



A critical look on quality through CSR lenses

Key challenges stemming from the development of ISO 26000

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to map the key challenges that quality management faces in order to meet the demands of CSR. The paper focuses on ISO 26000 – a newly emerging international standard for social responsibility – and discusses synergies (and divergences) between quality management (and ISO quality management and environmental management standards) and CSR as they emerged during the process of ISO 26000 development.

Design/methodology/approach – This paper draws conclusions from the resolutions and working materials produced by ISO Committee on Consumer Policy, the Strategic Advisory Group on Social Responsibility and ISO/TMB/WG SR – a working group in charge of the development of ISO 26000. To add the quality management dimension to the discussion, the evidence is further expanded from the ISO documents by revealing the arguments posited by nominated experts during the development of ISO 26000.

Findings – The paper finds that the quality field can significantly contribute to the deployment and uptake of the corporate social responsibility agenda yet needs to reinvent and rejuvenate in key areas such as management systems; integration of strategy, operations, technology, CSR and quality; incorporation of corporate governance; and improvements in third-party certification and internal auditing practices.

Research limitations/implications – The research in the paper is limited to the linkages between quality management and CSR stemming from the development of ISO 26000. Other CSR standards and tools are not included. However, as ISO 26000 is a global initiative, this paper provides a view from the perspective of one of the most significant initiatives in recent years.

Practical implications – The paper informs quality practitioners about the recent developments in international standardization of social responsibility and draws the linkages between quality management and corporate social responsibility that will enable them to adopt the CSR agenda and ISO 26000 in the future.

Originality/value – This is one of the first papers that deals with the linkages and synergies between ISO 26000 and quality management. By doing so, key areas are also offered that practitioners and academics should further explore in order to demonstrate the contribution of quality management to CSR.

Keywords Corporate governance, Corporate social responsibility, Quality management

Paper type Research paper



Introduction

TQM, ISO 9000 and in fact the quality field as such, are facing yet other evolutionary challenges as the increasing number of scholars as well as practitioners assert the need for reinvention for the new millennium. Further trends are believed to encompass inclusion of virtue (Ahmed and Machold, 2004), corporate social responsibility (Waddock and Bodwell, 2004) and corporate governance (Liebesman, 2005). This trend is also present in the field of international standardization, where the quality field have left a significant footprint through ISO 9000. Indeed, the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) has identified “the crisis in trust with regard to corporate and public governance” and “urgency of a responsible approach to sustainable development” as new developments that are having – and will have – a significant impact on international standardization in the near future (ISO, 2003).

Changing landscape – toward ISO 26000

Both areas mentioned in the “ISO Horizon 2010” document (ISO, 2003) – corporate governance and sustainable development – have enjoyed an increased attention from public as well as private sector. The corporate governance (CG) agenda has been under increased scrutiny because critical issues in corporate governance – such as established and sound systems of effective risk management and internal control – have not been met in many organisations (ICAEW, 1999). This triggered a development of a number of reports; such as Higgs (2003) report, Smith report (Smith, 2003); Turnbull report (ICAEW, 1999) and changes in legislation such as Sarbanes-Oxley Act (SOX, 2002). Similarly, corporate social responsibility (CSR) and sustainable development have seen a shift towards actual implementation. To facilitate this shift, a number of tools and national standards emerged over the last decade – such as GRI guidelines (GRI, 2002), the UN Global Compact, SA 8000 (see McIntosh, 2004, p. 54).

CSR is quickly becoming a watchword for many boardrooms, major investors and other organisational stakeholders (Peddle and Rosam, 2004). Moreover, many quality practitioners and academics have been pointing out toward areas where quality management can contribute – seeing synergies between CSR and quality management and corporate governance and quality management and arguing for the integration of CSR and CG into business/quality management systems (Ledgard and Taylor, 2002; Robbins and Smith, 2000; Pige, 2002; Castka *et al.*, 2004c). These recent developments have also hit the arena of international standardization and in 2004, the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) has announced that a new international standard for social responsibility – ISO 26000 – will be introduced in 2008 (ISO/TMB, 2004).

