



ISO/TMBG/JTCG/TF 14 COMMUNIQUÉ

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INTRODUCTION

ISO's Joint Technical Coordination Group ('JTCG') was established in 2007 and comprises representatives from all of ISO's and IEC's management system standards (MSS) committees. It is responsible for what is now known as 'Annex L' of the ISO/IEC Directives Part 1. Annex L defines the terminology, high-level structure ('HLS') and core text to enhance the consistency of ISO's and IEC's portfolio of management system standards. Taskforce 14 (TF 14) was established in late 2018 to conduct a limited revision of this Annex L. After meetings in Atlanta and Vienna in 2019, the third meeting was hosted by Standards Australia in Sydney from 13 to 17 January 2020. Nigel Croft, TF 14 convener, and Karen Riley-Takos, General Manager Operations of Standards Australia, welcomed the 30+ participants in the meeting room, and 10 who were participating electronically using Zoom, representing a significant number of MSS committees and national member bodies.



PROGRAMME FOR THE SYDNEY MEETING

Soon after the Vienna meeting (see Communiqué 2019-02), a first working draft of the revised Annex L had been circulated for comments among all committees responsible for one or more MSS and national member body participants of TF 14. This working draft contained the appendices 2 and 3 of Annex L in an integrated "side-by-side" format. Appendix 2 covers the HLS, identical core text, common terms and core definitions to be adopted by all MSS. Appendix 3 provides guidance for MSS writers by explaining the concept of the MSS requirements and providing examples and commentary. The targeted audience made good use of the opportunity to critically review and provide comments on this working draft. TF 14 received over 800 constructive comments that needed to be addressed in Sydney. In addition, sub-groups that had been established in Vienna were requested to provide their reports and recommendations on the feasibility of eliminating the definition of 'risk' from Annex L entirely; issues surrounding the use of the verbs 'maintain', 'retain' and 'keep' as they relate to 'documented information'; and a deeper analysis of the term 'requirement' as it relates to management systems.

BURNING MIDNIGHT OIL

The third meeting offered TF 14 members the possibility to fully participate online through Zoom, the web and audio conference tool provided by ISO. Several members made use of this possibility, meaning that most of them spent their nights interacting with the participants in the meeting room. A special thanks to these Zoom participants for their dedication to contribute to the revision of Annex L, and their patience with the inevitable challenges of remote participation.



TF 14 participants in the meeting room (with also screens on the right-hand side)

Nigel Croft advised that the revised text for Appendix 2 would need to be finalised by TF 14 at the Sydney meeting, considering the agreed time schedule and the required formal ballot among all ISO and IEC member bodies (countries) for this particular part of Annex L (as this text will impact all future MSS; either revisions or new ones). The first priority of the Sydney meeting was therefore to resolve the comments related to Appendix 2 including the work of the aforementioned sub-groups. All comments related to Appendix 3 will be dealt with after Sydney and at a subsequent meeting. Although this division

of work significantly reduced the number of comments to be resolved, it was still challenging to discuss and resolve those comments. The list of priority items in the product specification for the limited revision of Annex L was the compass during the meeting to ensure that those items would at least be addressed. At the end, a small number of low-priority items remained to be discussed and resolved over the next couple of weeks by correspondence among the TF 14 experts who participated in the meeting, before being formally balloted among all TF 14 members.

D-DAY FOR DEFINITION OF 'RISK'

One of the most important tasks for TF 14 at this meeting was to resolve the definition of 'risk'. This was one of the priority topics defined in the project specification and had been extensively debated throughout 2019. At the Vienna meeting (in July 2019) the option of having no definition was discussed as a possible way forward. It was agreed that a sub-group would prepare a 'white paper' to elaborate on the feasibility of this option, and how it might affect the remaining text in appendices 2 and 3 of Annex L. In Sydney, the sub-group provided its report describing the risk-based approach and risk management concept, and addressing opportunities and threats within the HLS. Following a very lively and informed discussion, it was concluded that the option for removing the definition of risk would



Sydney Harbour Bridge and Opera House – Two landmarks that also symbolise the goals and dynamics of TF 14 (i.e. reaching consensus by bridging different views and keeping good harmony)

make the whole topic more complicated and was therefore not a viable option. So, an important first step in the decision-making process was to agree that Appendix 2 will continue to contain a definition of risk.

