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Joint technical Coordination Group on MSS (TAG 13)

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Background: Dear all,

Attached please find the JTCG N359 FAQ as agreed at JTCG meeting in Atlanta. Many thanks to TF4 for the work in developing it

Kind regards

Anne-Marie

Committee URL: <http://isotc.iso.org/livelink/livelink/open/tmbjtcg>



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## **JTCG Frequently Asked Questions in support of Annex SL**

Please find attached FAQ developed by TF4 and approved by JTCG at its meeting.



## JTCG/TF4/N28

3 December 2013

### **JTCG - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

#### **Introduction**

In 2012 ISO added Annex SL to the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1, *Procedures Specific to ISO*.

Annex SL defines a) the proposal process for a new management system standard and b) the rules for drafting a management system standard using a common approach. Three appendices are included in Annex SL:

Appendix 1: Justification criteria questions;

Appendix 2: High level structure, identical text, and common terms and core definitions; and,

Appendix 3: Guidance on high level structure, identical text, and common terms and core definitions

These FAQs have been developed by the ISO/TMB/TAG13-JTCG against Annex SL as it pertains to the high level structure, identical text, and common terms and core definitions only. Unless otherwise stated in the FAQs, the use of the term "Annex SL" refers to just section SL.9 and Appendices 2 and 3.

#### **1. Who initiated the development of Annex SL ?**

In consideration of the "Report of the ISO TMB Ad Hoc Group on Management Systems Standards", 10 February, 2006, the Technical Management Board (TMB) formed the Joint Technical Co-ordination Group on Management System Standards (TAG13-JTCG, or JTCG) to develop the future vision and guidelines for "aligning" future editions of its current management system standards (MSS), and for any new MSS.

#### **2. Who was involved in the development of Annex SL ?**

Annex SL was developed by the ISO Technical Management Board's Technical Advisory Group 13 "Joint Technical Co-ordination Group on Management system standards" (or JTCG).

The secretariat (Chairperson and Secretary) of all ISO's Technical Committees (TCs), Project Committees (PCs) and Sub-committees (SCs) involved in the development of management system standards were requested to participate in the JTCG. In select cases, other ISO bodies involved in the development of management standards (as opposed to management system standards) were also invited to participate.

The JTCG established a number of Task Forces to develop Annex SL and its appendices. These were populated by experts from the JTCG's participating TCs/PCs/SCs.

### **3. What is the historical background of Annex SL ?**

Work to enhance commonality amongst management system standards (MSS) and avoid conflicting requirements began in the 1990's between the two ISO committees with MSS then in existence: ISO 9001, Quality Management Systems & ISO 14001, Environmental Management Systems. The focus was on achieving 'compatibility'. Their respective terminology groups 'harmonized' terms & definitions. Each committee established liaison members to serve as active members of each other's working group to enhance the compatibility of common requirements. During the same period they established a Joint Working Group (JWG) for auditing standards. The JWG successfully merged the auditing standards and published ISO 19011.

In the early 2000's, in response to feedback from users, a Joint Task Group between the MSS committees was formed to facilitate further alignment of the ISO 9001 and ISO 14001 standards. A joint vision & high level structure were developed. However during this period, a proliferation of MSS work items were being proposed, and the need to expand the group beyond Quality and Environment to cover all ISO MS standardization activities was recognized. ISO Technical Management Board (TMB) established two Technical Advisory Groups: the Joint Technical Coordination Group (TAG 13, JTCG) on MSS and an oversight body, the Strategic Advisory Group on MSS.

The JTCG built on the prior work, promoting the current vision of identical structure, identical requirements, and a set of common terms and core definitions for MSS. The output of this work, originally called Draft Guide 83, was balloted among the member bodies in 2011, approved by TMB, and published it (along with revised text from ISO Guide 72 on justification studies) in the ISO Directives in 2012 as Annex SL. In parallel, ISO 19011 was revised to expand its scope to cover all MSS discipline audits.

### **4. What was the Vision behind Annex SL ?**

All ISO management system "requirements" standards will be aligned and ISO will seek to enhance the compatibility of these standards, through the promotion of identical:

- *Clause* titles
- Sequence of *clause* titles
- Text, and
- Terms and definitions

that are permitted to diverge only where necessitated by specific differences in managing their individual fields of application.

### **5. What is the aim of Annex SL ?**

The aim of Annex SL is to enhance the consistency and alignment of existing and future ISO management system standards by providing a unifying and agreed high level structure, identical core text and common terms and core definitions (see clause SL 9.1).

- It defines a set of interdependent requirements that function as a whole, often referred to as a 'systems approach'.
- It defines what has to be achieved not how it should be achieved.

