Vol. 8, No. 6 November-December 2008

ISO Management Systems

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ISSN 1680-8096

Next generation ISO 14001

Scoring with ISO 9001:2000

Measuring carbon footprints of products

Port of Houston and ISO 28000

- The ISO Survey – 2007
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ISO MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS is published six times a year by the Central Secretariat of ISO (International Organization for Standardization) and is available in English, French and Spanish editions.

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A one-year subscription (six issues) to ISO MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS costs 128 Swiss francs.

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ISSN 1680-8096

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Future stakes for ISO's EMS standards

by **Oswald A. Dodds**

With 15 years' experience as leader of the ISO group responsible for ISO 14001 and ISO 14004, the author, who this year handed on the relay baton to his successor (see next article)*, is well placed to deliver a personal, but informed view of the issues and stakes related to the next editions of ISO's environmental management system standards.*

ISO's involvement with environmental management systems grew out of its commitment to support the objective of sustainable development discussed at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, in Rio de Janeiro, in 1992. However, already in 1991, ISO had been approached on the subject by the World Business Council on Sustainable Development.

Along with interest from elsewhere – from countries as well as businesses – this led ISO and its partner the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) to create the ISO/IEC Strategic Advisory Group on the Environment (SAGE).

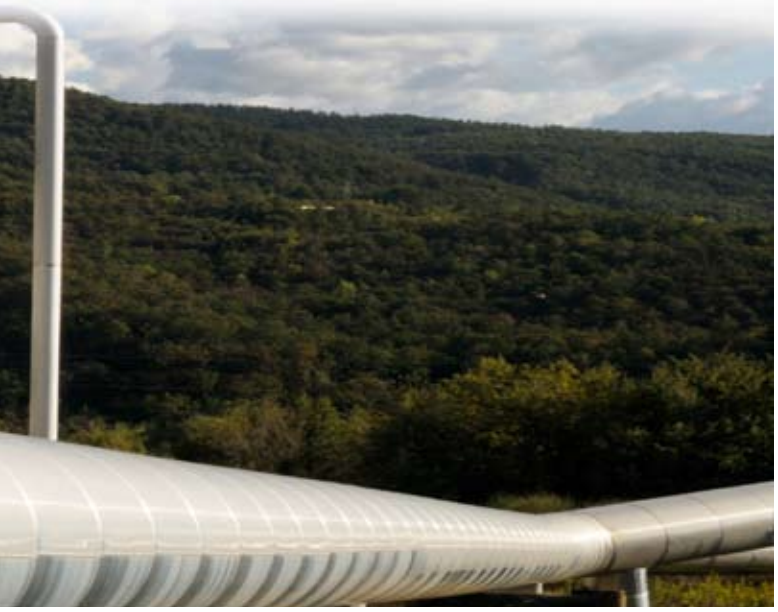
Over a two-period from 1991 to 1992, SAGE focused the efforts of representatives of 20 countries and 11 international organizations in defining the basic requirements of a new approach to environment-related standards.

It recommended the setting up of a new technical committee which led in 1993 to ISO creating ISO/TC 207, *Environmental management.* This in turn established subcommittee SC 1, *Environmental management systems*, which I have had the

honour and privilege to chair up to July 2008.

ISO/TC 207/SC 1 set to work developing two standards on environmental management systems (EMS), ISO 14001 (requirements) and ISO 14004 (guidelines), of which the first editions were published by ISO in 1996.

The second editions of both were published in 2004 after a thorough process designed to improve the clarity and intent of the language used in both standards, and to increase the compatibility of ISO 14001 with ISO 9001:2000, *Quality management systems – Requirements*.



SC 1 has now started to prepare for the third editions of ISO 14001 and ISO 14004. In addition, the subcommittee is also finalising a new standard designed to offer a phased approach to implementing an environmental management system, as well as introducing users of this approach to environmental performance evaluation.

This guidance standard will, once finally approved, be published as ISO 14005, *Environmental management systems – Guide for the phased implementation of an environmental management system – including the use of environmental performance evaluation*.

