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New Climate Change Work Likely for TC 207 *But Experts to Study Issue Thoroughly Before Moving Forward*

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia—Climate change experts pulled back from the ongoing political rhetoric surrounding the 1997 Kyoto Protocol during TC 207's ninth annual plenary in July, choosing instead to focus on global market needs relating to standardization and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reductions.

Indeed, TC 207 delegates planned the committee's long-term vision on climate change-related issues, ignoring the future outcome of the controversial negotiations with the Protocol that took place in the days following the TC 207 sessions. (See *IESU*, August 2001.)

Experts resolved a number of items during three days of meetings here—including a decision to disband the acclaimed TC 207 Climate Change Task Force (CCTF) by the end of this year. CCTF participants unanimously agreed that the work of the group was complete and that it was time to use the CCTF's years of effort to take the next steps regarding standards development.

In the end, four climate change issues were highlighted as priorities for TC 207 delegates in the months and years ahead:

- The Ad Hoc Group on Climate Change (AHG), created by ISO's Technical Management Board two years ago, identified in a recent report four priority areas for future work within ISO and possibly TC 207, which included the potential development of:
 1. methodology guidance for establishing GHG project baselines;
 2. GHG project monitoring, reporting and verification protocols;
 3. GHG measurement, reporting and verification for emission reductions; and
 4. GHG measurement, reporting and verification for emission removals.
- Delegates from Malaysia announced that they would generate a new work item proposal (NWIP) to create a management system standard on the measurement, reporting and verification of GHG emissions (Item 3). Although it is not clear when the proposal will be submitted to TC 207 officials, Malaysian delegates told *IESU* that the proposal would go

forward before the next TC 207 plenary in June 2002, and most likely before the end of this year.

- The CCTF agreed to develop a business/case study booklet for an organization's top management or other interested parties that would demonstrate the applicability of the ISO 14000 standards to manage GHG emissions. This will be the final work of the CCTF before being disbanded.
- TC 207's Subcommittee 2 on environmental auditing agreed to create a small task group to examine ISO 19011's potential to address auditing needs for GHG measurement and verification.

"All in all, it was an extremely busy week with the meetings and the workshop, but a very productive one," said BSI's Mark Barthel, chairman of both the AHG and the CCTF. "It will be interesting to see what develops before the next meeting."

Future Work

Noting the details of the busy week, Barthel explained that TC 207 delegates within the CCTF performed a complete review of the AHG's work to date, which included the four areas of potential new work within ISO as described previously. After the review, the CCTF provided strategic advice to the TC 207 Chairman's Advisory Group on how to proceed with those four areas. In a nutshell, Items 1, 2 and 4 were deemed to be too "politically sensitive" for TC 207 and might be perceived by the international community as favoring a particular policy approach. Additionally, Item 4—which includes the concepts of sinks and carbon sequestration—was considered to be "premature" for international standardization activities, due to incomplete scientific understanding and agreement regarding methodologies.

However, the CCTF decided that Item 3, which includes the development of a standard methodology/protocol for measuring, reporting and verifying GHG emissions at the organizational/facility level, would be within the scope of TC 207. The CCTF noted in its final report that TC 207 "appears to be better suited to the development of a standard that would rely on a system-based, mass balance methodology, as opposed to a point source sampling and measurement technique."

"What that means is that we concluded there was definitely a market need for standards that look at GHG emissions and management for organizations, in terms of measurement, monitoring and verification, and we will report that back to the Chairman's Advisory Group (CAG)," Barthel told *IESU*. "The CAG will discuss the CCTF recommendations and then determine whether it agrees with our analysis."

“I think initially, they probably do,” Barthel continued. “In terms of a new work item proposal being put forward, well, we can’t do that as a group, but national bodies can. And we’re quite sure that will happen soon.”

Malaysia Steps Forward—Again

Indeed, the NWIP on climate change may come sooner than some expected, according to Barthel and other experts.

Not only was Malaysia the first developing country to host the week-long sessions of TC 207, it also will likely go down in history as the country that proposed new climate change work for TC 207—an issue that has been hotly debated since the early days of the ISO 14000 standards.

During TC 207’s closing plenary, the Malaysian delegation announced that it plans to develop the climate change proposal—using ISO’s Guide 72, the assistance of the TC 207 leadership and other national bodies—in the very near future.

“We have to work together with this process,” said Abu Bakar Jaafar, the head of the Malaysian delegation, who also has been involved with his nation’s work on climate change. “We’re nervous about it, but excited at the same time. This is the first time that Malaysia will put forward a new work item, and it’s a very important one. We will ask other delegations how we should proceed.”

Other delegations urged caution, including the United States.

