Change is coming...Be prepared for the upcoming change to Annex SL!

What are the changes?

There are two changes coming to Annex SL (end of January 2024) which is the basis for all management system standards (MSSs). A new requirement has been added to clause 4.1 and a new note in clause 4.2. The requirement reads:

“The organization shall determine whether climate change is a relevant issue.”

The note in clause 4.2 states:

“NOTE Relevant interested parties can have requirements related to climate change.”

These changes to Annex SL are a result from agreements made during the ISO General Assembly (September 2021), known as the “London Declaration.” The London Declaration commits to achieve the climate agenda by 2050. This declaration, approved and adopted by all ISO members, will work with other initiatives (United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), United Nations Call for Action on Adaptation and Resilience, and the Paris Agreement) to reduce climate impact, among others.

This change will impact all MSSs and for organizations who are certified, the organization must address this requirement at its next audit. Understand that this requirement does not require the organization to put into place any climate controls but rather they must include climate change/climate impact in their discussions and decision-making. If it is then decided that climate control is an issue for the organization, then the organization should put into place the necessary controls reflected in the necessary policies, plans, processes and other actions, as per their organizational strategy. For more information on these changes to Annex SL, review the articles here:


How will this change impact the users of ISO/IEC 20000-1?

An amendment to ISO/IEC 20000-1 will be released by the end of January 2024. It is anticipated the amendment will be freely available. To help the certified organizations address these changes, the experts in JTC 1/SC 40/WG 2 generated a list of “evidence” (by no means exhaustive) that an organization could use to demonstrate that this requirement has been addressed. Remember, the requirement requires the organization to decide if climate change is a relevant issue. How does an organization demonstrate if climate control is a relevant issue? The following suggestions and potential evidence may apply:

- Interested parties
  - Do the interested parties think there is a climate issue? Use survey results, service review meeting reports, minutes from internal strategy meetings, etc.
- Contractual obligations from/to suppliers and customers
  - Contractual requirements/conditions that state sustainable operations, recycling requirements, etc.
- Government, regulatory, statutory, compliance obligations
  - Documented requirements from outside authorities under which the organization operates (e.g., greenhouse gas emissions, carbon footprint, use of alternative energy)
- Organizational policies on climate change or impact
  - Documented internal organizational policies (e.g., policy stating reuse before new purchase, no plastics in the cafeteria, corporate transportation using alternative energy sources)
- Industry trends in their sector
  - Is there a push on climate, what should be done.... Use industry newsletters or other documents that communicate current position(s) of the industry

There are two ways to look at this requirement:

- Does the current management system defined by ISO/IEC 20000-1 impact climate change; or
• Does climate change impact the current management systems as defined by ISO/IEC 20000-1?
If the answer is “No” to both questions, no additional work is needed – other than to have the necessary evidence of that decision. If the answer is “Yes” to either question, then the organization should have the necessary evidence that supports this issue…and then put into place the necessary controls as due diligence and organizational policy suggests.

Additional guidance

Additional guidance is included in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1 in Annex SL, Appendix 2 (updated 26 Sept 2023), which provides guidance on how to address the various requirements of the HS. There are several ISO resources related to sustainability and climate change which may provide support to the organization. These include:

- Guide 82 Guidelines for addressing sustainability in standards;
- Guide 84 Guidelines for addressing climate change in standards, and
- IWA 42 Net Zero Guiding Principles.

The Guides can be found on the ISO Publicly available resources – ISO/IEC Guides website (https://www.iso.org/resources/publicly-available-resources.html?t=Ruvyk3OTE1FejG9wJie0LojrUDDf3weEqbMekT5NvH7ARf5jR7ng2dLJMyUmadiO&view=documents#section-isodocuments-top).