In addition, when this article was written, a ballot was coming to an end within SC 1 concerning the establishment of a new working group to develop a further EMS guidance standard, the future ISO 14006, this time dealing with eco-design – in effect, a specific application of ISO 14001.

MSS strategy

Given the increasing worldwide interest in management system standards (MSS), in 2006 ISO established a Strategic Advisory Group (SAG-MSS) to advise it on future needs in this area. Among issues being explored by the group is the variety of topics and sectors now addressed by MSS (or that need, or wish to be covered) and the potential for gaps and/or duplication and/or variations in approaches taken.

The group currently comprises 16 user participants drawn from 13 countries with three representatives from different groups within the ISO system. At the time of writing, it had held four meetings with more planned for October 2008 and early 2009.

The SAG-MSS is looking critically at ISO's current approach and range of MSS as well as what it thinks the user community will need and expect from any ISO MSS in the future. It is endeavouring to look 10 years ahead. Clearly, whatever decisions are taken as a result of its investigations could have a major impact on the work and structure of ISO's current technical committees producing MSS.

High-level structure

ISO has long been committed to developing and publishing standards that meet the needs of its stakeholders in a timely manner, that are effective, relevant and coherent, and that are produced in a transparent, open and impartial way using a consensus-based approach.

It achieves these aims both by the processes it uses, as well as by ensuring liaison and cooperation amongst the technical committees that develop ISO standards. In the case of MSS, the two technical committees that are responsible, respectively, for the ISO 9000 and ISO 14000 families of standards –

***Oswald A. Dodds**, MBE, recently retired as Chair of ISO technical committee ISO/TC 207's Subcommittee 1, which is responsible for the environmental management system standards, ISO 14001 and ISO 14004. He served in this post from 1993 to July 2008.*

In addition to serving on ISO technical bodies on conformity assessment and social responsibility, he has also been 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 and has a number of directorships of companies in the private and charity sectors.

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ISO operates a cyclical review of its standards to ensure they are **at the state of the art**

ISO/TC 176 and ISO/TC 207 – have been cooperating for many years to improve, in particular, the compatibility of ISO 9001 and ISO 14001.

More recently, however, ISO's Technical Management Board (TMB) has formed the Joint Technical Coordination Group (JTCG) which includes representatives of all ISO technical committees and subcommittees that develop management system standards. The group is now working on a high level structure for management system standards. One of the areas being investigated by the group is going beyond compatibility to "alignment", which involves a common structure and approach for all ISO MSS.

Where or not to integrate MSS really is a major strategic issue

This group is now responsible for building upon the previous efforts referred to above by ensuring that the technical content and approach used within ISO for the development of MSS is coherent and consistent. It is also expected to ensure that revision cycles are sufficiently aligned in the future in order to improve the overall content of the families of standards and thus ensure that they will co-evolve in a consistent manner.

As part of its activities, the JTCG has been asked to consult with industry users of MSS to determine what form of joint vision (see below) is needed and how it may be applied, not only to the MS requirements standards, but also to the supporting standards developed by the committees concerned, for example, on terminology and auditing. It is also intended that the JTCG should play a role in considering proposals for new ISO MSS.

ISO/TC 207's business plan

All ISO technical bodies are required to have business plans in place and these are periodically reviewed to keep them up to date. The objectives of ISO/TC 207, as stated in its business plan (currently under review), are as follows:

- ensure that ISO/TC 207 is aware of relevant international policy developments and trends within its scope;
- ensure that market needs are served;
- ensure global participation in the development, revision, acceptance and use of the ISO 14000 standards;
- ensure the continual relevance and quality of ISO/TC 207's standards;
- protect the brand and integrity of the usage of the ISO 14000 series of standards;
- ensure the compatibility of ISO 14001 with other management system standards.

The plan goes on to identify strategies to achieve these objectives and it is principally these that are currently being reviewed and refined.