Sergio Galeano, of the Georgia Pacific Corp. and a U.S. representative to the CCTF, told *IESU* that while he was generally pleased with the CCTF’s achievements here and in the past, he believes new work in the area of climate change is “pregnant with difficulties.”

As an example, Galeano explained that the United States and many other countries already have procedures to estimate GHGs either by calculation or measurement. Additionally, no matter what debate is occurring at the national level, the United States is still a member of the United Nations Convention on Climate Change, and has signed the Kyoto agreement. As part of that convention, Galeano said, the United States must report annually its GHG inventories, its efforts and results of what has been done to curb the problem.

“What I’m saying is, there cannot be a sudden new way of doing things,” Galeano stressed. “We just need to keep in mind, that whatever an organization does regarding climate change, it has to be linked to what the country’s approaches are. They cannot be separated. That means a little more difficulty for ISO standards because there are so many national

interests at stake with [the Kyoto Protocol], which is what has been signed by the majority of countries.

“So we will wait and see what happens,” Galeano added. “We need to find out how the [Bush] administration’s final plans will play out, and I cannot predict that. We’ll know soon enough, but I can say that the positions taken at this meeting were in complete agreement with U.S. positions.”

Kevin Brady, the interim head of the Canadian delegation to TC 207 and the former CCTF secretary, had a more optimistic view of the role ISO can play in the climate change arena now that the Protocol appears to be moving ahead.

Brady, who is a climate change expert and consultant with Five Winds International, told *IESU* that there is a “clear market need out there for some standardized approaches” on GHG measurement and verification. He added that it “shouldn’t be a problem” for the Malaysian delegation to demonstrate the long-term necessity for climate change standards.

“I think if you look at the needs of national governments, who are trying to get a handle on this issue through technology and incentives, there needs to be a certain level of confidence that what’s being measured and reported is accurate and that [emissions] reductions are actually occurring,” Brady said. “And even if Kyoto went away tomorrow, I still think that both national governments and organizations would push to manage their emissions. They need tools to do that, and ISO is the most logical organization that can provide those tools.”

But Brady also stressed that now is a crucial time for countries to go back to their delegations and “sift through” the relevant recommendations around standards development in this area and develop their positions.

“We have to get on to the more complicated job of developing standards,” he said. “Canada has indicated its support for that, and we’ll be discussing that issue with our delegation. I think we all need to look at climate change and potential standards related to it from a much more strategic perspective.”

Will ISO 19011 Fit into the Equation?

Auditing experts also took on the climate change issue unexpectedly during TC 207’s Subcommittee (SC) 2 session July 3.

Andrew Griffiths, a German representative and the co-convenor of the Joint Working Group on quality and environmental auditing, proposed that a task group be created within SC 2 to examine the auditor’s role with the verification of GHG emissions reductions.

Specifically, the group would examine two hypothetical case studies involving ISO 19011, the joint auditing document that is slated for release in

mid-2002. The evaluation would examine each case study—both of which involve an assertion of environmental information with either environmental public reports on GHG reductions or emissions trading schemes—and link them with ISO 19011, clause by clause. Any gaps that would be uncovered regarding ISO 19011's inability to address certain issues with GHG verification would be noted to the SC 2 membership in a one-time report. Other climate change experts, however, were concerned that such a study could be premature and that performing such an endeavor would not follow the current process of developing standards for climate change.

But Griffiths told *IESU* that the intention is “definitely not to produce any document for publication,” and added that such a study should not result in a new work item or preempt any decision made on proposed new work items on climate change. Rather, it is intended to avoid duplication regarding verification/auditing practices and provide a reliable basis on which any proposed work item with a connection to climate change can use.

“We’re talking about two classic auditing situations here, and I see no reason why ISO 19011 shouldn’t be applied,” Griffiths said. “I believe that ISO 19011 is a damned good standard, and I’m proud of what we’ve achieved with this document. I don’t want to see another group reinventing the wheel and producing a new auditing standard if all it does is duplicate what we’ve already done with 19011.

Griffiths stressed that he and other members of the Joint Working Group want this standard to have the widest possible application within its scope and objectives. He added that TC 207 delegates discussed two new auditing applications during the weeklong sessions, and ISO 19011 will “probably have a role to play with each of those.”

“There is no doubt that if there is any standardization to be done on auditing, then SC 2 is the right place to do it,” he said. “I think everyone agrees with that. But I think the mistake or the misunderstanding is that some fear that the proposal within SC 2 was intended to derail activities elsewhere within TC 207. That is certainly not the case. The work by this new ad hoc group will be complete long before any new work item is up for voting.”

Griffiths said the task group would likely meet in November in Copenhagen, Denmark, and that the some members would try to draft the two case studies well in advance of that session so that members could review the document prior to the meeting.

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