Cooking up successful standards

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Charting course for change

ISO heads into the future

Change seems to be the only constant these days, affecting us as individuals as well as organizations – whether we like it or not. Faced with this inescapable reality, we must focus on the possibilities flowing from change and gear-up for uncertainty and apprehension, which are its natural companions.

In response to this reality, ISO must be flexible, ready and quick to adapt and take on new challenges. As an avid sailor, it reminds me of being on a boat, having to continuously adjust the course to maximize wind power and steer around storms.

Applying this metaphor further, the relevance of our standards, and thus of our work, depends on how efficiently we tackle emerging challenges in a world that is changing at an ever-increasing pace. Mapping the course for change is not easy, but ISO has many tools at its disposal, a key one being the ISO Technical Management Board (TMB) which helps ensure the continual improvement of the standards development process.

The TMB, which I have the honour to Chair for my fourth and final year, is responsible for ISO’s more than 3,000 technical bodies whose job is to build international consensus on nearly everything from screw sizes to supply chain security. Managing all this work is an intense job, evident from the fact that over its 17 years of existence, the TMB has held 50 meetings!

Throughout this time, our role has evolved from dealing with strictly technical issues in the “engine room” of standards development, to also spearheading strategic matters. The TMB helped shape the ISO Strategic Plan 2011-2015, and we are heavily involved in the ongoing realization of its objectives and vision.

Being close to the hands-on development of standards generates ideas to help chart ISO’s future course, supporting the market relevance of its work. The TMB has a unique access to, and dialogue with, ISO’s customers. So although we are still responsible for “nuts and bolts” issues, we also provide our colleagues on the “bridge” (the ISO Council), with strategic advice and recommendations for continual improvement.

ISO must adapt and take on new challenges.

To avoid reinventing the wheel, and to ensure ISO commits its resources to standards for which there is a clear market requirement, the TMB often “test drives” or carries out extensive studies of initiatives and programmes before engaging in some activities. These efforts contributed to the publication of standards such as ISO 26000:2010, Guidance on social responsibility, and ISO 50001:2011, Energy management systems – Requirements with guidance for use.

Through the TMB, ISO promotes cooperation with other standards developing organizations, where working together enables us to better meet the needs of our customers who benefit from a coordinated approach in international standardization. One example is the World Standards Cooperation which promotes collaboration amongst ISO, the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU).

To cope with a changing world, ISO strives for continual improvement. Never resting, always moving forward! For this purpose, ISO deployed the Living Lab project to test out ways of improving the standards development process. The TMB will take an active part and a leading role in deploying innovations arising from this project. These may involve skills development of key functions, leaner procedures, or ways to better address the needs of specific sectors, to name a few examples of low-hanging fruit and quick wins.

Most importantly, we are working to increase the usefulness and user-friendliness of our products. It is no longer enough to say that our job stops at the publication of a standard. We need to get more involved in promoting and facilitating their implementation, for example, through the development of value-added guides on how to promote their optimal use. When we buy products (be it a car or a computer), these come with user manuals, perhaps some spare parts or additional software to support their use – that is the idea.

There is always room for being simpler, faster, better and ISO must constantly reinvent itself. Our goal is never ending self-improvement. It is better to ride at high speed above the waves than get caught in a storm and capsize.

Jacob Holmblad is ISO Vice-President (technical management), and Chair of the Technical Management Board.
Mr. Holmblad also offered his perspectives on tensions between certain national public policies on freely available standards, caused in part by varying thresholds and definitions, and by differing regulatory and legislative regimes.

**Energy management highlighted in Chile**

Representatives of standards communities from North, Central, and South America gathered in Santiago, Chile in April 2011 for the Pan American Standards Commission Assembly (COPANT) 2011.

The event, hosted by the National Institute of Standardization (INN), ISO member for Chile, provided valuable opportunities for active engagement and information.

The ISO Secretary-General reported on ISO activities of interest to COPANT. He said, “Out of COPANT’s 25 members, 23 are ISO members and represent 14% of total ISO membership. In addition, three ISO Council members (out of 20), three ISO Technical Management Board members (out of 14) and the Chair of the ISO Committee on consumer policy (ISO/COPOLCO) are also COPANT members. The ISO Secretary-General also provided an overview of ISO initiatives in 2011, including studies on the economic benefits of standards using an ISO methodology, and the implementation of the ISO Strategic Plan 2011-2015.

In conjunction with the COPANT Assembly, INN organized a workshop on energy efficiency—a theme of immense importance in the global community. ISO Secretary-General Rob Steele highlighted the new ISO 50001 standard, noting, “Energy is no longer a technical issue, but a management issue with an impact on the bottom line and the time to address the issue is now.”

COPANT is a civil nonprofit association and comprises the national standards bodies (NSB) of the Americas, which currently total 25 active members and nine adherent members. The 2012 COPANT General Assembly will be held in Fortaleza, Brazil.

**“Spaceship ISO” lands at the EASC**

The Euro-Asian Council for Standardization, Metrology and Certification (EASC) convened its 39th meeting in May 2011 in Turkmenbashi City, Turkmenistan.

These events focus on the harmonization of technical regulations, interstate standardization, metrology, conformity assessment and accreditation in the region.

ISO President Dr. Boris Aleshin addressed the assembly in his native language: Russian. He highlighted the importance of the Russian language for ISO and the increase in the number of ISO International Standards being translated into Russian. He noted that the recent innovation of the ISO Website being available in Russian “will obviously help to boost knowledge of ISO and the usefulness of ISO standards in Russian-speaking countries.”

Dr. Aleshin stressed the wide range of domains affected by the global reach of “Spaceship ISO”: from cargo containers shipped worldwide, to standards used to develop the International Space Station, to standards for ship ISO: from cargo containers shipped worldwide, to standards used to develop the International Space Station, to standards for space and the oil and gas industry. He invited the EASC members to become major players in international standardization.

Mr. Ryskeldi Satbayev of Kazmemst, ISO member for Kazakhstan, was elected President of the EASC.

It was announced that the 40th meeting would take place at the end of November 2011 in Ganja, Azerbaijan. The 41st meeting will be convened in May/June 2012 in Almata, Kazakhstan.

**Greening the economy**

A business and industry global dialogue on the theme, “Strengthening the role of the private sector in the transition to a resource efficient and green economy: On the road to Rio+20”, was held in Paris, France, in April 2011. It was organized by the United Nations Environment Programme, Division of Technology, Industry and Economics (UNEP-DTIE).

The objective of the session was to review current trends in sustainability reporting and to monitor growing interest in integrated financial...
According to the report “Trends in Sustainable Development”, the unsustainable and inequitable use of resources is already pushing many of the world’s ecosystems past the tipping point from which they cannot recover.

Creating responsible and sustainable prosperity

In May, Forum Pro 2011 organized a symposium on “Responsible and sustainable prosperity: from words to action” at the Ecole Hoteliere in Lausanne, Switzerland.

Among the participants at the event was Kevin McKinley, ISO’s Deputy Secretary-General, who made a presentation on how ISO 26000 provides guidance to organizations on implementing social responsibility. He retraced the history of ISO’s role in the domain and described this International Standard’s scope, its potential audience and the benefits to be derived from its implementation.

ISO 26000: SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Mr. McKinley laid out the principles of social responsibility as ISO 26000 identifies them:

- Accountability (for an organization’s impact on society and the environment)
- Transparency (of decisions and activities impacting society and the environment)
- Ethical behaviour
- Respect for stakeholder interests
- Respect for the rule of law
- Respect for international norms of behavior
- Respect for human rights.

More than ever before, corporate responsibility and sustainable development have become key factors of long-term competitiveness and profitability. ISO 26000 provides guidance on how to illuminate the way forward.

Russia’s Premier Vladimir Putin underlines importance of ISO International Standards

Vladimir Putin, Prime Minister of the Russian Federation, expressed the continuing support of his country for the development of ISO International Standards that contribute to trade, industry and technology.

The Russian Premier was speaking at a meeting on 15 June at the United Nations office in Geneva, Switzerland with the ISO President for 2011-2012, Boris Aleshin; ISO Secretary-General, Rob Steele, and the President of the ISO member for the Russian Federation (GOST R – the Federal Agency on Technical Regulating and Metrology), Grigory Elkin.

Mr. Putin, who was visiting Geneva to address the annual conference of the International Labour Organization (ILO), said that ISO’s work contributed to “different sectors of the economy, industries and high-tech spheres”.

He pointed out that more than 500 Russian experts participated in ISO’s work and that his country intended to continue participating actively within ISO. Mr Putin said that GOST-R intended to increase its adoption of ISO’s work from the current 40% to 60%.

The Prime Minister expressed his pleasure that the current ISO President, Dr. Aleshin, is Russian adding “I’m convinced that his experience and knowledge will play a positive role in the organization’s development.”

Mr. Putin pointed out that GOST R had invited ISO to hold its 2013 General Assembly in Russian, in Saint Petersburg, declaring: “I’d like to assure you that the Federal Government and the municipal authorities of Saint Petersburg will do everything to ensure that the meeting is organized and held at the highest level.”

The Russian Prime Minister also expressed support for increasing the participation in ISO of experts both from the Russian Federation and the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States through a training programme in collaboration with ISO.
Ian Hudson is President – DuPont Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA), and President – DuPont de Nemours International SA Geneva. After spending 18 years with ICI, Mr. Hudson joined DuPont in 1998 as Regional Director Europe, DuPont Polyester Films. After five years in the USA as Global Business Director Sorona/Bio PDO, he relocated to Geneva, Switzerland in 2004, when he was named Regional Director – DuPont Advanced Fiber Systems and DuPont Nonwovens. He was named to his current position in April 2006.

Mr. Hudson graduated from Oxford University with a Master’s Degree in French and German. He is a member of the Executive Committee and Board of CEFIC (European Chemical Industry Association), Chairman of the Industrial Biotech Council and member of the Board of EuropaBio (European Association of Bio Industries), member of the Board of the Swiss-American Chamber of Commerce, and member of the Foundation Board of the International Institute for Management Development (IMD).
ISO Focus+: In the context of trade globalization, what is the strategic importance of International Standards for a company such as DuPont with its staff of 60,000 people spread among 90 countries?

Ian Hudson: I think that globalization and worldwide trade make it more relevant for International Standards to play a key role in today’s business.

If you look, for example, at our sourcing processes in DuPont, we have an initial self-assessment questionnaire for potential suppliers, followed by on-site audits. The questionnaire includes the certification requirements for ISO 9001 and ISO 14001, respectively. This provides a reliable source of confidence in our supply chains. All accredited third-party certifiers follow a standard evaluation system. Certification to ISO 9001 proves that the company is able to demonstrate stable processes that meet the needs of its customers, to deliver quality products or services and to drive continual improvement. We in DuPont share the same approach internally.

These ISO standards are important for our diversified businesses, not only to deliver quality products and services, but in the context of speaking one language: the international language of standards.

ISO Focus+: In line with its commitment towards sustainable development, DuPont surveyed 800 customers around the world to better understand the durability of demand for sustainable commitment: what improvements has this brought about in developing products with an enhanced environmental profile? How have ISO 14001 and other standards helped in this endeavour?

Ian Hudson: DuPont’s vision is to be the world’s most dynamic science company, creating sustainable solutions essential to a better, safer, healthier life for people everywhere.

One of our core values is safety, health and environmental stewardship, where we measure our footprint by looking at injuries, illnesses, incidents, waste, emission, use of water and depletable forms of raw materials and energy.

ISO 14001 allows us to have a third-party certification that demonstrates the success of our programmes, both in our operations and in our value chains, where we calculate the environmental impact of raw materials or services.

We strongly rely on ISO 14001, and the value we associate with the standard can also be demonstrated by our matrix certification which includes 141 manufacturing sites worldwide.

Made from DuPont™ Kevlar, temperature-resistant honeycomb structures, such as the one pictured here, are inherently strong, yet extremely light in weight. The honeycomb materials are generally utilized in aircraft and shipbuilding industries.

DuPont™ Kevlar helps protect soldiers in key applications. Vests, helmets and vehicle armor made of Kevlar® brand fiber provide superior protection against a wide range of threats, including bullets, shrapnel and fragmentation.
About DuPont

DuPont (www.dupont.com) is a science-based products and services company. Founded in 1802, DuPont puts science to work by creating sustainable solutions essential to a better, safer, healthier life for people everywhere. Operating in more than 70 countries, DuPont offers a wide range of innovative products and services for markets including agriculture and food; building and construction; communications; and transportation.

DuPont de Nemours International S.A. was created in Geneva in 1959. Today DuPont Switzerland is composed of 5 sites, including the EMEA Headquarters (photo above) and the European Technical Center (photo below), and employs 800 employees, 700 being based in Geneva. The political stability, the favourable economic conditions, the international organization atmosphere and the quality of life contributed to the choice of establishing EMEA Headquarters in Geneva more than 50 years ago.

ISO Focus+: As one of the first implementers of ISO 9001, how has DuPont’s use of the management system standard evolved over the years? What benefits does it bring you? Are you certified to ISO 9001 – and if so, what added value do you see in third-party certification?

Ian Hudson: The development of ISO 9001 over the past decades has helped us to considerably improve our processes, both for our customers and for their customers.

We focus on processes and not only on products, which leads us to improvements of our existing quality management systems, sometimes simplifying them and standardizing.

International Standards play a key role in today’s business.

We also started to use the requirements of ISO 9001 to develop our own control processes, including appropriate key performance indicators which help us stay focused in daily business activities. For example, the customer’s survey helped us to better understand the needs of the market, and the voice of the customer. The ISO technical specification ISO/TS 16949, for example, which all our plants and business units supplying to the automotive industry require, are also market penetration systems. In other words, if we want to supply automotive industries, we would only be invited to tender for certain projects if we hold the appropriate market requirements.

