Participating in the future International Standard ISO 26000 on Social Responsibility

ISO in brief

ISO (International Organization for Standardization), the world's leading developer of International Standards, began operating in 1947. It has a membership of 157[*] national standards bodies from countries large and small, industrialized and developing, in all regions of the world. ISO develops voluntary standards which add value to all types of business operations.

ISO standards make a positive contribution to the world we live in. They ensure vital features such as quality, ecology, safety, economy, reliability, compatibility, interoperability, efficiency and effectiveness. They facilitate trade, spread knowledge, and share technological advances and good management practices. ISO standards also safeguard users and consumers, and make many aspects of their lives simpler.

ISO develops only those standards that are required by the market. This work is carried out by experts coming from the industrial, technical and business sectors which have asked for the standards, and which subsequently put them to use. These experts may be joined by others with relevant knowledge, such as representatives of government agencies, consumer organizations, academia and testing laboratories.

Published under the designation of International Standards, ISO standards represent an international consensus on the state of the art in the technology concerned.

[*] At 1 July 2006

Message from the Chair of the ISO Technical Management Board

We all want to live in a better world – one that is safer, cleaner, sustainable and just. What are we doing to make it happen – as individuals, as organizations and as societies?

ISO, a global network of standards bodies, is uniquely positioned to influence change through its international reach and presence.

Our traditional role was to promote the standardization of products, services, processes, materials and systems. Then we evolved by developing standardized tools for management practice and now we are evolving further to develop standards that address the human aspects.

Today, in the light of ISO strategic vision for 2005-2010, we understand that everything is interconnected and one can no longer differentiate between software and hardware, between product and service, between management tools and the values of the organization. ISO has developed a policy to ensure the global relevance of our work, and today there are few areas more relevant than social responsibility (SR).

ISO's Technical Management Board (TMB), which manages the development of ISO standards, put much thought and effort into launching the SR initiative on a solid base where all SR stakeholders will feel comfortable.

We created an SR Working Group (WG), answering directly to the TMB, with a special structure designed to allow different stakeholder groups to participate without any one group dominating. In addition, developing countries are encouraged to participate through special seminars and funds. The WG is lead by joint leadership team uniting a developing country, Brazil, with a developed country, Sweden. The participation of hundreds of experts from 54 countries and the involvement of both men and women provide critically important diversity.

ISO's initiative to develop International Standard ISO 26000 giving guidance on social responsibility, is a unique opportunity to shape the future.

Ziva Patir

Chair of the ISO Technical Management Board

1

Message from SR Chairs

The world is not yet fair but together we still stand a good chance of eliminating poverty, inhumane conditions and environmental degradation that are still far too common.

As individuals, we all have the opportunity to take some res-ponsibility and it is no longer possible to argue that it is someone else's job to solve global challenges.

One way to engage is to participate in the process of developing the ISO 26000 guidance standard on social responsibility. As in all other initiatives that are currently under way for greater local and global sustainability, the final product will not be better than the chosen process and the people involved. That is why we are working so hard on the multistakeholder process of ISO 26000.

Any organization that wants to improve its social responsibility, must regularly reassess its processes and roles in society. All segments of society can contribute more to sustainability and there is a need for instruments that assist the practitioner to affirm and operationalize the goal of sustainability. There is a need for ISO 26000.

One important capacity of ISO, apart from the ability to handle standards development in an international setting, is the unique channel for disseminating information. We hope that the ISO 26000 standard will be widely implemented and result in many inspired individuals and organizations.

The world is not yet fair but together we still stand a chance of changing this, if only we can reach consensus and move from agenda to action.

Sustainability is a possibility.

Jorge Cajazeira

Chair of the Social Responsibility Working Group, appointed by the Brazilian Standards Institute (ABNT)

Staffan Söderberg

Vice Chair of the Social Responsibility Working Group, appointed by the SIS, Swedish Standards Institute

1 Background :
ISO and Social Responsibility (SR)

The setting for ISO's work on social responsibility lies in the general recognition that SR is essential to the sustainability of an organization. This recognition was expressed both at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit on the Environment and at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) held in South Africa.

1.1 ISO Committee on Consumer Policy (COPOLCO)

In April 2001, the ISO Council asked ISO/COPOLCO to consider the feasibility of ISO's establishing International Standards in the area then referred to as "corporate social responsibility." COPOLCO decided in May 2001 to go ahead. In June 2002, COPOLCO concluded that, from the perspective of the consumer, ISO was well positioned to lead in the development of international SR standards. Consequently, COPOLCO submitted a recommendation to the ISO Council to the effect that ISO establish an advisory group involving all key stakeholders to investigate the issue further.