As part of the review, all subcommittees and other groups within ISO/TC 207 have prepared a brief vision or strategy statement to cover the period from 2008 to 2015. They have been submitted to the committee and will be brought together as the updated business plan is finalised.

ISO 14001 and ISO 14004 today

ISO operates a cyclical review of its standards to ensure that they are still needed and, if so, are maintained at the state of the art. Such a review has just been completed for ISO 14001 and ISO 14004 and, as a result, both have been confirmed without change for a further five years.

However, because of the work of the JTCG and the need to identify issues that will need to be considered during any activity relating to the Joint Vision (see below), ISO/TC 207/SC 1 decided at its meeting in Bogotá, Colombia in June 2008 to create two new groups to prepare for any future changes.

The first Task Group will mirror the work of the JTCG and provide any necessary input to its activities relating to MSS.

The second, proposed as a Study Group, will look into changes that have taken place in the understanding and composition of environmental management systems, including changes in technology and stakeholder requirements since the current editions were developed. The SC 1 leadership is to draft the terms of reference of this group which will then be balloted within the SC 1 membership so that, if finally approved, work can commence shortly.

It is expected that the work of both groups will heavily influence the future approach and content of ISO 14001 in particular and, by reflection, the other SC 1 standards – ISO 14004,

ISO 14005 and ISO 14006 – as they all use or will use ISO 14001 as their base document and are required by SC 1 to be consistent with it.

The future

When turning to the future, writing this article becomes problematic, as my crystal ball is no more developed than those of the readers of this magazine. Clearly too, the views expressed are mine personally and should not be taken as the official position of ISO, or its various groups – technical or otherwise – including ISO/TC 207/SC 1.

There are a number of internal and external influences to contend with too that are described in the following paragraphs.

Internally, SC 1 will have to deal with the consequences of the work of the SAG-MSS should they impact on its work. These might include changes to ISO's overall approach to dealing with the development of MSS, including the possibility that a new super committee might be suggested to oversee all MSS activity.

It is also possible that the architecture of MS documents could be changed to follow a new uniform model with a common core and "bolt on" technology-based annexes to cover, for example, quality, environment, risk, food safety, IT security, etc.

> Issues around the quality and credibility of certification **continue to arise**

Alternatively, a single standard may be proposed that is intended to function at a high level and meet business needs, but to leave the detail to the organization to develop to suit its own style and activities.

Obviously, there are other possible options that might be suggested and time will tell which direction ISO will agree to move towards and what its consequences are.

Then we have the integration conundrum – part of, but yet separate from the previous point. During my ISO activities, I have heard many suggestions that integration is the only way forward.

Many of these views appear to concern only the integration of quality, safety and environment as a requirement, although most would acknowledge that this probably came about because of the existence of ISO 9001, ISO 14001 and OHSAS 18001 (dealing with occupational health and safety, not an ISO standard)!

Whether or not MSS are integrated brings with it another set of queries and challenges all of which need careful consideration because it would be a high price to pay if the wrong direction is chosen – not just for ISO, but also for the users of its standards.

Even if the above standards were to be integrated in some way, that still leaves significant areas of management that would not be covered – including and beyond even the excellent documents already produced in the areas of food safety, IT security, security in the supply chain and work underway in areas such as energy and risk management.

> Issues that should be addressed include the needs of governments and regulators and of NGOs

Where or not to integrate MSS really is a major strategic issue for ISO and, perhaps more importantly, the user community – and I include the potential users in this as, they are at least as important in my view as the existing user base.

Clearly, this debate should be stimulated once the SAG-MSS reports but, to me at least, ISO will need to carefully balance the needs and ideas of SMEs as well as "big business" if it is to significantly increase its user base in the future. Obviously, whatever is decided here will no doubt impact on ISO's environmental management system standards.

It is also clear that the work of the JTCG will impact significantly too. It is therefore appropriate to consider it in more detail.

