

Systematic review of ISO 26000

The "systematic review" of ISO 26000 takes place every three years.

Following an inconclusive vote of ISO national standards bodies in the Spring of 2017 (out of 163 ISO members, only 12 voted to "revise" the guidance; 11 voted to "confirm" the guidance; and 4 abstained), the ISO "Technical Management Board" will decide on 19 September 2017 on whether to "revise" or "confirm" ISO 26000 for another three years.

We understand that the Swedish ISO member, [SIS](#), is preparing an advocacy paper to argue why ISO 26000 should be "revised". This is not yet public.

Our concerns / position

- Only 12 votes to "revise" ISO 26000 (just 7 per cent of the 163 members) is not a mandate to revise the guidance, even a "light revision" as some have suggested.
- The guidance is currently in line with other authoritative standards including the UNGPs.
- Revising ISO 26000 now is illogical given the very recent development of "[IWA 26:2017 - Using ISO 26000 in management systems](#)" (in August 2017) – which aims to improve the performance of a management system by incorporating social responsibility guidance and improve social responsibility performance by using a structured management system approach.
- Contrary to ISO's claim that it is a "popular standard", we understand that it has only been downloaded some 2,000 + times in total and that very few companies use it or wish to have it revised (where is the business demand for this?).
- Revising ISO 26000 could precipitate a major substance change to the guidance so that it becomes standardized; certifiable; subject to audit; and/or used for regulatory or contractual purposes. This would not advance social responsibility but merely add unhelpful burdens on companies, especially SMEs.
- Revising ISO 26000 would likely result in the creation of a new committee, that is not properly structured, and the organisation of endless global meetings (no costs covered) in far flung places. In the past, the IOE and its members have endured long, unproductive and expensive meetings on this guidance and we do not see the merit in revising it in any form.
- The Post Publication Organization (PPO) – comprising the leadership of the Working Group that was disbanded after finalising ISO 26000 and created to provide support and expertise for users – is not properly structured, nor is it mandated to provide best guidance to implement ISO 26000. To date, its outcomes have been disappointing. This reflects directly on ISO and, if anything, the "systematic review" should be used to improve the PPO's governance. If the PPO were to be properly structured as a truly multi-stakeholder initiative with a clear mandate, the full potential of ISO could be realised.
- Any revision of ISO 26000 would break the hard-won consensus of 2010 and greatly jeopardise the guidance's standing and impact. ISO 26000 already suffers misuse for certification, it is lengthy and complex and it is oriented towards larger organisations.
- ISO's expertise lies in creating standards on specific products in the manufacturing, engineering and technology sectors, not in complex and multi-faceted issues related to social responsibility. It has not been engaged in the development and implementation of other authoritative human rights and labour standards and any

revision would lead to an unhelpful outcome. Other international organisations have complained that engaging with ISO in the past has been extremely difficult and, at times, futile.

- Furthermore, current proposals to "revise" ISO 26000 and create a new Technical Committee on Social Responsibility suggest an effort to give an alternative revenue stream for ISO itself (they charge for use of their standards) and the consultants who advise companies of them (i.e: ISO 26000 is long, complex and difficult to read and implement).

Requested action:

Please get in touch ASAP with your country's member of the [ISO Technical Management Board \(TMB\)](#) and lobby them to "confirm" ISO 26000 during the meeting on 19 September 2017 and not "revise" it (not even a "light revision").

- Chairperson (until end 2018): Mr Piet-Hein Daverveldt (Netherlands) - Managing Director of the [Royal Netherlands Standardisation Institute \(NEN\)](#)
- [ABNT - Brazil \(2017\)](#)
- [AFNOR - France \(2017\)](#)
- [ANSI - USA \(2018\)](#)
- [BSI - United Kingdom \(2018\)](#)
- [DIN - Germany \(2018\)](#)
- [DSM - Malaysia \(2017\)](#)
- [GOST R - Russian Federation \(2018\)](#)
- [JISC - Japan \(2019\)](#)
- [KATS - Republic of Korea \(2018\)](#)
- [SA - Australia \(2019\)](#)
- [SABS - South Africa \(2017\)](#)
- [SAC - China \(2017\)](#)
- [SIS - Sweden \(2017\)](#)
- [SFS - Finland \(2017\)](#)
- [SNV - Switzerland \(2019\)](#)

Votes of ISO TMB on ISO 26000 "systemic review" 2017 - 1st Round			
<u>Confirm</u>	<u>Revise</u>	<u>Abstained</u>	<u>No Position</u>
NEN - The Netherlands (TMB Chair)	ABNT - Brazil	SA - Australia	DSM - Malaysia
ANSI - USA	AFNOR - France	GOST R - Russian Federation	KATS - Republic of Korea
DIN - Germany	BSI - United Kingdom	SAC - China	
JISC - Japan	SIS - Sweden	SNV - Switzerland	
SABS - South Africa	SFS - Finland		
* TMB meets Sept 19th in Berlin to take final decision. Confirm/revise votes already on record, so the "abstention" & "no position" TMB members are key.			