



ISO/TMB/WG SR
Social Responsibility

Date
2009-12-18
Your date

Reference
Your reference

1(1)

Handled by, phone
Kristina Sandberg, +46 8 555 520 61
E-mail
kristina.sandberg@sis.se

To:
– Nominated experts and observers of ISO/TMB/WG SR

Dear all,

WG SR Leadership Statement

Please find enclosed the WG SR Leadership's Statement of 17 december 2009 on the ISO 26000 project.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank you all for a successful 2009 and to wish you and your families happy holidays!

Yours sincerely,

Secretariat of ISO/TMB/WG SR

Kristina Sandberg

T:\Internationella Sekretariat\ISO\ISO-TMB-WG Social Responsibility\06 Correspondence\Cover letters\2009-12-18 Cover letter, WG SR Leadership Statement.doc 2009-12-21

SIS, Swedish Standards Institute

SIS is the Swedish member of ISO and CEN

Postadress: 118 80 STOCKHOLM
Telefon: 08-555 520 00 Telefax: 08-555 520 01
Postal address: SE-118 80 STOCKHOLM, Sweden
Phone: +46 8 555 520 00 Telefax: +46 8 555 520 01

Besöksadress: Sankt Paulsgatan 6, Stockholm
E-post: info@sis.se
Office address: Sankt Paulsgatan 6, Stockholm
E-mail: info@sis.se

Organisationsnr: 8024100151
V.A.T. No. SE802410015101
www.sis.se

WG SR Leadership Statement – 17 December 2009

Over the past months we have received several questions and suggestions that we would like to address openly to all members of the Working Group. If you need any further clarifications please contact us.

The DIS stage and WG SR's next step in Copenhagen

The ISO/DIS 26000 document has been circulated for 5-month ballot to all member bodies of ISO (comments and voting) and to D-Liaisons of the WG SR (for comments). The ballot opened on September 14, 2009 and will close on February 14, 2010. All votes and comments must be submitted through the ISO e-balloting system (see e-mail of 2009-09-14 from the secretariat)

The votes must be submitted by national bodies and shall be explicit: positive (with or without technical comments), negative, or abstention. If a national body finds the DIS unacceptable, it should vote 'negative' and must state technical reason. The votes and comments shall reflect the consensus position of the members of the NSBs mirror committee, bearing in mind the ISO definition of consensus and that it does not imply unanimity (see WG SR procedure compilation - 2009-01.pdf).

The document is approved if:

- a two-third majority of the votes cast by P-members of WG SR are in favour, and
- not more than one-quarter of the total votes cast (from all ISO member bodies) are negative.

D-liaisons backing will be taken into consideration during Leadership judgement of consensus.

It is important to note that all comments submitted on the DIS ballot will be given fair and equitable treatment regardless if they are submitted by NSBs voting affirmative or negative, or whether they were submitted by NSBs or liaison organizations. Comments submitted with a NO vote will not automatically have a stronger impact. We will adopt the same approach as when we were dealing with comments on the Committee Draft in Quebec, i.e. all comments will be treated equally.

After the DIS ballot has closed, all comments sent in on the DIS ballot will be addressed, analyzed and/or grouped by the IDTF, and traceable records will be produced giving a proposed way forward for each comment submitted on the DIS. This proposed way forward will be presented to the CAG at its meeting in Cape Town in March 2010 and circulated to the full WG prior to the WG SR Plenary meeting in Copenhagen, Denmark on 17 – 21 May 2010. The proposed way

forward will then be discussed in Copenhagen and agreements on way forward be taken by the WG SR (same approach as with previous drafts).

Process after the WG SR Copenhagen meeting

After the Copenhagen meeting in May 2010, the draft standard will be revised by the IDTF based on the agreement made in Copenhagen. Depending on the result of the ongoing DIS ballot there are two main alternative ways forward:

- 1) If the DIS is approved (i.e. accepted to move forward as FDIS), the document will, after being revised based on the agreements made in Copenhagen, be circulated as a Final Draft International Standard (FDIS) for a two month final ballot before publication as an International Standard in the end of 2010.
- 2) If the DIS is not approved (i.e. not accepted to move forward as FDIS), the revised document will be circulated for a second DIS ballot. An additional Plenary meeting would then be needed to address comments received on the second DIS as well as probably two more IDTF meetings, two more Editing Committee meetings and a number of CAG meetings. Depending on the possibilities of a future host to quickly arrange a plenary meeting, publication of the ISO 26000 standard would probably be delayed approximately 12 month.

Question from IDTF to WG SR Secretariat regarding the Annex

The current draft of ISO 26000 lists (in an Annex) a number of other SR-related initiatives and tools that the reader seeking further guidance may want to use. A few of these voluntary initiatives and tools are used for third party certification purposes on local markets. This does not mean that the current draft ISO 26000 recommends or promotes certification or any other specific use of the many listed references in the Annex.

IDTF has from its Tokyo meeting (8 – 10 July 2009) asked the WG SR Secretariat to investigate possibilities and limitations of making the Annex available through the ISO website instead of through the final printed standard (see IDTF N105). The WG SR Secretariat has consulted ISO Central Secretariat and concluded that it is technically possible to publish the annex via the ISO website provided that

- 1) we formalize this decision in Copenhagen and initiate the needed steps, and
- 2) set up a governing body for the maintenance and governance of such a live annex.

