ISO/IEC JTC 1/AHG 5 "JTC 1 Standards Made Freely Available"
Convenorship: **ANSI**
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REPORT FROM JTF ON ISO/IEC JTC 1 PUBLICLY AVAILABLE STANDARDS (PHASE 1) - SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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Description

for information

REPORT FROM JTF ON ISO/IEC JTC 1 PUBLICLY AVAILABLE STANDARDS (PHASE 1) - SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report covers activity in response to the September 2021 ISO Council Resolution 41/2021 and July 2022 decision by the IEC Board regarding the process making publicly-available certain ISO/IEC JTC 1 standards on the Internet and strategic review of ISO/IEC JTC1:

ISO COUNCIL RESOLUTION 41/2021
(ISO/IEC JTC 1 standards made publicly-available)

Council

notes the report set out in document Council 41/2021 regarding the application of the criteria for making publicly-available certain ISO/IEC JTC 1 standards on the Internet,

further notes the comments made by Council members in document Council 41/2021 (Add.),

asks CSC/SP to explore the technical and commercial considerations related to the application of the above-mentioned criteria and to conduct a strategic review of ISO/IEC JTC 1, taking into consideration the comments made at the meeting and input from the ISO/IEC JTC 1 and CPAG, and to make a recommendation to Council,

asks the Secretary-General to reach out to the IEC General Secretary with a view to developing a proposal for a joint task force between ISO and IEC.

IEC approved in July 2022 to proceed with the Phase 1 of the proposal focusing first on the criteria for freely available standards (FAS).

NOTE: Phase 2 was intended to be a strategic review of JTC 1, but subject to reassessment by the IEC Board after Phase 1 completion.

Following the Council and Board decisions, the JTF moved forward with a sole focus on Phase 1.

1 Composition

When the Joint Task Force's kick-off meetings were held in March/April 2023, members agreed to undertake the work through two discussion groups as follows: One discussion group to closely examine the rationale, criteria, deliverable types and decision process to make standards available at no charge; then a second discussion group to review current and possible future distribution channels following approval/publication.

GOVID-873500747-

Group A - Rationale, Approval Criteria, Deliverable Types, Decision Process

IEC Co-convenor: Ian Oppermann (Australia)
ISO/IEC JTC1 representative: Phil Wennblom (USA)
IEC BAC representative: Giuseppe Molina (Italy)
IEC Board representative: Gilles Nativel (France) ISO/TMB
representative: Amanda Richardson (UK) IEC/SMB
representative: Christian Gabriel (Austria)
JTF Secretariat Support

Group B - Distribution Channels Review

ISO Co-convenor: Christoph Winterhalter (ISO Vice-President [policy])
Alternate ISO Co-Convenor: Scott Steedman (UK)
ISO Council representative: Joe Bhatia (USA)
ISO Council representative: Azusa Nakagawa-Inoue (Japan)
IEC BAC representative: Michael Teigeler (Germany)
ISO CPAG representative: Adam Stingemore (Australia)
ISO/IEC JTC1 representative: Phil Wennblom (USA)
JTF Secretariat Support

2 Scope

The scope of work in Phase 1 was designed to further examine the following:

1. Assess the technical and commercial rationale for offering freely available standards

2. Identify the types of eligible deliverables (International Standards (IS), Technical Specifications (TS), Technical Reports (TR), etc.)

3. Confirm the validation process

4. Clarify the criteria, making them as unambiguous as possible

5. Build a process to properly consider commercial impact

6. Review the channels to access and communicate freely available standards

The overall Terms of Reference for the JTF can be found here.

3 Meetings

Following the recruitment of volunteers at the end of 2022 and early 2023, a number of collective and individual meetings were held:

Kick-off meetings: 10 March 2023 and 19 April 2023
Group A Meeting: 12 July 2023
Group A Meeting: 1 September 2023
Group B Meeting: 5 September 2023
Group B Meeting: 30 October 2023
Group A Meeting: 31 October 2023
Joint A/B Meeting: 13 December 2023

4 Key considerations

Discussions over the last several months identified a number of issues that have affected the practice of making certain standards available at no charge since this offering started. While this list is not

GOVID-873500747-

exhaustive, volunteers raised and discussed the following points:

- Recognition of increased competition in the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) space due to the proliferation of industry consortia and open-source standards that are freely available.