1.2 ISO Advisory Group on Social Responsibility (SAG)

In early 2003, ISO set up a strategic advisory group (SAG) on social responsibility to help decide whether ISO involvement in the field of SR would add any value to existing initiatives and programmes. The group comprised representatives from around the world and from a wide spectrum of stakeholder interests, including business, government, inter-governmental organizations, labour, consumers and non-governmental organizations. Over 18 months of intensive debate and development, the group prepared a comprehensive report that included an overview of SR initiatives worldwide and identified issues that should be taken into account by ISO. The SAG concluded that ISO should go ahead with work on SR on the condition that a set of key recommendations were met.

3

On 21-22 June 2004, the SAG's work was the major focus of an international ISO conference on social responsibility hosted in Stockholm by the Swedish Standards Institute (SIS). The aim of the conference was to obtain further international input to contribute to ISO's decision on whether to proceed with SR standardization work. The conference was attended by 355 participants from 66 countries, representing the major stakeholder groups. The issues and challenges raised were remarkably in line with those identified in the SAG's report.

1.3 ISO Technical Management Board (TMB)

Given the SAG's report and recommendations, together with the positive and consistent feedback from the conference, the ISO/TMB proposed that a new working group (WG) be established to prepare an International Standard giving guidance on social responsibility. The TMB further assigned the leadership of the working group collectively to the national standards institutes of Brazil (ABNT) and Sweden (SIS). This new system of twinning a developing country member of ISO with a developed country member is one of the measures introduced by the TMB to strengthen the participation of the developing countries that represent 110 of ISO's current total membership of 156 member bodies.

In January 2005, 37 ISO members voted on a New Work Item Proposal (a proposal to develop a new standard) on SR. The New Work Item Proposal is the base document which provides the key guidelines to develop the new standard. A comfortable majority of 32 countries expressed their intention to participate in the work of developing an SR standard.

1.4 New Work Item "Guidance on social responsibility"

Based on New Work Item Proposal "ISO/TMB N 26000"

Scope of standard

- Assist an organization in addressing its social responsibilities.

- Provide practical guidance related to :

  – Operationalizing social responsibility ;

– Identifying and engaging with stakeholders;

– Enhancing credibility of reports and claims made about SR.

- Emphasize performance results and improvements.

- Increase customer satisfaction and confidence.

- Promote common terminology in the SR field.

- Be consistent, and not in conflict, with existing documents, treaties, conventions and other ISO standards.

  Note – ISO and the International Labour Organization (ILO) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to ensure that ISO 26000 is consistent with the ILO conventions.

Type of standard

- The document will be an International Standard providing guidance.

- It will not be intended for third-party certification.

- Throughout the standard, the verb form "should" will be used in preference to "shall".

- Only one standard will be developed.

Working Group under the TMB (ISO/TMB/WG SR)

The TMB created a balanced, multi-stakeholder Working Group (WG) on Social Responsibility.

The WG is made up of experts nominated by ISO member bodies wishing to actively participate, internal ISO/IEC committee liaisons and external liaisons (D-liaisons) which are open to any relevant international or broadly-based regional organization that wishes to participate in the work.

- An ISO member body may nominate a maximum of six experts to serve on the WG. It is desirable that a balanced representation of industry, government, consumers, labour, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other interests be ensured.

- Internal and external liaisons may nominate a maximum of two representatives each to serve on the WG.

Working method

In accordance with the normal ISO working methods, the Working Group will develop a draft standard that represents a consensus of the views of the experts taking part in the Working Group.

5

At the same time, it is expected that the member bodies that nominate experts will also establish national mirror committees (committees established in a given country for sharing information and exchanging views on standardization proposals and projects in a particular area which "mirror" the structure of the international Working Group, in terms of stakeholder representation) and that these mirror committees will establish national positions on the successive drafts developed by the Working Group.

The ultimate aim is that the consensus reached in the Working Group be validated through the member body votes on the Draft International Standard (DIS). Therefore, while the participants in the Working Group will contribute as individual experts and will not be expected to represent national consensus positions, they will nevertheless need to bear in mind national positions on issues that emerge in the Working Group.

2 Stakeholder categories

From the beginning, the ISO/TMB has considered it essential that balanced representation among diverse stakeholders be ensured in the development of SR standards.

