

ISO 26000 - regulations or guidance?

ISO 26000 is a voluntary guidance standard that aims to encourage all kinds of organisations in different sectors to use it when considering SR. The need for organisations in both public and private sectors to behave in a socially responsible way is becoming universally accepted in society. ISO published this document as guidance, not as a set of regulations. It is both a challenge and an opportunity for all types and sizes of company to use this guideline innovatively to benefit each specific situation and context.

No certificate

One thing ISO has made clear is that there will be no 'third party' issuing of ISO 26000 SR compliance certificates or ISO 26000 standard certificates.

"As ISO 26000 does not contain requirements, we are of the opinion it is not possible to be certified to this standard under any circumstance."

The ISO '26k-User-Guide' prepared by Guido Gürtler, Expert and International Chamber of Commerce-Paris observer to the SR Working Group and Claudia Graziani, SR practitioner make it clear, however, that it is acceptable for organisations to inspect and verify their own practice of SR and to produce reports and statements comparing and contrasting their practice of SR with the seven principles and seven core subjects of world class SR set out in ISO 26000.

Proprietors and General Managers of organisations in Bangladesh are now regularly asking "Why it is worth my time considering a non-certifying standard?" and "Why bother conforming to the expectations of a non-certified standard?" That the opportunity exists for a 'self-statement on SR' is part of the answer to this question. The other part of the equation is that being able to demonstrate SR to an international SR standard is very good news for the company's Brand when selling into North America and Western Europe. This is also very good for 'Brand Bangladesh'.