The JTCG developed, at the request of the TMB, a "Joint Vision" for the technical development of MSS within ISO. This is intended to prevent uncertainty for users and provide a clear framework within which MSS will be developed.

The current Joint Vision reads:

All ISO MSS will be aligned and will seek to enhance further the current levels of compatibility between any existing MSS, through the promotion of identical:

- *clause titles;*
- *sequence of clause titles;*
- *text; and*
- *definition;*

that are permitted to diverge only where necessitated by specific differences in managing their individual fields of application.

The use of this approach for future revisions will be targeted at increasing the value of the existing ISO MSS to users.

This has been successfully balloted amongst the committees involved in the JTCG, although a large number of comments have been made seeking clarification on the meaning and intent of the statement as well as querying how and by whom these objectives it will be achieved. According to usual ISO practice, the JTCG was to considering all comments received at its next meeting in October 2008 and I believe that it will keep respondents and the wider community informed as its work and thinking progresses.

ISO 14001 is now implemented in nearly 150 countries

Based on my previous involvement with the group, I also anticipate that JTCG will circulate an amended Vision statement and a proposed new structure for management system standards (the requirements documents) that is designed to introduce more of a systems approach to future editions of ISO's MS requirement standards. Clearly, implementing the Joint Vision will impact on future editions of all ISO MSS and will take time to develop and attain consensus. ISO/TC 207/SC 1 has, at my suggestion, recognised this and by forming its Task Group referred to earlier should be well placed and prepared for the debates to come.

It is the case, however, that the JTCG and its constituent TCs and SCs need to agree what the Joint Vision means in practice. This means, for example, by whom, how, and when the "identical" material is to be developed; by whom and how will it be agreed; the timescale for its incorporation into existing MSS; how and when will the views of ISO national member bodies and, most importantly, the users of MSS be sought, and what happens if users resist changes being proposed.

Speaking from experience of trying to deal with compatibility issues between ISO 9001 and ISO 14001, the time and effort that will be involved in this situation should not be underestimated. Clearly too, the success of the task depends on finding sufficient knowledgeable volunteers – experts in MS thinking as well as from the business sectors that need to be involved, as both will be vital to the successful achievement of the Joint Vision ideal.

There are also a number of other issues that are relevant to the future success of ISO 14001, which are dealt with in the following section.

Success factors

Factors in the success of the future ISO 14001 include the sustainability agenda – and the need to ensure that ISO 14001 continues to be relevant and seen as an important part of ISO's sustainable development contribution.

Although ISO 14001 is not designed solely for (third party) certification – indeed, in its Scope it lists four main means of demonstrating conformity – issues around the quality and credibility of certification continue to arise and cloud the undoubted improvements that can arise from the use of the standard.

Work is underway to revise and extend the ISO 19011: 2002, *Guidelines for quality and/or environmental management systems auditing*. At the same time, the ISO Committee on conformity assessment, ISO/CASCO, continues to upgrade its suite of standards that provide the framework within which third party audits will be performed.

Certification and accreditation bodies themselves are also looking closely at their practices and hopefully the collective effort will enhance the actual, as well as the perceived value of certification so that it really does mean more than just, "a certificate on the wall".

Hopefully, the changes to ISO 19011 will also enhance understanding of the role of internal auditing in adding value to the implementation and performance of management systems.

The next editions of ISO 14001 and ISO 14004

For the next editions of ISO 14001 and ISO 14004, issues that should be addressed in addition to those already referred to above include the following:

- the need to determine what, if anything, the market place actually wants/needs beyond what is already contained in the current editions of the standards;
- the results from research projects looking into the use and impact of the existing standards;
- factual data on existing usage as this could highlight areas of non-use (e.g. in particular sectors or geographical areas) which should be investigated to establish the reasons and then be addressed as part of the revision;
- factual data on the needs of small and medium-sized enterprises, building on the work carried out by several SME groups within TC 207/SC 1 and elsewhere;
- the needs and aspirations of governments and regulators;
- the needs and aspirations of nongovernmental organizations whose views are vital to the credibility of the standard in society.

