

COMMUNIQUÉ 6th Annual Meeting of ISO/TC 207 on Environmental Management

ISO/TC 207 held its 6th Plenary meeting in San Francisco, USA from June 14-21, 1998. Representatives of standards organizations from 53 countries attended the meetings. In addition, 17 Liaison Organizations participated in the discussions. The meetings were very well organized, and members thanked the US hosts for their super job and cordiality.

The plenary concluded with 30 resolutions, the most prominent of which were those resolutions relating to efforts undertaken to make the ISO 14000 series of standards and the ISO 9000 quality standards series more compatible. The following resolutions addressed aspects of this issue:

- The Subcommittee (SC) 1, *Environmental management systems*, resolutions to initiate the review of ISO 14001 and ISO 14004, focusing on compatibility issues and the special interests of small and medium enterprises (SMEs).
- An SC 2, *Environmental auditing and related environmental investigations*, resolution confirmed that the New Work Item Proposal for a common ISO 9000/ISO 14000 auditing standard, should continue to be balloted, with the ballot closing by the end of July 1998.
- Another resolution supported the activities of the Joint Coordination Group (JCG) between ISO/TC 207 and ISO/TC 176, which has been given the job of tackling compatibility issues. The resolution further endorsed expanding the JCG membership to include user interests, and representation from ISO's Technical Management Board (TMB) and ISO/CASCO (Committee on conformity assessment).
- A final resolution emphasized the need for greater and more effective communication between the TMB and TC 207 on the compatibility issue.

Five other key Resolutions addressed the following:

- Authorizing a contact group to investigate issues raised by NGO representatives and by developing countries on the participation of interested parties and the achievement of consensus. Open workshops with the above groups in future plenaries were encouraged;
- Disbanding WG2 on forestry after the successful completion of its Type III Technical report;
- Establishment of an ad hoc group to investigate the need and feasibility for an ISO document on Design For the Environment and to report back to TC 207; and
- Encouraging a three-month review of the Climate Change Task Force report by ISO/TC 207. The report will then be transmitted to the ISO Central Secretariat with a recommendation that it be distributed to appropriate organizations. The Task Force will reconvene to address further developments at the next TC 207 plenary session.
- Re-appointment of the Chairs of SCs 1 (Ossie Dodds), 2 (John Stans), and 4 (Dorothy Bowers, for a term of three years).

The 6th meeting of ISO/TC 207, *Environmental management*, was a great success, and the TC looks forward to a very productive year ahead.

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The ISO/TC 207 SCs and working groups (WGs) also had a productive series of meetings in between the two plenary sessions. Highlights from the SC reports presented to the final plenary are presented below:

SC 1, ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

SC 1 met on June 16-19th and held one day workshops on ISO 14001 implementation issues and SMEs, and an open session on the development of the ISO 9001:2000 and ISO 9004:2000 drafts. Highlights are as follows:

Compatibility between the environmental and quality management system standards

SC 1 agreed that a review of ISO 14001 and ISO 14004 should start in mid 1998, in order to gather information on the use of these two standards. Subject to the outcome of this review, meetings of WG 1 and WG 2 would be convened in June 1999 to address, as a priority, any changes necessary to ISO 14001:1996 and ISO 14004:1996 that will achieve greater compatibility with the anticipated ISO 9001:2000 and ISO 9004:2000.

SME issues

In response to the conclusions reached at the SC 1 SME workshop, SC 1 agreed that no new ISO standards or other ISO documents were required for SMEs at this time. However, it was decided that the review of ISO 14001: 1996 and ISO 14004: 1996 should, in addition to compatibility issues, also focus on SME concerns, which could then be addressed in any subsequent revision of the standards.

Interpretation procedure

Finalization of an interpretation procedure for ISO 14001 was achieved. The key elements are the provision of interpretation of ISO 14001 by National Standards Bodies which can then be reviewed annually by SC 1 and a mechanism by which Liaison Bodies and National Standards Bodies may request interpretation of ISO 14001 by SC 1.

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SC 2, ENVIRONMENTAL AUDITING

SC 2 met on June 18. SC 2 was updated on the progress made by WG 4 in developing a working draft for an ISO standard on *Environmental Assessment of Sites and Entities*. This standard will provide guidance on the assessment of environment related business risks of sites and entities (e.g. in take-over situations). It is expected that a Committee Draft for comments will be circulated in early 1999.

