



IAF-ISO Joint Communiqué on Addition of Climate Change Considerations to MSS

On 22 February 2024, IAF and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) published a [joint communiqué](#) to highlight the upcoming publication of Climate Action Amendments to new and existing ISO management systems standards.

Two new statements are being added to a number of existing management systems standards, and will be included in all new standards under development/revision, to address the need to consider the effects of climate change on the ability to achieve the intended results of the management system. The changes are being introduced initially as Amendments to these published standards.

The IAF Technical Committee (TC) has published a response to the changes as an official decision, to clarify the impact of the Amendments on accreditation bodies, certification bodies and certified organizations.

The abstract is as follows:

IAF Final Decision following 30 days consultation Addition of Climate Change notes to the Management Systems Standards

Introduction

IAF and ISO have published a joint communiqué, highlighting the changes being made to a number of Management Systems standards, in the form of additional text highlighting the importance of Climate Change as a consideration within the organisational context for the management system

concerned. As the joint communiqué explains, the changes were instigated in response to the London Declaration on Climate Action.

The purpose of this IAF communication, answering to the IAF Technical Committee Paper raised in Montreal 2023, is to clarify the expectations for management systems Certified Organisations, Certification Bodies and Accreditation Bodies, noting that, as stated in the joint communiqué:

“The overall intent of the requirements for clauses 4.1 and 4.2 remain unchanged; these clauses already include the need for the organization to consider all internal and external issues that can impact the effectiveness of their management system; these new inclusions are assuring that Climate Change is considered within the management system and that it is an external factor that is important enough for our community to require organizations to consider it now.”

Because of the above statement noting that the overall intent of the requirements remains unchanged, and with this change being treated as a clarification rather than a new requirement, it is considered that a full transition programme is not needed in this case, however, the guidance below should be considered.

Expectations on Certified Organisations

Certified organisations should ensure that they have considered Climate Change aspects and risks within the development, maintenance, and effectiveness of their own management system(s).

Climate Change, along with other issues, should be determined as relevant or not and if so, considered within an evaluation of risk, within the scope of the management systems standards. Where an organization operates more than one management system (for example Quality Management and Health and Safety Management), it should ensure that Climate Change, if determined to be relevant, is considered within the scope of each management system standard.

It is noted that some climate change aspects and risks may be of a general nature, independent of the applicable management system scope or the industry (e.g. when related to regulatory compliance or operational adaptability and organizational resilience), while others will be specifically indexed to the

requirements of the management system standards, to specific industries (e.g. energy production, agriculture and fisheries) and to characteristics of the organization (e.g. geographical location, nature of its supply-chain or workforce dynamics).

Expectations on Certification Bodies

Certification Bodies should already be ensuring that all internal and external issues have been determined by the organization as relevant or not and if so, considered in the development and effectiveness of the management system(s), as required by clauses 4.1 and 4.2.

With the new additions on Climate Change, Certification Bodies are expected to ensure that Climate Change has been considered and if determined to be a relevant issue for its management system, included in any objectives and mitigation activities by the organization, as required. If it was considered not to be a relevant issue by the organization for its management system, the CB is expected to ensure the effectiveness of the organization's process to make this determination and implementing related actions, when applicable.

Expectations on Accreditation Bodies

Accreditation Bodies should be, as part of the ongoing accreditation cycle, ensuring that Certification Bodies are confirming that their management systems certified clients have considered Climate Change aspects along with other aspects of clause 4.1 and 4.2.

Timing

The Amendments are expected to be published for the standards on 23 February 2024. As noted above, issues related to Climate Change affecting the context of an organization's management system(s) are typically already being considered by organizations.

Therefore, upon publication, certification bodies should include the new text in their auditing of the organization and its context. As with normal practice, where a certified organization cannot demonstrate that all external and internal issues that have been determined as relevant, including Climate Change, have been considered, a suitable finding should be raised.

The MS standards will go through the ISO amendment process, however a revised certificate should not need to be issued, considering that:

- The publication year of each MS standard will not change.*
- There is no change in the scope of application for the certified MS.*
- There is no significant impact on the effectiveness of the certified MS.*
- The method and actions that certified organizations will eventually enter into, due to the new requirement, will resemble methods and actions they would apply in the case of future changes in any other contextual issue they already address within the scope of the MS.*

All TC decisions can be viewed in the [IAF TC Searchable Decision Log](#).

