

**NATIONAL ELT ACCREDITATION SCHEME LIMITED (NEAS)  
ABN: 29 003 980 667  
MINUTES OF THE AGENT VERIFICATION COMMITTEE  
VIDEOCONFERENCE  
THURSDAY 16 JANUARY 2020 (3.00pm)**

**ATTENDEES**

Dr Patrick Pheasant  
Ms Katherine Olston  
Ms Heather Thomas  
Mr David Yoo  
Ms Jacky Ronan (minutes)

**APOLOGIES**

None

**DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

None

**ITEM STARRING**

None

**INTRODUCTION**

The CEO opened the Agent Verification Committee meeting citing that this was the first of three (so far) scheduled meetings for 2020. In late 2019, the Board approved for the investigation phase of this project to commence. At the 6 February 2020 Board meeting, the CEO will present a summary and a 12-month plan for this project to the Board for approval. The intention of these meetings is for the Committee to act as a sounding board and provide input into the initial research phase, with major project decisions to be made during Board meetings.

**PROPOSED TIMELINE AND MOU WITH ISEAA**

The concept of the initial process is to prepare for a pilot with 2-3 agents to test the endorsement process. This would be a collaborative activity to discuss the proposed process, collect documents and get feedback. The pilot will then lead into a review and then a more formal offer that could be made to ISEAA members, around ICEF ANZA in Adelaide in April. Following this, endorsement could be offered to those other agents not members of ISEAA that want to undertake a full assessment, at a higher price point. The committee agreed the right price points need to be determined for maximum uptake and agent motivations.

The process involves NEAS setting up an independent NEAS endorsed product, owned by NEAS but only offered to ISEAA during the pilot stage. The Committee discussed the appetite for agent verification in the industry, why the process should be NEAS endorsed and how this project aligns with NEAS values. The value was identified as being the traction we have in using our stakeholders to determine the strengths and weaknesses of an organisation. At the next committee meeting, we will look at the required frameworks for agents based on standards. It was suggested to also examine the UOW, Sydney Uni and APC standards for agents and put them on a mapping document so we can identify any gaps. Once this is done, the qualifiers will be able to be determined, and we will be able to develop some loud and clear statements that we can provide to agents.

The CEO advised that the Board Chair has signed the ISEAA MOU but would like committee's endorsement before it goes to Board. The committee gave their endorsement. At the next document iteration with ISEAA, the CEO will raise item 2.5 (sharing information) to clarify what specifically is to be included in such information sharing.

## **REVIEW OF PRICING**

Early feedback on pricing provided to the CEO is that \$1020 per agency is a palatable price point. If we implement a scalable pricing model, we need to do in depth research on agents such as how many counsellors they have, how many offices, how big their operation is etc. It was suggested to have a tiered model based on number of FTE's/counsellors, and charge different levies for 0-5, 5-10, 10-50 etc. If we implement the tiered pricing model, the committee discussed the need to be able to articulate the reasons as to why and it was suggested that this be the costs of staff training. The CEO agreed to also investigate a TPS based model.

The CEO advised on the current breakdown of how the \$1020 price point would be spent in relation to the NES assessor work required. There are currently no physical office visits planned, but virtual office visits via zoom will take place. If we eventually did full endorsement with an ISEAA member, this would include an in-person visit (limited to Australia only).

It was proposed that in future, we approach our members and ask for their agent locations and complete a mapping exercise. We could then approach the top 100 with a value proposition.

## **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The committee discussed the need to be able to identify the difference between verification and endorsement. The task would be to generate a table on what would be an endorsement for an agent versus a verification (rights and privileges, benefits etc). There is also a need to define the names of our offerings appropriately as it may be difficult for people to differentiate between NEAS Endorsed and NEAS Verified. If the perception is that they're both equally as prestigious, people will likely purchase the cheaper option. The CEO will think about the two labels and processes, and how these can be clearer. As a side note, legally, "Verified Agent" is not trademarked by NEAS, but "Endorsed by NEAS" is.

The CEO raised the need to be cautious around price difference on the ISEAA membership. It would be beneficial to get as many onboard as possible in the beginning and then possibly implement a staged price increase over a few years.

The visa refusal rate was identified as missing from the agent information list. This should be included in the agency submission or the request to provide their AL 1, 2 or 3 rating (government risk rating).

For the next meeting, the CEO will provide the size and scope of members and details of how we approach the pilot.

Separately, it was identified that IALC have recently begun using an approved agency tick similar to the NEAS one. This will be investigated by lawyers.

## **CLOSE**

The meeting concluded at 3.50pm

## **NEXT MEETING**

30 January 2020