We believe the main challenge is point 2 above and have understood that IDTF saw the same main challenge after their Tokyo deliberations. In summary, our

conclusion is that the current consensus position of the WG SR is that the Annex be kept as part of the future printed standard.

Post publication

When the standard is published there is a need for some kind of governing body that oversees developments including, when needed, providing advice on the organization of seminars and conferences. After consultation with CAG we have come to the preliminary conclusion that we should propose that the WG SR Secretariat with CAG as representative body with institutional memory remain in order to handle post publication issues. Stakeholder groups will be asked to confirm its CAG representatives during the Copenhagen meeting to assure proper representation.

It is expected that the ISO/TMB will make a decision at the appropriate time on the future of the WG SR for the purpose of conducting systematic reviews and future revisions to ISO 26000.

ISO/TMB has also set up a Process Evaluation Group (PEG) to investigate responsiveness of the ISO standards development processes to the changing dynamics facing the ISO system in order to strengthen ISO's future standards development procedures. It is anticipated that the PEG will contact members of the WG SR in order to get input on important lessons learned.

The request to make the published ISO 26000 available free of charge

From the outset of the standards development process of ISO 26000, it has been known that ISO and its members charge for standards. The WG SR has suggested that the published ISO 26000 Standard should, as an exception from the normal ISO process, be made available free of charge. This is not in line with ISO sales and pricing policies and so ISO Council, as the only body in ISO that can change such policies, analyzed our arguments related to the important stakeholder engagement processes of this project and some concrete suggestions for the standard's availability. ISO Council carefully reviewed the arguments but decided that ISO 26000 should not be made freely available and that therefore the current pricing policy should be applied.

At the moment there are some stakeholders that have contacted us and argued that unless and until ISO decides to make the published ISO 26000 standard available free of charge, NSBs should vote no to the DIS. On this note, the WG SR Secretariat does not view that such an argument is related to the technical content of the Standard, and therefore is not an appropriate technical justification for a negative vote.

In a recent telephone conference with the ISO Secretary-General, Rob Steele, the WG SR Secretariat was given the opportunity to again explain the uniqueness of the ISO 26000 process and the resulting standard. The WG SR Secretariat explained for example that some stakeholders to the process strongly believe that ISO should find new business models for ISO 26000 as well as reinvest any profits back into the process. Rob Steele listened to the arguments but explained and reconfirmed the ISO Council decision. He also reiterated his support for the efforts of the WG SR and encouraged us all to continue our progress.

Last but not least

We are very much looking forward to seeing you again in Copenhagen in May next year. As in most of our communications we would like to re-emphasize the importance of all participating NSBs to make sure that the local mirror committees and nominated experts are representative of all involved stakeholder groups: NGO, Industry, Government, Service/Support/Research/Others and especially Labour and Consumer.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank you all for the engagement and time you are investing in this process. Over the past months we have received several examples of strong engagement; joint letter from seven D-liaisons to ISOs Technical Management Board, an individual participating country sending letters to other NSBs in order to influence their vote, input from UN on how we can use “sphere of influence” in a more aligned way throughout the document, and even a full stakeholder group sending us their positions on the availability of the future standard.

We are fully committed to upholding the procedures decided by ISO and WG SR for the development of ISO 26000, including that comments are to be handled through agreed channels. We are confident that the procedures in place for this process will capture and handle these stakeholders’ important input.

We have again carefully studied the New Work Item Proposal – the scope and instructions agreed for what we are to deliver from WG SR – and we cannot find any part of this specification that has not been properly embraced by the experts involved. Over the past years the WG SR has drafted a document reflecting the complexity any organization faces when contributing to sustainable development. The resulting document expresses negotiated compromises, for example with regards to length, tone, complexity, wording between international and local norms, and appropriate guidance for both small, medium-sized and large organizations.

We believe that the more than 400 experts directly involved in the process have built a well balanced document and during our next, and hopefully final, WG meeting in Copenhagen we will further improve the draft standard. It is interesting

to note however, that the current draft (DIS), which by decision of ISO Council has been freely available over the past months, has already been tested operationally by several organizations (NGOs, small and large companies, consultants, inter alia). The reports that have reached us so far show that the guidance provided in the DIS has offered great value to many users. The published ISO 26000 will most likely find good dissemination and effect especially in the private sector and small, medium sized organizations.

Users of ISO 26000 (e.g. organisations, facilitating bodies, ISO-member bodies) are expected to adhere to the intention of the standard as expressed in the text of the standard. This means among other things that ISO 26000 should not be used for certification purposes or public claims. Over the past months we have noticed a growing number of occasions where the draft standard has been used for public claims with reference to audit or “certification”. If you come across examples of such misuse we kindly ask you to communicate this to the ISO member body (NSB) in question with a copy to us.

We are aware of the challenges this long and sometimes complex ISO 26000 process puts on you as a participating expert. Hopefully you do not feel that we have tried to rush the process. Our aim is simply to follow the policies and rules set up by WG SR in order for our working group to come to consensus.

Now we are looking forward to the next meeting where we will find consensus around the result of the 5 month long voting and commenting period !

Yours sincerely,

WG SR leadership

Jorge Cajazeira, WG SR Chair
Staffan Söderberg, WG SR Vice-Chair
Kristina Sandberg, WG SR Secretary
Eduardo São Thiago, WG SR Co-Secretary