

ISO Guidance on elements to be considered when developing justification statements

Background

For some time ISO members have been requested to include justification statements when returning votes on new work item proposals and proposals for new fields of technical activity.

The reason for requiring justification statements is primarily to collect input on market or stakeholder needs, and on market relevance of the proposal, to benefit the development of the proposed ISO standard(s). Any NSB vote in relation to a proposal for new work may result in significant commitments of resources by all parties (NSBs, committee leaders and delegates/experts) or may have significant implications for ISO's relevance in the global community. It is especially important that NSBs consider and express why they vote the way they do. In addition, it would be useful for ISO and its committees to have documentation as to why the NSBs feel a proposal has market need and market relevance.

Despite the development of guidance on justification statements which was added to the committee internal balloting system and multiple communications via the TMB Communiqué there still seems to be some confusion among ISO members and committee secretaries as to what kind of information should be included within a justification statement. Examples of justification statements that have been deemed to not include the necessary information are:

- We support this NWIP
- No comments
- We support this NWIP by nominating an expert
- We are happy with the proposal

The aim of this guidance is to provide information to ISO members and committee secretaries on elements that should be considered for inclusion in a justification statement.

Guidance

When considering what should be included in a justification statement it is useful to recall the purpose of requiring them i.e. the collection of information on market/stakeholder needs and the market relevance of a proposal.

As identified in the ISO guidance on *Engaging stakeholders and building consensus* (http://www.iso.org/iso/guidance_nsb.pdf) it is essential that ISO develops standards that are

relevant to the market; therefore stakeholder engagement at a national level is a fundamental part of an ISO member's responsibility.

Based on this it is recommended that when developing a justification statement information be included on:

- What feedback has been received from relevant national stakeholders. Have stakeholders indicated that the standard would be beneficial/not beneficial and why? This information should be as detailed and specific as possible in order to provide useful feedback to the proposer and other ISO members.
- Information on the benefits or potential problems such a proposal will bring to the economy/society/environment in that country or internationally. For example will a new standard help align conflicting existing guidance or will another standard cause confusion in the market.
- Specific comments or concerns with the scope of the proposed standard or area of technical activity. Are there any conflicts/overlaps with the work of existing international committees or standards (not only ISO committees or standards but global standards from any source).

Other information that may be considered useful; such as:

- Any national experiences of using a similar standard or other document.
- An indication of the types of stakeholders consulted and consider providing information on the size or composition of a relevant industry/sector within that ISO member country.

The most important thing is to include specific information on why a member has voted in the way it has, and whilst, it is not compulsory to include the specific information on the areas detailed above, it is a useful guide to the type of elements that should be considered by a member when considering its response; or a committee secretary when considering whether a response is satisfactory.