

ISO/IEC JTC 1/SC 2 N 3683

DATE: 2003-06-10

**ISO/IEC JTC 1/SC 2
Coded Character Sets
Secretariat: [Japan \(JISC\)](#)**

DOC. TYPE	ISO TMB Communiqué						
TITLE	ISO TMB communiqué No. 18 May 2003						
SOURCE	ISO Central Secretariat						
PROJECT							
STATUS	For information.						
ACTION ID	FYI						
DUE DATE							
DISTRIBUTION	P, O and L Members of ISO/IEC JTC 1/SC 2 ; ISO/IEC JTC 1 Secretariat; ISO/IEC ITTF						
ACCESS LEVEL	Open						
ISSUE NO.	165						
FILE	<table border="1"><tr><td>NAME</td><td>02n3683.pdf</td></tr><tr><td>SIZE (KB)</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>PAGES</td><td>9</td></tr></table>	NAME	02n3683.pdf	SIZE (KB)		PAGES	9
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PAGES	9						

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Message from the Chairman of the TMB

This issue of the TMB Communiqué provides the results of the TMB meeting held on 3 and 4 February 2003 as well as the results of the Council meeting held on 13 and 14 March.

The Council meeting was the first for Alan Bryden in his capacity as Secretary-General of ISO, although he had been the AFNOR representative on Council in preceding years. He has taken office, however, at a particularly challenging time for ISO and many forces for change are currently operating within the ISO system.

As was reported in the last issue of the TMB Communiqué, a major theme during the General Assembly in Stockholm last year was the need to find ways to increase developing country participation in ISO. Various strategies are under review to help national standards bodies in developing countries to promote the value of standardization in their countries, to help them with capacity building etc. At the technical level, the TMB has approved a number of changes to the Directives to allow twinning between developing and developed countries in ISO technical work. The implementation of such twinning arrangements is foreseen not only to make developing countries more visible within the ISO system but also to ensure that the needs of developing countries are taken into account when standards are developed that are important to their national economies.

This naturally leads on to another topic discussed at the TMB meeting in February, i.e. the definition of a policy to ensure the global relevance of ISO's technical work and publications.

In the past, the general sentiment has been that ISO's International Standards represent a consensus between those that participated in their development. The vision for the future however is that International Standards will represent the broadest possible international consensus between all interested parties and moreover that such standards will be usable anywhere in the world. The TMB is currently refining its thinking with regard to the policy implications of this vision and it will be using the opportunity of the TC/SC chairs' conference in June 2003 to have an exchange of views with committee officers.

It goes without saying that the last major force for change is information technology and good progress has been made by the Central Secretariat in a number of projects aiming at the creation of IT tools and services to aid committees to optimize their work through the use of IT.

Interesting times indeed and one during which each and every one of us, whether Council or TMB members, Central Secretariat staff, committee chairmen or secretaries, delegates and experts, need to contribute to ensure that ISO can continue to be responsive to our rapidly changing world and its need for the right standards at the right time.

Ross Wraight

Chairman of the TMB
Vice-President (Technical Management)

Council

1. The Lawrence D. Eicher Award

Following the untimely passing of Dr. Eicher last year, Council considered a number of ways of paying lasting tribute to his contributions to ISO. Noting that in the context of evaluating committee performance the TMB was considering the institution of an awards system, Council decided to designate one of these awards as the "Lawrence D. Eicher leadership award for excellence in creative and innovative ISO/TC/SC services and initiatives".

Following finalization of the criteria by the TMB, Council decided that this award should be presented in principle every year in the context of the General Assembly and that the award should contribute to the dissemination of practices of excellence to other committees. Candidate committees are to be nominated by the Technical Programme Managers of the Central Secretariat, on the basis of proposals coming from any relevant sources, and are subject to a selection process conducted by a subgroup of the TMB subject to confirmation by the TMB.

It is intended that the first such award be presented during the General Assembly in Buenos Aires this coming September.

2. World Standards Cooperation

The World Standards Cooperation (WSC) comprises officers of ISO, IEC and ITU-T and during their second meeting they proposed that the three organizations organize annual strategic workshops with a view to gaining a better understanding of the needs of the stakeholders for developing cooperative work between the three organizations. Council endorsed this proposal as well as that to hold the first such workshop in the health care and medical devices sector.