The SC 2 Secretary reported on experiences with the use of ISO 14010, 14011 and 14012, which were published in 1996. The SC accepted it as an interim report, and requested that the Secretary continue to monitor and report on this topic. More detailed information to support the review process of these standards needs to be gathered. The Secretary further reported on experiences with compliance audits and audits of environmental statements. It was concluded that there is no urgent need to start any ISO activities for these types of audits.

A large part of the meeting was devoted to discussing the report of the Common Study Group (CSG) on Auditing and the New Work Item Proposal to develop a common standard for environmental and quality auditing. The CSG, which is comprised of TC 207/SC 2 and ISO/TC 176/SC 3, was established in Kyoto (1997) to investigate market needs and options to further align and possibly integrate the standards on quality and environmental auditing. In its final report, the CSG concluded that the preferred option would be a standard consisting of a common core, with satellites included for quality and environment (as may be necessary). In addition, ISO/TAG 12 and the TMB had supported the concept of a common auditing standard. Subsequently, the secretariats of both SCs involved had circulated a NWIP for the development of such a common standard. At the meeting, many arguments both for and against the idea of a common standard were provided. Various countries argued that there is no market need for a common standard at present since the current separate standards are already compatible and can be jointly implemented. Other countries had different

views. They considered that ISO should be able to deliver one common standard since, in practice, both internal and external quality and environmental audits are increasingly being conducted in a combined form. Finally, it was decided to extend the closing date for the ballot on the NWIP to the end of July 1998, to provide countries with a better opportunity to reconsider their positions, taking into account the discussions in San Francisco. In addition, a resolution was accepted concerning various procedural aspects on the common standard development project, (e.g. the Joint Working Group be led by two co-convenors and both SCs involved be equally treated in the ballot procedures).

Finally, consideration was given to cooperation with ISO/TC 176/SC 3 in case the ballot on the NWIP turns out to be negative. In that case, SC 2 comments would be incorporated with those relating to the Committee Draft for the revision of ISO 10011. SC 2 further agreed that, in the event of disapproval of the NWIP, the CSG be reinstated to maintain communications with TC 176/SC 3. It will also continue to provide recommendations to both SCs with the goal of greater compatibility and alignment.

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SC 3, ENVIRONMENTAL LABELLING

The following major decisions were taken at the SC 3 plenary session in San Francisco on 1998-06-20:

Technical Report on Type III Environmental Declarations:

SC 3 agreed to further progress the work on Type III environmental declarations as a Technical Report rather than as a Standard. Ms Laura Beron of Argentina has been appointed as Convenor of the Task Group and Sweden will provide the Secretariat. The project is aimed for completion by next year's plenary.

DIS 14024:

Voting on DIS 14024 *Environmental labels and declarations – Environmental labelling Type I – Guiding Principles and Procedures* closed on 23 March 1998 and the comments were considered at the San Francisco meeting. It is now ready for release as an FDIS.

Voting at Meetings:

SC 3 agreed to complete an investigation and set up special conditions that would need to be met prior to allowing CDs to be raised to DIS status by vote at a plenary meeting (see Resolution 21/98).

Reference to ISO 14020:

Because of concern about the current misuse of some certification marks implying that the environmental aspects of products have been independently assessed against criteria when they have not, SC 3 has suggested that other SCs might usefully make reference to ISO 14020, when it is published, to provide guidance on these matters.

The next SC 3 meeting will be held in Korea in 1999, however, there will be working group meetings in Sydney towards the end of this year.

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SC 4, ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

SC 4 met on June 17-19 in San Francisco, and addressed the following items of business:

- SC 4 agreed to request the ISO/TC 207 appoint Dorothy Bowers to serve an additional three-year term of office as ISO/TC 207/SC 4 Chair.

- SC 4 did not approve of the new work item proposal from Sweden for an ISO standard on environmental performance assessment (document ISO/TC 207/SC 4 N256).
- Based on the favorable results of voting on document ISO/TC 207/SC 4 N251, the subcommittee agreed to form ISO/TC 207/SC 4/WG 3 with the following title and terms of reference:
Title: Development of ISO TR 14032
Terms of reference: To develop an ISO Type 3 Technical Report providing examples of varying complexity which illustrate the use of the EPE guidance in ISO 14031.
- SC 4 agreed to assign the convenorship of ISO/TC 207/SC 4/WG 3 to Denmark, and appointed Mr. Kristian Loekkegaard to serve as convenor of this working group on behalf of Denmark.
- SC 4 agreed to its schedule of work, with voting on ISO/DIS 14031 to close on 1998-08-19, submission of examples for ISO TR 14032 due on 1998-09-01, meeting in December to prepare the ISO/FDIS 14031 and ISO TR 14032 texts for voting to take place in the first quarter of 1999, with final publication of both documents during the second quarter of 1999.
- SC 4 agreed to hold its next two meetings on 1998-12-10/15 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and during 1999-06-08/14 in Seoul, Republic of Korea in conjunction with meetings of ISO/TC 207 and its subgroups.