By applying and “living” ISO 9001 requirements, we constantly verify the voice of the customer and understand that our key performance indicators are valid. In addition, we can ensure that we use the right control mechanisms and aim for continual improvement and the prevention of mistakes.

ISO Focus+: Social responsibility has moved from the fringe to become a mainstream business issue. How do you think acting responsibly positively affects the bottom line of companies? Have you considered the implementation of the ISO 26000 standard on social responsibility?

Ian Hudson: We believe that our core values are very consistent with the key elements of the ISO 26000 guidelines and we will continue to use ISO 26000 and other resources to add to our thinking.
The benefits that could be achieved by implementing ISO 26000 are related to achieving a competitive advantage in the market, to the ability to engage public opinion, to improving employees' morale and motivation, to addressing the demands of financial investors and interested parties, and to managing reputation.

If you have a look at the vision and mission of many companies, you will detect that all the companies which apply social behaviour and responsibility show their competitive advantage and, in this regard, ISO 26000 can be a strong asset in the area of social responsibility.

ISO Focus+: ISO develops International Standards for every type of human activity from ergonomics to packaging, protective clothing to plastics, pipes and coatings, and many of these more specific standards would certainly be implemented within DuPont. Can you say how these product standards bring added value to DuPont products? Do you have a position yet on the ISO 50001 energy management standard published on 15 June?

Ian Hudson: ISO standards have become essential in daily business with our customers. We are aware that ISO 50001 was just issued, and we do already have our own internal managing processes for driving continual improvement in energy efficiency. These processes contain most of the elements described in the new standard, but now that ISO 50001 is complete and has been published, we will certainly look at it to determine if there are enhancements to our energy management system that we should be implementing. We will continue to review market expectations to determine the value of having our management system certified.

ISO Focus+: We understand that DuPont, for example, has people from all its industries participating in standards committees around the world. Can you please comment on the benefits of participation in the ISO standards-making process?

Ian Hudson: We want to play an active role in these developments. Therefore, participating in different groups and working together with our partners in associations can only help to further improve the development of ISO standards. It supports our internal interests on potential improvements of the whole organization, making our quality management systems more mature, which proves the effectiveness and efficiency of our activities and consequently increases our customer satisfaction.
Consensus on best practice

ISO’s magic formula revealed

by Maria Lazarte

We only need to glance over the news to realize that what ISO achieves in its daily work is truly extraordinary – international consensus on practical tools for tackling global challenges.

Indeed, getting the world to agree on anything is never easy, but ISO has done this successfully with over 18,600 International Standards to date.

What is ISO’s magic formula? How does it build true and representative international consensus on topics as diverse as medical devices and social responsibility? And how does it ensure the market relevance and uptake of this work?

This Special Report unveils the tools on which ISO’s success rests: the standards development process. Here we let you in on the secret, taking you behind the scenes into the making of ISO standards. You will find out how the decision to develop a standard is taken and what goes on before its publication.

ISO’s achievements are the outcome of formidable management skills, technical expertise and a finely thought out process, which evolves with changing times. This herculean effort is carried out within one big team consisting of ISO members from over 160 countries, technical experts, the ISO Central Secretariat, and organizations in liaison.

Here you will discover how the organization coordinates the thousands of volunteer experts from industry, government, NGOs, academia and more that are responsible for writing standards within hundreds of ISO technical committees, subcommittees and working groups.

The secret ingredient? Dedicated leaders who in this issue tell us how they engage stakeholders to ensure broad representation, and how they get experts from all over the world to work together.

From nanotechnologies to the automotive industry, each committee’s experience is unique. Find out also why experts give of their time and effort to get involved, and why too perhaps you might want to participate.

In order to tackle a wide scope of subjects and address the challenges of a rapidly changing world, ISO must be flexible and ready to change. One of ISO’s unsung heroes and a pillar of the ISO system for 33 years – Mike Smith, Senior Advisor Technical Policy, and Secretary of the ISO Technical Management Board – shares with us his profound knowledge with a fascinating story of ISO’s development over time.

In this report you will also find out how ISO developed through a targeted approach a one-of-a-kind standard which presented some unique challenges – ISO 26000:2010, Guidance on social responsibility – a subject where building consensus was more difficult than ever given the wide scope and broad stakeholders’ interests at stake.

In its Strategic Plan 2011-2015 ISO expressed a commitment to be “the world’s leading provider of high quality, globally relevant International Standards”. In order to ensure that the organization continues to meet this goal, ISO implemented a Living Lab project, whose ultimate aim is continuous improvement of the standards development process.

Another innovative project is that of making all standards available in XML, which will give users greater flexibility on how they access our standards.

Read on to discover the world of standards and you may be riveted.

Maria Lazarte is Assistant Editor, ISO Focus+.
ISO standards are everywhere. They have been applied to the brakes on our cars, the pipes of our houses, the floors and windows, our computers and printers, the food we consume and much more. But few take notice of the thousands of standards that enable us to carry out day-to-day activities such as e-mailing a digital photo to a loved one or riding our motorcycles and mopeds. It is only when standards are absent that we realize their importance.

But that is because we do not have to. The ISO system ensures that standards are developed when needed, with all stakeholders on board, through a fine-tuned process that successfully builds global consensus on best practice. ISO’s more than 18,600 standards are testament to this achievement.

So what’s the secret? Who decides to develop a standard? And what goes on before we get to the end product?

In the beginning...

If you think that standards are conceived by individuals whose job it is to spend the day sitting in a stuffy office thinking of new subjects for ISO to tackle, then you would do well to read on. The development of a standard starts with a need. An industry sector or stakeholder group must first express a clearly established market need and communicate it to their national ISO member body.

For instance, an industry might realize that being able to purchase parts with standard sizes from around the world would lower costs and increase efficiency. Standards might be required by innovators to facilitate the adoption and market entry of new technologies. And regulators might want to rely on them to promote implementation of best practice while bringing down technical barriers to trade.

International organizations working in liaison with ISO may also propose ideas for new standards. ISO policy committees – on conformity assessment (CASCO), consumers (COPOLCO) and developing countries (DEVCO) – can also recommend future work areas.

To be accepted for development, a proposed work item must be supported by the majority of the participating members of the relevant ISO technical committee. The committee will, amongst other criteria, verify the global relevance of the proposed item, to confirm that the standard responds to an international need and will be suitable for implementation on as broad a basis as possible.

Who develops standards?

ISO standards are developed by technical committees (including subcommittees or project committees) comprising of experts 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 representatives of government agencies, testing laboratories, consumer associations, non-governmental organizations and academic circles.

Experts participate as national delegations selected by the ISO member for the country. All interested ISO member bodies can opt to participate (P-member) in the work of a technical committee, or attend as
ISO deliverables

Puzzled by ISO acronyms like PAS or IWA? In fact, in addition to International Standards, ISO offers other forms of normative agreements for situations where speedy publication is particularly important.

- **ISO standard** – A full-fledged International Standard.
- **ISO/PAS (Publicly Available Specification)** – A normative document representing consensus within a working group.
- **ISO/TR (Technical Report)** – Contains information of a different kind from that normally published in a normative document.
- **IWA (International Workshop Agreement)** – Produced through a workshop meeting and not through a technical committee process.

Beyond publication

As technology develops and times change, International Standards may become outdated. All ISO standards are therefore reviewed at the least three years after publication (and every five years after the first review) by all the ISO member bodies to decide whether the document is still valid and should be confirmed or, alternatively, be revised or withdrawn.

Everyday, an average of 13 ISO meetings take place around the world.

Even though ISO standards are voluntary, they are widely applied because they respond to existing market needs. By ensuring the involvement of all stakeholders, solid consensus-building and continual review, ISO ensures that these documents are both practical and acceptable to all.

Maria Lazarte is Assistant Editor, **ISO Focus+**.
In recent years, to be responsive to both current and new stakeholder needs and to maintain itself as a highly relevant International Standards developer, ISO has seen its work programme expand and evolve into new subject areas. Compelling challenges for ISO regarding its standards development processes have come with this evolution, as stakeholder expectations of the ISO system are changing. As a result, the ISO Technical Management Board (ISO/TMB) has formed its Process Evaluation Group (PEG) to investigate the responsiveness of the ISO standards development processes to these changing dynamics. The ultimate intent of the PEG’s efforts is to safeguard the outcomes of the ISO system and to promote the existing value, strength and authority of International Standards and the processes by which they are produced. Indeed, the ISO/TMB agreed that the PEG, in its work, must uphold the commitment of the ISO system to participation via national standards bodies, as well as through the consideration of the input received from liaison organizations.

In the following articles, a selection of leaders from ISO technical committees, subcommittees and working groups explain why they support the ISO model of excellence built on international consensus and input from the broadest possible range of stakeholder, which at times, proves to be challenging, but very fulfilling and worthwhile.
While ISO technical committee ISO/TC 229, Nanotechnologies, has had quite reasonable track record over the past six years, the newness of the subject matter has presented some significant challenges for the delivery of quality documents.

ISO/TC 229, Nanotechnologies, was established in June 2005 to develop horizontal standards in this newly emerging area. Our first document, ISO technical specification ISO/TS 27687:2008, Nanotechnologies – Terminology and definitions for nano-objects – Nanoparticle, nanofibre and nanoplate, was published only three years ago. By our sixth anniversary we had been responsible for another 10 publications, with another 34 under development.

Additional support

However, it became clear early on that many of those nominated as experts by their national bodies needed extra support in standardization. It was also obvious that while national standards bodies have an obligation to ensure participants are suitably equipped for their roles in leading or developing projects, further support in this area would be useful.

Our first action was to formulate letters of welcome and suitable guidance notes, which are now sent to the leaders and nominated experts of all newly approved projects. In addition to expressing appreciation for agreeing to participate in the work of the committee, these letters and guidance notes provide links to, and basic information about, ISO/IEC Directives, the ISO template, the structure of the technical committee “livelink/e-committees” Website, and other introductory material.

The next task was to tackle the new work item proposal (NWIP) process to try to ensure that submitted items addressed the committee roadmap and business plan and so were prepared to have the best possible chance of success. Here, we introduced a two-stage review process: the first stage was the development of a draft proposal in close collaboration with the appropriate working group convenor; and the second stage was a review of the NWIP by the task group on “planning and coordination”, which provides, where appropriate, recommendations for improving the proposal.

Improving procedures

As Chair, I decided to focus on the quality of the documents we produce and have studied all the documents submitted for ballot. After reading the first few, it was obvious that I was seeing the same deficiencies repeated. To remedy this, we arranged for an editor from the British Standards Institution to attend one of our twice-yearly plenary meetings and speak to all the working groups individually.

Many experts needed extra support in standardization.

We followed this with a requirement that all documents for committee draft, draft technical specification, draft technical report or draft International Standard ballot be submitted to an editor and that comments received be addressed before a document would be accepted for ballot.

This was complemented by the introduction of a “document development and review checklist” which identifies common shortcomings; explains briefly how they should be addressed; and identifies relevant sections of the ISO/IEC Directives.

In addition to reviewing documents for ballot, I review the results of all ballots and again I saw patterns emerging. My main concern was that I was seeing large numbers of positive votes but with few comments, even for documents in which I had identified serious shortcomings. On discussing this with a few members, it became clear that some either did not have relevant expertise or they were not making full use of it.

I therefore wrote to all members asking them to review their response to ballots in the light of available national expertise, pointing out that, where expertise was absent, the only appropriate response was to abstain.

I am pleased to say this letter increased the number of abstentions by at least 50%, and I know that some national committees have introduced a default abstention rather than the positive vote that they had formerly used.

Active participation

In addition to these formal measures, I have used the opportunity afforded by plenary meetings to remind members of their responsibility to uphold the principle of consensus and to ensure the quality of documents. While I think we have made good progress, our ongoing tasks include ensuring the active participation of all nominated experts in the development and approval of final working drafts.

Here national committees have a critical role in ensuring their experts are aware of what is expected of them and that they actively contribute, rather than leave things to the project leader.
ISO/TC 22

Securing collaboration for the automotive industry

by Michel Potvin

With rapid developments in automotive technology, industry stakeholders need to collaborate efficiently to develop the standards required.

ISO technical committee ISO/TC 22 has developed more than 700 standards that have helped to create the modern road vehicle, including the two-wheeler and commercial vehicles. Many of the standards apply to technological innovations in the environmental and safety fields.

The road vehicle has and will continue to face considerable challenges. For example, with its dependence on depleting stocks of oil – despite the fact that vehicles today are cleaner than ever before – it is clear that the automobile industry must move towards alternative fuels and electrification.

Multiple stakeholders

In the past, the standardization process was purely concentrated in the automotive arena. Today the process is becoming increasingly complex because it is also addressing new stakeholders like the electrical industry, energy providers and the telecommunications industry. Each one of these stakeholders claims legitimacy in being part of vehicle-related standardization.

Furthermore, ISO/TC 22 interacts with other ISO technical committees that deal with the standardization of associated automotive aspects such as road-traffic management systems and energy management.

There has never been a more important time to secure balanced, fair and efficient collaboration.

However, being the sole body responsible for developing International Standards for road vehicles, ISO/TC 22 works with these stakeholders to ensure consensus in specific cases on the responsibility, functionality, efficiency and interoperability of road vehicles. An example of this is the memorandum of understanding concluded between ISO and IEC, which is responsible for the standardization of charging infrastructure, to define a mode of collaboration for vehicles connected to the grid.

