



TMB Survey on the ‘Exclusion principle’ and ‘light’ QMS

The survey

This survey is being carried out in the context of the ISO strategy for service standardization. This strategy was adopted in February 2016 and aims to increase ISO’s visibility as a developer of International Standards for services, help ISO members face the particular challenges associated with the development of standards for services, and gain a better understanding of market interests and trends in the services sector.

As ISO has begun to implement this strategy, 2 issues that keep arising are that of the “exclusion principle” (see Box 1), which is seen by some as a challenge faced by both developers and users of service standards, and that of potential reference to selective ISO 9001 requirements in ISO service standards (the so-called ‘light 9001’ option – see Box 2).

In order to determine whether these issues need to be reviewed, the ISO Technical Management Board (ISO/TMB) is launching this survey to gather more widespread feedback to support ISO/TMB decision-making on these issues.

Box 1: The ‘Exclusion principle’

Since its 2001 edition, the ISO/IEC Directives Part 2, which sets out the rules for the structure and drafting of ISO and IEC standards, contains what is known as “the exclusion principle”. It is contained in Clause 33.1 of the Directives Part 2 (2016 edition).

“No document containing requirements for products, processes, services, persons, systems and bodies shall make conformity dependent on a quality management systems standard, i.e. it shall not, for example, make normative reference to ISO 9001.”

Annex SL of the ISO Supplement further elaborates to state that this principle applies to all management system standards:

Exclusions

- An MSS should not include directly related product (including services) specifications, test methods, performance levels (i.e. setting of limits) or other forms of standardization for products produced by the implementing organization

In the case of service standards, this principle prohibits ISO and IEC standards from containing both requirements for the provision of the service, together with requirements for a management system. It also means that the service standard cannot itself require an organization to implement a management system as a prerequisite for conformance.

Box 2: The ‘Quality Management system’ (QMS)

Since its 2001 edition, the ISO/IEC Directives Part 2 also contains a section on “quality management system”. It is contained in Clause 34.2 of the Directives Part 2 (2016 edition).

“When an ISO or IEC committee wishes to develop quality management system requirements or guidance for a particular product or industry/economic sector it shall respect the following rules.

a) Normative reference shall be made to ISO 9001 in its entirety or, subject to the “applicability” provisions detailed in the scope of ISO 9001, to its clauses or subclauses. Alternatively, subject to the “applicability” provisions detailed in the scope of ISO 9001, the clauses or subclauses may be reproduced verbatim.

In the case of service standards, this principle prohibits ISO and IEC standards from including quality management system requirements consisting of only a sample of chosen clauses of ISO 9001 or any other QMS standard.

Background

At the ISO workshop on 13-14 June 2016 entitled “Global services, ISO standards as solutions”, participants debated whether the exclusion principle ultimately encouraged or discouraged implementation of service standards, and whether service sector stakeholders would like to be able to have the possibility of a ‘light’ QMS. Opinion amongst those present was polarized (the full workshop report is available [here](#)).

A number of existing ISO committees that develop service standards (standards that provide requirements for the level of service that is to be delivered) have considered or sought to develop standards that are not in compliance with the ISO exclusion principle or that seek to include “light” QMS requirements in the service standards themselves. To date, decisions of the ISO/TMB have not supported such efforts.

The argument for maintaining the status-quo

The exclusion principle was introduced so that the demonstration of conformance of a product or service with a product/service standard could not be made dependent on the conformance of its producer’s management system with ISO 9001, or by extension with any management system standard. In addition, the exclusion principle prevents confusion regarding conformity assessment of the service, especially with regard to certification and whether certification is based on the service aspects of the ISO standard or the management system aspects. Maintaining the status-quo would also avoid service standards making other management system requirements compulsory.

Whilst earlier versions of ISO 9001 may have been perceived as “too difficult” to apply to SMEs or service organizations, the latest version of ISO 9001 (2015) has been specifically developed to be less prescriptive on documentation, and more user-friendly for these kinds of organizations. Having regular and “lighter” versions of ISO QMS standards could confuse the marketplace/general public, and it would not be possible to ensure that the “lighter” version was only applied by SMEs.

The argument for change

Those who argue for change make the point that allowing management system and service requirements to exist in the same standard creates a product that is more attractive and easier to implement for the user of the standard. It is also argued that in the services sector, where many service providers are SMEs, the implementation of the full requirements of ISO 9001 and/or other management system standards is perceived as too complicated and expensive.

Please complete the survey on Survey Monkey:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FMQ7XZX>