

Recommendations for the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and National Standards Institutes/Organizations

**APO Course on Integrated Management Systems
11–15 June 2012, Bangkok, Thailand**

Preamble

An advanced training course on integrated management systems (IMS) was organized by the Asian Productivity Organization (APO), 11–15 June 2012, in Bangkok, Thailand, in collaboration with the Thailand Productivity Institute (FTPI). This course was attended by 28 management system professionals and expert facilitators from 15 countries in the Asia-Pacific region. The countries represented were Bangladesh, Cambodia, Fiji, India, Indonesia, IR Iran, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam.

The group discussed various management systems including the quality management system (ISO 9001), environmental management system (ISO 14001), and occupational health and safety management system (OHSAS 18001); their commonalities, distinctions, and compatibility; need and approaches to integrate these systems and benefits thereof; present status of IMS adoption; and why IMS has become necessary for organizations to improve strategic management for continual improvement and sustainability.

The following are key points that the group agreed unanimously in terms of IMS:

Profitability and Cost-effectiveness: An IMS increases an organization's profitability and cost-effectiveness by sharing and optimizing resources, including a common budget, reduced number of audits, and shared time for the establishment, implementation, maintenance, and monitoring of the management system.

Employee Development and Engagement: An IMS promotes employee development and engagement in a comprehensive manner by ensuring a common learning process, instilling a shared perspective, and developing a clear understanding of organizational goals, objectives, and strategies. It therefore improves employee morale and motivation.

Operational and Administrative Efficiency: An IMS drives continual improvement in the efficiency of operational control, administration, and management as it encourages a cross-functional system approach, harmonizes organizational structure and methods, and reduces documentation and the number of internal and external audits, leading to efficient business management.

Customer Satisfaction: An IMS leads to increased customer (and other stakeholder) satisfaction by improving process and management control, ensuring consistent performance and quality of products and services, and fostering closer communication, thereby earning their confidence.

Organizational/ Strategic Management: An IMS helps top management comprehend relevant issues faced by the organization holistically and thoroughly, resulting in better decisions, and develop a comprehensive organizational management strategy to tackle them, resulting in reduced business risk.

Overall Productivity Enhancement: All management systems follow the PDCA approach, which is the key to continual improvement and productivity enhancement. Integration of management systems increases resource efficiency, encourages continual improvement, improves business focus, and boosts overall productivity of the organization, leading to its sustainability.

Recommendations

In light of the above, the group of 28 made the following specific recommendations for the ISO and national standards institutes/organizations.

Recommendation for the ISO

Given that the integration of management systems has become essential and in the absence of guidelines from the ISO, interested organizations lack reliable, accurate information. The ISO should develop a set of voluntary guidelines or a standard framework for the integration of management systems to enhance the understanding of organizations and increase the acceptance of IMS, culminating in overall productivity improvement.

Recommendations for National Standards Institutes/Organizations

National standards institutes/organizations should intensify efforts to enable the ISO to develop standard, voluntary guidelines on IMS. They should also develop national standards for or guidelines on IMS following PAS 99 (Publicly Available Specification) or any other equivalent specifications/guidelines.

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