

# 8 ISO 26000 -GUIDANCE ON SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

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### INTRODUCTION

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national Standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which technical committees have been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental in liaison with ISO also take part in the work. International Standards are drafted in accordance with the rules given in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2.

The main task of the technical committees is to prepare international standards. Draft international Standards adopted by the technical committees are circulated to the member bodies for voting. Publication as an international Standard requires approval by at least seventy five percentage of the member bodies casting a vote.

### BACKGROUND

This International Standard was developed using a multi-stakeholder approach involving experts from more than 90 countries and 40 international or broadly-based regional organizations involved in different aspects of social responsibility. These experts were from six different stakeholders groups: consumers, government,

industry, labour, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and service, support, research, academics and others. However the participation of various stakeholders group was constrained by various factors like availability of resources and need for English language skills.

### EVALUATION

The book describes a comprehensive range of actions that stakeholders can take to deliver sound CSR from Guidance on social responsibility, recognizing social responsibility and engaging stakeholders, labour practices, community involvement and development, integrating social responsibility throughout an organization. For each of those topics, the Author offers detailed information in terms of clauses thoroughly presented, including useful facts and links for who'd like to get into further details. In the end of the chapter the book also states the Certifiable initiatives and initiatives connected to commercial or economic interests. Examples of cross sectional initiatives as well as example of cross-sectoral initiatives are well shown as annex 'A' & 'B' which reflects the situation at the time of completion of this international standard.

The authors deal with a number of issues, starting with the most basic – do we need the C in CSR? They emphasize ISOs decision to keep the new standard relevant to everyone – big and small

businesses, non-profits and even governments. So, social responsibility, sans the big C-word, is the term that is used in the book. So the core of the book is matched to the four main clauses of the standard –

- Principles of social responsibility (clause 4).
- Recognizing social responsibility and engaging stakeholders (clause 5).
- Guidance on social responsibility core subjects (clause 6).
- Guidance on integrating social responsibility throughout an organization (clause 7).

The title of the book shows it as a highly technical book as well as a highly specialized book for people who are interested in this particular aspect of sustainable development and CSR. I could see it as something for a niche audience, perhaps even a book that was very academic in style. I was pleasantly surprised to find it easy to read and not too heavy on the lecturing. The layout is attractive, with useful facts from time to time as well as little grey boxes with interesting and easy to understand annex.

In a nutshell, ISO 26000 talks about what it says on the cover, but it also does more. The content and style of the book make it a useful addition to the collection of books for CSR experts, as I mentioned. But it is also a very good first book for someone just beginning to get interested in sustainability. We all will learn a lot about CSR, and not just about ISO 26000.

## **CONCLUSION**

The book should not be seen as a manual or a recipe book only. It highlights, in my opinion, something critical: what is essential is the process of creating social responsibility among the companies of developed and developing countries as well as developing sustainability strategy and defining the CSR activities that support it.