ISOT Guidance Note 2014-03 – Joint Work Groups

Joint work and the formation of joint working groups (JWGs) has been a confusing topic for many of us. ISO has added some new language about this topic to the new version of the ISO/IEC Directives Part 1 and Consolidated Supplement to provide specific guidance at all development stages. As this topic is now a bit clearer to us, we thought we’d explain this to our ANSI delegated US secretaries and US/TAG administrators.

The decision to form a JWG can happen prior to the launch of the NWIP or after. A JWG is established once the 2 committees decide on the following 3 things:

1. Who has the administrative lead? The administrative lead is the committee that has the document registered to its work programme, is responsible for addressing comments (usually referred back to the JWG), prepares drafts for ballot and is responsible for maintenance of the standard.
2. Who will serve as the JWG convener? The convener will be nominated from a P-member of one of the committees in the JWG.
3. How will the membership of the JWG be determined? Membership can be open to all who wish to participate or it can be limited to an equal number from each of the committees in the JWG.

The ISO/IEC Directives are followed for approval criteria and the supplement for the committee with administrative lead also applies. For example, if an IEC committee has the administrative lead, then the IEC Supplement would apply instead of the ISO Supplement.

Let’s talk about the various development stages now.

New Work Item Proposals (NP)
At the NP stage the circulation of the ballot will depend on if the joint work is between 2 ISO committees or an ISO and IEC committee. If the joint work is between 2 ISO committees, then only 1 NWIP is needed and the other committee will issue a call for experts. If the joint work is between an ISO and IEC committee 2 NWIPs are launched.

Working Draft (WD)
A JWG will function like any regular WG and consensus is required to move to the CD stage.

Committee Draft (CD)
A CD is circulated to the P members of both committees and the final CD will require consensus between the 2 committees’ votes.
Draft International Standard (DIS) and Final Draft International Standards (FDIS)
These votes are similar to what happens at the NP stage. If the joint work is between 2 ISO committees, the DIS or FDIS will be launched in the committee with administrative lead. If the work is between an ISO and IEC committee then a DIS and FDIS will be launched within each committee.

Please note that there are other modes of cooperation between committees through liaisons and information sharing. Please see Annex B of the ISO Directives Part 1 for additional information.

**ISOT’s Forms and Procedures Folder** contains the current versions of the ISO Directives as well as a link to see all the US/TAG administrators for coordination purposes.

**What this means to you as an ISO secretary:**
When a JWG is formed you will need to work with the other secretary to help determine which committee will have the administrative lead, who will serve as the convenor and if the JWG needs to limit its membership.

Your role in joint work after that will depend on if your committee has administrative lead or not. If you have administrative lead, then you will be responsible keeping the work item on its development track and in many ways the work will function very similar to any other work item in your committee.

If your committee doesn’t have administrative lead, you will need to stay proactive and keep in contact with the committee secretary that does have administrative lead. While you will launch a CD for the joint work, at the DIS and FDIS level, the ballot will be circulated to the committee with administrative lead. Therefore, you will want to inform your members when the DIS and FDIS ballots are launched and encourage your members to get in touch with the member bodies to find out how they can comment on the documents. In addition, at the DIS and FDIS level, you can coordinate consensus comments on behalf of your committee to submit to the committee with administrative lead should you have a formal liaison established as well.

If the work between the 2 committees is controversial, then the 2 secretaries might look for ways to compromise and balance the work. Sometimes the committee that does not have administrative lead will be the one to choose the JWG convenor to balance the leadership, but this is not a hard and fast rule. If you are embarking on new work in a JWG and have questions, please do not hesitate to contact ISOT.

**What this means to you as a US/TAG administrator:**
When a JWG is going to be established, you should get in touch with the US/TAG administrator of the other committee. Regardless of whether the joint work is between is ISO/ISO or ISO/IEC, it is important that you decide how you will conduct the work at the US/TAG level. While consensus between the 2 US/TAG is not required at all development stages, ANSI does expect that the 2 US/TAGs are sharing information and coordinating their input.

If the work is between 2 ISO committees, ANSI must submit 1 consolidated US position at the DIS and FDIS level to the ISO committee with administrative lead. This means that US/TAGs are required to coordinate and submit 1 position to ISOT. Going forward, ISOT is planning to take a more proactive lead in helping US/TAGs during the DIS and FDIS review process.

For joint work where ANSI only participates in the committee with administrative lead, the process will be the same as a regular DIS or FDIS.
For joint work where ANSI participates in both ISO committees, ISOT will review all DIS’s that come through our system and contact both US/TAG administrators with a courtesy reminder of our expectations. If the 2 US/TAGs do not agree on a position, ANSI will abstain on the vote.

For joint work where ANSI only participates in the committee without administrative lead, we will provide a copy of the DIS to that US/TAG. Should that US/TAG wish to vote, ISOT will review and submit that US/TAG’s position.

**About the ANSI ISO Team (ISOT)**

The American National Standards Institute (ANSI) is the U.S. member body to the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). To ensure a strong and effective U.S. voice in international standardization, the ANSI ISO Team (ISOT) acts as the interface between ANSI-accredited U.S. Technical Advisory Groups (US/TAGs) and/or ANSI-delegated U.S. held ISO secretariats.

ISOT daily operations include distribution of ISO documents to US/TAG administrators, processing votes on behalf of US/TAGs, accrediting delegates to attend international meetings, nominating experts to participate on working groups, coordination with key group such as the ANSI ISO Forum (AIF), ANSI ISO Council (AIC), and the ISO Technical Management Board (TMB), administering ANSI Virtual Technical Advisory Groups (VTAGs), facilitating training programs, among many other functions. In addition to daily responsibilities, ISOT is available to assist with any committee specific issues US/TAGs or U.S. held secretariats may be facing. ISOT staff is well versed in the ISO procedures, ANSI International Procedures, and has experience in all aspects of the ISO process.

For organizations that are new to ISO or want additional support with ISO related activities, ANSI’s ISOT staff provides hands-on, practical guidance on all aspects of administration of US/TAGs or ISO Secretariats through its fee-based Enhanced Services program. For more information, contact isot@ansi.org.