Focus of this paper

In this paper we review ISO 26000 standard and its development. Our aim is twofold. First, we aim to demonstrate synergies (and divergences) between quality management (and ISO quality management and environmental management standards) and CSR as they emerged during the process of ISO 26000 development. Second, we want to highlight key challenges that the quality management field faces in order to meet the demands of the CSR agenda and ISO 26000.

The paper is organised in a following way. First, we explore the development of ISO 26000, in particular its shift from management systems standard approach (similar to ISO 9000 and ISO 14000) and discuss the scope and type of ISO 26000. This discussion allows us to draw the first parallels with quality management. Here we draw our findings from the resolutions and working materials produced by ISO Committee on Consumer Policy, the Strategic Advisory Group on Social Responsibility and the SR Working Group. To add the quality management dimension to our discussion, we further expand the evidence from the ISO documents by revealing the arguments posited by invited delegates to the ISO Conference on Social Responsibility and nominated experts of the SR Working Group during the development of ISO 26000. Even though these debates cannot be considered as official outcomes of the SR Working Group (and indeed many of these issues were not a subject to any resolution or consensus of the SR Working Group), this rich data brings further illumination on the issue of the contribution of quality management to the uptake of the social responsibility agenda, hence synergies between quality and CSR. We conclude our paper with a discussion on key challenges that the quality management field faces in order to meet the demands of CSR and ISO 26000. By doing this, we aim to further highlight these issues and stimulate future research in these areas.

ISO 26000 – guidance standard on social responsibility

In 2004, the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) announced a launch of a new standard – ISO 26000 international standard on social responsibility. The development process, initiated in 2005, is facilitated by ISO/TMB/WG SR (further referred to as the SR Working Group) that consists of about 300 nominated experts from 54 ISO member countries and 33 liaison organisations (as in April 2006), which represent six main stakeholder groups (Industry, Government, Consumer, Labour, Non Governmental Organisations and Service, Support, Research and Others; ISO/TMB/WG/SR, 2006). The SR Working Group is one of the biggest and most diverse working groups ever established by the International Organization for Standardization. Development of ISO 26000 is currently (June 2006) at the Design for Specification stage and the SR Working Group has agreed a structure for the standard (see Table I).

Structure of ISO 26000 – International Standard on Social Responsibility (N49, 2005)

- (1) *Introduction*. The introduction should give information or commentary about the content of the guidance standard and the reasons prompting its preparation. The introduction should describe the purpose of the guidance standard in informative terms.
- (2) *Scope*. This section shall define the subject of the guidance standard, its coverage and the limits of its applicability.
- (3) *Normative references*. This section is for a list of documents, if any, which must be read in conjunction with the guidance standard.
- (4) *Terms and definitions*. This section will identify terms used in the guidance standard that require definition and provide such definitions.

Standard	ISO 9000	ISO 14000	SA 8000	AA 1000	ISO 26000
General description	Quality management systems standard	Environmental management systems standard	Auditable standard for a third-party verification system	Accountability standard, for accounting, auditing and reporting	International Standard on Social Responsibility
Key elements	Quality management system Management responsibility Resource management Product realization Measurement, analysis and improvement	Environmental policy Planning Implementation and operation Checking Management review	Policy Management review Planning and implementation Control of suppliers/subcontractors and sub-suppliers Addressing concerns and taking corrective action	Accounting Auditing and reporting Embedding Stakeholder engagement	The SR context in which all organisations operate SR-principles relevant to organisations Guidance on core SR subjects/issues Guidance for organisations of implementing SR
Principles	Customer focus	Outside communication access for verification records Shares common management systems principles with ISO 9001	Requires companies to respect a set of ILO Conventions, United Nations Conventions and Universal Declaration of Human Rights ^a	Hierarchy of principles ^b :	Clause 5 (currently under development) will specify substantive and process/attitude-related principles

(continued)

Table I.
A comparison of standards

Table I.