ISO/TC 207/SC 4/WG 3 also met for two days during the 1998-06-17/19 period to address administrative details to organize its work, such as the:

- intent of ISO TR 14032;
- working criteria for acceptance of examples to be included in ISO TR 14032;
- format for presentation of examples to be included in ISO TR 14032;
- formation and membership of an editing group to assist in the development of the technical report; and
- the schedule and process for the working group and the editing group to conduct their efforts.

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SC 5, ENVIRONMENTAL LIFE CYCLE ASSESSMENT

SC 5 met on June 15th and 19th, 1998.

The major achievements that SC 5 concluded are as follows:

- The document on "Goal and scope definition and inventory analysis" is at its final stage, actually under FDIS ballot until 11th August 1998 (ISO/FDIS 14041);
- ISO/CD 14042.3 on "Life cycle assessment" was discussed. A final session will be held on this subject in September. Its purpose will be to harmonize the text, and make it consistent. After this meeting, the document should progress to DIS stage;
- ISO/CD 14043.2 on "Life cycle interpretation" has been reviewed and will progress to DIS stage; and
- Work on the LCA data documentation format, focusing on LCI, Inventory data, will begin under the umbrella of SC 5/WG2/WG3. A Task Force was created. It will comprise experts with skills in LCA and data format.

New Work for SC 5

SC 5 agreed to circulate, within its members, the U.K. proposal for an ISO Type 3 Technical Report - Illustrative examples on how to apply ISO 14042 - *Life Cycle assessment - Life cycle impact assessment (LCIA)*.

Liaison

SC 5 agreed to establish a liaison group between SC 5 and SC 3.

In conclusion, the SC 5 meetings were very successful.

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SC 6, TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

ISO/TC 207/SC 6 held its eleventh meeting in San Francisco, June 15-20, 1998. At the San Francisco meeting, two Ad Hoc Groups were active:

- AHG1 discussed terms and definitions originating from SC 2, SC 3, SC 4, and SC 5 of TC 207. SC 6 comments will be submitted following these discussions.
- AHG2 discussed terms and definitions related to the coordination process with ISO/TC 176, primarily related to auditing and management systems. A report will be submitted to the relevant committees within ISO/TC 207 and made available to the TC 207 participants in the coordinating groups.

The issues that were discussed in the Ad Hoc Groups were reported to the SC 6 Plenary, and both AHG reports were approved by SC 6.

- ISO 14050 was published as an International Standard in May 1998. Unfortunately, a small number of minor last-minute corrections that were submitted to ISO Central Secretariat were not taken into account due to a communication error. Information about these errors will be included in the minutes of the ISO/TC 207/SC 6 meeting and thus made available to the members.
- ISO/TC 207/SC 6 decided to circulate an Amendment to ISO 14050 for CD ballot shortly after the San Francisco meeting. SC 6 will, however, also investigate the option of publishing a second edition of ISO 14050 including the terms and definitions intended for the amendment.
- ISO/TC 207/SC 6 and ISO/TC 176/SC 1 have formed a Joint Advisory Group (JAG) with members from both committees. The work in the JAG has so far been conducted by correspondence.
- The Chair of ISO/TC 207/SC 6 included in his report to the ISO/TC 207 Plenary, that the role of the subcommittee could be seen in two perspectives:
 - The ISO/IEC Directives specify certain rules for the work with and the presentation of terminology in International Standards. Many of the contributions from SC 6 are intended to ensure that TC 207 standards adhere to these rules.
 - SC 6 studies documents originating from all TC 207 Sub-committees and Working Groups. In reporting on internal inconsistencies in the terminology, SC 6 hopes to contribute to internal coordination within TC 207.
- The Chair also stressed that terminology work has its own methodology, which is supported by a set of International Standards from ISO/TC 37. He further indicated that members of ISO/TC 207/SC 6, as well as members of other groups within TC 207, have expressed an interest in an introduction to the methodology of terminology work. To meet such expectations he made an offer that SC 6 arrange an open Workshop on terminology work during the next meeting of TC 207.

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