In the Working Group, there are six stakeholder categories: Consumers, Government, Industry, Labour, NGOs, and SSRO (service, support, research and others).

Definitions of these categories can be found on the ISO/TMB/WG SR Web site. To determine which stakeholder category is most appropriate for you, see the document under "Organization" at **www.iso.org/sr**. Regarding your participation in the ISO standardization activity on SR, you are kindly requested to contact the national standards body (NSB) of your country. NSB information can be found under "ISO members" at **www.iso.org**

3.1 WG organization

Leadership

The WG is chaired jointly by two national standards bodies : Associação Brasileira de Normas Técnicas (ABNT), Brazil and the SIS, Swedish Standards Institute, Sweden. The Working Group has chosen to establish a Chairs' Advisory Group (CAG). The CAG does not take decisions for the Working Group, but rather identifies issues, holds preliminary discussions on how to address them and, through the Chair, makes recommendations to the Working Group. The CAG is a balanced group representing stakeholder categories, developing and developed countries and both genders.

Standard development

Three Task Groups (TG 4, 5 and 6) will write drafts of the standard and an Editing Committee (EC) will compile, review and edit the documents at each stage of development.

Promotion of the work on Social Responsibility

Broad stakeholder involvement

A specific Task Group (TG 1) has been created within the Working Group to facilitate the participation of experts with limited resources, such as experts from developing countries, non-governmental organizations, relevant organizations in the SSRO category, and consumers.

Open communication

To ensure transparency and openness and to facilitate the provision of WG information, a strategic communication Task Group (TG 2) has been established. The Task Group is also expected to develop supporting tools for disseminating information.

Trustworthy procedures

The operation of the Working Group is guided by the ISO Directives, supplemented with special guidelines established by the ISO/TMB. A specific Task Group (TG 3) has also been established
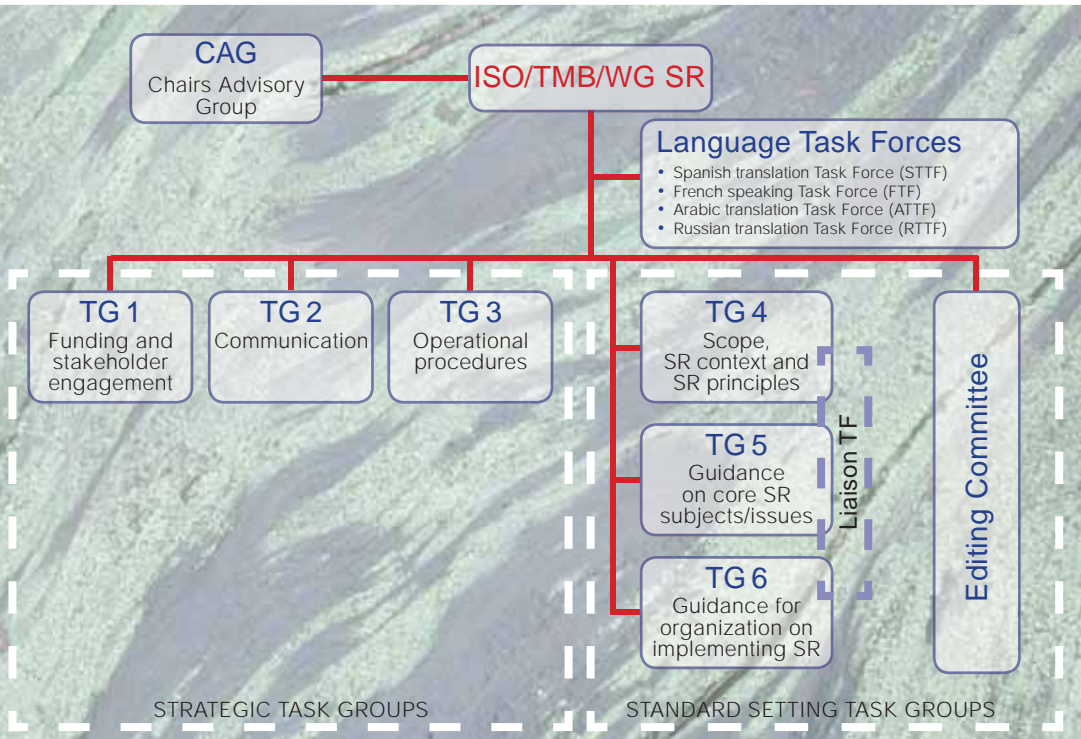
to provide internal guidance on those special working procedures established by the ISO/TMB.

