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ISO/TMB/WG SR comments to ISO/TMB on ISO/CD 9004.2

Dear Mike,

We support the ISO/TMB discussion on sustainability and the ISO/TMB request in Resolution 44/2007 for "ISO CS to monitor and report on any developments by technical bodies in the area of sustainability to ensure they remain within their existing scopes." In line with this, we would like to offer a few considerations on the unnecessarily confusing development of ISO/CD 9004.2.

After having received a great number of comments from several members of the ISO/TMB Working Group on Social Responsibility (ISO/TMB/WG SR), we reviewed ISO/CD 9004.2 and concluded that ISO 9004, as currently drafted, addresses issues much broader than quality management and is thus outside of the scope of ISO/TC 176. We also concluded that ISO/CD 9004.2 does in fact overlap with the scope of the ISO/TMB/WG SR and the content of ISO 26000. We mainly see the following issues as creating unnecessary confusion in our working group:

- 1) ISO/CD 9004.2 basically presents the topic of "sustainability", i.e. balancing economic, social and environmental considerations, as a subset of quality management. Sustainability is a broad term that refers to an organization's contribution to sustainable development and it is more logical that quality management is a subset of sustainability. Thus, a standard on sustainability is clearly outside of the scope of ISO/TC 176.
- 2) The concepts of Sustainability and Social Responsibility (SR) overlap and are, in many ways and for many, synonymous. The ISO 26000 Guidance for Social Responsibility is intended to provide guidance on many of the issues addressed in ISO/CD 9004.2, which has created a great deal of confusion among many ISO/TMB/WG SR members.
- 3) The TMB recognized the need to modify ISO processes to ensure broad stakeholder engagement when dealing with SR /Sustainability issues by using a multi-stakeholder approach in the ISO/TMB/WG SR. However, confusion arises when ISO/TC 176/SC2/WG18 attempts to address basically the same issues yet has not been organized in this fashion.
- 4) ISO/CD 9004.2 especially overlaps with ISO 26000 in the case of Clause 7 on SR implementation. Confusion is mainly caused by the fact that ISO/CD 9004.2 is explicitly designed as a management system standard (MSS) on sustainability, while ISO 26000 is explicitly designed not to be an MSS in accordance with TMB Resolution 38/2005.
- 5) ISO/CD 9004.2 also overlaps a number of other issues addressed in ISO 26000, including stakeholder engagement (interested parties), organizational governance (decision-making processes), environmental protection, and occupational health and safety.

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Again, we support the TMB's conclusions in Resolution 44/2007 that "sustainability is not the exclusive domain of any one ISO Technical Committee or activity," since every issue relates to sustainability at some level. But there is a clear difference between indicating how a specific standard supports sustainability and writing a standard on sustainability itself. We are concerned because ISO/CD 9004.2 attempts the latter.

We therefore hope that ISO CS will review the activity of ISO/TC 176/SC 2/WG 18 to determine if the subject of ISO/CD 9004.2 is within the scope of ISO/TC 176. We also kindly ask the TMB to inform the ISO/TMB/WG SR leadership if revisions need to be made in the scope of our standardization project if ISO/TMB/WG SR no longer should develop a standard that gives guidance on "operationalization of social responsibility" as is stated in our New Work Item Proposal. Please also motivate and explain how this is then going to be handled by other ongoing or planned standardization projects as we need help explaining this to the currently unnecessarily confused Working Group on Social Responsibility.

Yours sincerely,

Secretariat of ISO/TMB/WG SR

Jorge Cajazeira, ISO/TMB/WG SR Chair
Staffan Söderberg, ISO/TMB/WG SR Vice chair

and

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