) for transparency on our website:  
[www.sustainableeelgroup.org](http://www.sustainableeelgroup.org).

2.3 Those using and applying it are responsible for ensuring they use the latest version.

## 3. Trademark and intellectual property

3.1 The Sustainable Eel Group logo is the property of the Sustainable Eel Group. Use of the logo or reference of an organisation's association with the Sustainable Eel Group shall not be used on any documentation, packaging, invoicing or marketing material (including websites) without SEG's written agreement.

## 4. What certification under the SEG standard means

### 4.1 Certification

To be awarded a SEG standard certificate, a client must achieve the criteria of the SEG standard, as assessed by an auditor and confirmed and certified by the Conformity Assessment Body (CAB).

### 4.2 The meaning of certification

The simplest meaning of a SEG standard certificate, is that the client (business) is trading in European eel in such a way that it is regarded as:

***'Responsible sourced'***

It means that they have complied with the '[SEG Standard: a Code of Conduct for a Responsible Eel Sector](#)'. Further, it refers to:

***'Eel that is traceable from a responsible fishery which has been caught, handled and traded using the most responsible practices by organisations that have all met the SEG standard, which are working towards sustainability, forming a joined up responsible supply chain.'***

It also means that the business that has achieved the standard is making a

***'contribution to the protection and recovery of the European eel population'***.

### 4.3 Claims

On holding a valid SEG standard certificate, a business may make one or more of the following claims on its website, promotional material or publicity:

- 'certified under the SEG standard'
- 'trading in SEG certified, responsibly sourced European eel'
- 'certified responsibly sourced'
- 'certified as trading in Eel that is traceable from a responsible fishery which has been caught, handled and traded using the most responsible practices by organisations that have all met the SEG standard, which are working towards sustainability in a fully traceable supply chain'.

### 4.4 Other claims and requirements

Note that some of these are covered in the [SEG Assurance system](#) but are repeated here as these two documents may have different audience).

- Achievement of the standard, and award of the certificate, shows that the client has passed the requirements for the components of the standard relevant to that business.
- It indicates that the client has demonstrated responsible practices to make a contribution to the protection and recovery of the European eel population.
- The certificate indicates that the client is trading in responsibly sourced, SEG certified eel.
- The certificate alone does not show, and shall not be used to give the impression, that any individual batch of eel or eel product is SEG certified.

- The client may show their certificate to customers to show that they have passed the general requirements of the relevant section of the standard. Clients should also show them the [105 Terms and Conditions of Use](#).
- Certified products shall have relevant batch labelling to support the assurance of traceability in the chain of custody (see section 5 below).

#### 4.5 Other users

- 4.5.1 Media organisations and publishers may use the SEG logo for illustrative purposes, with written permission from SEG.
- 4.5.2 Organisations or individuals, such as grantors, foundations, certification partners or project collaborators that wish to promote their relationship with SEG, and that have a written agreement for logo use may also be permitted to use the logo.

## 5. How eel and eel products shall be identified or labelled

The use of the different certified eel logos (on product) has distinct guidelines depending on the type of use:

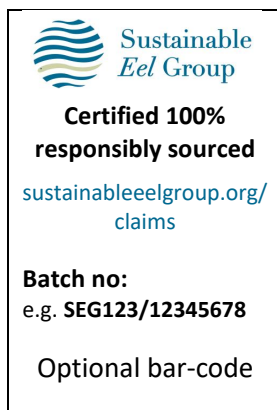
### 5.1 Business to business: from fishery to wholesaler / processor. Traceability and labelling

- 5.1.1 Traceability of SEG certified product is fundamental to the SEG standard and the responsibly sourced supply chain. Certification by a client to the SEG standard is dependent on achieving Traceability component and by providing proof that they are trading in traceable SEG certified eel.
- 5.1.2 When the SEG standard has been achieved, because that means that some or all of the client's eel is from a certified source, only those batches that are 100% from SEG certified sources shall be labelled as SEG certified. Associated records must be maintained (as required in the Traceability component of the certification assessment) to provide auditable assurance of that 100% certified source.
- 5.1.3 Clients shall be provided with a unique number, related to their SEG standard certificate number. If the client doesn't already have a batch numbering system, a SEG standard batch labelling system can be adopted (see example below).
- 5.1.4 The SEG logo can be used and the words 'Certified 100% responsibly sourced' applied, along with the SEG website address ([www.sustainableeelgroup.org/claims](http://www.sustainableeelgroup.org/claims) [under construction]) so that businesses and organisations can look up to see what the claim 'Certified responsibly sourced' means.
- 5.1.5 Examples of how labels shall look, are provided here:
- a) SEG logo and wording on or with product:



