

National Meeting on Quality Management and Standardization '99

As part of their move to promote standardization activities to a wider audience, JSA annually hosts a national meeting on quality management and standardization. The main theme of this year's meeting, held on October 4-5th in Tokyo, was "Leaping Forward Whilst Creating New Values".

At the end of the JISC Awards Ceremony, Dr. Lawrence D. Eicher, Secretary General of ISO, presented a certificate to JISC in recognition for their contribution to standardization activities over the last 50 years.

Various seminars were held over the two-day event, but it was the international panel discussion "Global Standards in the 21st Century" held on the afternoon of the first day that attracted the most interest. The panel discussion was led by Mr. Akihiro Masuda, Director-General, Standards Department, AIST, MITI and a total of 7 distinguished guests from home and abroad took part in the discussions:

Dr. Lawrence D. Eicher (Secretary General of ISO)

Prof. Dr. -Ing. Helmut Reihlen (Former Director of DIN)

Mr. John S. Wilson (Former Vice President of Information Technology Industry Council)

Prof. Akira Kodera (University of Tokyo)

Dr. Sei-ichi Takayanagi (Senior Adviser, TOSHIBA CORPORATION)

Mr. Hiroyuki Torii (Editorial Writer, Nikkei Press)

Mr. Satoji Maehara (General Manager, The Japan Iron and Steel Federation)

The session opened with three presentations, given by Prof. Reihlen, Mr. Wilson and Mr. Maehara respectively.

Prof. Reihlen stressed how voluntary, consensus-based standards institutes must always strike a balance between two demands: self-interest and altruism: "Love your neighbour as you love yourself". Mr. Wilson concentrated on the governmental role in standardization, in particular, the lessons learned from the US-EU Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) which he noted can be both time intensive and costly. Mr. Maehara's presentation centered on "the 20th century as the century of standardization" and talked about the increasing need to consider disparate national circumstances in International Standards.

The panel discussion pursued lively discussions on a range of topics, starting with growing popularity of standardization in various fields. Prof. Reihlen, in response to Mr. Torii comments regarding the issue of cultural differences in adopting international standards, remarked that draft standards should first be considered from an international perspective and if deemed inappropriate, be subsequently developed as a national or regional standard.



Panelists: "Global Standards in the 21st Century"

Other comments were raised concerning the potential "unfairness" of standards in limiting competition. Dr. Eicher, who stated that it was competition that would make the market work correctly, not standards, disputed these comments. Mr. Wilson also added that in the case of 3rd generation wireless standards, there was a concern that standards use might lead to unfair discrimination but this proved not to be the case.

A comment from the audience regarding the appropriateness of MRA "one-stop testing" in the pharmaceutical field ignited a response from Mr. Wilson, who stated that most pharmaceutical companies were multi-national companies with internationally based facilities. Nevertheless, the highest level of standards must be used in testing laboratories.

In closing, Prof. Reihlen explained that he was surprised how well JISC functions given that it is organised by the government. In Germany, it would not work as well. In response to this, Mr. Masuda emphasized that JISC committees were comprised of representatives from the industrial, academic, consumer and corporate sectors. Hence standardization activities were by no means

CONTENTS

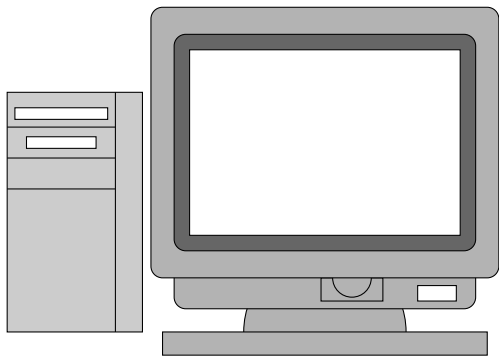
- 1** · National Meeting on Quality Management and Standardization '99
- 2** · Electronification of JIS (SGML)
 - Revision of JIS Statistical Quality Standards
 - Acquisition of the ISO/TC69/SC6 Secretariat
 - Secretariat for Conformity Assessment Committee
- 3** · Japan-ASEAN TQM Project
- 4** · Environmental Management System Center
 - Other Registration and Certification Activities
 - 63rd IEC General Meeting – Kyoto '99
 - ISO/COPOLCO General Meeting

Electronification of JIS (SGML)

JSA began the electronification of JIS (Japanese Industrial Standards) 3 years ago in response to both client request and the increasing amount of information on standards available in electronic form. The approximately 8,300 JIS currently available have now been converted to electronic format and the full texts of these standards have been entered into a database. From henceforth, JSA will promote the electronic revision and amendment of standards as part of the move to complete computerization.

