

# ISO 26000

## Basic training material

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Contact: [Tina.Bohlin@sis.se](mailto:Tina.Bohlin@sis.se) (PPO Secretary) or  
[Staffan.Soderberg@amap.se](mailto:Staffan.Soderberg@amap.se) (PPO Vice Chair, part of the drafting team),

**Drafting team** part of the ISO 26000 PPO stakeholder advisory group:

Ms. Carolyn Schmidt (leader), Ms. Adriana Rosenfeld,

Ms. Divya Kirti Gupta, Mr. Ken-Ichi Kumagai

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# INTRODUCTION

1. About this presentation
2. About ISO 26000
3. The core content
4. How to use ISO 26000

# 1. About this presentation

- Basic introduction to ISO 26000, Guidance on Social Responsibility:
  - emphasizes key definitions and main points
  - provides an overview, not a complete summary
  - presents a starting point for further exploration and use
- Intended for people and organizations from all sectors of their societies, and from any region of the world
- Open source, free of charge, available to anyone to use, and to customize to fit their own context and needs

# How to use this presentation

- It is recommended to translate these slides into your local language, consulting the formal translation of ISO 26000:2010
- It is recommended to add slides that are relevant to the target audience. Examples of such slides can be based on the local/regional/national/international context as well as illustrating sectors, networks, tools, initiatives etcetera. Annex A contains examples of voluntary initiatives and tools.
- It is not recommended to delete any of the slides as they form a context
- It is recommended that you format the slides to fit your purposes, for example by adding illustrations and photos that you have developed/own.

## 2. About ISO 26000

- ISO 26000 is an International Standard giving guidance/recommendations about how any organization can improve its Social Responsibility and thus contribute to sustainable environmental, social and economic development.
- ISO 26000 is not certifiable, as it does not contain requirements. Its appeal is to those who, for whatever reasons, seek to improve their operating processes and impacts through socially responsible behaviour.
- ISO is the world's largest developer of voluntary International Standards, used by businesses and other organizations; its members are national standards bodies and its standards and name-recognition are global in reach. See Appendix for more information about ISO.

# What makes ISO 26000 important and credible?

- It is designed to work in all organizational and cultural contexts – in any country or region
- It is flexible and the user decides how to use it
- It was internationally negotiated through ISO's consensus method, using a multi-stakeholder approach, and balance to reflect global diversity. See Appendix for more information about this process, and the different stakeholder groups.
- It incorporates the real-life experiences of its many contributors, and at the same time builds on international norms and agreements related to Social Responsibility

# Examples of linkages between International norms and ISO 26000



# How does ISO 26000 define Social Responsibility?

Social Responsibility (SR) is the responsibility of an organization for the impacts of its decisions and activities on society and the environment through transparent and ethical behaviour that:

- Contributes to sustainable development, including the health and welfare of society
- Takes into account the expectations of stakeholders
- Is in compliance with applicable law and consistent with international norms of behavior, and
- Is integrated throughout the organization and practised in its relationships.



# SR definition, continued

Note 1: Activities include products, services and processes.

Note 2: Relationships refer to an organization's activities within its sphere of influence.

(Sphere of Influence refers to the range of relationships through which the organization has the ability to affect the decisions or activities of others – that is, its owners, customers, workers, suppliers, etcetera.)

“Sustainable development is about meeting the needs of society while living within the planet's ecological limits and without jeopardizing the ability of future generations to meet their needs.”

Sources: ISO 26000: 2010 Clause 2:18; Clause 3.3.5

# What does ISO 26000 offer to its users?

- Guidance and recommendations on how to structure, evaluate, and improve their social responsibility, including stakeholder relationships and community impacts.
- Provides organizations with a set of societal expectations of what constitutes responsible behaviour, based on authoritative international instruments

# ISO 26000 can be used by any organization, for example:

- large multi-national corporations
- small and medium size enterprises
- the public sector (hospitals, schools or others)
- foundations, charities and NGOs
- extractive industries, such as mining and fossil fuel companies
- service and financial industries (banks, IT, insurance)
- municipal governments
- farmers and agribusiness
- consultancies

# ISO 26000 Social Responsibility can

- show a commitment to continual improvement
- attract like-minded partners, investors, customers and staff
- improve relations with employees, communities, the media, suppliers, and government agencies
- help to establish more robust, stable supply chains
- contribute to sustainable development by reducing harmful environmental, social and economic impacts
- help manage and reduce risks
- identify new opportunities