Standard	ISO 9000	ISO 14000	SA 8000	AA 1000	ISO 26000
Leadership			Inclusivity	Accountability	
Involvement of people					
Process approach				Scope and nature of processes	
Systems approach to management			Meaningfulness of information		
Continual improvement			Management of process on an ongoing basis		
Factual approach to decision making					
Mutually beneficial supplier relations					

Notes: ^aComplete list includes: ILO Conventions 29 and 105 (Forced and Bonded Labour); ILO Convention 87 (Freedom of Association); ILO Convention 98 (Right to Collective Bargaining); ILO Conventions 100 and 111 (Equal remuneration for male and female workers for work of equal value; Discrimination); ILO Convention 135 (Workers' Representatives Convention); ILO Convention 138 and Recommendation 146 (Minimum Age and Recommendation); ILO Convention 155 and Recommendation 164 (Occupational Safety and Health); ILO Convention 159 (Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment/Disabled Persons); ILO Convention 177 (Home Work); ILO Convention 182 (Worst Forms of Child Labour); Universal Declaration of Human Rights; The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child; The United Nations Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination against Women; ^bA quality process of social and ethical accounting, auditing and reporting is governed by the principle of accountability. Organisational accountability is directly addressed by the inclusivity of the social and ethical accounting, auditing and reporting process. Stakeholder views are obtained through an engagement process that allows them to be accurately and fully expressed without fear or restriction. Inclusivity concerns the reflection at all stages of the process of the aspirations and needs of all stakeholder groups. Inclusivity requires the consideration of "voiceless" stakeholders including future generations and the environment. Inclusivity is supported by, and infuses the operational meaning of, the remaining AA 1000 principles. These can be divided into three broad groups, relating to: the scope and nature of the organisation's process; the meaningfulness of information; and the management of the process on an ongoing basis

- (5) *The SR context in which all organisations operate.* This section will provide the historical and contemporary contexts for SR. The section will also address questions arising out of the nature of the concept of SR. Relevant Stakeholder issues should be addressed in this section.
- (6) *SR principles relevant to organisations.* This section will identify a set of SR principles drawn from a variety of sources and provide guidance on these principles. Relevant stakeholder issues should be addressed in this section.
- (7) *Guidance on core SR subjects/issues.* This section will provide separate guidance on a range of core subjects/issues and relate them to organisations. Relevant stakeholder issues should be addressed in this section.
- (8) *Guidance for organisations on implementing SR.* This section will provide practical guidance on implementing and integrating SR in the organisation, including, for example, on policies, practices, approaches, issue identification, performance assessment, reporting and communication. Relevant stakeholder issues should be addressed in this section.
- (9) *Guidance annexes.* The guidance standard may include annexes if so desired.

More importantly, the SR Working Group has taken some important decisions in terms of overall direction and type of ISO 26000 standard (ISO/TMB/WG/SR, 2006):

- The document will be an International Standard providing guidance.
- It will not be intended for third-party certification.
- Throughout the standard, the verb form “should” will be used in preference to “shall”.
- Only one standard will be developed.

Here two important messages emerge. First, ISO 26000 takes a different approach in comparison to ISO 9000/ISO 14000. ISO 26000 is not designed as a management systems standard and third-party certification will not be offered. Second, ISO 26000 shifts its focus from the compliance-based standard – apart from a shift from third-party certification, ISO 26000 significantly changes its narrative (use of should/shall as mentioned above; use of more user-friendly language throughout the standard). In the following, we put these issues into a wider perspective.