Website page: [sustainableeelgroup.org/claims](https://sustainableeelgroup.org/claims) (under construction).

b) SEG logo and wording when associated with a batch label:



- 5.1.6 The label shall be associated with the consignment (e.g. on boxes, packaging, delivery note, invoice),
- 5.1.7 There are no sizing or placement guidelines to the use of the label, except that the wording and logo shall be clearly visible,
- 5.1.8 The label and claim shall **only be used on products that can be shown to be 100% traceable from certified source; there can be no mixing with uncertified product**. The client must be able to show, to an auditor, on inspection, the traceable source of any product that carries the label or claim.
- 5.1.9 This batch labelling is a 'business to business' assurance scheme: fishery to wholesaler / processor. This is not designed for use on packaging for the end consumer where the ESF label is to be used (see below).
- 5.1.10 Written agreement from SEG shall be required to approve the use and appearance of the SEG label.
- 5.1.11 SEG shall monitor usage to ensure that this guide is being adopted

## 5.2 Business to consumer: wholesaler / processor to retailer / shop / supermarket / restaurant

### Non SEG-certified eel

- 5.2.1 Eel Stewardship Funds (ESFs) were developed in the Netherlands in 2010 and in Germany in 2016. In these schemes a small levy is placed on sales of eel, at a level set by the Eel Stewardship Association. This is then paid to the Eel Stewardship Fund for that country.
- 5.2.2 Those funds are used to finance scientific research and eel conservation projects such as restocking juvenile eels to areas of low abundance, building eel passes to help migration, or to even catch migrating silver eels and transfer them to the sea to by-pass the lethal effects of pumping stations. In this way, consumers of eel have been able to fund and support eel conservation projects and

measures. Some ESF funding is also used to fund the Sustainable Eel Group, for example to develop and maintain the SEG standard certification scheme; and to be a member of the [ISEAL Alliance](#) and to comply with its sustainability [codes of good practice](#).

5.2.3 Eel products in this scheme are identified by the label:



5.2.4 Rules for use of this label, including the claims it makes, are described on the eel Stewardship Association's [website](#).

5.2.5 In summary, this label claims that a proportion of the sale of this uncertified product is used in conservation measures and scientific research that directly benefit the European eel population.

5.2.6 No claims of SEG certified or use of the SEG logo can be used in conjunction with this label.

### SEG Certified eel

5.2.7 As SEG standard certified eel becomes available through the supply chain and reaches the retailer and consumer, a different consumer-facing ESF label shall be used:



5.2.8 This label shall be used to identify:

- Certified 100% responsibly sourced eel that meets the SEG standard. **Note that can only be used where 100% of the labelled product is from the certified supply chain** - there can be no mixing with uncertified product.
- Where a proportion of the financial proceeds has been allocated to an Eel Stewardship Fund for conservation projects for the direct of the eel population.

5.2.9 Rules for use of this label, including the claims it makes, are described on the Eel Stewardship Association's [website](#).



We are also to start using this label for SEG certified product and will transition for it to replace or go alongside that in 5.2.7 above).

We will describe how/when/why to use this label, the claims that can be made and any transition period etc.



### 5.3 Choices for the retailer and consumer

With the application of the above options, retailers and consumers will have the ability to make a choice between purchasing:-

- **Non-labelled eels**, with no associated contribution to a ESF and no benefit back to the environment or the eel,
- **ESF labelled eels**, where a proportion of sales go directly to eel conservation projects but are not SEG certified. The aim is for this label to decline and cease as SEG certified supplies increase,
- **ESF labelled certified eels**, which are SEG Certified 100% Responsibly Sourced and a proportion of sales go to directly fund eel conservation projects.