The collaborative way forward

The electrically propelled vehicle is now available on the road, yet the infrastructure for its charging in public zones is not fully in place. There has never been a more important time to secure balanced, fair and efficient collaboration among different bodies to develop quickly relevant standards that suit customers and the industries concerned.

MPEG

Hi-tech creations from a formal process

by Leonardo Chiariglione

By introducing and constantly developing digital media standards, the Moving Pictures Expert Group (MPEG) has bridged the gap between creators and consumers.

Over the past 20 or so years, digital media standards have changed the life of millions or even billions of consumers. Once music tracks are converted to MP3 files, tracks are no longer something to be enjoyed only as dictated by the publisher, but according to the consumer’s wishes. Similarly, once user-generated video is inexpensively produced by the million, people receive information and knowledge in a completely different way.

Participation and standards development

Digital media standards have enabled hardware, software and content providers to use appropriate “formats”, therefore linking creators with consumers.

Over the past two decades, MPEG has created digital media standards that have had far-reaching effects in the consumer and industrial worlds, both expected and unexpected. In achieving this goal, MPEG has been assisted by the ISO/IEC Joint Technical Committee JTC 1 process of...
standards development. This involves the following six steps.

1) “Calls for proposals” are issued worldwide and therefore beyond regular ISO/IEC participation. This gains the attention of the industry and brings to the formal standards arena excellent technologies that would otherwise remain unexploited.

2) Standards are developed from elementary technology components. This is achieved by bringing in first-rate technologists who help to achieve the best possible technological integration.

3) Intensive use of the ISO/IEC JTC 1 process of standards development, using the review by national bodies to revise standards’ technical content makes them as robust and efficient as possible. “Study on documents under ballot”, for example, enables experts to air their technical doubts.

4) Users participate in the requirements, development, testing and use of standards. An important element is the MPEG “reference software” for which MPEG has recently adopted the BDS (open source software, originally Berkeley Software Distribution) licence, which lets users implement the standard early and test its performance.

5) Payment for technology excellence is achieved by using the ISO/IEC Option 2 licensing that enables owners of excellent technology selected for the standard to be paid for their invention and, hopefully, promotes further innovation for the next generation of standards.

6) The deployment, outside the ISO/IEC perimeter, of practical means to define industry-friendly licensing terms overcomes multiple patent ownership relevant to standards.

It is said that success has many fathers. MPEG has six but, digging deeper, I think we will find more.

ISO/WG SR

A reference point for group dynamics

by Staffan Söderberg

No product is better than the process behind it – and ISO 26000 is no exception. The result of a robust, balanced and credible process involving many stakeholders, ISO 26000 is now a widely used standard and a powerful tool in increasing sustainability.

One of my first contacts with ISO was a lecture held by the CEO of the national standards body of Sweden. This made me think of the importance of standards in my job and reminded me that, without standards such as Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and ISO 14001, my work as an environmental manager would be more difficult.

Many of us have participated in standards development and been struck by the importance of the development process. While all standards are results of compromises between standards writers, the methods involved clearly vary widely.

The ISO process is well structured and based on core principles: that the standard is a voluntary agreement and the group developing it should allow participants to reach consensus.

Introducing a new subject

After hearing of ISO’s work to develop a standard on corporate social responsibility (CSR), and that the advisory group comprised stakeholder representatives from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), labour bodies and companies, I became almost more interested in the process than in its outcome – the standard.

After long deliberations at the preparatory conference 2005 in Stockholm, the ISO Technical Management Board decided on a new work item proposal (NWIP) for ISO 26000 in accordance with the advisory group’s recommendations: the standard would provide guidance on CSR and increasing sustainability. In particular, the NWIP defined the criteria for a credible process by requiring a balanced stakeholder-based approach and allowed the working group to investigate improved procedures.

Much of the first two years drafting ISO 26000 was spent agreeing on additional procedures to secure representativeness and balance in the working group. At the end of the five years and eight plenary meetings it took to develop ISO 26000, we had almost reached gender equality and a balance between developed and developing countries. We had also increased the number of under-represented stakeholders among the 400 experts representing industry, NGOs, labour, consumers, government and others.

ISO 26000 is the result of a robust, credible process.

The leadership of the working group, as well as sub-groups, was shared between developed and developing country representatives. The support for the final draft standard from the developing countries was the final key to a vote of 93% in favour. This would not have been possible without the work of the ISO Committee on developing country matters (ISO/DEVCO), which focused on awareness-raising regional workshops on process participation.
ISO 26000 in action

Today I work for an NGO, the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), developing partnerships with companies. We spend most of our time discussing multi-stakeholder initiatives that have the potential to transform commodity markets that negatively affect places where WWF wants to increase biodiversity and reduce the human ecological footprint. In our due diligence preceding the partnerships, we use ISO 26000 as a reference point.

Now widely used, ISO 26000 is the result of a robust, credible process and is valuable for all organizations wanting to improve their contribution to sustainable development. ISO has shown it can use balanced and broad stakeholder-based procedures in its standards development process. If such procedures are integrated in all standards development, it gives me great hope as future environmental managers and others will enjoy standards certain to increase global sustainability.

PEG

Meeting stakeholder needs and expectations

by Amanda Richardson and Steven Cornish

Stakeholder engagement is a key part of the ISO process and ISO member bodies have a major role to play in engaging with relevant stakeholders nationally. ISO members have the responsibility of organising national consultations and considering all relevant interests in the development of positions that reflect a balance of their country’s national interest. As ISO’s stakeholders are also international organizations linked to the relevant committee, those bodies have a role in engaging with their stakeholders and representing members’ interests.

As a result, the credibility of ISO’s national body and liaison organization processes for stakeholder engagement is vital to ensure the credibility of the resulting ISO standards and, ultimately, of the ISO brand in the market.

The role of the Process Evaluation Group

The ISO Technical Management Board (TMB) established the Process Evaluation Group (PEG) to investigate the responsiveness of the ISO standards development processes to the changing dynamics facing ISO, particularly with regard to changing stakeholder expectations of the ISO system.

PEG consulted with national standards bodies and liaison organizations to determine their processes and, as a result, developed guidance for ISO national standards bodies and liaison organizations on “Engaging stakeholders and building consensus”. These documents focus on principles and guidance in key areas related to stakeholder engagement for new ISO projects, through to leadership of national mirror committees.

Stakeholder engagement is vital to ensure the credibility of the resulting ISO standards.

PEG has also reviewed the current ISO model of participation, considered alternative models and, after wide consultation, developed proposals and recommendations related to stakeholder engagement. This applies where broader public interest engagement is a key priority, such as for subjects of wider societal interest. These principles and recommendations are being developed for approval by the ISO/TMB.

The next steps for ISO, its members and liaison organizations are to implement and monitor the application of guidance developed by PEG. This will ensure ISO continues to develop International Standards of integrity and credibility.
With more than 450 participants representing all stakeholder groups, the ISO 26000 Working Group on Social Responsibility (ISO/WG SR) was one of the largest in ISO’s history. ISO/WG SR established unique mechanisms to meet its development goals, including the International Drafting Task Force (IDTF). In this interview, Jonathon Hanks, Chair of the IDTF, describes the special nature of the process and the drafting team’s crucial role in the successful development of ISO 26000.

ISO Focus+: What was the SR International Drafting Task Force (IDTF), and what was it created to achieve?

Jonathon Hanks: The IDTF was established to ensure a co-ordinated and consolidated approach to drafting the text of ISO 26000. Before the IDTF was formed, the drafting had been undertaken by three separate groups (Task Groups 4, 5 and 6), each of which was responsible for developing separate sections of the standard. Coordination on cross-cutting issues between these groups was handled by a small multi-stakeholder representative body known as the Liaison Task Force (LTF).

While it had been beneficial to start the process with these separate drafting teams working in parallel – and although the LTF had played an effective role in managing the cross-cutting “liaison key topics” – it soon became evident that there were some inefficiencies in having three different teams separately drafting text.

Recognizing this concern, the WG leadership proposed the establishment of a single body responsible for coordinating the drafting process. The experts agreed at the fifth meeting of the ISO/WG SR, held in Vienna in November 2007, and the IDTF was established by resolution at the end of that meeting, effectively disbanding the three drafting task groups.

ISO Focus+: What were the benefits of the process?

Jonathon Hanks: The main benefit was to pull together this small, yet representative, team to review and analyse the written comments, debate some of the contentious issues, make specific proposals to the WG on options for addressing these issues, and then draft suggested text informed by the decisions taken by the experts at the WG meetings.

I think we got the balance absolutely right in defining the membership of the IDTF, and that we ended up with a representative team that worked well together in assisting the ISO/WG SR in its deliberations. We were of course always accountable to the WG, which had the final decision-making authority.

An important feature of the process was that the IDTF was very clear in ensuring that it followed due process, that it maintained full transparency during the drafting process, for ensuring that applicable ISO rules were followed, for producing drafts based on consensus amongst all experts, and for ensuring that drafts were edited according to ISO Directives and the guidance received from the editing committee.

It was important to ensure, on the one hand, that we kept the team reasonably small to make it more manageable and efficient while, on the other hand, that it was representative of the full ISO/WG SR. With these goals in mind, it was agreed that the IDTF would include two experts from each of the six stakeholder categories (with one each from a developed and developing country); the convenors and co-convenors of Task Groups 4, 5 and 6; a representative from the editing committee; a representative each from the International Labour Organization (ILO), the UN Global Compact and the ISO Central Secretariat; and two secretaries.

The primary mandate of the IDTF was to review and revise the ISO 26000 drafts, based on all of the written comments received from the WG experts. The IDTF was also responsible for maintaining full transparency during the drafting process, for ensuring that applicable ISO rules were followed, for producing drafts based on consensus amongst all experts, and for ensuring that drafts were edited according to ISO Directives and the guidance received from the editing committee.

ISO Focus+: What was the SR International Drafting Task Force (IDTF), and what was it created to achieve?
processing the many thousands of written comments on the drafts. Minutes were taken of each IDTF meeting, and reports of their discussions were made available publicly. All of these reports are still available through the ISO Website, along with the IDTF’s high-level responses to each of the thousands of comments that we had to review.

Arguably, the most important function of the IDTF was to distil and anticipate the most contentious debates based on our analysis of the comments, and to propose a specific way forward for managing these hotly contested issues. The fact that we had some of the most vocal and active members of the ISO/WG SR in the IDTF – across the stakeholder groups – generally meant that we were able to propose a way forward that would serve as a valuable basis for reaching consensus.

As the rather fraught WG meeting in Vienna demonstrated, it’s a lot more effective to have these debates in a small representative group than in a plenary meeting of four hundred experts.

ISO Focus+: What challenges did the IDTF meet?

Jonathon Hanks: There were several significant challenges, both within the IDTF team itself and between the IDTF and the broader WG.

Internally, we faced the interesting challenge of managing the personal dynamics among the team members. The team had some strong personalities, and there were diverging opinions on the key substantive issues being debated.

While I think that for the most part we had a cohesive team that worked very well together, we can’t hide the fact that some of the personalities did not get on, and at times this resulted in visible internal friction. Managing the differences of opinion on substantive issues — rather than seeking to temper conflicting personalities — was a lot more enjoyable and productive. I think we made very good progress here, and would suggest that the final outcome of the voting process is a testament to this.

Some experts believed that this closed group was over-stepping its mandate, that it was not sufficiently transparent, and/or that it was taking decisions that were the responsibility of the WG experts. I think such views are an inevitable outcome of a process of this nature, no matter how transparent one strives to be, or how diligent in seeking to follow due process.

The most interesting challenge for me as convenor of the IDTF was chairing the plenary negotiations where we debated the most contentious issues relating to the content of the standard. At times the negotiations were tough, particularly once the government representatives from two influential countries started to get more actively involved.

Their engagement seemed to raise the stakes, and added complexity to the robust inputs that we had all become used to from some of the more persistent WG experts. Interestingly, not only did the process at times prompt formal interaction at a ministerial level, but these negotiations also featured on diplomatic exchanges uncovered as part of the WikiLeaks process.

ISO Focus+: Do you have any personal anecdotes about this intense and unusual process?

Jonathon Hanks: The IDTF was a collection of rather colourful characters who made our team meetings a lot more interesting. There are several memories that stand out:

- The rather Freudian artwork we produced as part of a team-building exercise, during which we had to represent our views of the team and its leadership
- Team members letting off frustration on the volleyball court up in the mountains above Cape Town
- A hysterical NGO representative being rescued when she found a scorpion under her bed
- Managing to silence one of the more vocal delegates by taking him on a low-altitude flight along the Cape coast
- The rather eccentric views from certain IDTF colleagues on their conspiracy theories regarding UFOs and aliens (including the suggestion by one – which I think was genuine – that the standard make provision for protecting visiting extraterrestrials).

Who says standards people are boring!

Having the opportunity to lead this group was a real privilege, through which I have established some valuable friendships. Given the opportunity, I’d certainly do it again.

About the author

Jonathon Hanks served as the Convenor of the ISO 26000 Integrated Drafting Task Force.
A manager who has a profound understanding of the inner workings of the organization is a rich asset to any successful business. When that manager also exercises his responsibilities with diligence, wisdom and commitment to the organization – all the better.

For ISO Central Secretariat, such a manager is Mike Smith, Senior Advisor Technical Policy, and Secretary of the ISO Technical Management Board (TMB).

This month he sits down with ISO Focus+ for an in-depth interview before taking early retirement at the end of November 2011. Mike’s profound knowledge of ISO’s policies, procedures and work programme, as well as his immense contributions spanning 33 years of service, will be sorely missed.