Technical Management Board

3. Global relevance

The Technical Management Board, at its meeting in Stockholm, had established a Task Force to address the subject of global relevance and a first exchange of views had been carried out by e-mail during the last quarter of 2002. As a result, the TMB decided to devote the first morning of its schedule to a meeting of its task force, and a number of members whose terms of office had expired at the end of 2002 came to Geneva specifically to participate in that meeting.

The outcome of the discussions was subsequently embodied in a formal TMB resolution setting out a series of principles and the chairman and secretary of the TMB were asked to further elaborate these principles for review by the TMB by correspondence and for further discussion at its June 2003 meeting.

The starting point for the elaboration of these principles came from the unanimous view that the status and meaning of an International Standard is sacrosanct and this became the first principle. In further principles, the TMB recognized that there may in some instances be factors, such as climatic conditions and infrastructure differences, that require options to be included in International Standards, as recognized by the WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade, and it has agreed to elaborate more detailed rules for dealing with such issues.

It also recognized however that ISO committees need to be more critical about whether International Standards are really feasible in some cases. Amongst the case studies prepared as background was one relating to an ISO standard published in the early 1990s which had never been taken up in the market. In fact the market continues to use the national and regional standards that the ISO standard was intended to replace. The TMB consequently decided that the development of an International Standard should only be undertaken if there is a commitment to participate in its development and the feasibility of preparing it is ensured before undertaking the work.

It further recognized that, in some cases, it might be useful to publish competing national or regional standards as interim ISO deliverables, but this should be done only when there is, again, a commitment to participate in the preparation of an International Standard and the feasibility of preparing it has been ensured.

More generally, it goes without saying that global relevance can only be assured if all relevant information is available to ISO committees and the TMB therefore called on all countries to participate in work of interest to them and as a minimum to cast votes and make comments.

The TMB is expected to finalize its thinking on global relevance at its June meeting and it will use the opportunity of the TC/SC chairs' conference to exchange views with committee chairmen and secretaries.

4. Participation by developing countries in ISO technical work

As reported in previous issues of the TMB Communiqué, the need to find mechanisms to increase participation by developing countries in ISO's technical work has been a key strategic objective over the last few years. Five regional workshops were held between the ISO General Assemblies in 2001 and 2002 and a final workshop was held in conjunction with the 2002 General Assembly in Stockholm in order to consolidate the findings from the regional workshops.

Follow up to the workshops was delegated to the ISO Council which established a task force to address the various recommendations, but Council also charged the TMB with acceleration of the implementation of the concept of twinning.

Working mostly electronically, the TMB has elaborated a series of modifications to the ISO Supplement to the ISO/IEC Directives, to include provisions for various forms of twinning. Twinning can be done at the level of committee secretariats, through the appointment of a vice-chairman from a developing country, and at the P-membership level.

At this stage, it was agreed to leave sufficient flexibility to allow the parties concerned to work out the details of twinning arrangements. However, the TMB stresses that it is important that the arrangements are transparent and therefore known to committee chairmen, secretaries, all P-members of committees and the ISO Central Secretariat.

The secretariat of the ISO Committee on developing country matters (DEVCO) is currently consulting its members, inviting them to indicate the committees in which they would like to enter into twinning arrangements. The modifications to the ISO Supplement are being prepared for issue as change notifications.

5. Recognition in standards

Over the last year, there have been a number of cases in which organizations have claimed that ISO committees have taken, or announced their intention to take, over one of their publications in order to develop an International Standard. Technically, this constitutes an infringement of copyright and committees are therefore reminded that they need to obtain permission from the copyright holders in order to use copyrighted material in ISO's technical work.

More generally, this also resulted in the question of how ISO acknowledges the use of material copyrighted by other organizations and the TMB was asked to study this question.

At present there are a number of models, including citing of the source document in the foreword of the International Standard when the source document was contributed under the fast-track procedure whilst the Directives also make provision for citing source documents in a bibliography. There are however other models and the TMB has been asked to review the various practices and make any recommendations it feels are appropriate to the ISO Council.

6. Project management of ISO technical work

The use of modern project management techniques and tools has been a high-priority strategic issue for ISO for several years and the TMB had called upon all ISO committees to establish realistic target dates for the principal standards development stages as required by the ISO/IEC Directives. It has also announced in the past that its aim is to measure the performance of committees by the extent to which they respect the target dates they have fixed.