A shift from management systems standard to guidance standard

A shift from management systems standard to guidance standard is a result of a long debate with all stakeholders involved in the development of ISO 26000. The question whether or not ISO 26000 should be designed as a management system standard was present in the discussion on the social responsibility standard since the first initiatives. In 2002, a report of ISO Committee on Consumer Policy suggested that a trio of ISO management standards – ISO 9001, ISO 14001 and ISO corporate responsibility management systems standards – would support business efforts to show that an organisation cares about quality, environment and the social effects of the production or activity (ISO/COPOLCO, 2002). Even though ISO COPOLCO advised to develop a management systems standard, it also acknowledged that several comments made during the circulation of its recommendations suggested that the option of guidance document or other ISO instruments (e.g. technical specification, workshop agreements,

technical reports) might be preferable at this time (ISO/COPOLCO, 2002). Indeed, the Strategic Advisory Group on Social Responsibility, established in 2003 reviewed this issue once more and recommended a guidance document as a way forward (ISO/AG/SR, 2004a, b). This decision is captured in the key document “New Work Item Proposal” (ISO/TMB, 2004) – a starting point in the development of ISO 26000.

The debate on the suitability of management systems approach revealed quite polarized viewpoints that nominated experts have (see Castka and Balzarova, 2005 for a detailed analysis of the initial stages in social responsibility standardization in 2004). Whilst the management systems approach was mainly promoted by nominated experts with quality background, it was opposed by other stakeholder groups such as NGOs and labour organisations. Here we can see a parallel that reflects the status quo of the quality field – a negative perception about “quality” in general and its contribution to today’s organisations and the general assumption that ISO 9000 means “quality” and ISO 9000 practices mean “quality practices”. Consequently, a management systems approach (such as ISO 9000 and ISO 14000) was seen as only partially suitable for the purposes of social responsibility.

A shift from compliance and third-party certification

Here again, the initial stages in the standardization of social responsibility supported the need for verification. ISO/COPOLCO (2002) stated that ISO corporate responsibility management systems standard “would constitute an internationally agreed-upon framework for operationalisation of corporate responsibility commitments, capable of producing verifiable, measurable outputs” and that firms could either self-declare compliance or seek certificates from authorised third parties.

During the discussions, many nominated experts have strongly argued for, whilst others against, third-party certification. Overall, the consensus was that the current status of the verification industry is unsatisfactory. This industry was perceived as unreliable and inconsistent, which was seen as being too risky for the uptake – and gradual build up – of the social responsibility agenda and ISO 26000. Nevertheless, many nominated experts also expressed their belief that some form of verification will be necessary in the future.

Discussion and implications – quality needs to reinvent

Hence what does it mean for quality management? Are there any synergies between quality and CSR? Can quality management contribute to the uptake of CSR? In the following section we offer key areas that need further focus – from quality practitioners and academics alike.

Beyond “management systems” approach

In late 1980s standards bodies made a major breakthrough in management standardization by developing management systems standards (Uzumeri, 1997). This approach was adopted in areas ranging from quality to health and safety. Management systems standards, such as ISO 9000 and ISO 14000 became internationally used. However, gradually management systems approach have also caused an increased wave of criticism – from practitioners (Seddon, 2000) and academics (Hallstrom, 2000) – and ISO 26000s divergence from management systems approach could be viewed as a culmination of this criticism. Hence, have management systems still a role to play?

Our view is that they have – for several reasons. First, even the critics of management systems approach (Seddon, 2000) acknowledge that, in many cases, managers/consultants/auditors are to blame – rather than the approach as such. Indeed, management systems such as ISO 9000 are often used as a source of blame for rapid bureaucratization of organisations that add little value. Second, quality systems (such as ISO 9000) were always seen by quality gurus as the first stepping-stone toward business excellence. For instance, Ho and Fung (1994) argue for a natural progression from 5-S, through ISO 9000 to Business Excellence – allowing for the gradual uptake of quality practices. Similarly, ISO 9004 standard (in its Annex A), clearly promotes the notion of “performance maturity” and “self-assessment” – concepts typically linked with Business Excellence approaches.