- Confirming that the opportunity remains for JTC1 to bring in consortia and other ICT organizations to partner with on standards development and adoptions – namely through liaisons and the Publicly Available Specifications (PAS) Submission process in JTC1. This has been seen by the JTC1 to be a successful collaboration over the years.

- Increasing pressure from governments and intergovernmental bodies for SDOs to develop harmonized standards and the future effect on no-cost access to standards with the current ISO/IEC business model.

- The existing approval criteria should be reviewed and may require amendment to ensure that they are clear and easy to apply, in order to avoid confusion when reviewing requests for access at no charge. This will enable a consistent application of the criteria and effective governance of the decision-making process.

- Lack of data collection in the current process poses a big challenge to assess the value of no-charge access to ISO/IEC standards and to confirm future support of the existing rationale – further noting limited capabilities to capture download user contact on an independent website that is not integrated with ISO, IEC, or national webstores - Publicly Available Standards (iso.org).

- The current portal (https://standards.iso.org/ittf/PubliclyAvailableStandards/) is limited from a technical standpoint, as it does not require capture of any kind of information from those downloading and using the content.

- The ISO and IEC deliverables on the current portal do not provide a watermark to identify the rightful licensee. There also is limited ability in the current practice to introduce users to other related standards and standards packages for add-on sales, plus lack of sales tracking.

- The same standards content is available for sale and at no charge in different locations.

- Perceived lack of transparency and reporting to ISO Council and IEC Board when deliverables are requested and approved for access at no charge.

- Need to re-confirm the internal approval process for making deliverables available at no charge – to ensure this is open and transparent.

- Concern over the appropriate terminology for 'freely available standards' – and recognition that value has been added with the ISO/IEC brand and the human resource responsible for their development.

- Concern over existing disclaimer on the current portal to permit unenforceable use of free deliverables for purposes other than standards development.

- Recommendations from this group could include suggestions for both ISO Council and IEC Board to consider access at no charge for ISO- or IEC-only documents (subject to approval criteria and commercial impact assessment by IEC BAC and ISO CPAG).

- Recognition that other deliverable types – such as Technical Reports – could be eligible for access at no charge, as long as approval criteria are met.

GOVID-873500747-

5 Recommendations and Actions With JTF Consensus

Following the discussions in both groups over the last several months, a series of recommendations are being put forward to ensure a more efficient review process, offer more clarity and transparency, and enable better data collection for future analysis. Some recommendations, however, may require added consideration by ISO and IEC commercial groups to further assess economic impact on both organizations and their members. The following recommendations were agreed to by a consensus among the JTF members:

1. Recommend ISO/IEC to continue to support the no-charge deliverables approach in areas covered by the JTC 1 scope, as there is evidence of a global market need to ensure that the ICT community are aligned and using the same terms, frameworks etc. ISO/IEC need to be seen as partners in a global movement and providing certain types of content at no-cost is seen as the right thing to do and which builds trust and credibility into the wider proposition.

2. Recommend 'freely available standards' be specifically defined as 'content' or 'deliverables' available at 'no charge' to avoid confusion and misunderstanding on the inherent value behind the ISO/IEC brand and to the rich and valuable content generated in standards development by our members and experts.

3. Recommend the content of the current portal be incorporated into the ISO and IEC webstores to promote sales of related deliverables through a single user interface. Further recommend retiring the current portal when the transition is complete.

4. Recommend requests for no-charge deliverables capture the same licensee information as is obtained currently with deliverables in the ISO and IEC webstores -- to facilitate future reporting and inform future decision-making on no-charge availability. Request mandatory registration to enable this data capture, so that ISO CPAG and IEC BAC can review data after 12 months of implementation to decide whether any further measures would be needed.