The definition of risk had been extensively discussed on the TF 14 Livelihood discussion forum as well as in the face-to-face meetings in 2019. Prior to the Sydney meeting, a number of TF 14 members shared their views

in the discussion forum and via series of discussion papers. The main issue is that the current Annex L definition of risk is slightly different from the one developed by ISO/TC 262 in their latest edition of ISO 31000 on risk management. The use of the term objectives, with a broader definition used elsewhere in ISO, had implications for the narrower use in an MSS where it could be inferred that the objectives refer only to the measurable objectives of the MSS. While Annex L defines risk as 'effect of uncertainty', the 2018 edition of ISO 31000 defines risk as 'effect of uncertainty on objectives', with notes to explain the relationship between risks, threats and opportunities. The implications of adopting ISO 31000 definition were discussed, with the possibility of using the 'Notes to entry' to respond to concerns raised by some committees about adding the phrase 'on objectives'. After extensive discussions, however, it was decided that although there might be merit in agreeing a single aligned definition in future, changing the current Annex L definition would be a 'step too far' for this limited revision. Many committees have only very recently adopted Annex L as a basis for their MSS, and there was general concern among these committees that changing the current definition of risk would only serve to confuse the users of those standards. TF 14 therefore made the conscious decision not to change the current Annex L definition.

risk

effect of uncertainty

Note 1 to entry: An effect is a deviation from the expected — positive or negative.

Note 2 to entry: Uncertainty is the state, even partial, of deficiency of information related to, understanding or knowledge of, an event, its consequence, or likelihood.

Note 3 to entry: Risk is often characterized by reference to potential "events" (as defined in ISO Guide 73) and "consequences" (as defined in ISO Guide 73), or a combination of these.

Note 4 to entry: Risk is often expressed in terms of a combination of the consequences of an event (including changes in circumstances) and the associated "likelihood" (as defined in ISO Guide 73) of occurrence.

Concerning the use of the phrase ‘risks and opportunities’, particularly in 6.1 of the HLS, it was acknowledged that there is room for improvement. This was supported by the nature and number of comments received on this topic. Different options to address these concerns were explored, for example by decoupling the words ‘risk’ and ‘opportunity’, introducing the word ‘threat’, determining risk sources or removing entirely the word ‘opportunities’. However, none of the suggested alternatives received sufficient support to merit further analysis. It was therefore reluctantly concluded that maintaining the current text in Appendix 2 is the best option for this limited revision.

Nigel Croft concluded that maintaining the current Annex L definition and text related to risk and opportunity was a well-informed decision, and not one that was taken lightly. He emphasised that a lot of valuable information has been shared to facilitate discussion and increase mutual understanding between risk management and management system specialists. This information should be captured in one way or another and made available to MSS writers and users in developing and implementing their discipline-specific management system standards. Not only will improved guidance be made available in Appendix 3 (to be developed over the course of 2020), the consensus of the group was this entire topic is worthy of further deliberations after TF 14 has finished the current limited revision of Annex L.

AND THE CHANGES ARE ...

TF 14 welcomed all suggestions made for amending Appendix 2. With the project specification in mind, aiming at a limited revision, the suggestions for amending Appendix 2 were discussed. It was agreed that any change to the post-Vienna draft of Appendix 2 would require a two-thirds majority of participants present at the time the decision was taken (either physically or virtually). This meant that a number of TF 14 members had to participate throughout the night in their local times, to be able to make an active contribution.

For several suggestions, it was concluded that they are beyond the limited scope of the project specification or are discipline specific. These suggestions will again be considered when working on Appendix 3. They will also be archived for potential consideration in future, more extensive revisions of Annex L.



One of the TF 14 participants did a great job in capturing the discussion on the whiteboard

The agreed changes, still subject to formal approval by ISO and IEC member bodies, include:

- ✓ Documented information: The current definition in Annex L and the core text in some cases result in circularity of the definition with respect to ‘controlling’ and ‘maintaining’ documented information. In addition, different language is used to describe what users are required to do with documented information (e.g. ‘keep’, ‘retain’ and ‘maintain’). After the post-Vienna sub-group on this topic made its presentation, and following a discussion, it was agreed not to change the current definition, but to rephrase the relevant requirements that will now use the construct of “(appropriate) documented information shall be available”.
- ✓ ‘Organization’ and ‘scope of the management system’: The notes to entry of ‘organization’ and ‘management system’ seemed to result in inconsistencies. This has been resolved by removing the note about scope of management system and integrating its intent with the note under ‘organization’.