Other subgroups

Other subgroups that have been established are : three task groups for standard writing and a liaison task force to co-ordinate on issues that may be adressed in more than one of the standard writing task groups, an editing committee and four different language task forces.

Organizational structure of the Working Group

STRATEGIC TASK GROUPS

- CAG — Chairs Advisory Group
- ISO/TMB/WG SR
- Language Task Forces
  - Spanish translation Task Force (STTF)
  - French speaking Task Force (FTF)
  - Arabic translation Task Force (ATTF)
  - Russian translation Task Force (RTTF)
- TG 1 — Funding and stakeholder engagement
- TG 2 — Communication
- TG 3 — Operational procedures
- TG 4 — Scope, SR context and SR principles
- TG 5 — Guidance on core SR subjects/issues
- TG 6 — Guidance for organization on implementing SR
- Liaison TF
- Editing Committee

STANDARD SETTING TASK GROUPS

3.2 Project plan – Producing the standard, ISO 26000

8

– A first working draft (WD 1) : completed March 2006.

– A Draft International Standard (DIS) : to be ready July 2008.

– A Final Draft International Standard (FDIS) : to be ready November 2008.

– The International Standard : to be published in December 2008.

4 Structure of ISO 26000

0 Introduction

The introduction will give information on the content of the guidance standard and the reasons prompting its preparation.

1 Scope

This section will define the subject of the guidance standard, its coverage and the limits of its applicability.

2 Normative references

This section will contain a list of documents, if any, which are to be read in conjunction with the guidance standard.

3 Terms and definitions

This section will identify terms used in the guidance standard that require definition and will provide such definitions.

4 The SR context in which all organizations operate

This section will discuss the historical and contemporary contexts of SR. It will also address questions arising out of the nature of the concept of SR. Relevant stakeholder issues are to be addressed in this section.

5 SR principles relevant to organizations

This section will identify a set of SR principles drawn from a variety of sources and will provide guidance on these principles. Relevant stakeholder issues are to be addressed in this section.

6 Guidance on core SR subjects/issues

This section will provide separate guidance on a range of core subjects/issues and relate them to organizations. Relevant stakeholder issues are to be addressed in this section.

7 Guidance for organizations on implementing SR

This section will provide practical guidance on implementing and integrating SR in the organization, including, for example, on policies, practices, approaches, issue identification, performance assessment, reporting and communication. Relevant stakeholder issues are to be addressed in this section.

8 Guidance annexes

The guidance standard may include annexes if needed.

Bibliography

5 ISO/TMB/WG SR Membership

The membership in the ISO Working Group on SR consists of experts from ISO member national standards bodies and from liaison organizations.

Membership is limited to a maximum of six experts per national standards body (NSB) and two experts per liaison organization.

The following ISO member bodies have nominated experts to the Working Group :

• At 1 November 2006

Country	NSB	Country	NSB
Argentina	IRAM	Kazakhstan	KAZMEMST
Armenia	SARM	Kenya	KEBS
Australia	SA	Republic of Korea	KATS
Azerbaijan	AZSTAND	Malaysia	DSM
Austria	ON	Mauritius	MSB
Belarus	BELST	Mexico	DGN
Belgium	IBN	Morocco	SNIMA
Brazil	ABNT	Netherlands	NEN
Canada	SCC	New Zealand	SNZ
Chile	INN	Nigeria	SON
China	SAC	Norway	SN
Colombia	ICONTEC	Panama	COPANIT
Costa Rica	INTECO	Philippines	BPS
Côte d'Ivoire	CODINORM	Poland	PKN
Cuba	NC	Portugal	IPQ
Czech Republic	CNI	Russian Federation	GOST R
Denmark	DS	Saint Lucia	SLBS
Egypt	EOS	Singapore	SPRING SG
Finland	SFS	South Africa	SABS
France	AFNOR	Spain	AENOR
Germany	DIN	Sweden	SIS
Ghana	GSB	Switzerland	SNV
Greece	ELOT	Thailand	TISI
India	BIS	Turkey	TSE
Indonesia	BSN	United Kingdom	BSI
Iran	ISIRI	Uruguay	UNIT
Ireland	NSAI	USA	ANSI
Israel	SII	Venezuela	FONDONORMA
Italy	UNI	Vietnam	TCVN
Jamaica	JBS	Zimbabwe	SAZ
Japan	JISC		

The following organizations are liaison members
of the Working Group and have nominated experts :