5. Recommend user confirmation of License Agreement and Terms and Conditions to be mandatory with any access or download of any content that is provided at no charge.

6. Recommend the same copyright protection be applied to ISO/IEC JTC1 'no charge' deliverables as for purchased deliverables, keeping in line with ISO POCOSA and IEC Sales Policy.

7. Recommend regular reporting by the ITTF to the ISO Council/IEC Board, TMB/SMB and JTC 1 of requests received and decisions taken to ensure approval criteria are applied consistently in an open process.
   Note: ITTF has already begun implementing this recommendation by including approval request status in their ITTF report at each JTC1 meeting.

8. Recommend any deliverable type be eligible for access at no charge (Technical Reports in addition to International Standards and Technical Specifications), subject to meeting one or more justification criteria and assessment of commercial impact by IEC BAC and ISO CPAG 12 months after implementation.

9. Recommend the approval criteria are updated (proposed criteria are included in **Appendix**) to improve clarity and consistency in application. Ask requesting committee and ITTF to confirm external location of the content available at no charge when reviewing the request (when the first criteria is cited). Allow for commercial impact review 12 months after implementation.

10. Recommend that if a deliverable is approved and available at no charge, the option to pay for it on the ISO and IEC webstores is removed, and offer national member bodies the freedom to decide what to do on

their sites. This option would then be reviewed by ISO CPAG and IEC BAC after 12 months following implementation to determine any need for update.

6   Additional Considerations Discussed But Overall Consensus Not Reached

In addition to the recommendations above, some additional proposals are put forward, but without overall consensus reached:

1. Recommend removal of 'for standardization purposes' language from a user download, subject to confirmation of mandatory License Agreement for any purpose. It is noted that this content on the current portal is targeted at standards users, and not just for standards makers. Adding alternative text explaining how these no-charge standards are often background documents to assist with implementation of other deliverables would be recommended.
RATIONALE FOR DISSENT: concern remains that the no-charge download could be used for other purposes – commercial, educational, etc.

2. Recommend the relevant ISO/IEC Governance groups investigate broadening the scope of this approach to enable a consistent policy for access at no charge not just for eligible JTC1 deliverables, but for deliverables from all other ISO and IEC committees. This would need to be explored further by members, but also ISO Council and IEC Board, if such a recommendation is made (again due to potential commercial impact).
RATIONALE FOR DISSENT: concern this recommendation falls outside the scope of the JTF.

7   Appreciation

The JTF Freely Available Standards Secretariat would like to offer special thanks to the members of the group, who represent a unique perspective over a broad area of governance in both ISO and IEC.

GOVID-873500747-

UPDATED APPROVAL CRITERIA

The criteria used to determine no cost availability should be revised as follows:

A deliverable can be proposed to be made available at no cost subject to meeting one or more of the justification criteria below:

1. NO-COST AVAILABILITY ELSEWHERE
Deliverables for which authorized identical or technically equivalent deliverables are available at no-cost in electronic format elsewhere.

2. TECHNICAL CORRIGENDA
Corrigenda should always be available at no cost since corrigenda are fixing defects in a deliverable. This is the same as current ISO/IEC policy.

3. AMENDMENTS
Amendments should be available at no cost if the deliverable being amended was available at no cost.

4. REVISIONS
A revision should be available at no cost if the deliverable being revised was available at no cost, and if the scope of the revision does not exceed the scope of the original deliverable.

5. DATASETS AND SOFTWARE CODE
Datasets – including machine-readable schemas and catalogues of components or requirements – and software code included with a standard instead and/or that they promote sales of associated standards. The condition is that the standard itself cannot be reverse-engineered from the free content.

6. REFERENCES
Deliverables that are references (pointers) to other documents.

7. REFERENCE MODELS
Deliverables that explain the relationships between existing deliverables. Architectural descriptions that describe frameworks to guide standards development, including profiles and taxonomies.

8. INTRODUCTIONS
Purely introductory parts of multi-part standards.