For this project, the SGML (Standard Generalized Markup Language) defined in ISO 8879:1986 (JIS X 4151:1992) is being used. The next step is to computerize the tables and charts contained within JIS.

At present, only the Japanese versions of JIS have been targeted for conversion to electronic form. The task that lies ahead is to consider using SGML from the initial stages of the drafting process of standards conforming to the ISO standardization process and also to enable standards to be read online (as supported in the ITSIG Guide).



Note: A unique feature of SGML is that documents are constructed by adding codes known as "tags". By doing this the document can be read regardless of the application used and it has the advantage that it is easy to convert into different formats. In other words, it is possible to convert the SGML into HTML and display it on a web site, or process the SGML to make a CD-ROM or a standards handbook. SGML is not limited to standards however; the industrial world has also started using SGML for creating manuals.

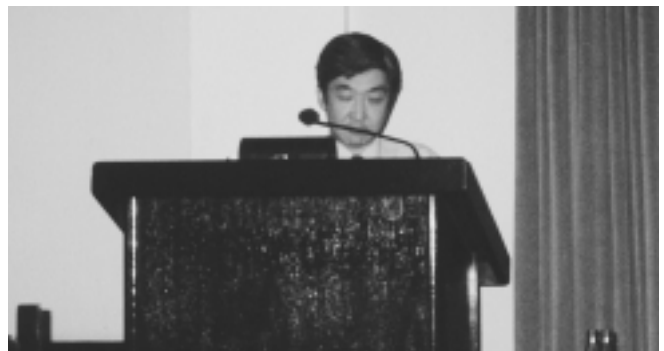
Revision of JIS Statistical Quality Control Standards

As part of the national Deregulation Promotion Plan which was established after the effectuation of the WTO (World Trade Organisation) /TBT (Technical Barriers to Trade) Agreement in January 1995, a national project to align JIS standards with international standards was implemented over the 3-year period from 1995-97.

The JIS Statistical Quality Control standards series drafted by JSA were aligned with the ISO standards drafted by ISO/TC69 (Technical committee 69: Applications of statistical methods) which covers the scope and technical contents of these standards. Out of the 35 JIS statistical quality control standards, 27 of them were found to correspond to 20 ISO standards. These JIS standards have consequentially been restructured and aligned to form 20 JIS standards that are in alignment with the relevant ISO standard (due to be published by the end of 1999). The breakdown of the restructured JIS is as follows: 3 Terminology and Symbols, 5 Measurement methods and results, 6 Sampling Inspection, 2 Control Charts, and 4 Interpretation of Statistical Data.

Acquisition of the ISO/TC69/SC6 Secretariat

At the Warsaw Meeting held in June 1999, it was resolved that Japan (JISC) would succeed as secretariat and chair of ISO/TC69/SC6 (Subcommittee 6: Measurement methods and results) as these roles were to be relinquished by their German colleagues. The actual secretariat work will be the responsibility of JSA. As a result of this move, the total number of secretariats of ISO and IEC (International Electrotechnical Commission) TCs and SCs held by Japan reached 42 (as of July 1999).



Warsaw Meeting, Prof. Y. Ojima, Chairman of TC69/SC6

Secretariat for Conformity Assessment Committee

JSA acts as the secretariat for the conformity assessment national committee, which comprises of representatives from a wide range of industries, academia, accreditation and certification bodies. Their designated activities relate to ISO/CASCO, IEC/CAB, IAF (International Accreditation Forum), ILAC (International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation)/APLAC (Asia Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation), IATCA (International Auditor and Training Certification Association), and the certification mark system.

JSA also acts as the secretariat for ISO/TC176 (Quality Management and Quality Assurance) and ISO/TC207 (Environmental Management) national committees as well as for the OHSAS project national research committee and the JIS development committee for Risk Management System. These fields have been drawing a lot of attention lately and in their capacity as secretariat, JSA is focusing on the propagation and assimilation of information, views and opinions relating to these fields.