At a more technical level, I also believe that the standards writers will need to look, in particular, at the following:

- the definition of "continual improvement" – is it really credible to continue to debate whether ISO 14001 promotes environmental "performance improvement" and not just "system improvement"?
- what is actually meant by "legal compliance" and how it should be demonstrated;
- the adequacy of the clause dealing with communication issues;
- the issue of procedures/documented procedures versus processes;
- the need for more explicit requirements dealing with environmental performance and how it is determined. (In this context, it is interesting to note that the proposed ISO 14005 specifically refers to environmental performance evaluation in its title and content, something only implicit in ISO 14001 itself.);
- the determination of the effectiveness of the environmental management system (by whom and on what basis?);
- the demonstration of continual improvement and how it is measured and communicated;
- how to reduce opportunities for variable application of the standard – so called "green washing" that can undermine the perception of its worth and value.

I am sure that readers will have their own lists of issues and I am certain that the SC 1 secretariat will welcome all views so they can be fed into the process. However, ideas for change – or no change – should in the first instance be sent to the national standards bodies that make up ISO's membership as this will stimulate national discussion.

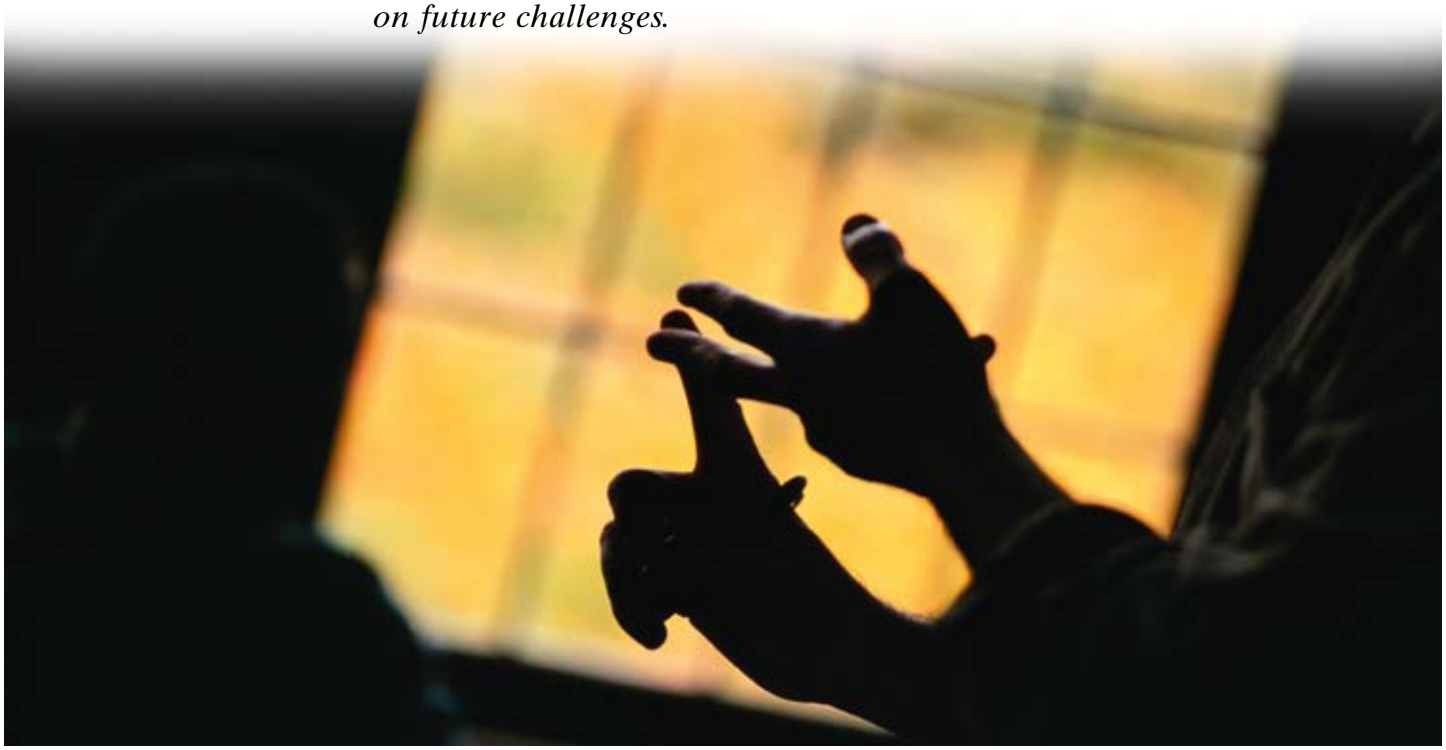
State of the art

First launched in 1996, ISO 14001 is now implemented by public and private sector organizations in nearly 150 countries. We owe it to the developers of the original standard and the accompanying tools in the ISO 14000 family, to the early adopters and to those who are still to be convinced, that the next-generation ISO 14001 and supporting standards are state-of-the-art in what they require and in what they deliver. •