ISO Focus+: What is the TMB? Could you briefly explain its structure?

Mike Smith: As defined by ISO’s Statutes and Rules of Procedure, the Technical Management Board (TMB) is the body which has the overall responsibility for the management of ISO’s technical work within the context of the policies established by the General Assembly and Council. It deals with all matters of strategic planning, technical coordination, performance and monitoring of the activities of the technical committees.

Since the technical work has so far resulted in close to 19 000 technical publications,
and with almost 4000 more in the pipeline and being carried out in over 3000 technical bodies (technical committees, subcommittees, project committees and working groups of experts), the TMB has quite reasonably adopted a policy of management by exception. This means that there is no systematic reporting from the technical bodies to the TMB, but it is requested to address issues when it has not been possible to resolve them at the committee level.

The TMB is chaired by the Vice-President (technical management) and comprises 14 member bodies elected by Council. In order to be eligible to serve on the TMB, a member body has to hold at least one secretariat of a technical committee, subcommittee or project committee. It meets three times per year, typically in February, June and in September in conjunction with the General Assembly.

The TMB does not have a fixed substructure, but has the ability to create subgroups to address particular issues. Such groups may be requested to provide advice on specific subjects, such as the Strategic Advisory Group on energy efficiency and renewable energy sources, or to provide ongoing oversight and coordination of the technical work in specific fields, such as Technical Advisory Group (TAG) 8 for the building field. Such groups typically draw on external expertise so that the TMB receives advice from qualified technical experts.

The TMB also establishes subgroups of its own members to address particular issues, such as the Directives Maintenance Team to maintain the procedures followed by ISO committees for the development and drafting of standards.

ISO Focus+: How has the TMB evolved over the years?

Mike Smith: The TMB in its current form and with its current role and responsibilities has existed since 1994. Its predecessor was called the Technical Board and prior to that it was the Planning Committee (PLACO). Not only has the TMB itself evolved, but it has also been instrumental as ISO itself has evolved.

ISO as an organization has always of course been evolving, but it is interesting that for the first quarter century of its existence it used to publish ISO Recommendations and that the designation “International Standards” was only introduced in the early 1970s. However, the late 1980s and 1990s in many ways constituted a turning point for ISO.
Among the events that occurred in the late 1980s, there was firstly the decision within Europe to use a “New Approach” to European legislation and to rely on voluntary European standards as deemed-to-satisfy solutions to that legislation as a means of creating the Single European Market.

This resulted in an explosion of standardization work within the European Committee for Standardization (CEN) and resulted in the conclusion of the Vienna Agreement on technical cooperation between ISO and CEN.

Ironically, it was the establishment of a strong European standardization programme which seems to have stimulated a much stronger commitment to ISO from other parts of the world.

When the TMB was first created, ISO was still very much a paper-based organization, but it has now developed into an organization in which an International Standard can be developed from start to finish fully electronically and also be delivered to the end-user in electronic form.

The TMB, through its representation in the IT Strategies Implementation Group, but also through policy decisions deploying ICT technologies and requiring their use by committees, has played a strong role in this evolution of ISO’s working methods.

Of course, this has also been mirrored in the way the TMB itself works. At its first meetings, members typically brought files of the working documents on paper, but for many years now, members simply bring a laptop from which they can consult the working documents and also any briefs they have received in relation to particular agenda items.

It recognizes that more needs to be done and this will no doubt be an important component as the TMB develops its strategies for implementation of the ISO Strategic Plan 2011-2015.

ISO Focus+: How has the TMB organized itself to address the ISO Strategic Plan 2011-2015?

Mike Smith: As preparation for implementation of the ISO Strategic Plan 2011-2015, the TMB carried out a review of lessons learned during the previous planning period and identified those elements that worked well and those where there was need for improvement.

As an overarching framework, the TMB maintains its own business plan which comprises a description of the role and responsibilities of the TMB, assumptions about the context in which the TMB carries out its work (and which are periodically re-visited to confirm that the assumptions are still valid) and a work programme comprising the items needing to be addressed in order to advance implementation of the Strategic Plan.

The last planning period was initiated by a brainstorming session in which items to be included in the work programme were identified and subsequently prioritized.
and the TMB is currently in the process of repeating this exercise. Last time, it had also appointed project champions for each of the seven key strategic objectives in the Strategic Plan and has done so again for the new planning period.

However, I recognized that one weakness last time was that the annual rotation of members on and off the TMB had sometimes resulted in a lack of continuity. In order to remedy this, the project champions will be supported this time round by teams of other TMB members.

The TMB has also decided this time to use the Balanced Scorecard approach as the means for presenting and monitoring implementation of the Strategic Plan and reviewed the first draft at its meeting in June 2011.

ISO Focus+: What are the links between the TMB and ISO technical committees?

Mike Smith: As noted earlier, the technical committees do not report systematically to the TMB, which nevertheless has a number of statutory responsibilities. These include responsibility for the establishment and dissolution of technical committees, approval of their titles and scopes, allocation of secretariats and appointment of TC chairs.

The TMB also deals with issues of delineation of work between technical committees both within ISO, and between ISO and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) committees in conjunction with the IEC Standardization Management Board (SMB).

TMB decisions specific to particular committees are normally communicated to them by the responsible technical programme manager in the ISO Central Secretariat. Decisions of broader interest, for example policy decisions or changes to the Directives, are communicated via the TMB Communiqué.

ISO Focus+: How would you qualify ISO’s cooperation with the IEC?

Mike Smith: Overall, the technical cooperation between the two organizations is good and, in recent years, we have established annual meetings of representatives of the TMB and IEC/SMB and of the Joint Directives Maintenance Team to provide for exchanges of information of mutual interest.

Inevitably, however, as we see more and more technology convergence, there are the occasional cases in which there are disputes about whether particular work belongs more appropriately in ISO or in the IEC. We usually resolve this by establishing joint working groups between the ISO and IEC committees concerned.

ISO Focus+: With a career spanning over 30 years, what has left you with the most enduring impression?

Mike Smith: There have been times in my career when I have wondered whether anyone really cares about what we do in the ISO Central Secretariat and then a “standards war” comes along and serves as a timely reminder that standards are indeed important and that the Central Secretariat has an important role to play, on behalf of the TMB, of ensuring due process and respect for ISO’s consensus principle.

It has also been gratifying in recent years to see the growing recognition, especially in the inter-governmental arena, that while International Standards cannot answer all the world’s problems, such as climate change, diminishing potable water reserves, or the financial crisis, they can make a valid contribution.

These developments all serve to convince me that standardizers, both the professionals in the ISO member bodies and the experts who populate our technical bodies, are the unsung heroes of our modern technological societies.
The ISO team of senior managers responsible for oversight of the 3,274 technical bodies that make up the ISO standards development system celebrated its 50th meeting in February 2011 in Geneva, Switzerland. During its half-century of meetings since it was established in 1994, the ISO Technical Management Board (TMB) has seen its role evolve from strictly technical issues, such as adjudicating between scopes of the committees that develop ISO standards, to also cover strategic matters, such as the TMB contributions to the on-going realization of objectives and vision set out in the ISO Strategic Plan 2011-2015.

“We are still responsible for ‘nuts and bolts’ issues, but in addition to our work in the ‘engine room’ of standards development, we also provide our colleagues on the ‘bridge’ – ISO Council – with strategic advice and recommendations,” comments TMB Chair, Jacob Holmblad. For example, in recent years the TMB introduced the concept of ISO project committees which concentrate on rapidly developing a single standard for a new field. Such committees are currently addressing a variety of topics, including asset management, natural gas fuelling stations for vehicles, and outsourcing, in addition to new ISO technical committees for areas such as the safety of amusement park attractions, and biogas.

Part of the TMB’s role is to ensure that ISO only commits resources to developing standards for which there is a clear market requirement. It therefore carried out an extensive study of initiatives and programmes related to social responsibility before recommending that an ISO standard could add value – finally resulting in the publication on 1 November 2010 of ISO 26000, which provides guidance on social responsibility.

Membership of the TMB rotates among ISO national member bodies and currently includes representatives from: Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, South Africa, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the USA.
ISO’s secret formula for successful standards

Photo: ISO/Granier

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ISO’s “movers and shakers” at the fifth ISO Chairs’ Conference.
The event provided the ideal platform for a lively exchange of views among the leaders of ISO technical committees, subcommittees and project committees that was not only highly useful and thought-provoking – it was fun!
Living Lab
Where ISO grows continual improvement culture

by Kevin McKinley

The ISO Strategic Plan 2011-2015 states that ISO will be “the world’s leading provider of high quality, globally relevant International Standards”. Are we there yet? Some working in the ISO system would say we are, but many others outside the system would say that we have a long way to go. In fact, feedback received during the Strategic Plan consultation provided insights on what it will take to assure this “leading provider” vision. Comments pointed to the need to shorten ISO’s development timeframes, provide higher quality documents, ensure better stakeholder consultation, and improve the relevance of our work to users.

At its March 2010 meeting, ISO Council reviewed the results of a preliminary study (Phase 0) of a so-called “ISO Living Laboratory” concept, and approved its implementation as a special project, under the responsibility of the ISO Secretary-General. The Living Lab project seeks to:

- Improve standards development processes inline with the Strategic Plan feedback
- Incorporate the best practices of ISO members already in place within the system
- Investigate the impact of ideas in an environment where it’s safe to “play”, to test, and try new approaches
- Complement and consolidate the results of existing initiatives e.g., on-going maintenance of the ISO/IEC Directives, ISO Central Secretariat (ISO/CS) production improvement projects, and results of the ISO Technical Management Board’s (TMB) Process Evaluation Group.

The consultancy Enzyme International was selected to provide facilitation services, management support and methodologies for the project. Enzyme International brings to the table innovative methods to solicit customer views, perceptions and expectations. Enzyme also provides a mathematically based tool that can model the ISO standards development process, and simulate proposed changes and improvements.

This provides visibility of possible impacts on the process before any potentially drastic changes are implemented and can help validate expected benefits of a particular improvement idea. A major task in these first phases of the Living Lab project has been to populate the model with statistics on the current process and to develop an accurate mathematical model of how our work is currently done. Figure 1 is...
a high-level depiction of the model that describes ISO’s current processes.

Planning for the ISO Living Lab divided the project into three major phases as follows:

**Phase 1 – Stakeholder Value Discovery (April-August 2010)**

This phase had two major components. The first was the building, testing and refining of the above interactive model, based on Phase 0 information and existing data. The second part was conducting “value assessment” workshops and interviews of a sample of key ISO customer segments to assess needs and potential improvement areas.

In this value assessment, the ISO Secretary-General was responsible for selecting approximately 50 key ISO “customers” taking into account a balance of individuals from broad customer categories identified in Phase 0 (i.e., ISO national members, standards developers, users, ISO/TMB, staff). Input was obtained from these groups via workshops or interviews. Three important sets of information were sought from each target group:

- The most severe “irritants and issues” associated with the current ISO standards development system
- The most important “value factors or best practices” of an ideal system (see **Figure 2**)
- Ideas about highest priority success criteria that could help assess if an improvement initiative had an impact (e.g., faster turnaround times, increased standard sales, etc.) more globally relevant standards etc.).

Irritants and value factors were then compiled and ranked to provide an overall score of ISO’s current customer value performance (see **Figure 3**).

This initial poll of ISO customers revealed important opportunities to target improved
Figure 3 – ISO’s performance as rated by its customers.

best practices related to leadership, speed and simplicity.

Phase 2 – Consolidation & Key Areas for Process Improvement (August-October 2010)

In this phase, a Living Lab Project Team was assembled for a series of workshops in Geneva, in September 2010, addressing:

- Areas of potential transformation
- Cycle time and process improvements
- Testing/simulation of potential impacts.

Project Team members were appointed by the ISO Secretary-General, taking into consideration experience of the ISO development process and a balance of representatives from different regions and sizes of economies. After identifying a series of high priority improvement areas, further specialized brainstorming workshops were held to identify potential improvement initiatives which were finally categorized into two major sets: “Quick Wins” and “Pilots”.

ISO’s customers want leadership, speed and simplicity.

Soon after the workshops, the ISO General Assembly in September 2010 in Oslo, Norway, presented an opportunity to present the concept of the Living Lab and an update of results from the Geneva workshops completed in the previous weeks. In addition, it provided an opportunity to gather feedback directly from General Assembly delegates using an electronic wireless audience response system to determine possible priorities.

This feedback was used to validate a set of Quick Win and Pilot improvement initiatives identified in the workshops. The improvement ideas selected by the ISO General Assembly indicated below (Figure 4) have helped to validate and shape the development of the top priority projects in the following Phase 3.

Phase 3 – Validation and Implementation of the ISO Living Laboratory (on-going)

This current phase of the project involves validation and implementation of the actual ISO Living Laboratory and associated improvement projects. This involves work on four identified improvement projects as follows:

Two quick wins

- **Quick Win 1** – Develop and implement a code of conduct for participating in ISO’s technical work
- **Quick Win 2** – Collect and implement a set of selection/performance criteria for ISO secretaries, chairs, convenors and experts.

Figure 4 – Areas for improvement identified by ISO members.
Results of these shorter-term, quick-win projects were presented for discussion by the TMB at its meeting on 23-24 February 2011. TMB members supported the items in principle and have since provided detailed comments on the projects. Revised versions of these quick-win items were to be finalized at the June 2011 TMB meeting and then introduced by the ISO Vice-President (Technical management) at the June 2011 ISO Chairs’ Conference (Chairs of the technical committees that develop ISO standards) held immediately after the TMB meeting.

