

## Revising ISO 14001 and ISO 14004

by Oswald A. Dodds, Chair TC 207, *Environmental management*, Subcommittee SC 1, *Environmental management systems*

*To ensure that ISO standards represent the state of the art, ISO's rules require its technical committees to review the standards they have developed within five years of their publication and to decide whether to revise, confirm or withdraw them.*

ISO's environmental management system (EMS) standards ISO 14001 (*EMS specification and guidance for use*) and ISO 14004 (*general guidelines on EMS principles, systems and supporting technologies*) are no exceptions to the rule. Published in 1996, they are now being revised by Subcommittee (SC) 1 of ISO technical committee ISO/TC 207, *Environmental management*, which developed the original versions.

In addition to ISO's five-year review requirement, the following issues came into play during the discussions preceding the review :

- the overwhelming desire of the writers of the standards to ensure compatibility with the ISO 9000 series standards, which were undergoing a major revision at the time ISO 14001 and ISO 14004 were first published ;
- the need to ensure that the standards are clear in their requirements and content;
- the need to reflect experience in the use of ISO 14001 and ISO 14004 ;
- the need to ensure that the standards can be used and understood by all types and sizes of organization worldwide.

SC 1 decided to survey the national delegations that make up the subcommittee about the need for and possible approach to a revision of both standards and this took place in 1998. Thirty-one of the then 47 participating "P" members (ISO technical committees also have observer "O" members, who do not vote) of ISO/TC 207/SC 1 supported revising the standards with most of them preferring to see a wide-ranging



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revision.

At the same time, concerns existed (and still do) that such an early revision could cause confusion or uncertainty among the potential users of the standards. Therefore, SC 1 decided to limit the revisions to the following :

- enhancing compatibility between ISO 14001 and ISO 9001:2000, and
- improving the clarity of the 1996 texts.

This decision was designed to reassure the marketplace, assist existing users and help countries only recently becoming aware of and involved in the development and use of the standards.

In the case of ISO 14004, the scope of the revision was defined as follows :

- follow and remain consistent with the revisions of ISO 14001,

collection of statistical data for electronic information resources and electronic delivery as well as for traditional library services. This ISO standard gives library managers with performance indicators which can be used as a base for strategic planning, decision-making and funding, review and formulating policy.

ISO 2789 will also help libraries and information services in the compilation of statistics at the regional, national and international levels so that they can be truly comparable between countries and over time.

This third edition, which replaces ISO 2789:1991, has been updated to take into account new methods of sampling for library services, and gives an account of new developments in library practice, particularly those concerned with electronic resources and automation.

"The main challenge linked to the revision was to identify and define statistics for the 'digital library'," said Dr. Poll, convenor of the working group that developed the new standard. "The solution was to add those data and definitions of new electronic information services which will hopefully remain stable over several years."

The new standard is likely to be used by all types of libraries and information services, regardless of setting, user group and characteristics (e.g. structure, funding, governance, etc.)

ISO 2789:2003 is the work of ISO technical committee ISO/TC 46, *Information and documentation*, subcommittee SC 8, *Quality – Statistics and performance evaluation*, working group WG 2, *International library statistics*. □

- improve the clarity of the text,
- reflect and integrate the experience of users,
- ensure that the document can be used by and is relevant to small and medium enterprises (SME's).

Terms of reference for the revisions were agreed and the work got underway in 1999-2000. The original work plan showed that the task should be completed during 2003. It is now seen as more likely that the task will be completed during 2004.

### The revision process

Two working groups have been set up, each assigned the revision of one of the standards. They use many techniques, ranging from general brainstorming sessions to specific issue discussions in small and large groups, not to forget focussed task groups looking at a particular element (or even phrase) in one of the standards.

We have been through rough drafts, working drafts, editing groups, and many more! We have had our “moments” en route to the present position, but that is all part of the process of consensus-building, which is at the core of the ISO process.

Currently, we are in the middle of a four-month (approximately) period for Committee Draft (CD) ballot/comments that will hopefully lead to a Draft International Standard (DIS) for both revised documents following meetings scheduled to take place in Bali, Indonesia in late June/early July 2003.

I should point out that through this activity we have had the full support and

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cooperation of our colleagues from ISO/TC 176/SC 2 – the subcommittee responsible for ISO 9001:2000. Several years ago, during their own revision activity, a joint group was established to deal with compatibility issues and participants in that group (the Joint Task Group) have attended each other’s meetings, offering comments to aid the compatibility improvements of ISO’s quality and environmental management system standards.