Next-generation ISO 14001
Three questions and 3C's

by **Anne-Marie Warris**

The new Chair of ISO technical committee ISO/TC 207, Environmental management, *subcommittee SC 1,* Environmental management systems, *which is responsible for ISO 14001 and ISO 14004, shares her perspectives on future challenges.*



The main challenge that faces the management systems community is as Charles Handy, the philosopher and writer on organizational behaviour and management, says "not to let our past, however glorious, get in the way of the future". Re-reading Handy's book, *Beyond certainty – the changing world of organizations,* published in 1995, reminded me just how quickly things have and are changing.

When I was doing my MBA, we looked at organizational structure. It focused on all the different types of structures, i.e. the way organizations operate and, back then, the most common one was bureaucracy. People's views of what an organization[1)] is have changed since then.

The article (*see pages* **4** to **9**) by Oswald Dodds, my predecessor as Chair of ISO/TC 207/SC 1 (*see box,* "Tribute to retiring SC 1 Chair") recounts the evolution of the group responsible for ISO's standards for environmental management systems and some of the challenges it has and continues to face.

Reading it made me think about the importance of not losing organizational experience, learning and memories when dealing with situations of rapid change. Without our

records, memories and experience, how do organizations grow and meet new challenges without repeating the same old mistakes and pitfalls – something we, the SC 1 community, are aware of as we move forward without "Ossie" at the helm.

What are the challenges?

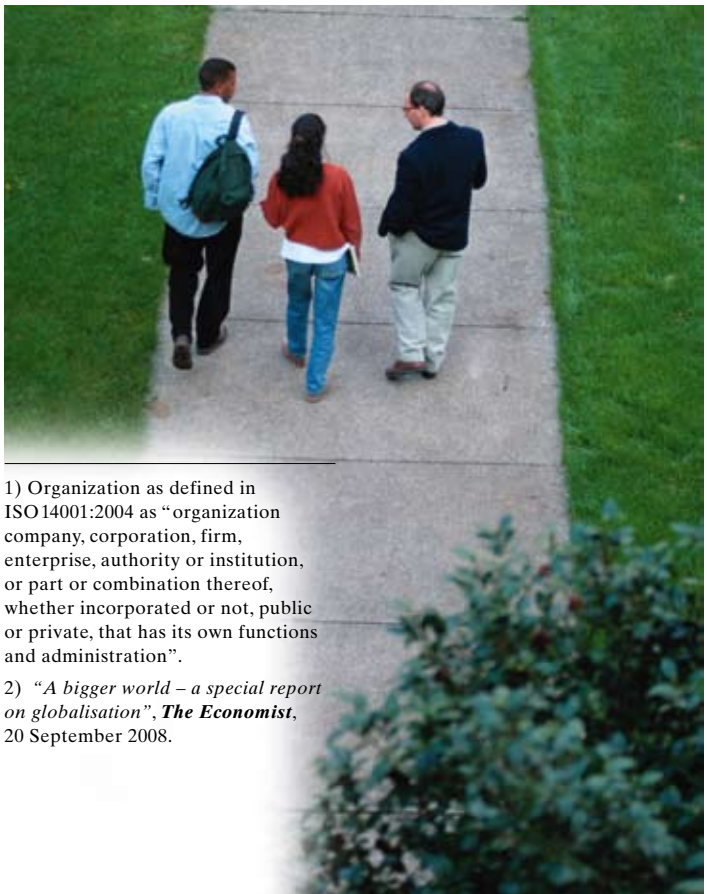
As the new Chair of SC 1, I am asking myself a set of questions – ones that I feel we need to ask, understand and answer. From my perspective, we in the management system community are facing a number of challenges, the most critical of which are:

- What do we now mean by an organization? And does it fully cover what an organization is/could be?
- How do we ensure management systems meet stakeholders' needs?
- Being able to convincingly answer that most commonly asked question – "what is a management system and why is it relevant to my organization?"

Organizational challenges

I have already alluded to the change in perception of "what is an organization?" and if I look back to the publication of the first edition of ISO 14001 in 1996, this perception has changed substantially. The following is but a short list of some of the new phenomena related to this change:

- more portfolio organizations;
- much leaner organizations;
- more service-based organization operating in diverse manners;
- faster and more agile organizations;
- cross-functional groups and project groups;
- more virtual working;
- faster and mainly electronic communications;
- more outsourcing, including the growth of the "just in time" approach to manufacturing, supermarket deliveries etc.;
- growth from national to global organizations;
- the change in global organizations with their headquarters in developed countries to ones based in emerging economies[2];
- the growth of small organizations.



1) Organization as defined in ISO 14001:2004 as "organization company, corporation, firm, enterprise, authority or institution, or part or combination thereof, whether incorporated or not, public or private, that has its own functions and administration".

2) *"A bigger world – a special report on globalisation"*, ***The Economist***, 20 September 2008.

***Dr. Anne-Marie Warris**, CEng, MBA, has been involved in the activities of ISO technical committee ISO/TC 207, Environmental management, since June 2000 as principal United Kingdom delegate to a number of groups, including work related to management systems, greenhouse gas accounting and carbon footprints.*

Dr. Warris is the new Chair of ISO/TC 207's subcommittee SC 1, which is reponsible for the environmental management system (EMS) standards ISO 14001 and ISO 14004 and which is also developing the new ISO 14005, giving guidelines for a phased implementation of an EMS, and ISO 14006, giving guidelines on eco-design

She joined the LR Group in 1989 to help develop and subsequently manage their environmental consultancy business. In 1996, she moved to LRQA to become global product manager for environmental management systems, subsequently extended to cover climate change. When this article was written, she was due to take up a new role in the LR Group focusing on external relations.

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Now, couple this change in "what is an organization?" with the on-going complaint of "management systems are too bureaucratic, so they do not suit my organization", and I believe this takes us to the next question:

So what about stakeholders – what are their needs?

Well, they are many and varied. However, do organizations spot them quickly enough? Can they identify those critical issues that may change or affect the business environment in which the organization and its supply chain operate?

And if organizations do pick up the critical issues relating stakeholders, do they have a management system in place that allows them to process this information and knowledge in a way that benefits them – and, ultimately, the stakeholders?

This is all about being sensitive to changing business environments and needs and being able to respond. Some recent examples include the switch to organic food and the demand for "climate change friendly" goods.

So, the critical question is, "Did the system get the right information and did the system take the appropriate action given the information?" If not, then stakeholder needs will not be met, nor is the system fit for the organization.

This only furthers my view that we have to be able to answer the above commonly asked question and it may also explain why the whole issue of management systems is such a struggle for many.