The CSR agenda suggests that organisations progress similarly with the uptake of the CSR agenda. For instance, Carroll (1979) describes four modes of social responsiveness (reaction, defence, accommodation, proaction). A similar approach is described in Wartick and Cochran (1985) and more recently in Zadek (2004). Zadek (2004) message is straightforward: companies do not become model citizens overnight, there is a path to follow. Indeed, research conducted in several industries suggests that the uptake of CSR at the beginning is rather chaotic as organisations firstly “make sense” of the meaning of SR in their organisations, supply chains and industries (Cramer *et al.*, 2004). This was observed in many industries, i.e. in athletic footwear and clothing industry (Zadek, 2004), paper manufacturing industry (de Man and Burns, 2006) or consultancy industry (Castka *et al.*, 2004b). Lessons from these studies demonstrate that management systems play an important part in this process as organisations strive to capture the basics and search for a communication mode in their supply chains. Here an extension of quality systems (such as ISO 9000) is a simple choice given the infrastructural convenience.

For the quality field this implies the need to further continue with a progression from management system to more holistic excellence models of organisations. This is well captured in Zwetsloot (2003):

... CSR is very likely to build on the management systems as well. From a CSR point of view, the existing generation of management systems with their focus on rational control (= doing things right) can only be of limited use in the development of CSR. However, the preventive rationalities of management systems are important. Values and the principle doing the right things is extremely relevant for CSR. This goes far beyond the present generation of ISO type management systems; opportunities stem from building on TQM approaches like the EFQM Business Excellence model.

Necessity to strengthen the strategy-quality-operations-technology-CSR axis

Integration of operations, quality, strategy and technology is increasingly seen as a way to sustain competitive advantage of organisations and also a way to overcome disappointments with quality programs and standards (Hayes *et al.*, 2005). Furthermore, developing and improving of these linkages can also help to strengthen the focus on doing right things right, as the strategic element here inevitably requires the involvement of top management and/or board of directors. This can be in contrast to current quality practice – at least in terms of ISO 9000 – where inarguably in many compliance-focused organisations, middle managers or specialised quality departments “deal” with certification. On the contrary, ISO 26000 strengthens

the focus on wider stakeholder base, understanding of the context in which organisations operate and its translation into organisational settings – clearly a top management task.

However, key questions remains whether and under what circumstances an organisation should engage in the CSR agenda. To enable this discussion McWilliams *et al.* (2006) distinguish strategic CSR, altruistic CSR and coerced CSR. Here again a parallel with quality management can be drawn – looking at the uptake of ISO 9000/ISO 14000 (Corbett and Kirsch, 2001; Delmas, 2002; Franceschini *et al.*, 2004; Guler *et al.*, 2002; King *et al.*, 2005): some organisations implemented ISO 9000 for strategic reasons (i.e. market entry; signalling value to the market); other had altruistic motivations (i.e. CEO/investor “believing” in environmental issue hence promoting the implementation of ISO 14000) and yet others were forced by coercive mechanisms to get certified (i.e. small firms competing for contracts; necessity to join a particular supply chain, etc.). Even though this can appear as a loose parallel, the key is that management practices diffuse similarly and that we can see similar patterns with CSR. In any case (strategic, altruistic, coercive), organisations will inevitably balance their CSR programmes against profitability – in order to sustain their survival and here quality management literature argues for the use of business/quality management systems (Castka *et al.*, 2004a; Rosam and Peddle, 2004).

There are many examples in the literature relating to finding a balance between CSR and firm’s profitability and using CSR as a point of differentiation. For instance Peddle and Rosam (2004) argue that CSR is not different from quality – both searching for success through careful balance. McWilliams and Siegel (2001) argue for the balance between the demand for CSR and investment into CSR – through a cost-benefit analysis. Smith (2004) argues that firm’s social responsibility strategy should be unique despite the sameness of corporate reports on CSR. Hart (1995), applying the resource-based view of the firm for the investigation of environmental social responsibility, concluded that this can constitute a resource or capability that leads to a sustained competitive advantage. Finally, Porter and Kramer (2002) even suggest that an organisation should seek a competitive advantage through its philanthropic activities. This brings us to the initial point that the integration of strategy-quality-operations-technology-CSR is critical and we argue that quality management can contribute to CSR if an organisation clearly sees these linkages and can synergise and integrate its quality and CSR initiatives.