- ✓ Process: The earlier change made of ‘outputs’ to ‘results’ resulted in several comments about clarification. By adding a note that other terminology is also used depending on the context, additional clarification is provided.
- ✓ (External) provider: The earlier change made to replace ‘outsourcing’ with ‘externally provided processes, products or services’ and consequently introducing definitions for ‘provider’ and ‘external provider’ resulted also in several comments. While there was broad support for this replacement, the addition of the definitions was questioned. It was agreed to remove these terms and definitions (that are also available in ISO Online Browsing Platform). In addition, it is clarified in Clause 8 that controls relate to those externally provided processes, products or services that are relevant to the XXX management system.
- ✓ Audit: The proposed post-Vienna definition of audit, which was taken from ISO 19011:2018, refers to audit as a ‘documented process’. Discussion was centred on the fact that this definition contains a generic requirement for documentation, while Annex L already addresses the extent to which the audit process (or indeed any process) has to be documented. It was therefore agreed to omit the word ‘documented’ from the Annex L definition.
- ✓ Improvement: It had already been identified that Clause 10 might need a first new, more general subclause before jumping into the subject of nonconformities and corrective actions. Several proposals were received and were discussed for such a subclause, but most involved at least partial repetition of the current 10.2 on continual improvement. The decision was therefore made to simply exchange the sequence of 10.1 and 10.2, without changing the text.

In addition to these changes, concerns had been expressed by the terminology specialists about the sequencing of Clause 3 of the HLS, which does not follow the conceptual approach recommended by the various ISO terminology standards. It was therefore agreed to restructure the order of terms and definitions. A restructured order of the Clause 3 terms and definitions can therefore be expected in the next draft of Appendix 2 that will be submitted for formal ISO and IEC member body ballot.

Following a report from the sub-group that was looking at the definition of ‘requirement’, it was concluded that the current definition Annex L describes the intent perfectly well. The definition in the ISO/IEC Directives, which is different, is applicable to drafting of requirements in standards, and is used in a different context.

The proposal that had been introduced in the post-Vienna draft of Appendix 3 to add a new subclause on management of change (new 6.3)

ABOUT STANDARDS AUSTRALIA

The meeting was hosted by Standards Australia, the country’s leading independent, non-governmental, not-for-profit standards organization, which also represent Australia in ISO and IEC. The meeting participants thanked them for their excellent hospitality and the facilities they provided to make the meeting a successful one.



Standards Australia distinguishes three key roles:

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received generally positive feedback. It was questioned whether this subclause would better fit in Clause 4 or Clause 8. TF 14 participants reconfirmed that Clause 6 is the most appropriate location, so the new subclause will be maintained and included in the final draft to be circulated for ISO and IEC member body ballot.

HEADING TO BOGOTA

The fourth TF 14 meeting will take place in Bogota in the week of 13 to 17 July 2020 following a kind invitation from L'Instituto Colombiano de Normas Técnicas y Certificación (ICONTEC), the Columbian member body for ISO and IEC. The main focus will be to discuss and resolve comments received on the first working draft of the revised Annex L with respect to Appendix 3, as well as identified needs for further guidance as a result of the revision (or non-revision) of Appendix 2 text as agreed in Sydney.



A coordination group and various sub-groups will be established post-Sydney to conduct the necessary pre-work to facilitate and focus the discussion in Bogota. The groups will also consider the possibility to address a number of comments that were not accepted for changing Appendix 2.

In addition to the content of Appendix 3, TF 14 will make recommendations on the way in which its content can be provided to the users, i.e. MSS writers and ISO/IEC editors. Appendix 3 will be aimed at clarifying the intent of the requirements in Appendix 2 in order to reduce the need for deviations; provide guidance where a certain degree of flexibility in the application of Appendix 2 requirements exists and, where applicable, provide suggested common text and examples for additions to the HLS text, where such additions have been made in a sufficient number of existing standards.

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