Two major pilot projects

- **Pilot 1 – Radical editing**
  The first longer-term Pilot project is entitled “Radical editing”, with a first phase currently underway and involving ISO/CS provision of earlier technical editing services (i.e., at DIS stage versus FDIS) for selected work items. For the second phase, a detailed plan and rollout of the project will be reviewed by TMB at their June 2011 meeting.
  In the second phase of this Living Lab improvement project, new approaches of providing focused, centralized content editing and project management support for high-priority projects will be piloted. The ISO Chair’s Conference was to assist in identifying candidate ISO technical committees and work items for implementation trials.

- **Pilot 2 – Shorter development cycle time**
  The second longer-term Pilot Project involves drastically improving the standards development cycle from two, three and four-year timeframes, to one, two and three-year tracks. Proposed changes and improvement ideas will again be tested at the ISO Chairs’ Conference, and the model developed in the Living Lab project will be used subsequently to simulate the impact of selected ideas. Again, the Chairs’ Conference was to be a means of selecting candidate committees and work items that can be used as a trial for these new development processes.

Finally, a Living Lab “Innovation Pool” has been introduced and was to be promoted at the Chair’s Conference to encourage, track and evaluate new process ideas and initiatives that come from the ISO committees themselves.

At the end of 2011, the ISO Secretary-General, with the ISO/TMB, will review the results of Living Lab projects to-date, determine where necessary changes in policies and procedures need to be made based on experiences with the projects, and consider what further ideas should be brought into the Living Lab.

Ultimately, the Living Laboratory is intended to serve as a controlled way of trying out new ideas, of testing new development approaches, and of challenging existing paradigms, in an effort to achieve the ISO 2011-2015 Strategy Vision of being the “world’s leading provider of high quality, globally relevant International Standards”.

For more information, or to submit your ideas for important improvements to ISO development process, please contact us at livinglab@iso.org.

About the author

Kevin McKinley is ISO Deputy Secretary-General.
Introducing XML

A strategic approach to standards publishing

by Nicolas Fleury

Publishing is one of the key steps in the standards development process in that it makes the results of the work carried out within ISO’s technical committees available to the public. ISO proceeds to a first publication when a future standard reaches the Draft International Standard (DIS) or Final Draft International Standard (FDIS) stages, in order to circulate it for comments and voting. Once the FDIS has been approved, it is then published for the second time so that customers and end-users can ultimately implement it.

An unavoidable technological change

For ISO and all players in the publishing and information industry, today’s technological changes drastically and constantly modify the way businesses and people consume information or content. It started with the development of the Internet and the Web which prompted the digitization of standards and the generalization of electronic distribution.

Today, about 95% of standards purchased via the Central Secretariat’s Webstore are delivered as downloadable files. More recently, mobile information technology devices have been expanding and mobile computers, netbooks, tablets and smartphones are increasingly used.

Needs keep changing and growing and they now vary according to each user, which forces content providers to adapt and be extremely flexible in their information delivery. ISO is fully aware of this change as the first objective of its Strategic Plan 2011-2015 is precisely to « ensure that ISO deliverables […] meet customer needs in terms of […] quality of content, clarity, format and access ».

Meeting market needs

To achieve this objective, in March 2010, ISO’s Council decided to launch a project with a view to implementing an XML-based publishing system (see box on next page). The need for such a project at ISO’s level is justified by the number of its members interested in the implementation of such systems. A central directory should, on the one hand, help reduce or even avoid redundant technical and financial efforts within the ISO family itself and, on the other, give those members lacking the resources to implement such an infrastructure the means to meet the expectations of standards users in their own markets.
What is XML?

A markup language is used for annotating a text or enriching it through tags, with information on the text or part of it. With such a structure, it can be decoded according to pre-established rules. An analogy is often made between HTML (HyperText Markup Language), known as the language underlying the Web, and XML (eXtensible Markup Language). HTML consists of an exhaustive set of tags describing how a text element should be displayed.

For example, for the title of a text, HTML describes how the title should be displayed, for instance in bold, whereas XML shows that this specific part of the text is a title. The main difference between both languages is that the tags used in HTML are predefined while in the case of XML, the user defines his/her own tags and decides how to use them. The advantage of XML is that it is possible to create a set of tags describing data that are specific to a given sector or to a type of document, for instance a standard, with no limitation due to the number of defined tags. Derived from SGML (ISO 8879:1986, Information processing – Text and office systems – Standard Generalized Markup Language (SGML)), XML was developed and launched in 1998 by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) (www.w3.org/standards/xml/).

The benefits of XML

ISO’s XML project should become a reality in the next few months in the form of a directory for storing and searching the content of the standards that have been previously converted to the XML format. This server should become central to all content publishing activities throughout the various stages of the standards development process.

About 95% of standards purchased via the Webstore are delivered as downloadable files.

This directory can be supplemented by other tools for accessing content, improving it or delivering it to end-users in different forms and different contexts. XML should then offer ISO members, the ISO Central Secretariat, and of course end-users, many benefits such as:

- Extended search capacities, which are particularly important for technical publications like standards, by using the possibility offered by XML tags to identify the nature of specific parts of a document’s content
- The possibility to simultaneously publish standards in different formats such as the new traditional PDF format, or the various existing e-book formats, or any future formats
- For ISO members, XML should facilitate the national adoption process, thereby accelerating time-to-market for national standards which are a key element in the dissemination strategy for ISO’s work
- The possibility to build Web portals more easily in order to collect comments during the enquiry stage
- The possibility to develop new products and services by exploiting unreservedly the components of the documents available in the directory, by aggregating content from different documents, or enhancing it with information from other sources.

A unique source

Finally, users should be able to access standards content, at the lowest level of granularity, through application programming interfaces (API), Web services and other mechanisms enabling the integration of standards content into proprietary applications. This is why, as part of ISO’s XML project, it has also been decided that components such as terminology, language, country and currency codes, as well as graphical symbols which are currently available in the ISO Concept Database (www.iso.org/iso/concept_database_cdb.htm) will be included in the directory.

This decision will help avoid the costs associated with the development and maintenance of multiple platforms, facilitate content integration, and truly make the XML directory the unique source for all components of a standard, whatever its type.

The next steps

ISO’s ambitions for the implementation of the XML infrastructure are commensurate with the potential offered by XML in terms of flexibility and capacity to meet the needs of standards customers in different market segments, and of its strategic importance.

The directory should thus be made available to members in early 2012 with the latest standards already available in XML format. The conversion process of the catalogue of ISO standards, i.e., more than 18 600 documents principally available in English and French, should extend into 2013. The first products and services developed on the basis of the platform should be available in the first months of 2012. ISO Focus+ will extensively cover the news in its columns.

About the author

Nicolas Fleury is Director, Marketing, Communication & Information at the ISO Central Secretariat.
The inside story

Why participate in standardization?

Standards are developed by thousands of experts who volunteer their time and effort. Often, with “day jobs” on the side, these participants may come from industry, academia, government, consumer organizations and other stakeholder groups.

Why do they do it? The answer is simple, having a seat at the standards-making table provides a unique opportunity to have a say when the rules are being made. Below, we highlight some of the main stakeholder groups, and the advantages to be derived from participation.

Industry

By participating in standardization you can plan for the future. You receive inside knowledge on upcoming work, so that you can make standards part of your strategy. Participation provides an opportunity to get an inside view of the standards most relevant to your goals. Furthermore, you have an opportunity to influence the future of your industry.

Being at the standards-making table alongside other industry players, regulators, customers and partners also allows participants to collaborate for competitiveness. That is, you get access to what your competitors are saying on a particular subject, and you have an opportunity to collaborate with your customers and partners.

Most importantly, participating in standardization is an opportunity to influence the outcome of a standard to make sure that all interests, including your own, are taken into account. You have a voice in the development of new standards.

Tom Purves

“International Standards bring together like-minded people to tackle issues of high importance to our community. These standards help companies translate ethical principles into effective actions.”

(ISO Focus+, January 2011)

Tom Grissen

“Our business is highly dependent on data sharing and interoperability... To be on the leading edge and ready to go where our customers are, we have to be in a position to anticipate where the standards are going and be strategic in building them into our platforms.”

(ISO Focus+, February 2011)

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Government

International Standards can constitute a valuable complement to regulation. They are a means for ensuring best practice while facilitating trade. Participation in the standards development process ensures that governments and regulators from around the world can have a say on specifications of interest to them such as health, security, quality and safety.

At the same time they can bring their national interests and concerns to the decision making table. It also facilitates dialogue between countries, industry players and other stakeholders.

Ewa Björling

“Our Swedish experiences over the years have taught us that there are important benefits from participating in the international standardization process. Among other things, an active participation ensures that national priorities and circumstances are reflected in International Standards.

“Participation in the development of global standards can also provide a forum for exchange of technical information with representatives from international industrial and scientific organizations. This is something valuable in itself, not the least because it promotes innovation.”

(ISO Focus+, February 2010)

Consumers

Consumers can contribute to standardization in many ways, for example:

• By providing data on safety aspects and ensuring that safety is properly addressed
• By giving examples of how products and services are actually used (or misused) in practice
• By checking that the performance requirements and test methods reflect the way products and services are actually used.

Consumers lend their unique perspective to the creation of the voluntary standards that define products and services used in everyday life. The consumer representative’s role is to ensure that the standards being developed address issues of concern to consumers. These may include some of the following: health, safety, performance, ergonomics, quality, reliability, comfort, environmental protection, ease-of-use, compatibility and interoperability.

Joost Martens

“Consumers need to participate effectively, both nationally and internationally, in policy and in technical work. To do this, consumer organizations have to overcome many challenges. These include a lack of resources and the need to determine where to focus efforts in the ever growing raft of consumer protection issues, such as safety, access, performance, sustainability and privacy... This has meant that consumers continue to be one of the least represented stakeholder group in standards making.

An example that stands out in this regard is the development of ISO 26000, whose unique standards process recognized consumers as a key stakeholder group... This resulted in the participation of the largest number of consumer organizations.

International organizations

The participation of relevant international organizations in ISO’s work brings benefits to all parties. On one side, ISO benefits from the expertise these organizations bring to the process, and on the other participating organizations may coordinate efforts, engage with other stakeholders, and have a say in the development of widely accepted International Standards.

Edouard Dayan

“The international postal service is based on a global postal supply chain. To be competitive, the postal supply chain must be fast and smart.

“The need for an efficient, interoperable supply chain forces all participants to adopt common standards that eliminate friction at borders and, combined with other UPU initiatives, help make the supply chain more visible.

“By participating in the ISO standards process, the UPU has a voice in the development and evolution of ISO standards that impact the postal office.”

(ISO Focus+, April 2010)
The case of Singapore

Working in harmony for standards

by Lin Yih

For a small country with a population of five million, Singapore has the largest number of smart cards per capita with approximately 15 million contact and contactless cards used in mass transit, electronic road pricing, and retail purchase. The country has a lot at stake as far as standards for cards and personal identification are concerned, and a strong motivation in getting their national needs and interests on the international standardization decision-making table. For example, Singapore was one of the earliest member countries in the US Waiver programme to issue standards-compliant chip based biometric ePassports.

The national mirror committee

So how can Singapore consolidate national interests into international standardization? One way of doing this is through a national mirror committee (NMC). These committees “mirror” the work carried out internationally at a national level.

Singapore’s Cards and Personal Identification Technical Committee (Singapore’s CPITC) is a NMC of ISO/IEC Joint Technical Committee JTC1, Information technology, subcommittee SC17, Cards and personal identification, since 2001.

Mirror committees like this one facilitate the process of negotiation and consensus-building among national stakeholders. They thus contribute to the international negotiation and consensus-building process. Because of this, close cooperation and synergy are required between the international standardization work taking place in the international TCs and national standardization taking place in mirror committees.

Individuals and enterprises members of Singapore’s CPITC, have a range of opportunities for taking part in ISO’s work:

- Individuals may be selected by national member institutes to serve as experts on national delegations participating in ISO technical committees
- Individuals and enterprises may provide their input during the process of developing a national consensus for presentation by the delegation. This may done through national mirror committees to the corresponding ISO technical committee

Mirror committees facilitate negotiation and consensus-building among national stakeholders.

- International organizations and associations, both non-governmental and representing industry sectors, can apply for liaison status to a technical committee. They do not vote, but can participate in the debates and the development of consensus.
Close linkage with international work

Singapore has been using biometric technology (notably fingerprint) since the introduction of national ID cards in the 1960s. It was only natural then that Singapore propose a “biometric match on card” standard, together with a nomination for project editor.

Mirroring international work also involves the adoption and use of International Standards.

Mr Lin Yih, who is currently the Chairman of Singapore’s CPITC, was nominated Convener of WG 11, which covers the application of biometrics on cards. The working group, consisting of at least 10 member countries, was responsible for the development of ISO/IEC 24787:2010, Information technology – Identification cards – On-card biometric comparison.

Singapore’s CPITC attends meetings of ISO/IEC JTC 1/SC 17, and acquires much technical knowledge as a result of its participation. In turn, CPITC hosts many meetings, and organizes international events to promote adoption and testing. For example, in 2001, Singapore participated and later hosted a small gathering of experts from working group WG 8, Contactless, of ISO/IEC JTC 1/SC 17. It was most productive and mutually beneficial for both the international and local delegates, who had never seen an ISO meeting in action.

Since then, on a yearly basis, Singapore has hosted at least one working group meeting of SC 17, which consists of eight active working groups that meet autonomously throughout the year. Moreover, in 2003, Singapore hosted the SC 17 working group plenary meetings, which included the participation of some 180 people over a 10-day period.