Encompassing corporate governance, strengthening internal and external audits and control

Recent scandals and bankruptcy in large corporations revealed huge gaps between boards of directors, executive management, internal control and organisational performance. The importance of internal control and audit is aggravated even more after accounting firms are being sued by shareholders for their inability to detect fraud (Schnatterly, 2001; Lerach, 2001) – since then the changes involved strengthening internal control in organisations (for instance SOX, 2002). At the same time, several authors proposed that quality and corporate governance (CG) should be dealt as inseparable areas. For instance, the CSR/CG framework published by British Standards Institution (Castka *et al.*, 2004a) makes a significant contribution to this trend. This work offers organisations a framework for establishing, maintaining,

improving and documenting their CSR/CG management system. The authors assert that these concepts cannot be mutually exclusive but merge together, each offering a different yet complementary perspective on the activities of an organisation, to form a robust strategic business management tool.

Liebesman (2004) strongly advocates that ISO 9000 and ISO 14000 can be used to reduce risks with compliance with the Sarbanes-Oxley act (SOX, 2002):

Because of SOX, the CEOs and CFOs of public companies must certify their financial statements, and each year they must certify the effectiveness of their systems of internal controls mandated by the law. Top management needs to obtain better information about the effectiveness of their organizations. Quality and environmental people should be at the table when the internal financial auditors develop their reports to top management and the board of directors.

In the later work Liebesman (2005) asserts that ISO 9000 and ISO 14000 can be substituted by other quality framework, such as Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award. Importantly, Liebesman (2005) further demonstrates one important outcome of the integration of CSR and CG with quality management: that this can be used as a vehicle to bring quality at the board level and rejuvenate quality programs in organisations.

Research into white-collar crime (which is understood as any crime committed by business people or professionals in the course of occupation) reveals that the most effective mechanisms used to discover frauds are internal audits. Schnatterly (2001) reports that:

- 59 percent of frauds are uncovered in organisations by internal controls (including internal auditor reviews);
- 38 percent are uncovered through letters from customers;
- 28 percent from anonymous sources;
- 32 percent by accident; and
- Only 3 percent are discovered by external auditor reviews.

Indeed, internal audits make up an integral part of quality systems. ISO 9000 and ISO 14000 require thorough audit plan and management review. In any case, a “feedback” and “continuous improvement” are critical parts of the whole quality management philosophy. Here again, organisations can extend their audit activities to include and encompass elements of CSR.

However, internal auditing practices are often criticised – as mechanisms that lead to compliance mentality (Karapetrovic, 1999) or adding little value to the running of organisations (Seddon, 2000). Similar arguments can be drawn in relation to third-party certification. Third-party certification is under increased attack and looking at the findings from the discovery of frauds (only 3 percent attributed to external auditors; Schnatterly, 2001), this should be of little surprise. Problems can be summarised in three areas. First, the critiques point at the commercial nature of the relationship between the certifier and the audited organization (Lal, 2004). This relationship can cause laxity and malpractice in ISO certification. Second, the competence of auditors is often questioned and they are seen as adding little value to organisations. Third, the accountability of the certification body to final customer and end user is marginal.

Clearly, a profound change in third party verification practices is necessary. The efforts so far suggest that there is willingness for change and in fact some changes are in progress (Wade, 2002; Lal, 2004). The International Accreditation Forum (IAF) and ISO has attempted to address the criticism by revision of requirements for accreditation bodies that accredit conformity and for auditor competences yet IAF asserts that the profound changes will need more time (Feary, 2005). In the meanwhile, some accreditation bodies (UL, The HPA) have already challenged the management systems paradigm and offer new approaches to ISO management systems certification (HPO, 2006).

Conclusion

CSR has evolved tremendously over the last decade. Waddock and Bodwell (2004) suggest that the evolution of CSR and quality shows similar patterns: in the early days of quality movement managers questioned whether there was a business case for quality, quality was seen as a function and only later became an integral part of organisations, higher quality was seen as unrecoverable cost. Similar patterns can be traced in the CSR debate: is there a business case for CSR (Castka *et al.*, 2004b)? How much should companies invest in their CSR (McWilliams and Siegel, 2001)? Our expectation is that CSR, similarly to quality, will become a cornerstone of future organisational activities.