Japan-ASEAN TQM Project

The Technical Assistance Division, Training and Technical Services Department has been implementing the Japan-ASEAN TQM Project under the auspices of the Agency of Industrial Science and Technology, Ministry of International Trade and Industry (AIST/MITI) since 1995, as a 5 year plan supported financially by the Japanese government and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization: UNIDO.

“Project’s blueprint”

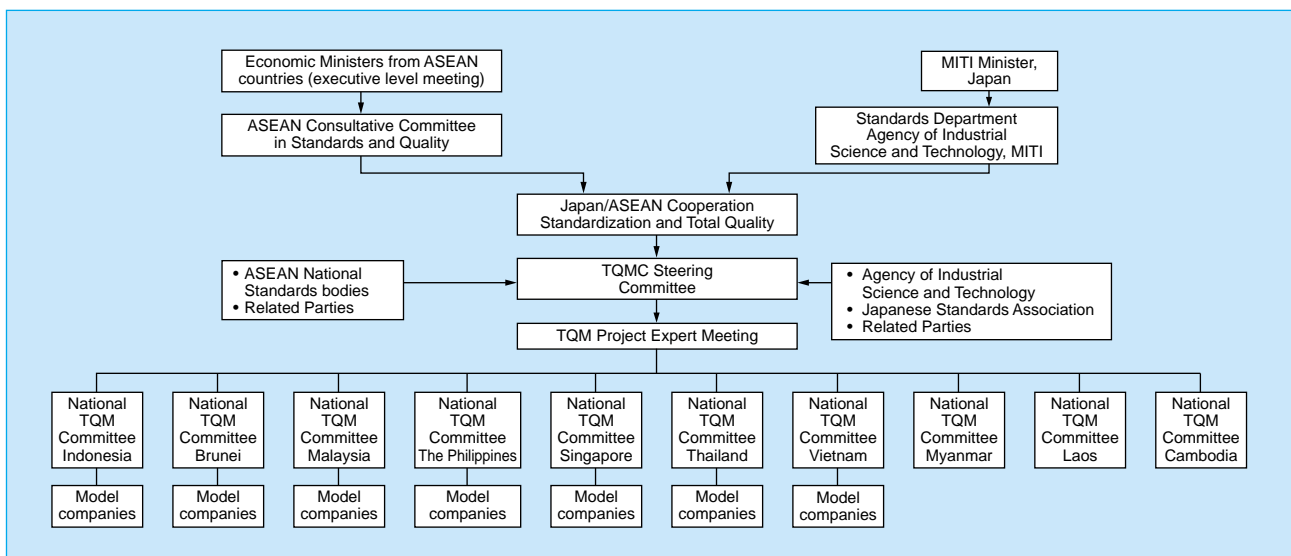
The blueprint for this project was drawn-up by the ASEAN Economic Ministers (AEM) and the Minister for MITI at a joint meeting held in October 1993 in Singapore. The project is administered by the Standards Department of AIST/MITI and by JSA on the Japanese side and by the ASEAN Consultative Committee in Standards and Quality (ACCSQ) for the ASEAN countries. A Steering Committee (TQMC) was also established to oversee the smooth implementation of the project.

- (1) Conduction of seminars that introduce, promote and educate the concept of ASEAN TQM (more specifically the CEO, Top Management Seminar and Seminar for Middle Managers).
- (2) Technology transfer and guidance on TQM for model companies. (Dispatch of Japanese Experts)
- (3) Coordination of Experts’ Meetings for both the model companies and national committees.
- (4) TQM training held in Japan (JICA/AOTS)
- (5) Compilation of teaching materials (19 different TQM handbooks and training materials for use at the above training sessions (see (4)).

“Final year”

This year marks the final year of this project. The model companies in those countries that been part of the project since its initiation 5 years ago continue to produce good results despite being in the midst of the “Asian financial crisis”. However, for those countries that joined the project later on, for example Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia, the planned technological transfer has hardly begun.

Illustration of the structure of the Japan-ASEAN TQM Project



NOTE: National TQM Committees are the administrative organizations of ASEAN countries composed of their respective national standardization agencies, model companies and specialists

“Member bodies”

The majority of the national standardizing bodies or organizations affiliated to these bodies that make up the ASEAN members for this project are also ISO/IEC members and therefore have close ties with the Standards Department of MITI and JSA. When the project was initiated, there were a total of 6 countries taking part but with the participation of Vietnam in 1997 and Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia in 1999, the number has since risen to 10 countries.