Encouraging adoption of International Standards

Mirroring international work also involves the adoption and use of International Standards. In 2006, for example, CPITC published two Singapore standards based on international ones, namely SS518, Contactless e-purse application, and SS529, Smart Card ID. These standards define smart card commands and data structures in addition to work that has been done in ISO/IEC JTC 1/SC 17.

To encourage the adoption and enhance the practicality of standards, Singapore emphasizes product interoperability testing and organizes InterFest events, which bring together vendors and products, and encourage cross testing.

Singapore has learned from and contributed back to the ISO/IEC community of standardizers.

Most importantly, Singapore, through CPITC, has learned from and contributed back to the ISO/IEC international community of standardizers. It looks forward to continuing to support and learn from its role as an NMC of ISO/IEC JTC 1/SC 17 – a role which it encourages other ISO members to take up and embrace to its fullest.

About the author

Lin Yih is Director of Digital Applied Research and Technology Pte Ltd, which develops software and hardware in areas such as smart cards, biometrics and computer security. He was born and raised in Singapore and received his university education in the USA. He has three degrees from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, in electrical engineering and computer science. His active participation in local and International Standards has spanned more than a decade.
Focus on financial services

A workshop on “Standardization in the field of banking, securities and other financial services: current and future needs” was held in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, in May 2011. More than 70 highly qualified participants from the financial services industry, regulators, and consumers attended the event, including representatives from the World Bank and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

The initiative promoted dialogue between stakeholders and provided an opportunity for ISO technical committee ISO/TC 68, Financial services, to review its objectives and priorities, considering present and future challenges facing the financial services industry. The workshop underlined the following key points.

It is important to extend dialogue between industry and regulators. In particular, legal entity identifiers, and other items such as securities identifiers and classifications of instruments under the responsibility of ISO technical committee ISO/TC 68, Financial services, were welcomed and supported by representatives of industry and regulators at the workshop [such as US Treasury Office of Financial Research (OFR) and the European Securities and Markets Authority (Esma)].

There is a need to strengthen communication to better present the flexibility of the ISO 20022 framework (universal financial industry message scheme), its applicability in a variety of contexts and the benefits derived from its use.

Standardization in the field of mobile banking has never been in greater demand and there is a need to capture the requirements from as many relevant and affected parties as possible, including, for example, the World Bank.

There is a need to ensure the efficient and updated exchange of information with ISO’s Committee on consumer policy (ISO/COPOLCO), especially on priority issues.

The workshop was jointly organized by ISO, NEN, the ISO member for the Netherlands, and ISO/TC 68. Additional information can be found at: www.iso.org/sites/finservworkshop_nl_2011-05/index.html

90 years for UNI

UNI, ISO member for Italy, concluded its 90th anniversary celebrations in May 2011 in Rome, Italy.

ISO Secretary-General Rob Steele attended the celebration, at which he congratulated UNI for its active support of international standardization and its strong participation in ISO. The figures speak for themselves. Italy participates in 92% of all ISO technical bodies. What is more, Italy is actively participating in more than 500 of them. This “value-added” participation ranges from road vehicles to energy management.

“Be standards’ makers instead of standards’ takers,” said UNI’s President Piero Torretta, to a gathering of Italian entrepreneurs, professionals and consumers at the celebration. Sustainability, quality and safety, explained Mr. Torretta, are the keywords we can make them work only through a much larger participation in the standardization process from all stakeholders.

Among the other speakers were the Vice-president of the Confederation of Italian Industry Giorgio Squinzi, the member of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) Antonello Pezzini, the representative of the National Council of Consumers and Users Gianni Cavinato and the President of the Italian Workers’ Compensation Authority Marco Fabio Sartori.

News on nanotech

Some 180 participants attended the 12th meeting of ISO technical committee ISO/TC 229, Nanotechnologies, in St. Petersburg, Russia.

The meeting was jointly hosted by the Federal Agency for Technical Regulating and Metrology (GOST R), ISO member for the country and the Russian Corporation of
Nanotechnologies (RUSNANO). Excellent progress was made with the majority of the 25 active work items undertaken by the committee’s four working groups – terminology and nomenclature, measurement and characterization, health, safety and environmental aspects of nanotechnologies, and materials specifications.

Participants described the meeting as an outstanding, well-organized success, the crowning glory was the social event at the magnificent Konstantanovsky Palace on the outskirts of St Petersburg.

The next ISO/TC 229 will take place in South Africa in November 2011, at the invitation of the South African Bureau of Standards (SABS), ISO member for the country.

Standards in the spotlight in South America

ISO Secretary-General Rob Steele recently visited three countries in South America for a series of meetings with ISO members and key stakeholders.

In Brazil, the ISO Secretary-General spoke at the regional meeting of the World Economic Forum on two occasions. The first was on the “responsible corporation” and the increasing importance of social and environmental awareness in business practices.

Following the principles of ISO 26000:2010, *Guidance on social responsibility*, is not only good for the world, but it also makes sound business sense.

Rob Steele also spoke on ISO 50001:2011, *Energy management systems – Requirements with guidance for use*, and outlined how investments based on the standard had already proven significant with quick benefits to businesses of all sizes and types.

While in Brazil, the ISO Secretary-General made a visit to ABNT, ISO member for the country. The visit was an opportunity to meet and speak to the ABNT Board on recent ISO activities, including the implementation of the *ISO Strategic Plan 2011-2015* and the need to be simpler, faster and better in the development and encouragement of the use of ISO standards. He also met with ABNT management and reviewed the latest initiatives, especially in IT, and the plans for expansion of ABNT.

A visit to ICONTEC in Colombia included two meetings with key stakeholders from industry and those involved in implementing quality management standards in the country. Industry representatives in attendance expressed enthusiasm and benefits from the use of ISO standards. A case study, using the ISO methodology for assessing the economic benefits of standards, provided first-hand knowledge of the usefulness of standards.

The company, Gerfor, reported that over 50% of its sales could be attributed to the use of standards.

This was followed by a Chief Executive’s Forum in Santiago, Chile, attended by 14 CEOs from ISO member bodies and funded from ISO resources. The two-day session allowed participants to exchange best practice ideas on managing a national standards body using the balanced scorecard concepts of customer focus, processing excellence, having and encouraging great people and ensuring the financial basis for all of this is sustainable in the long-term. The Forum was followed by the COPANT meeting (see World Scene).

Encapsulating these visits was the statement made at the World Economic Forum in Brazil which emphasized that this decade was the time for Latin America. There has been significant change over the last 10 years including lifting many out of poverty and establishing a more stable basis for growth. The regions’ contribution to Global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was much higher than the proportion of patents being granted to the region.

There is, therefore, a compelling argument for greater innovation and this is where education and international opportunities, including the use of International Standards, can make a significant and positive further improvement for the region.
AC Labels of Derby, England, a leader in printed barcode labels, has won back its ISO 9001 quality management system (QMS) certification, maintained since 1991, which was lost when it went into administration in 2010.

The company hit financial difficulties following a slump in phone card sales. However, part of AC Labels was bought out of administration by the Mercian Labels Group in 2010, and is now trading as AC Labels (2010) Ltd. The move has resulted in a new and leaner business structure, with the closing of the pre-pay phone card business to concentrate solely on barcode label production.

“An important milestone”

ISO Focus+ asked Peter Hartshorn, AC Label’s General Manager, why the company considered it important to re-certify to ISO 9001, the implications of a new business model, and why he describes the achievement as “an important milestone”.

ISO Focus+: Why did AC Labels wish to go through the ISO 9001 implementation and certification process again?

Peter Hartshorn: The main reason was that the previous company structure went into administration, and the ISO 9001 certification was not transferable to the new business.

Re-certification was driven by our own commitment to proving that we had maintained quality standards, and to demonstrate to our customers that we are unquestionably committed to maintaining such quality, and are always looking for continual improvement. It also satisfies demands from customers who prefer to deal with companies with quality standard certification.

ISO Focus+: You mention that it is “an important milestone” – can you comment on the significance of ISO 9001 certification to your company, and the value of a recognized QMS?

Peter Hartshorn: ISO 9001 certification proves to our customers that we are working to approved standards and gives them confidence when they are reviewing their preferred supplier lists.

As all employees had taken enthusiastic ownership of the implementation of the QMS, the reward of certification was an achievement received with pride by the whole team.

Our business runs more efficiently

Re-certification not only enhanced our credibility and gave our business more confidence, but it also gave us the opportunity to integrate and streamline our new content management system (CMS) to ensure that the processes and procedures reflected the new AC Labels (2010) Ltd business structure.

The implementation and certification process, and the way in which all company employees embraced it, gives us confidence when undergoing external auditing by our customer’s quality control teams.

ISO Focus+: Is the Mercian Labels Group also ISO 9001-certified, and did they influence your decision to re-certify?

Peter Hartshorn: Yes, the Mercian Labels Group holds ISO 9001 certification, awarded in 2006. But it was our intention from day one to implement and regain ISO 9001 certification – a task that we achieved in just nine months with no major or minor nonconformities found during the assessment.

ISO Focus+ July-August 2011
AC Labels at a glance

AC Labels (2010) Ltd., is a market leader in the United Kingdom for the printing of variable data barcode self-adhesive labels, supplied to the National Health Service and to records management, warehousing and logistics customers.

The company’s in-line high-speed variable data print engine coupled with a flexographic printing press enables cost-effective medium to large volume barcode label production runs. An ISO 9001-certified barcode verification system and multiple scanning checks throughout the print process ensure data integrity and barcode readability every time, for end-user security.

Streamlined procedures

ISO Focus+: Why did it take you nine months to re-certify – didn’t you have quality manuals and procedures in place from your earlier certification, or did you have to rebuild your documentation to satisfy the certification body?

Peter Hartshorn: We were not allowed to bring the manuals through to the new business but we continued to work the same procedures. As the business model had changed from a company of 54 staff to only nine we took the opportunity to streamline the procedures and used consultants to help us do this.

ISO Focus+: What are the benefits of operating an ISO 9001-based QMS?

Peter Hartshorn: One of the benefits to the company of operating a QMS that conforms to ISO 9001 is that every employee works to the one standard, ensuring minimal quality issues, which, in turn, relates to a secure and profitable business.

It also helps ensure that our business runs more efficiently. We investigated every process, eliminated any unnecessary paperwork, and modeled our system around the streamlined processes.

The second time around we had the input of all employees. Previously the system implementation had been carried out by the QC manager with small elements of input from employees, but then we had many more employees and printed a wider variety of products.

Second time around we had the input of all employees.

We went through every single process with the employees to ensure that the procedures met the criteria required and any unnecessary elements were removed. This, in turn, made all employees feel that they were a real part of the construction of the new manual, and that’s why we were so proud to regain our certification.

Garry Lambert is a British freelance journalist based in Switzerland.

Printer David Badman uses barcode verification software to scan printed sheets for accuracy during a sample pre-production press run.

AC Labels won back ISO 9001 certification thanks to the total commitment of the entire team.
Greening our homes
What do we need for the future and how standards can help?

by Sandrine Tranchard

There is a growing worldwide demand for more sustainable consumption of goods and services, and one of the priority concerns of consumers is the building area. How can standards help our homes best reflect trends and daily realities in an evolving world?

This question was at the heart of the discussions at the annual workshop of the ISO Committee on consumer policy (ISO/COPOLCO), which explored whether standards can play a greater role in responding to rapid change in the landscape of housing needs for populations around the world, focusing on the theme Homes for tomorrow – Building through standards.

This 33rd ISO/COPOLCO workshop was held on 24 May in London, hosted by the ISO member for the United Kingdom, the British Standards Institution (BSI). About 130 participants from 46 countries representing consumer associations, business, industry, public authorities and national standardization bodies attended the workshop and discussed possible ways in which standards could address issues in two major areas: “Greening our homes” and “Rebuilding after disasters”.

In his opening remarks, Mike Low, Director of Standards at BSI, welcomed the participants of the workshop and reminded them of “the 60 years of involvement of BSI in consumers’ issues through the Consumer & Public Interest Unit, which ensures that consumers have a strong voice on BSI committees.”

In her welcome speech Norma McCormick, Chair of ISO/COPOLCO, encouraged delegates to take an active part in the discussions, and highlighted the presenters and the depth of interest and expertise they represent, “What comes out of the workshop by way of recommendations for further exploration by ISO/COPOLCO or action by ISO will be better if it reflects the experience and expertise that we all bring to the discussions”.

Sustainable housing and design

The workshop started with the exploration of the theme of sustainable housing. In the future, homes will be lower carbon both in delivery and in use. They will provide greater comfort, security, flexibility and value. About sustainable housing, Peter Caplehorn, Chair of CB/Construction & Built Environment Sector, Scott Brownrigg, raised the question “How do designers design? There is a complexity of issues and designers need knowledge.”

“There is a need to establish what parameters and specifications are built in. This is the role of standards and specifications. Regulations start the ball rolling, but the underlying standards actually address the detail, especially where government is asking for less red tape, less bureaucracy. Standards will play an important part.” He said it was important to look at the relationship of building regulations to standards and how this relationship works.

New areas needing standards include the following: sustainability, low carbon, health and safety, quality and compliance. All players have a part to play and to ensure they deliver quality because quality is crucial. This is why standardization is needed because it is a framework to unify all these different documents.

Every 20 years, significant changes take place in the construction industry. During the 1970s the oil crisis and recession introduced the concept of designing for energy conservation. The recession of the early 1990s introduced the widespread use of computer-aided design and improved communications (fax, mobile phone, etc.). What will the recession of the 2010s bring?, asked Richard Waterhouse, Chief Executive Officer, RIBA Enterprises, speaking on “Modelling homes for the future”, he answered: “I think it is carbon. We need to find how to balance carbon and design while taking economics into consideration because regarding the consumers’ point of view, are they ready to afford an increase in cost, including cost of building, energy, and use of appliances?”

