

Towards UNGC-ISO 26000 Alignment: An Evolving Story

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Points of Discussion

- The ISO 26000 Opportunity for UNGC (and vice versa)
- Background on ISO
- Background on the ISO 26000 standard development process
- UNGC Involvement in ISO 26000
- Connections, ISO “National Mirror Committees” and UNGC Local Networks

The ISO 26000 opportunity for UNGC (1)

- ISO is probably the most recognized, high profile technical standards body in the world
- ISO standards play a particularly important role in developing countries, by providing “road maps” to businesses for how to operationalize important concepts (e.g., quality, environmental management) and to thereby increase the ability of developing country businesses to gain entry to developed country markets

ISO 26000 opportunity for UNGC

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- ISO standards are also useful to businesses in developed countries, by providing widely agreed upon “yardsticks” by which they can measure their own behaviour, and businesses in developed countries can also use it to encourage their supply chain partners
- ISO 26000 offers the opportunity to “mainstream” social responsibility and the UNGC principles to an audience of companies that are currently not being reached through the UNGC’s international

Opportunity of ISO to work with UN entities

- ISO has technical expertise in issues of operationalization
- UN bodies have expertise on issues of substantive norms, international instruments
- Involvement of UN bodies in the ISO process helps to ensure that the resultant ISO standard is acceptable and compatible with the work of intergovernmental bodies such as those of

Background –ISO

- ISO = Greek word for “equal”
- International Organization for Standardization
- established in 1947, headquarters in Geneva
- An international non-governmental standard-setting body composed of representatives from various national standards bodies devoted to facilitating trade through standards
 - 157 national standards bodies participate in ISO
 - all ISO standards are voluntary standards
 - the world’s largest developer of technical standards
 - has developed more than 14000 standards so far, including the ISO 9000 quality management and ISO 14000 environmental management systems standards
- Close to one million facilities around the world have been certified to either ISO 9001 or ISO 14001

Background – ISO 26000

- Objective: to develop a ***guidance standard*** (i.e., written using “should” rather than “shall” language)
- Working Group established in 2004
- Standard to be completed by 2009
- Standard is intended to apply to all types of organizations, not just businesses
- Co-chaired by Swedish and Brazilian standards bodies
- Four meetings so far: Brazil (2005), Bangkok (2006), Lisbon (2006), Sidney (2007)
- Next meeting: Vienna, November, 2007

Who is participating in the ISO 26000 development process?

- 364 experts in working group + 86 observers
 - This includes experts from 35 international organizations
 - ISO members from 74 countries are participating
- Participating national standards bodies (NSBs) appoint up to 6 experts from business, government, labour, consumers, NGOs, and “other” category
- participating NSBs have developed “national mirror committees,” consisting of local stakeholders to provide comments on draft

ISO 26000 – some participants from international organizations

- IOE (International Organization of Employers)
- ICC
- UN Global Compact (MOU)
- GRI
- ILO (MOU)
- UNEP
- UNCTAD
- WHO
- ICFTU (International Confederation of Free Trade Unions)
- SAI (SA 8000)
- Consumers International

ISO 26000 – What to Expect

What it should be:

- Key definitions (e.g, “social responsibility,” “stakeholder”, “accountability”)
- Description of the principles of SR
- Guidance on core SR issues (human and labour rights, environmental, anti-corruption, consumer, organizational governance)
- Guidance to help organizations to understand and implement SR, suitable for implementation by different types of organizations
- Should be compatible with inter-governmental and non-governmental instruments

What it will not be:

- A management systems standard
- A set of certifiable requirements
- A duplication of other international (O)SD instruments and

ISO 26000 – draft definition of SR

Actions of an organization to take responsibility for the impacts of its activities on society and the environment, where these actions:

- are consistent with the interests of society and sustainable development;
- are based on ethical behaviour, compliance with applicable law and intergovernmental instruments; and
- are integrated into the ongoing activities of an organization.

UNGC Involvement in ISO process

- UNGC has been involved in the process since before it began: was a member of the multi-stakeholder advisory group which recommended that ISO develop the standard
- UNGC works with its UN partners to ensure that its issues are addressed
- Objective: at minimum should reflect/be consistent with/complement/reflect the 10 UNGC principles
- Should drive organizations to UNGC and UN partners for more detailed and authoritative guidance
- Thereby assist UNGC in advancing both

UNGC-ISO 26000 MOU

- Provides for a collaborative relationship between ISO and UNGC, in the development of the standard and subsequent “roll out”
- Ensures that UNGC part of key decision-making bodies (e.g., Chairman’s Advisory Group, Liaison Task Force, Editing Committee)
- Commitment to work together on issue of linkages between national mirror committees and local networks

UNGC local networks and ISO national mirror committees

- Real opportunity for sharing among the two
- Real opportunity for capacity building between the two entities
- Real opportunity for longer term linkages between the two organizations and networks
- Begin with information sharing, identifying of common ground

Comments and Questions Appreciated

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