- It specifies requirements. There is no inherent assumption of sequence or order in which they are to be implemented by an organisation. There is no inherent demand that all activities in a specific clause must be done before activities in another clause are started.
- It does not dictate or imply a specific model for how to achieve the requirements.
- It was written with the aim of avoiding repeating words and using plain English.
- It deliberately separated clause 4.1 from 4.2 because of a wish to address interested parties separately and specifically.
- It used cross referencing to show linkage
- It deliberately used bullets to avoid presenting an inherent assumption of sequence or order. If standards writers want to, they can use a), b) etc instead of the bullet as a symbol.
- It developed definitions with the aim of finding words that explained the concept behind the term in its most general approach. The process used the ISO requirement for development of definitions in ISO 704:2009 *Terminology work — Principles and methods*: In discipline specific standards it is possible to add Notes to explain and complete the sense; however, it should be understood that Notes to terminology are normative according to ISO Directives and cannot contain requirements.

## **6. Who is the intended user of Annex SL?**

The intended audience for the document is ISO Technical Committees (TC) Subcommittees (SC) and Project Committees (PC) and associated Working Groups that are involved in the development of management system standards (see clause SL9.1).

## **7. What benefit is there to harmonization ?**

Where organizations are implementing and operating several Management Systems they are often confronted with different and sometime contradicting requirements, terms and definitions. Annex SL will be particularly useful for those organizations that choose to operate a single (sometimes called “integrated”) management system that can meet the requirements of two or more management system standards simultaneously.

## **8. What is the flexibility of the HLS and identical text ?**

Annex SL is a core structure for MSS that TC/PC/SCs will need to add to and build on for the development of their discipline specific MSS

The TMB recognized that standards writers may need flexibility when writing their discipline specific MSS, therefore the TMB decided that any future MSS (new and revisions) shall, in principle, follow Annex SL and decided to permit deviations on the condition they are reported to the TMB with detailed rationale. Clause SL9.3 provides further detail on non-applicability.

The intent is that TC/SC/PC strive to avoid non applicability, therefore flexibility on the addition of discipline-specific text and sub-clauses were incorporated into the rules on using Annex SL.

### a) Clause Structure

Subclauses may be added at any position in the structure, and the subsequent sub-clauses be renumbered. Renaming, inserting or restructuring the main clauses (1.0 – 10.0) of the high level structure should be avoided.

### b) Identical text

TC/SC/PCs are allowed to add discipline specific text that does not affect harmonization or contradict or undermine the intent of the identical text, common terms and core definitions, at any position within the high level structure and identical text. Examples of additions include:

- New bullet points
- Discipline specific explanatory text
- New paragraphs
- Text that enhances the existing requirements in Appendix 2

TC/PC/SCs can avoid repeating requirements by adding discipline specific text to the identical text.

c) Deletion of identical text

It is preferable to try to avoid deleting or replacing the identical text of Annex SL and thereby potentially affect harmonization or contradict or undermine its intent. If TC/SC/PCs determine, however, (a) special or exceptional circumstance(s) in which the identical text, common terms or core definitions cannot be applied in their MSS, then they must notify the TMB of its rationale (see clause SL9.3).

**9. Is it possible to distinguish the Annex SL common text from discipline specific text ?**

Technical Committees can decide if they wish to distinguish the Annex SL common text by having it produced in a different colour, during the drafting stage.

**10. Why does the common text not include a specific clause on “Preventive Action” ?**

The high level structure and identical text does not include a clause giving specific requirements for “preventive action”. This is because one of the key purposes of a formal management system is to act as a preventive tool. Consequently, a MSS requires an assessment of the organization’s “external and internal issues that are relevant to its purpose and that affect its ability to achieve the intended outcome(s)” in clause 4.1, and to “determine the risks and opportunities that need to be addressed to: assure the XXX management system can achieve its intended outcome(s); prevent, or reduce, undesired effects; achieve continual improvement.” in clause 6.1. These two sets of requirements are considered to cover the concept of “preventive action”, and also to take a wider view that looks at risks and opportunities.

**11. Why was the “process model” or the “PDCA” model not used in the structure of Annex SL ?**

In developing Annex SL Annex 3, the existing management system standards were reviewed. Since there were a number of models in use, no one model was adopted. Annex SL accommodates the concept of the PDCA cycle and the concept of managing processes as an interacting and interrelated set in order to achieve the intended outcomes

This does not prevent a model diagram being incorporated in a management system standard.

**12. How is risk to be addressed ?**

The topic of risk will be addressed by TC/SC/PCs based on the scope of their MSS, their discipline related risks, as well as the risk that the management system itself is not effective. Each discipline should clarify its need for a formal "risk management" approach.