More recently, the TMB has been addressing the question of monitoring the work of the committees and it has again confirmed that the responsibility for managing the work has to lie with the committees themselves. At the same time, however, it has recognized that recent surveys carried out by a number of member bodies indicate that the general perception is that it still takes too long to produce International Standards and that a new approach is needed.

The approach approved at the last TMB meeting is to introduce three different standards development tracks. The first, the "accelerated" track, aims to produce a standard within two years. The second, "default" track aims to produce a standard in three years. The last track recognizes that some standards projects may be complex and for these cases a four year timeframe is foreseen. The TMB recognized that these target dates are ambitious, but it also believes that ISO needs to be ambitious if it is to respond to market expectations.

One consequence of this new approach is that the time limits after which projects will be automatically cancelled will be modified as from **1 September 2003** such that

- **projects which have not moved for the last two years will be automatically cancelled (instead of the current three years),**
- **projects which have not reached publications stage after five years will be automatically cancelled (instead of the current 7 years).**

In both cases, the Central Secretariat has been asked to give **12 months advance notice** of the possibility of cancellation.

7. Parallel approval procedure on Technical Specifications and Technical Reports

The Central Secretariat was recently received a number of queries concerning the application of the approval procedure for Technical Specifications (TS) and Technical Reports (TR) under the Vienna Agreement. You find as an annex to this TMB Communiqué a description of the procedure.

Closing remarks

I hope you found reading this edition of the TMB Communiqué useful. I am looking forward to seeing many of you in person at the upcoming TC/SC chairs conference.

Ross Wraight

This TMB Communiqué and all its previous editions are also available in electronic form on ISO's *Standards Developer's Information Site* (SDIS) under www.iso.org/sdis in the section [TMB News & Information](#).

Responsible for the TMB Communiqué: Reinhard Weissinger

Application of the parallel approval procedure between ISO and CEN on Technical Specifications (TS) and Technical Reports (TR)

ISO and CEN may in certain fields and under specific circumstances wish to develop and approve in parallel Technical Specifications (TS) or Technical Reports (TR) under the Vienna Agreement. The procedure given below is an extract of "Day to Day Management between ISO/CS and CMC" which is available on the ISO Website at <http://www.iso.org/va> .

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION or TECHNICAL REPORT - VA - ISO LEADERSHIP

NOTE : The transposition of an ISO/TS or an ISO/TR which is available world-wide including for CEN members should be considered as an exception and a CEN/BT resolution is required.

Registration :

ISO/TC/SC and CEN/TC agree to process the project in parallel under ISO leadership. CEN/BT resolution is necessary prior to registration of the project on the CEN programme of work.

The ISO Central Secretariat (ISO/CS) and the CEN Management Centre (CMC) are informed by the committee secretariat, the two databases and programmes of work are aligned accordingly.

3 months vote - simultaneously on an agreed date vote :

ISO/TC/SC secretariat sends the DTS/DTR and the dates of vote to ISO/CS. ISO/CS makes available to CMC the text with the dates of vote. **CMC circulates** the text to the **CEN members** to a **3 months vote** and simultaneously **ISO/TC/SC secretariat** submits the DTS/DTR within the committee to all **its P-members to a 3 months vote**.

At the end of the voting period the CEN/TC compiles and sends the results and the comments to ISO/TC/SC secretariat for consideration with a copy to ISO/CS for information.

At publication :

ISO/TC/SC secretariat sends the final text to ISO/CS. ISO/CS prepares, edits the final text and notifies CMC of the date of publication. CMC sends the German version to the CEN members and notifies them of the date of availability.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION or TECHNICAL REPORT VA - CEN LEADERSHIP

Registration :

The CEN/TC and ISO/TC/SC agree to process the project in parallel under CEN leadership.

CMC and ISO/CS are informed, the two databases and programmes of work are aligned accordingly.

3 months voting period - simultaneously on an agreed date of vote :

CEN/TC sends the text to CMC. CMC makes available the text to ISO/CS. ISO/CS sends the text to the ISO/TC/SC secretariat with the dates of vote. **ISO/TC/SC secretariat** submits the DTS/DTR within the committee to a **3 months - P-member vote**. Simultaneously, **CMC** circulates the text to its **CEN members to a 3 months vote**.

At the end of the voting period, the ISO/TC/SC secretariat compiles and sends the results and comments to CEN/TC secretariat for consideration.

At publication :

Upon receipt of the final text from CEN/TC, CMC prepares, edits the final text and sends ISO/CS the final text as well as the date of availability. ISO/CS publishes the TS/TR.