Tribute to retiring SC 1 Chair

Anne-Marie Warris, the new Chair of ISO/TC 207/SC 1, the group responsible for ISO 14001 and ISO 14004, the management system standards in the ISO 14000 family, paid the following tribute to her predecessor, **Oswald A. Dodds**:

"Ossie's contributions to the developments and success of ISO/TC 207/SC 1 were substantial. His calm leadership ensured solutions were found and issues managed in a pragmatic manner.

"There were many learning lessons in watching the manner in which items were managed to ensure a smooth transition and how major "rocks in the rapids" were negotiated without embarrassing anyone, or making them want to withdraw from the process.

"This included building bridges with other management system committees, while supporting and defending ISO 14001."

But why are management systems seen as such a struggle?

There are numerous answers, and I am sure we all have our own. But my simplistic and somewhat confrontational answers are:

- it is because it is a term or concept that basically is not understood;
- it is also perceived as coming with a lot of negative baggage, such as "it's bureaucratic, of no use and does not deliver what either the user community wants, or the community the users serve want, let alone what external stakeholders need".

Does the following scenario sound familiar? *You are at a party or talking to a new friend and the conversation turns to work. "So, what do you do?" In reply, you start explaining what a management system is and, eventually, depending on the politeness of the person you are speaking to, the conversation changes topic. Management systems are almost guaranteed to switch them off the conversation – it all sounds just too boring.*

But how exactly did you explain what a management system is?

I believe our starting point to answering that commonly asked question, "What is a management system and why is it relevant to my organization?" is for us to be clearer in describing what a management system is.

And I do not mean in terms of a sophisticated ISO definition, but in terms of what it means to organizations and their stakeholders, whether they be internal or external. Certainly, from my experience, organizations and stakeholders talk a different language from the one that we in the management system community use: one that does not translate into the "jungle" of terms and concepts. We have to make our language match that of the organization and the challenges it faces in being able to meet stakeholder needs.

So how do we make management systems work and respond to stakeholder needs?

What do organizations actually want and need?

I think organizations need a system which is flexible, multi-functioning and supported by an issues-based "tool kit". Clearly, any system needs to fit the needs of the organization, as well as be integrated with the manner in which the business is managed – otherwise, it will simply be a "bolt-on", without generating significant added value. The characteristics of such a system are as follows:

- *flexible* – the ability to adapt to the type of organization; whether it is a small or medium-sized enterprise, or multi-national, in services or manufacturing, governmental or a charity;
- *multi-functioning* – capable of tackling the variety of challenges being faced

by the organization to ensure it stays "in control" in today's fast changing business environment;

- *issue-based tool-kits* – having access to a number of compatible standards, tools, processes, etc. for managing and responding to stakeholder critical issues (which will be different from organization to organization).

Whatever the system of the future looks like, it will have to:

- be clear about what it is and its benefits;
- be designed to support organizations in the widest sense of what an organization is;
- have the capacity to link, with little or no fuss, to other relevant systems both within and outside of the organization;
- use plain and simple language i.e. words that are in everybody's daily conversations.

We in the management system community are facing a number of challenges

My belief is that in order for us to achieve this "utopia", ISO/TC 207/SC 1 needs the following "3C's":

1) *courage* – and we have that in plenty – to challenge perceived wisdom and historical habits;
2) *capability* – again in abundance in SC 1 – to find the pragmatic and flexible solutions needed to help organizations manage their critical issues;
3) *commitment* – to allocate sufficient time for SC 1 and ISO to develop management systems. This is where I have concerns. The current SC 1 experts are hugely committed, working many hours beyond what is expected. However, when the amount of hours required by the organizations employing the experts increases, where does that leave the time available their ISO work and developing the management system standards that will help organizations of the future?

The management system of the future will have **to be clear about what it is and its benefits**

If ISO/TC 207/SC 1 has the 3C's and answers the three questions I have posed in this article, I personally believe that management systems have a bright future. I know it is going to be a challenge, but it is one that I look forward to. In particular, I look forward to working with colleagues from around the world in ensuring that the International Standards we develop meet organizational and stakeholder needs as well as protect our planet. •