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### Key revisions

Examples of key changes proposed to ISO 14001 include the following:

- changes to the diagram (Figure 1) to show the Plan-Do-Check-Act methodology and the addition of a note of explanation and reference to the process approach used in ISO 9001:2000;
- amendments to and the addition of new definitions for compatibility, and enhancement and clarity of meaning;
- the explicit requirement to define the scope of the EMS has been moved from the Introduction of the existing version of the standard to clause 4.1;
- the requirement “for the Policy to be appropriate to the nature, scale and environmental impacts” will now apply to the “activities, products and services that are within the defined scope of its EMS”;
- the phrases “employees” and “members” are to be replaced by the phrase “all persons working for or on behalf of the organization”;

- the Legal and other requirements clause is to include an explicit provision “to ensure that legal requirements are considered in developing, implementing and maintaining (an organization’s) EMS”;
- the clauses in the 1996 edition that refer to Objectives and Targets and Environmental Management programme are to be combined in order to aid understanding;
- the clauses on Structure and responsibility, and Training, awareness and competence have been revised to clarify their purpose and make them more understandable for users;



*... and “improving the clarity of the 1996 texts”.*

- the requirement for specific documented procedures is to be reduced to that required for operational control purposes. In all other cases, the need for documentation is to be covered by a revised Documentation clause that includes requirements for
  - documented environmental policy, objectives and targets,
  - a description of the main elements of the EMS and their interaction and reference to related documents,
  - documents required by this International Standard,
  - documents determined by the organization to be necessary to ensure the effective planning, operation and control of processes that relate to its significant environmental aspects, and

- records required by this International Standard.
- the requirement to evaluate legal compliance periodically is to be separated from the monitoring and measurement clause to ensure that it receives appropriate attention by users ;
- the EMS audit clause will be amended to emphasize that the requirement is for an internal process (not to be confused with other audit-type activities) ;
- *Annex A*: the guidance offered on the use of ISO 14001, has been revised to fit with the changes to the requirements and to provide guidance based on experience and need, and
- *Annex B*: informative tables showing links between ISO 9001:2000 and ISO 14001:200X will be updated as the revision progresses.

Space limitations preclude a more detailed explanation of proposed changes, as they are many and detailed. All of them are designed to :

- improve the clarity of the 1996 text,
- improve further compatibility between ISO 9001:2000 and ISO 14001:200X,
- ensure easier translation and use around the world, and
- avoid new requirements being introduced (beyond any changes needed to implement the other bullet points above).

Clearly, with both ISO 14001 and ISO 14004, the views of ISO national member institutes will have to be accommodated as we move to finalize the revised standards – and clearly too, the ballot results will be significant in how and when we move to finalize the process and ask ISO to publish the new editions.

I am optimistic that we can achieve publication during 2004 – later than originally expected, but given the nature of the task and the considerable interest and involvement in our discussions, perhaps not entirely unexpected. □

#### About the author



Oswald A. Dodds, MBE, is chairman of ISO technical committee ISO/TC 207's Subcommittee 1, which is revising ISO 14001 and ISO 14004, and a member of the working group dealing specifically with ISO 14001. He is co-leader of the ISO/TC 207 Group on Corporate Social Responsibility, TC 207 liaison representative to ISO/CASCO, Committee on conformity assessment, and leader of the United Kingdom delegation to ISO/TC 207. He is also active in standardization at all levels within the British Standards Institution (BSI) and the European Committee for Standardization (CEN). Former executive director of a large British local government authority, Oswald Dodds now runs his own business support company, Osanda.

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## ISO 9000 guidelines for medical laboratories

ISO has published guidelines for medical laboratories for implementing quality management systems based on ISO 9001:2000.

“The new standard will guide laboratories to organize their operation efficiently”, said John Zlockie, Secretary of the technical committee which developed the new standard. “It will help them to comply with regulatory requirements, to meet the expectations of their clients and customers and, most importantly, to improve or maintain their service to patients.”

ISO 15189:2003, *Medical laboratories – Particular requirements for quality and competence*, provides a framework for the design and improvement of process-based quality management systems by medical laboratories. It contains much of the text of ISO 9001:2000, supplemented by specific guidance for its implementation in laboratories based on ISO 17025:1999, *General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories*.

The new standard is intended to promote a common approach to the quality management of medical laboratories and to all aspects of its operation, from patient preparation and identification to the collection and examination of clinical samples.

According to John Zlockie, ISO 15189 will prove useful to accreditation bodies engaged in the recognition of the competence of medical laboratories as a basis for their activities.

“ISO 15189 will be an important template for assessing and recognizing the competence of medical laboratories in their technical capacity and the effective