



Outline Agreed for Social Responsibility Standard

October 1, 2005

A shell is fashioned for what will become the ISO 26000 guidance. Toiling through the night, a group representing a diverse set of interests produced a draft outline for ISO 26000, a standard on social responsibility. It was voted on in Bangkok on September 30 at the second plenary meeting of the International Organization for Standardization Working Group on Social Responsibility.

Over the next two and a half years, delegates from about 49 countries and 32 liaison organizations will follow the design specification as they write the guidance document. They want to provide information for companies and other entities of every type and size, including government agencies, labor unions, and nongovernmental organizations.

ISO 26000 is not intended to be used as a benchmark for declarations of conformity by organizations or certification by others. So the design specification avoids the look and the sound of management system standards that ISO has pioneered in other related areas.

The standard will not contain case studies. Industry wanted to put them in. Others thought they would load the guidance down and detract from its core principles. The draft outline leaves some flexibility to include examples of best practices without specifying the individual companies that follow them.

0. Introduction

A commentary about the content of the guidance standard will present the reasons prompting its preparation, and its purpose.

1. Scope

The section will define the subject of the standard and its limits.

2. Normative references

If any other documents must be read in conjunction with the standard, they will be listed in this part.

3. Terms and definitions

The standard writers have the option of drawing up a list of words and phrases that have a special meaning in the standard.

4. The SR context in which organizations operate

The section will give the historical and contemporary context for social responsibility. Any issues particular to one of six stakeholder categories will be brought up in this

section. The officially defined interest groups are industry, government, labor, consumers, NGOs, and others. The “others” have forged an identity at group meetings in Bangkok. They are referring to themselves as services, support, and research (SSR).

5. SR principles relevant to organizations

The ideals or values are to be drawn from a variety of sources. Relevant stakeholder issues will be addressed here and in sections 6 and 7, too.

6. Guidance on core SR subjects/issues

Each issue that is identified in the section could be embellished:

- its background;
- challenges, opportunities and difficulties;
- trends;
- existing initiatives;
- stakeholder relationships; and
- references.

7. Guidance for organizations on implementing SR

Advice on integrating social responsibility in organizations might cover policies, practices, approaches, issue identification, performance assessment, reporting, and communication. The participants will be carefully not to leave the door ajar for anyone to use the implementation guidelines as a basis for attestations of social responsibility.

8. Guidance annexes

If any supporting text is necessary, it will go in the last section.

Bibliography

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