In the near future, carbon will be as much a deciding factor in construction product and...
system selection as cost. How to manage carbon, how to define zero carbon?

Richard Waterhouse commented: “How do we deliver zero-carbon homes without limiting architectural imagination? The answer is standardizing the process. It is obvious that there is a need for a standards plug-in model to achieve zero carbon.”

What does “green” mean?

Representing the voice of the consumer, Monika Büning, Policy Officer Environment, Product Safety & Standardization, Federation of German Consumer Organizations, gave a European perspective on sustainable and green housing that has many aspects. She said: “Houses are built for several generations which have different needs from comfort to accessibility, so the architecture of houses needs to be adaptable. Building new houses is the easiest part, but we also have to work on existing houses.”

Among consumers, there are different understandings of the term “green” and she raised the question: “What do consumers have in mind when they think about green houses? And what is sustainable? Consumers need information about what is green today and what will be green tomorrow. The role of standards is to help consumers to differentiate products and assess the quality of services.”

Rebuilding after disasters

Following recent natural disasters across Australia, New Zealand and Asia, there has been an increasing focus on the way in which individuals, governments and communities can be better prepared for, and respond to, such disasters. How can standards and standardization processes enable communities to be more resilient? Paul Murphy, Global Technical Leader, Property and Buildings, GHD, Australia, presented the way in which standardization can play a role in the development of communities which are resilient to physical disruption. After a disaster, he said, “There are fundamental issues, such as shelter, water, to sustain life. There are material issues, but also social issues and can standards help in removing dysfunction after disasters? How can standards develop dynamically to respond to these issues?”

He added: “Resilience is different for different people and culture should be considered in developing new standards.”

Social responsibility

Humanitarian organizations which respond following a disaster have to act in a socially responsible manner and they must comply with codes of conduct. The Sphere standards frame these humanitarian charters. The Sphere Project was developed after the lessons learned from the Rwanda humanitarian response and is based on two core beliefs: that all possible steps should be taken to alleviate human suffering arising out of calamity and conflict, and that those affected by disaster have a right to life with dignity and therefore a right to assistance. Sphere contains a set of minimum standards to attain in disaster assistance in each of five key sectors: water supply and sanitation, nutrition, food aid, shelter and health services.

Gordon Browne, Freelance Consultant, The Good Earth Shelter Consultant, The Good Earth Shelter, explained that it is internationally and legally recognized that everyone has the right to adequate housing. The key indicator is an initial covered floor area per person of least 3.5m². The typical shelter is a plastic sheet conforming to ISO standards. But it causes deficiencies in adequate ventilation, light, security design and space. An improved shelter may be constructed of earth blocks.

In his conclusion, he said, on social responsibility and Sphere standards for transitional shelter for humanitarian disaster relief response: “We have a humanitarian social responsibility, which conforms with the voluntary guidance as outlined in ISO 26000, to provide adequate housing in disaster assistance to a minimum Sphere standard. The question remains: What is “adequate” and what is achievable in certain given circumstances?”

Disasters leave more than uprooted lives in their wake. With no access to their homes, financial documents, and sometimes lacking any proof of identification, displaced people often struggle to rebuild their financial lives. Consumers need protection in these circumstances.

Disaster responders need to know what the common post-disaster scams are, how

Norma McCormick, Chair of ISO/COPOLCO.

Breakout session groups at work at the 33rd ISO/COPOLCO meeting.
The United Kingdom (UK) Government Minister for Employment Relations, Consumer and Postal Affairs, Edward Davey MP, underlined the importance of the role played by consumers in the development of standards when he welcomed participants to the 33rd plenary meeting of the ISO Committee on consumer policy (ISO/COPOLCO). Some 100 delegates from 42 ISO member countries, including 13 sponsored participants from developing countries, attended.

The Minister said the UK Government understands that rigorous standards are an important tool for encouraging economic growth and innovation. Good standards help government to achieve policy objectives in many sectors of the economy, from sustainability to services and from nanotechnology to healthcare – and all of them have an impact on the lives of consumers. Standards also spur innovation and allow the development of new products, services and technologies, ensuring that they are compatible with existing ones – for the benefit of consumers.

"The UK Government is keen to ensure that consumers are treated fairly," he said, "that they know their rights and can use them effectively; and that consumer law is fair to both consumers and business. Well founded standards developed with good participation from consumers and their advocates can play an important role in achieving these objectives. Therefore government, through BSI, the national standards body, works to ensure that standards are developed through a true, broad-based consensus, taking in the views of consumers, businesses, both large and small, charities and other interested parties."

He was pleased to see representatives of these stakeholders from all around the world and he congratulated the ISO/COPOLCO delegates for the work that has already been done, and strongly encouraged them to continue their work.

These comments reinforced those of the opening remarks by David Bell, BSI’s Head of External Policy. Welcoming the participants, he declared, "This year represents a significant milestone in standardization in the UK as we commemorate 60 years of consumer participation in the work of BSI."

"In 1951, BSI recognized that if we were to produce standards which ensured that the new electrical products to be used around the home would be safe and fit for purpose, then the requirements of the end-user needed to be taken into consideration from the beginning of the standards development process. And so was born the Women’s Advisory Committee, and so began a strong and binding relationship that has endured to this day."

He added, "This level of participation demonstrates that the needs of the consumer are recognized around the world as a key input to global standards programmes."

Norma McCormick, Chair of ISO/COPOLCO, in her opening speech, stated, "In every forum in which I have encountered Rob Steele, ISO’s Secretary-General, I have found him to be a genuine supporter of ISO/COPOLCO and of consumers in general. Our ability to advance consumers’ interests and protection in the standards system is partially dependent on this organizational and leadership support. We need ISO and ISO needs us. Again this year by our choice of the workshop topic, ‘Homes for tomorrow – Building through standards’, we have demonstrated our ability to anticipate significant emerging issues and to be proactive in offering to ISO our insight, opinions and perspectives on what requires further study by ISO/COPOLCO, or action by ISO."

In his opening address, ISO Secretary-General Rob Steele highlighted the ISO Strategic Plan 2011-2015 and its seven key objectives, drawing particular attention to the three objectives specifically aimed at consumers:

- ISO deliverables meet customers’ needs
- ISO excels in reaching out to and engaging stakeholders
- ISO and the value of voluntary International Standards are clearly understood by customers, stakeholders, and the general public.

He added, "ISO faces huge challenges in a world that massively changes. We need to be more customer responsive and we need to have leadership. We need to be excellent in being faster, simpler and better."
to educate people to help them avoid frauds and scams, and how to assist people who are victimized.

Rigo Reyes, Acting director, Department of Consumer Affairs, County of Los Angeles, USA, talked about protecting consumers before and after a disaster and the role of the government in risk management and preparedness plans and post-disaster response. He emphasized the importance of relationships with diverse organizations, communities and media, and showed how simple systems working together can get extraordinary results. “The work we do, we can’t do alone,” he said.

**Smart meters**

Moderating a panel discussion on “Smart meters in the home – asset or liability?”, Rob Steele, ISO Secretary-General, remarked: “Everyone is talking about smart grid. Do we have smart consumers and do they understand the impact?” He introduced Rémi Reuss, Consumer Affairs Advisor, AFNOR, the ISO member for France, who talked about how consumers can benefit from smart meters/smart grids and the issues involved. He presented input from the AFNOR Consumer Committee and the Consumer Council of DIN, ISO’s German member.

Rémi Reuss declared: “In France, 225,000 smart meters have already been installed with some expected benefits such as productivity gain, incentive rate offers, but also some identified risks such as the proliferation of incomparable offers, the access to data, the cost of access to service, or the respect and protection of personal data.”

**Standards can help to empower consumers by protecting against risks.**

He added: “A study on ergonomic aspects of smart grids in Germany showed as main results that ergonomic aspects are not taken into account by the applications and devices on the market”. He concluded: “There is a need for a terminology standard, and experts in ergonomics should be more involved.”

Anna Fielder, a trustee of Privacy International and Sustainability Coordinator, BSI Consumer & Public Interest Network, focused on the implications for privacy and security. “Some information collected by smart meters can reveal data about the user. It is essential to take measures.” She presented the privacy protection that should be in place now, such as privacy and security by design, storage of data in the meter only, and independent internal supplier’s audits.

For Neil Avery, ANEC (the European Association for the Co-ordination of Consumer Representation in Standardization), consumer representative, the implementation of smart metering is an opportunity for consumers to benefit from more accurate billing and to receive better feedback on their energy consumption, but the new technologies can also bring unintended consequences. Standards need to ensure that consumers are helped to realize the benefits of smart metering and are protected from the risk associated with the new technology.

Standards can help to empower consumers by protecting against risks from new functions, protecting from risks related to control of data, helping release benefits through better informed usage and more effective purchasing decisions, and meeting the specific requirements of consumers in vulnerable circumstances. But behavioural change is also needed and this requires regulatory action and consumer education. The key consumer requirements are accessible information, control and protection.

It is easy to see that the benefits of smart meters can potentially be huge: an end to estimated billing, more accurate bills, more choice, new services, new ways to pay, and other features.

Stephen Douglas, Regulatory Manager, British Gas, talked about helping consumers understand their consumption, maintain transparency and confidence. He said: “This is a huge challenge for industry because consumers’ awareness is low. So there is a need for customers’ engagement and a need for standardization so customers can understand better how smart meters work”.

**Green tracks for the future**

Breakout sessions confirmed on “greening our homes” that standards can help with guidance that gives definition and best practices. They could take the form of technical documents, generic standards that assist consumers in taking advantage of smart systems, the convergence of systems, the certification of smart meter readers and assessors, commitment by national standard bodies to place consumer representatives on existing mirror committee on green standards, support for government incentives to promote green behavior, sustainable procurement policies and laws, and standards for insulation.

They also confirmed the role for standardization in providing guidance to be prepared before a disaster and tin re-building after a disaster, both for immediate responses and for longer-term solutions. Standards can help to organize experience from disasters around the world, distilling such experiences into guidance and universal guides for emergency preparedness.

The workshop preceded the ISO/COPOLCO plenary meeting which reviewed current consumer priorities in standardization and agreed on a roadmap for future progress. Taking into consideration the discussions at the workshop, the delegates decided to set up two task groups to prioritize issues and develop recommendations to bring to ISO’s governing committees.

Sandrine Tranchard is a Communication Officer, ISO Central Secretariat.
Leaders of the international groups of experts that develop ISO International Standards gathered in Geneva, Switzerland, for a two-day, highly interactive conference to improve even further the efficiency and usefulness of the solutions and benefits ISO offers to business, government and society.

ISO Secretary-General Rob Steele welcomed some 200 delegates representing 24 countries and explained the background to the fifth ISO TC Chairs’ Conference in Geneva on 16 and 17 June 2011: “You have told us that we need to be simpler, faster, and better. If we are not, we will be irrelevant.”

He underlined the growing demand for ISO standards against a background of massive challenges, such as the global economic changes and the expansion of social media. He added: “We need to embrace change and to think even more about our customers’ needs. If we are good, but too slow in meeting our customers’ needs, we are not relevant. If we are not using information and communication technologies to get the standards developed or to get faster to the market, we are not relevant.

“In response, our collective challenge is to develop globally relevant standards while continuously improving our speed to better serve market and customer needs. It is important to use the ISO Strategic Plan 2010-2015 to ensure that ISO is best placed to meet the challenges ahead. Let’s aim for excellence – and together, we can do it!”

Meeting customer needs

ISO’s current portfolio of more than 18,600 voluntary standards is the output of stakeholders in business, government, international organizations, consumer associations and other groups, working in over 3,200 technical bodies under more than 700 ISO committees. Every working day, 10 or more ISO meetings are taking place in different parts of the world, not counting the virtual meetings and contacts.
Both the ISO methodology toolbox and industry case studies are available in a series of guides and reports.

**The difference a standard makes**

Singapore’s largest supermarket retailer derived benefits of over 4.5 million Singaporean dollars (about USD 3.5 million) with the implementation of four standards, said Susan Chong, Director (Special Projects), at SPRING SG (ISO member for the country).

**Leadership counts**

ISO Vice-President (technical management) and Chair of the Technical Management Board (TMB), Jacob Holmblad, clarified why there is a paramount need for leadership to manage the huge proportion of resources entrusted by stakeholders to the ISO system: “We need change and we need to take leadership on board. Leadership will pay off.”

He identified tools at the disposal of leaders, including the business plan and the self-assessment, pointing out that ISO Chairs’ conferences are generally held every three years and provide a unique opportunity for the leaders of ISO committees to network and exchange views, experience and best practice with respect to the conduct of ISO committee work.

ISO Deputy Secretary-General Kevin McKinley put the theme in context by declaring: “If ISO is going to improve and stay relevant, we must look for ways to meet customer needs.”

He explained the ISO Living Laboratory project, a software model of the end-to-end ISO standards development process, which has also identified factors key to ensuring ISO’s future success. Ultimately, the Living Laboratory is intended to serve as a controlled way of trying out new ideas, of testing new development approaches, and of challenging existing paradigms in an effort to achieve the ISO 2011-2015 strategic vision of being the “the world’s leading provider of high quality, globally relevant International Standards”.

**What’s in it for me?**

It should not come as a surprise that an organization looking to implement International Standards may ask, “What’s in it for my company?” But can we actually measure the benefits of standards? asked Strategic Advisor to the ISO Secretary-General, Daniele Gerundino. The answer, he affirmed, was emphatically “Yes!”