### 5.4 Claims on the SEG and ESA websites

To help businesses in the supply chain and consumers to understand what the claims mean, they shall each be published on the SEG and ESA websites as indicated on the respective logos, ie.

[www.sustainableeelgroup.org/claims](http://www.sustainableeelgroup.org/claims)

[www.esf.international](http://www.esf.international)

## 6. The relationships between the organisations responsible

### 6.1 Sustainable Eel Group (SEG)

6.1.1 SEG is the system or scheme owner for the SEG standard. It is responsible for designing and setting the standard and supporting materials and systems for the effective, transparent and fair operation of the [SEG standard system](#).

6.1.2 SEG shall work with the Eel Stewardship Association (see below) and the sector to identify and agree the mechanisms and amount at which clients shall make a contribution to Eel Stewardship

Funds (ESFs) (see below). This to maintain a level playing field and to provide unlawful practices under EU competition laws. The funds shall be owned by the regional ESFs.

## **6.2 Eel Stewardship Fund (ESF)**

- 6.2.1 ESFs are established to finance activities that contribute to a sustainable recovery of the eel stocks in European waters. Individual ESFs are administered by agreement of the members of the ESA.
- 6.2.2 ESFs set the terms of the logo licensing system for members to be able to use and to make their contributions.
- 6.2.3 ESFs currently exist in The Netherlands and Germany and it is expected that they will expand in size and into more countries.
- 6.2.4 ESFs can contribute to the costs of running SEG and its projects – particularly where it is providing a direct benefit to the eel population or service to the eel sector.

## **6.3 Eel Stewardship Association (ESA)**

- 6.3.1 The (ESA) is founder of the Eel Stewardship Funds and owner of the ESF trademark. ESA was established in 2015 by industry organisations of the Netherlands and Germany. ESA members make the decisions on how the ESF schemes operate, i.e. how funds are collected and how monies are allocated and spent.

## **6.4 Clients**

- 6.4.1 Clients are the fishermen, traders, businesses, eel farms and processors (e.g. smokeries) who have been audited for their compliance with the SEG standard. Clients shall form a financial contractual agreement with the Conformity Assessment Body (CAB) to undertake audits
- 6.4.2 Clients shall be required to make a contribution to an ESF in order to meet the requirements of the SEG standard, as part of them making their contribution to the recovery of the eel.
- 6.4.3 Clients shall provide data and information to SEG and the CB to enable SEG to operate its Monitoring & Evaluation system.

# **7. How to apply for use of logos and claims**

## **7.1 SEG logo**

- 7.1.1 SEG-related claims and use of the SEG logo are subject to a licensing agreement between SEG and the entity wishing to use the logos or make claims. Licensing is conducted in line with the SEG Claims and Labelling Guide.
- 7.1.2 To apply to use the SEG logo or for details on how to use and apply any claims, contact: [standard@sustainableeelgroup.org](mailto:standard@sustainableeelgroup.org).

## **7.2 ESF logo**

- 7.2.1 For more details on the ESF scheme and how to use it, see: <http://www.esf.international/how-to-use-esf/>.
- 7.2.2 To apply to use the ESF logo contact: [info@esf.international](mailto:info@esf.international).

## 8. Fraudulent use

SEG is committed to upholding the credibility of its programme and will therefore carry out surveillance activities to ensure logo and claims use are in accordance with this guide and licence agreements.

### **SEG shall:**

1. Every year, via its CAB, audit 25% of all fishmongers, markets and restaurant outlets that offer SEG or ESF labelled products and inspect how the products are labelled and advertised. Visited outlets shall rotate from year to year,
2. Every year, via its CAB, audit the SEG or ESF labelled products of 25% of SEG certified client and check the traceability in the supply chain to identify the origin of the product,
3. Investigate any reports SEG receives in relation to potentially fraudulent products,
4. Where labels, claims or origins are faulty or cannot be identified, SEG will take action to stop or correct the situation, for example requesting packaging to be corrected and reprinted or requesting an unscheduled audit. SEG may draw on the support of Conformity Assessment Bodies in carrying out investigations.