“Current activities”

The following activities are currently being conducted based on the TQMC action plan, which is revised annually after taken into account the progress made in the previous year.

“Plans for extension”

There has been much talk about technological cooperation lately but with the close of this project, in other words by putting a stop on technology transfer, there is a fear that the countries concerned may, as a result, halt their related activities geared towards sustainability. Accordingly, the Technical Assistance Division is drafting plans and is requesting the appropriate budget from the government for phase 2 of the ASEAN project, to be implemented from the year 2000. The aim of the project will be to continue providing technical assistance to the countries that joined in at the later stages of the project, and to expand TQM activities to cover a wider range of industries and companies rather than the few models which are currently being targeted.

Environmental Management System Center

The Environmental Management System Center (EMS Center) started their assessment and registration services in April 1996, and was accredited by the Japanese Accreditation Board for Conformity Assessment (JAB) as an EMS certification body on February 18, 1997.

The scope accredited by JAB covers a total of 23 fields as of May 1999, which is one of the broadest range of accreditation maintained by a certification body. Furthermore, the EMS Center has already applied to JAB for an extension of the current scope to cover 4 more fields, with a further 5 fields expected to be applied for in the future.

On May 24, 1999 the EMS Center was also accredited by the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) for 15 fields. The center is striving to expand this to include a further 11 fields.

The key reasons for seeking UKAS accreditation for the EMS Center were based on the consensus that the UKAS is a well-established central accreditation body in Europe, which in turn is the birthplace of the EMS standards. These reasons inspired the Center to study the concept of accreditation used at UKAS and to seek cultural and information exchange between their respective organisations.

UKAS accreditation has enabled the EMS Center to respond to the various needs of entrepreneurs seeking UKAS accredited certification as well as to obtain fast and accurate information from Europe on these issues.

The EMS Center bases its activities on the following four policies:

- 1) *The EMS Center strives to ensure that standards are correctly interpreted and to encourage their*

proliferation given the role of its parent body, JSA, which acts as national secretariat for ISO standards, and its individual stance as the representative office for approximately 30 registration bodies based in Japan.

- 2) *The EMS Center seeks to ensure an appropriate balance in the time and allocation of auditors required for an audit and that they carry out their services in a fair and transparent manner.*
- 3) *The EMS Center ensures the implementation of high quality assessments by continually improving both the auditing techniques used and the qualifications of the auditors employed.*
- 4) *The EMS Center works towards promoting JSA's mission across a broad range of fields.*

The above policies form the underlying foundation of EMS assessment procedures. By August 25, 1999, EMS Center had received over 200 applications for assessments and had issued 132 certifications.

Other Registration and Certification Activities

- 1) *Quality System Center (QS Center)*
The QS Center is the principle body in handling assessments and registrations on quality control in accordance with ISO 9000 series and QS 9000. Since the operation started in July 1994, more than 500 companies have been registered.
- 2) *Japanese Registration of Certificated Auditors (JRCA)*
JRCA operates as a certification body for quality system auditors, assessing qualifications and registering (and renewing the registration of) auditors in accordance with the ISO 9000 quality management system series. JRCA has been opened to international auditors (IATCA-Auditors) since June 1998.

Announcements



63rd IEC General Meeting – Kyoto '99

By the time this newsletter goes to print, the Kyoto International Convention Hall will be poised and ready to receive more than 1,500 distinguished experts from all fields of electrotechnology from all around the world for the 63rd International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) General Meeting. The 1999 Meeting will take place from 18th to 29th October and will host a variety of Technical Committee, Subcommittee, and Working Group meetings as well as IEC Management forums and sessions. For further details, please visit the official IEC Kyoto GM 99 web at: <http://www.jsa.or.jp/iec99>

ISO/COPOLCO General Meeting

The dates of the ISO/COPOLCO General Meeting has been set for 22nd (Mon.) to 24th (Weds.) May, 2000 and it will be held at the Kyoto International Conference Hall in Kyoto, Japan. The tentative theme of the workshop, which is to be held on the first date of the meeting, is "Consumer Protection in the Global Market". The COPOLCO plenary meeting will take place on 23rd and 24th May - it is very likely that at least one of the COPOLCO working groups will take the opportunity for meeting in conjunction with the plenary.

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