Dr. Gerundino was presenting a methodology, developed by ISO following the global financial crisis of 2008, to measure the impact and economic benefits of standards. He emphasized that although it is generally recognized that International Standards provide significant value to companies, consumers and public authorities, it is important to be able to quantify this.

The ISO methodology has now been applied in a number of industry case studies to raise the awareness of business leaders and policy makers on the importance of standardization, help ISO members reach out to and strengthen the interaction with national stakeholders, develop cooperation with academic institutions and promote the value of standards to stakeholders.

Ms. Chong was referring to NTUC Fairprice, a supermarket retailer with over 50% of the Singaporean market, and a pilot project of the ISO methodology to measure economic benefits. The study focused on the impact of standards for cold chain management of chilled pork and milk and dairy products, pallets and carton barcodes.

For example, the supermarket used to spend considerable time every week on negotiating and establishing refrigeration temperatures with suppliers throughout the

- Using ISO’s Web-based IT tools for its technical work.
- Because the system is decentralized, ISO instituted a conference for the leaders of its technical committees (TCs), subcommittees, project committees and working group convenors to provide them an opportunity for a face-to-face exchange of views, experience and ideas with their counterparts from other committees. This year, the conference highlighted the theme of how to make ISO simpler, faster, better.
- ISO Deputy Secretary-General Kevin McKinley put the theme in context by declaring: “If ISO is going to improve and stay relevant, we must look for ways to meet customer needs.”

ISO Secretary-General Rob Steele kicks-off the fifth ISO TC Chairs’ Conference, encouraging leaders to be simpler, faster, better.

ISO Vice-President (technical management) and Chair of the Technical Management Board (TMB), Jacob Holmblad, clarified why there is a paramount need for leadership to manage the huge proportion of resources entrusted by stakeholders to
supply chain for milk and butter products. The application of standards saved considerable time while ensuring quality, boosting NTUC Fairprice’s significant growth in fresh specialty food, now their largest market.

A welcome initiative


“For our projects and operations, Shell prefers to use International Standards as the basis for specifications, and is actively supporting this,” began Shell’s Neil Reeve, Chair of ISO technical committee ISO/TC 67, Materials, equipment and offshore structures for petroleum, petrochemical and natural gas industries. He was looking at why Shell implements standards and participates in their development. “Health, safety, contract and procurement, enable technical acceptance of manufacturers and their products,” he said. There is wide support for standardization in the company, including at executive management level. He welcomed the simplicity of the ISO methodology for measuring the benefits of standards.

Virtual world

Technology can make the standards development process simpler, faster, better, emphasized David Ratcliffe, Information Technology and Electronic Services Director at the ISO Central Secretariat. One such tool is a new online conference service (Webex) that will save time and costs and facilitate participation of experts from all over the world in ISO meetings. Mr. Ratcliffe asked participants for their feedback on how to make ISO’s eServices even better.

Maximizing market relevance

Steven P. Cornish, Sector Director, International Policy, American National Standards Institute (ANSI), in his speech on maximizing market relevance, highlighted the recent decisions on the introduction of new work. In this session, he addressed the outcome of the ISO/TMB and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) Standardization Management Board (SMB) Market Relevance Task Force (MATF): “We have to consider concerns, perceptions and issues related to the introduction of new work items.”

The recommendations of the MATF included new requirements for proposal documentation, a new approach to justification of new work, a review of proposals, New Work Item Proposal (NWIP) voting by participating members, and NWIP approval criteria. The issue of documentation for the proposal of new work was also highlighted, including a statement of the impact of existing work in order to minimize a duplication of work and effort.

Mr. Cornish commented: “We must ensure that we have the relevant key stakeholders for the work. To get the right parties involved is an important part.” He also encouraged people to raise questions about base documents and their relevance in ISO work.

At the end of this session, participants debated practices for the introduction of new work and the documentation of market relevance used by ISO committees that could benefit others.

Dan Roley, Chair of ISO/TC 127, Earth-moving machinery, thanked ISO/TC 127, and explained the goals of the TC, which has published 150 standards: “A common goal is to develop safe machines. We develop safety standards, we update existing standards, we try to keep things as simple as possible.”

Reviewing the committees’ experience on 16 Preliminary Work Items (PWI), Dan Roley said the ISO/TC 127 PWI process works well. “We use the process as simply and easily as possible. Proposed changes to the ISO process for PWI should allow a simple process without adding complexity or wasted time and effort.”

Chair of ISO/TC 67, Neil Reeve, said: “In ISO/TC 67, we have a shared vision and goals. We debate, we exchange regularly, we advertise our work and pay a lot of attention to ensuring that our standards are used.”

Concerning NWIP, he added: “We do give attention to this activity. We try to follow the ISO/IEC Directives and the mission and goals are the framework for our activity.”

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Mr. Reeve raised the question about consensus building. Consensus, he said, comes from everywhere: existing work, other partner standards developers, stakeholder groups such as oil and gas companies, new member countries such as China, Brazil and the Middle East region. Ideas are also coming from incidents and accidents that have occurred in the industry and that provide lessons.
Support from the centre

Following a survey of the technical community that was conducted in 2010, the ISO Central Secretariat has undertaken a number of initiatives to improve the service it provides to the technical community. Trevor Vyze, Director Standard Development Department at the ISO Central Secretariat, thanked participants for their involvement and input to the survey: “Last year we ran a survey on how we were performing. We received more than 500 responses. We are going to look at your contribution and will take some into account in the Living Lab project. We want to help you make your job easier.”

Adapting to the outside world

Nicolas Fleury, Director of Marketing, Communication & Information at the ISO Central Secretariat, spoke about new challenges in delivering content and about post-publication issues, “You are all familiar with the lifecycle of the standard”, he said, “but what happens after the standard is published?”

He added: “Today 95% of ISO standards are sold in electronic format. ISO is a publishing company, and as with all information providers, is affected by the Internet. We have new devices (tablets, iPhone, etc.) and all are impacting the way we need to deliver information to customers. The needs are changing and we should adapt.”

Mr. Fleury highlighted: “We are facing new challenges and how should we react to that? We need to be able to be as flexible as possible and this explains the purpose of our project to make all standards available in XML format.

On reinforcing collaboration between committees, ISO members and the ISO Central Secretariat, he said to the participants: “You play a critical role in helping us to know how to better highlight the benefits of standards and better target our communication towards potential users. You have already contributed a lot and I want to thank you. But we should continue to do more together. You will have the opportunity to express ideas on how we can further promote your work.”

Issues arising from use, implementation, certification and interpretation should be taken into consideration in the drafting process. Olivier Peyrat, Chair of the ISO Committee on conformity assessment (ISO/CASCO) encouraged participants to express ideas to improve effective, global implementation of standards in the future. He said: “ISO/CASCO cares about the standards lifecycle and has both a policy and a technical role.”

He added: “We are willing to help you to respect challenges and ensure ISO/CASCO will be responsive to your market needs. An important point is neutrality. Markets should be free. We should stay neutral and we are ready to help with the ISO/CASCO toolbox for that.”

Steven Cornish spoke on stakeholders’ engagement and gave an update on the work of the TMB Process Evaluation Group (PEG) (See page 16). The TMB PEG was mandated with the task of looking at ISO’s existing engagement and development processes. The PEG conducted extensive surveys of ISO national standards bodies, as well as the liaison organizations that are frequently involved in the ISO standards development process. The input was used in the preparation of guidance publications.

He said: “Stakeholder engagement and consensus decision-making are central to ISO processes so please familiarize yourself with and encourage national standards bodies and liaison organizations to use the PEG Task 1 guidance documents”. He also encouraged the implementation of PEG Task 2 process changes to ensure the responsiveness of the ISO process and to maintain ISO as a highly relevant International Standards developer.”

These speeches were followed by question/answer sessions.

Not on deaf ears

Addressing participants at the end of the conference, ISO Secretary-General Rob Steele reiterated the importance of engaging with the leaders of ISO committees. They are at the forefront of standards development, and thus in an ideal position to help ISO meet its strategic objective to be the world’s leading provider of high quality, globally relevant International Standards as outlined in the ISO Strategic Plan 2011-2015.

Substantial feedback was therefore gathered through interactive discussions with speakers and participants, an “ideas wall” for each of the key strategic objectives of the ISO Strategic Plan, and through voting and surveys.
ISO launches ISO 50001 energy management standard

Substantial improvements in energy efficiency with positive financial impacts have been experienced both by a major company and by a small business taking part in a pilot programme to test the new ISO 50001 energy management standard.

These results were reported on 17 June 2011 at the launching by ISO of the new standard at the Geneva International Conference Centre (CICG), Switzerland.

ISO Secretary-General Rob Steele told the international audience of nearly 200 people attending the event: “Energy is no longer a technical issue, but a management issue with an impact on the bottom line and the time to address the issue is now.”

The event included presentations by three out of some 100 experts from 45 countries who participated in developing the standard.

Ken Hamilton, Director, Global Energy and Sustainability Services, Hewlett Packard (USA), described ISO 50001 as a “very pragmatic standard” which will help companies integrate energy management with business practices. It will allow multinational companies like Hewlett Packard to reduce energy costs and increase the efficiency of energy use throughout global supply chains.


He cited the experience of two plants. One of them was a plant owned by a major company, Dow Chemical. The plant reduced its use of energy by 17.9% over two years. At the same time, ISO 50001 principles are also successfully implemented by small businesses as shown by the experience of the other plant, CCP, of Houston, Texas, employing 36 people. In two years, it achieved energy savings of 14.9%, worth USD 250 000 a year with zero capital investment.

Alberto J. Fossa, Director, International Copper Association/MDJ, Brazil, underlined the international expertise that had been distilled in ISO 50001, with meetings to develop the standard held in China, the USA, Brazil and the United Kingdom.

At these, a common understanding had been forged between experts in technical efficiency on the one hand and in management on the other to produce a standard that will help all types of organization to achieve continual improvement of their energy performance.

Marco Matteini, of the Industrial Energy Efficiency Unit, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), said that forecasts of future energy demand highlighted substantial increases in developing countries, thus underlining the importance and relevance of ISO 50001 for organizations in emerging economies.

The launch event, moderated by the ISO Director of Marketing, Communication and Information, Nicolas Fleury, saw the first public showing of the short video, ISO and energy management. This video is among the material available on a multimedia news release published on the ISO Website, making the launch event available to a worldwide public. It includes video interviews of the speakers, videos of their presentations, their PowerPoint slides, the new ISO brochure Win the energy management challenge with ISO 50001, and links to related ISO material.
Global confidence

In a rapidly evolving world, International Standards are key to creating confidence globally, which is why this year’s World Standards Day, celebrated each year on 14 October, as well as the September issue of ISO Focus+ will be dedicated to International Standards and global confidence.

The three leaders of the three principal international standardization organizations: Dr. Klaus Wucherer, President of the IEC, Dr. Boris Aleshin, President of ISO, and Dr Hamadoun Touré, Secretary-General of ITU, declare in their World Standards Day 2011 message:

“We expect that when we pick up the phone we will be able to instantly connect to any other phone on the planet. We expect to be able to connect to the Internet and be provided with news and information… instantly. When we fall ill, we rely on the healthcare equipment used to treat us. When we drive our cars, we have confidence that the engine management, steering and braking, and child safety systems are reliable. We expect to be protected against electrical power failure and the harmful effects of pollution. International standards give us this confidence globally.”

The September ISO Focus+ highlights how ISO standards help create confidence in products, services and in global trade. The articles cover a range of issues from conformity assessment and energy to health and safety.

Global trust in products and services is built on International Standards for metrology and accreditation – one of the three fundamental elements for global market entry, and the benefits thereof. An article highlights how International Standards are used to assure fair weights and measures and to allow global trade to flourish in a modern society.

Related to the global confidence in products and services, is the notion of confidence in people. An article highlights how personnel certification bodies can create better programmes by using ISO/IEC 17024, which provides employers confidence that the certified person does indeed have the knowledge to be competent.

Energy is another sector in which global confidence is vital. An article from ISO technical committee ISO/TC 85, Nuclear energy, nuclear technologies, and radiological protection, for example, highlights how ISO can build or rebuild confidence in the continual improvement of the control of nuclear activities.

Procurement is the process which creates, manages and fulfills contracts, which, at the same time, needs to be managed and controlled. An article highlights how ISO standards offer the international construction industry practical tools to provide confidence in procurement outcomes.

Risks are inevitable. The greatest challenge or risk to the achievement of confidence is the effect of uncertainty. An article explains how ISO 31000:2009, Risk management – Principles and guidelines or ISO Guide 73:2009, Risk management – Vocabulary, provide a solution to this challenge.

As concerns evaluating risk and related health and safety issues, an article from ISO/TC 127, Earth-moving machinery, shows how ISO standards can help achieve zero injuries for machine operators and people on work sites and, in so doing, provide confidence globally.

Learn more in the September issue of ISO Focus+.
What’s all the excitement about?

ISO Focus+ magazine is now available free of charge!

If your idea of standards is still along the lines of making sure that screws fit, it’s time to wise up. ISO standards mean business, cost reduction, product safety, risk management, sustainability, energy efficiency, social responsibility, and so much more. More than 18,600 standards more. For business, government and society. Read ISO Focus+ and learn how current standards can make your organization more efficient and improve your products and services. Gain advance intelligence on standards now under development that will be shaping markets tomorrow, providing tools for governments to achieve their policy goals and helping to transform social aspirations into action.

And you can now read ISO Focus+ available free of charge on the ISO Website at www.iso.org/isofocus+ and download it as a free PDF file. You’ll soon be pink with excitement!