Current need to deal with CSR and Corporate Governance presents a tremendous opportunity for the quality movement and quality practitioners to add value to their organisations. Quality standards, excellence models and TQM principles can serve as platforms for implementation of CSR in organisations. There can be several starting points. In Table I, we have outlined various standards that can be used, namely ISO 9000, ISO 14000, SA 8000, AA 1000 and ISO 26000. In Table I, key elements and principles are compared. We envisage that organisations can naturally progress from building management systems (ISO 9000 and ISO 14000), introducing accountability principles (SA8000 and AA1000) toward building a stakeholder-focused organisation (ISO 26000). This does not necessarily mean that organisations should seek certification against these standards – these standards can be used as a benchmark and/or inspiration. Another pathway may be through excellence models. However, in any case the aim should be a full embedment of CSR into daily running of organisations (Castka *et al.*, 2004b).

The quality discourse can play an important role in the evolution of the CSR agenda and implementation of ISO 26000. Yet changes and improvements are necessary to rejuvenate the quality field. There is a need to stress the importance of a move beyond management systems and compliance paradigm and changing the negative perception about certified management systems and third-party certification. In our discussion, we have offered key areas that practitioners and academics should further explore in order to demonstrate the contribution of quality management to CSR.

Glossary of terms

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR): “the continuing commitment by business to behave ethically and contribute to economic development while improving the quality of life of the workforce and their families as well as of the local community and society at large (WBCSD, 1999)”. Many other definitions exist and also other terms are used –

such as corporate responsibility or social responsibility. The first committee in ISO that dealt with the CSR agenda – Consumer Policy Committee of ISO (ISO/COPOLCO, 2002) – used terms “corporate social responsibility” and “corporate responsibility” as approximately equivalent. ISO COPOLCO later decided to adopt the term “corporate responsibility”. After that, the Advisory Group on Social Responsibility (ISO/AG/SR, 2004a) initiated the use of the term “social responsibility”, which is also used in ISO 26000 (ISO/TMB, 2004)

ISO/TMB/WG SR: multi-stakeholder working group charged with the development of ISO 26000; the SR Working Group is made up of experts nominated by ISO member bodies wishing to actively participate, internal ISO/IEC committee liaisons and external liaisons – open to any relevant international or broadly based regional organisation that wishes to participate in the work; ISO/TMB/WG SR is referred in the paper as “the SR Working Group”

Nominated expert: a member of ISO/TMB/WG SR; each country may nominate up to six experts; as in April 2006 countries that nominated their experts include Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d’Ivoire, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Greece, India, Indonesia, Iran, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Republic of Korea, Kenya, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Nigeria, Panama, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Turkey, United Kingdom, the Uruguay, USA, Venezuela, Zimbabwe.

Liaison organisations: organisations that participate in the development process; as in April 2006 following organisations are liaison members of ISO/TMB/WG SR and have nominated their experts: African Institute of Corporate Citizenship, Centre for Corporate Social Responsibility, Consumers International, European Commission, Ecologists Linked for Organizing Grassroots Initiatives and Action, Foundation and Ethical Investment Research Services Ltd., Ethos Institute, Forum Impresa, Global Reporting Initiative, Institute for Energy and Environment of the French speaking countries, International Chamber of Commerce, International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, International Council of Mining and Metals, International Federation of Standards Users, International Institute of Environment and Development, International Institute for Sustainable Development, International Labour Organization, Inter American CSR Network, International Organization of Employers, International Petroleum Industry Environmental Conservation Association, International Social and Environmental Accreditation and Labelling, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, International Association of Oil and Gas Producers, Red Puentes, Social Accountability International, Transparency International, United Nation Division for Sustainable Development, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, UN Global Compact, United Nations Industrial Development Organization, World Business Council on Sustainable Development, World Health Organization.

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