

New International Standard

ISO 21500: Guide to Project Management

ISO Project Management Standard Initiative

Background

In recent years there has been a proliferation of sector specific standards worldwide which have had no overarching standard to set the generic principles and procedures of project management globally. In addition these standards have had no common vocabulary or processes that could be referenced by the global project management community resulting in different definitions and interpretations.

To address these problems the International Standards Organisation (ISO) has initiated work to create a new Standard entitled ISO 21500: Guide to Project Management. The Standard will provide a common platform which will become a reference point for all project management professionals and facilitate knowledge transfer and the harmonisation of principles, vocabulary and processes in existing and future Standards.

Benefits

A number of key benefits to the project management community will ensue from this Standard as it will:

- ~ Aid in the transfer of knowledge between projects and organisations resulting in improved project delivery.
- ~ Facilitate more efficient tendering processes particularly on large international projects through the use of consistent project management terminology.
- ~ Enable multi-national organisations to coordinate their project management processes and systems.
- ~ Facilitate the mobility of project management personnel and their ability to work on international projects.
- ~ Provide a framework which can be used as the basis for mapping of certification programs globally and therefore assist in their reciprocity.
- ~ Provide a framework for project management generic principles and processes that could be built upon for the advancement of the project management profession.

Project Launch and Participation

The ISO project was launched at the inaugural meeting of the International Standards organisation project committee (ISO/PC 236) held in London in late October 2007, and attended by representatives from the 23 countries who have voted to be involved in the development of the Standard.

It is expected that other nations will join in the development effort as the Standard progresses. ISO is actively attempting to broaden the number of countries that participate to ensure global coverage.

Project Governance

A new project Committee, ISO/PC 236 Project Management, was established to develop ISO 21500. The Committee is chaired by British Standards Institute (BSI), and the secretariat is held by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). Membership of the Committee is by all the participating countries and each member receives one vote.

ISO/PC 236 is supported by three working groups as follows:

- ~ WG1- Terminology, convened by ANSI (USA)
- ~ WG2 - Processes, convened by DIN (Germany) and secretariat by ANSI (USA).
- ~ WG3 - Informative guidance, convened by BSI (UK) and secretariat by ANSI (USA).

Progress to Date and Implementation Plan

Over 50 experts selected by participating National Standards bodies from around the world have taken part in the inaugural meeting of ISO/PC 236. Significant progress was made at the meeting on mapping the terminology, processes and informative guidance that will constitute the new Standard.

Work has subsequently continued remotely within the working groups since the meeting. The first working drafts of the: table of contents, scope statement, glossary of terms and project processes have been prepared and circulated for comments to all working groups' members and updated accordingly. This development will continue within the working groups until the various drafts and the final International Standard are ready for presentation to the ISO/PC236 Committee which will meet twice a year for discussion and voting purposes according to the following timeline:

- ~ Develop Working Draft - June 2008
- ~ Develop Committee Draft 1 – May 2009
- ~ Develop Committee Draft 2 – October 2009
- ~ Develop Draft International Standard - April 2010
- ~ Develop Final Draft International Standard - June 2010
- ~ Update and Launch International Standard - September 2010

Participating Countries

Australia (SA)
Austria (ON)
Belgium (NBN)
Brazil (ABNT)
Canada (SCC)
Finland (SFS)
France (AFNOR)
Germany (DIN)
Ghana (GSB)
India (BIS)
Israel (SII)
Japan (JISC)
Netherlands (NEN)
Norway (SN)
Portugal (IPQ)
South Africa (SABS)
Spain (AENOR)
Sweden (SIS)
United Kingdom (BSI)
USA (ANSI)

Observer Countries

Ireland (NSAI)
Pakistan (PSQCA)
Romania (ASRO)