Name	Acronym
AccountAbility	
African Institute of Corporate Citizenship	AICC
The Business and Industry Advisory Committee to the OECD	BIAC
Centre for Corporate Social Responsibility	CCSR
Consumers International	CI
European Commission	EC
Ecologists Linked for Organizing Grassroots Initiatives and Action	ECOLOGIA
EIRIS Foundation & ethical Investment Research Services Ltd	EIRIS
Forum Empresa/Ethos Institute	
Global Reporting Initiative	GRI
International Chamber of Commerce	ICC
International Confederation of Free Trade Unions	ICFTU
International Council of Mining and Metals	ICMM
Institute for Energy and Environment of the French speaking countries	IEPF
International Federation of Standards Users	IFAN
International Institute for Environmental and Development	IIED
International Institute for Sustainable Development	IISD
International Labour Organization	ILO
Interamerican CSR Network	
International Organization of Employers	IOE
International Petroleum Industry Environmental Conservation Association	IPIECA
International Social and Environmental Accreditation and Labelling	ISEAL Alliance
European Office of Crafts, Trades and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises for Standardisation	NORMAPME
Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development	OECD
International Association of Oil and Gas Producers	OGP
Red Puentes	
Social Accountability International	SAI
Transparency International	
United Nations Division for Sustainable Development	UNSD
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development	UNCTAD
UN Global Compact	
United Nations Industrial Development Organization	UNIDO
World Business Council on Sustainable Development	WBCSD
World Health Organization	WHO

The following ISO technical committees have internal liaison
status with the Working Group :

Number of ISO/TC	
ISO/TC 173	Assistive products for persons with disability
ISO/TC 207	Environmental Management

6 Participating in the ISO SR standard's development process

Readers are probably aware that, for the purpose of the SR standard, ISO has adopted a number of innovations to encourage and facilitate participation by people who in the past were seldom involved directly in ISO work. It is hoped that expanded participation will both make this standard better and provide practical experience that will facilitate the involvement of new voices in future ISO work.

Your voice is sought. So how can you make it heard? At the international level, you can participate in the ISO Working Group on SR, which develops the standard. At the national or regional level, you can participate in "mirror committees" or other forums for coordinating positions on the standard. For more information, which you will need in order to develop your strategies, a good starting point would be to read the information provided by ISO using the links given on the back cover to acquaint yourself with unfamiliar terms, and to communicate with your NSB and the Working Group.

7 Participating in the ISO SR Working Group

An ISO member body may nominate up to six experts – one for each of the stakeholder categories of industry, government, labour, consumers, NGOs and SSRO (service, support, research and others) – to participate in the Working Group and will be considered to be a P-member for any subsequent member body consultations. A D-liaison organization may nominate up to two experts. Also, ISO member bodies, D-liaisons, ISO O-members, and ISO C-members may choose to nominate observers to the Working Group. Organizations who nominate observers and not experts will be considered O-members. (See Glossary at the end of this brochure.)

As an individual, the only way to participate directly in the ISO SR Working Group is as an expert.

Experts in the Working Group act in a personal capacity and not as official representatives of the member body or D-liaison organization by which they were appointed. However, it is recommended that they keep close contact with that member body or liaison organization in order to inform them about the progress of

the work and of the various opinions in the Working Group at the earliest possible stage.

An observer has the right to follow the proceedings of the Working Group. Being an observer is a good opportunity to learn about the Working Group.

A specific Task Group (TG 1) has been created within the Working Group to facilitate the participation of experts with limited resources, such as experts from developing countries, non-governmental organizations, relevant organizations in the SSRO category, and consumers.

8 Participating at the national level

It is also possible to take part in the development of an International Standard by getting involved at the national level. Each member body represented in the Working Group is expected to establish a national committee to coordinate its input into the international process. This committee will 'mirror' the ISO Working Group on SR at the national level and is therefore called a "mirror committee."

A mirror committee is organized by the ISO member body. It is recommended that the membership of the committee reflect the stakeholder groups present at the international level.

The national mirror committee will be consulted when the member body votes on the draft standard at the DIS (Draft International Standard) and FDIS (Final Draft International Standard) stages and when P-members are invited to comment on a CD (Committee Draft). The committee may also forward the draft standard to national interested parties and collect their comments.

SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
COOPERATION AGENCY

Further information

ISO/TMB/WG on Social Responsibility :
www.iso.org/sr

The working documents of the WG :
www.iso.org/wgsr

International Organization for Standardization :
www.iso.org