**13. Why is the term "Documented information" used instead of "Documentation" or "Records" ?**

The standard has been updated to reflect current technology. Data, documentation and records are now frequently processed electronically. Therefore the new term "documented information" has been created to describe and take account of this situation. The term subsumes the previous concepts of documentation, documents, documented procedures and records.

**14. Why are there no references to "procedures" ?**

Annex SL was written to establish distinct requirements on what has to be done, not to define requirements for procedures.

It was agreed that the need for procedures was discipline specific and would be addressed by the TC/PC/SCs in their MSS.

**15. What is the difference between the terms "determine" and "identify" ?**

The terms are used interchangeably in general English but "identify" can have translational problems, as it can be mistaken for e.g. putting a label on something to identify it.

"Determination" is an indication of an assessment rather than "identify" which indicates that something has been noted.

Dictionary definitions give:

Determine = establish or find out with certainty by research, examination or calculation

Identify = establish the identity of something or somebody

**16. Why is there explicit distinction between requirements for "top management " and "the organization" ?**

The success of the management system depends on the leadership and commitment of top management; however it would be unreasonable for top management to perform all activities within the management system, therefore it is necessary for such tasks to be assigned to other roles within "the organization".

**17. What is the implication of "Top management shall ensure" ?**

This means that Top management remains accountable for the satisfactory completion of activities assigned to the organization.

**18. How do 4.1, 4.2, 6.1 and 8.1 link together ?**

The external or internal issues determined in 4.1 along with the relevant requirements of relevant interested parties determined in 4.2 create a knowledge base for determining the organizational requirements in 4.3 for the planning of the organization's management system in 6.1, and for determining the control activities needed to achieve those requirements in 8.1

### **19. What does “issues” mean ?**

An "issue" is "an important topic for the organization, problems for debate and discussion, or changing circumstances". This term was used in Annex SL identical text after referring to dictionary definitions (e.g. the Oxford English Dictionary).

### **20. What is the difference between “stakeholder” and “interested party” ?**

Traditionally management systems standards used the term "interested party" because "stakeholder" created translation problems for a number of languages. The term "stakeholder" has gained wider acceptance even in translation, and some MSS now have chosen to use the term.

The two terms are defined as being interchangeable, but with "interested party" as the preferred term.

### **21. Are interested parties part of the context of the organization ?**

Interested parties are part of the context of the organization; however only "relevant" interested parties and their relevant requirements (as accepted by the organization) are considered for the implementation of the management system.

Clause 4 "Context of the organization" is divided into three parts with the first part (4.1) addressing the important internal and external issues for the organization, the second (4.2) addressing the important interested parties and the relevant requirements, and the third part (4.3) is about the organization defining the scope of its management system once it has considered the two previous parts.

### **22. What is the difference between “as applicable” vs. “as appropriate” ?**

Dictionary definitions give:

Applicable = relevant; appropriate; possible to apply

Appropriate = suitable (for, to)

In most cases appropriate implies some degree of freedom, whereas applicable implies that if it can be done it shall be done.

### **23. The title to Clause 4.1 states ‘understanding’ and ‘context’ while the text uses the terms ‘determine’ and ‘issues’; why is this ?**

“In order to understand you first have to find out what it is you need to evaluate”. That evaluation requires consideration of relevance and ability to achieve, etc. Once you know that, you have a basis for an understanding of the organization and its context.

**24. What is the meaning of the term 'requirement' in the context of management systems.**

In Annex SL requirement is defined in 3.03.

In the context of a management system, requirements become obligations when the organization chooses to comply with them. Obligations may arise from mandatory requirements, such as applicable laws and regulations or voluntary commitments such as industry standards and codes (including ISO MSS), contractual relationships, principles of good governance and accepted community and ethical standards. Clause 4.2 provides the framework for determining the relevant requirements of relevant interested parties, which the organization chooses to adopt in 4.3. A MSS contains specific requirements in addition to those of other relevant interested parties. Lastly, an organization may self-impose internal requirements above and beyond those required by an MSS or by other relevant interested parties.

The term requirement is used in several clauses with reference to different sources of requirements.

Clauses 4.2, 4.3, 5.2, 6.1, 6.2 reference the requirements of relevant interested parties that are applicable to the organization.

Clauses 4.4, 5.3, 9.2 reference the MSS requirements.

Clauses 5.1, 7.3, 8.1, 9.2 reference the organization's MS requirements

If clarification is needed to avoid confusion within a MSS, it is suggested that standards writers maintain the term 'requirement' as it is defined in Annex SL, and where necessary, make use of notes in the definition of 'requirement' or create a new term and definition for a specific requirement to cover cases where a difference needs to be made.

**25. What is the meaning of the word "available" in Clause 7.5.3 'documented information' ?**

The word 'available' encompasses the idea of 'to whosoever needs access / is authorized, or are concerned with, the documented information'.