Increasing social responsibility contributes to a “virtuous cycle” where each action strengthens the organization and the community, encouraging sustainable development

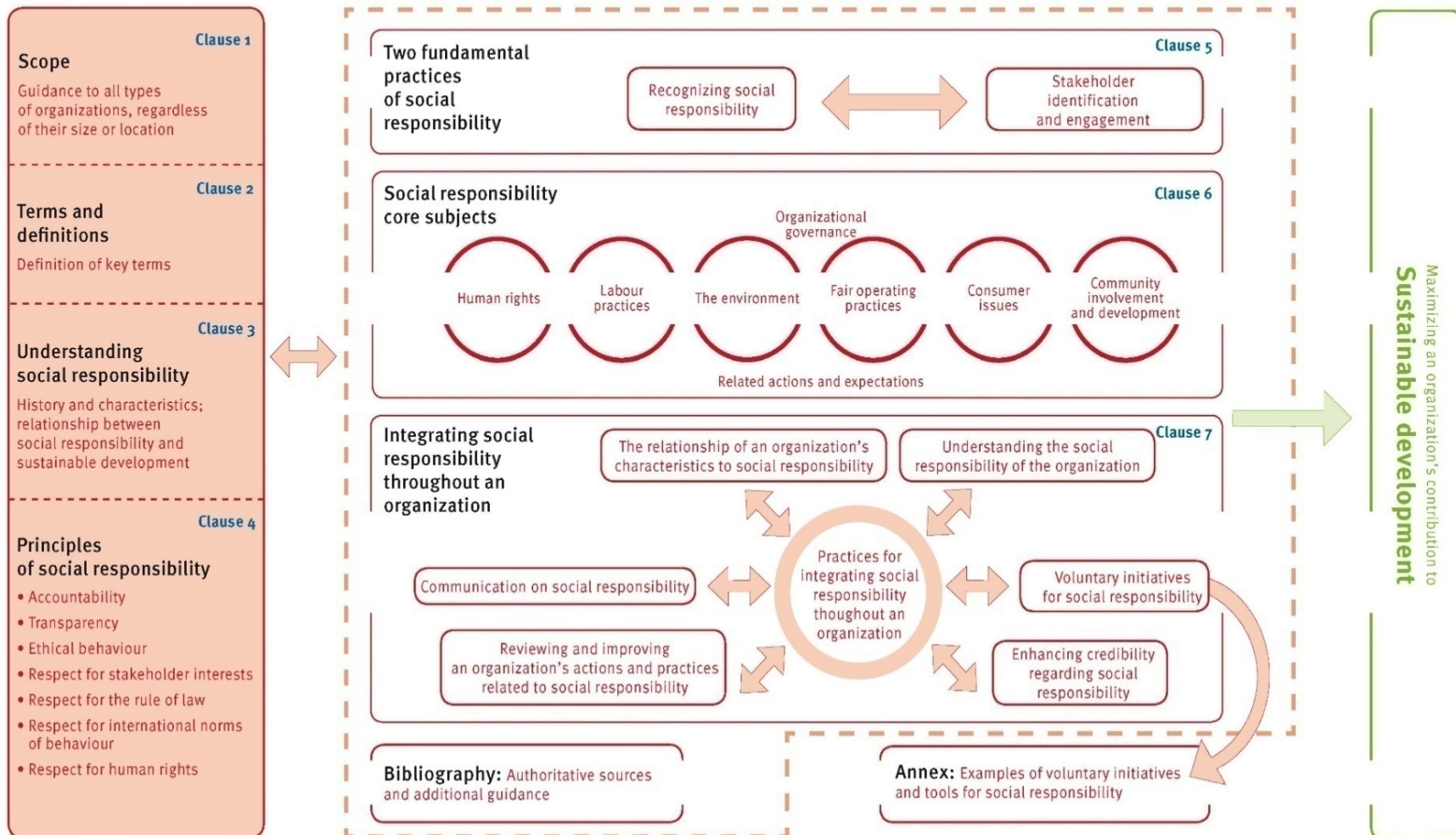


# 3. The core content

- Seven principles
- Seven core subjects and their related issues
- Stakeholder engagement



# Schematic overview of ISO 26000



# The 7 Principles

1. Accountability
2. Transparency
3. Ethical behaviour
4. Respect for stakeholder interests
5. Respect for the rule of law
6. Respect for international norms of behavior
7. Respect for human rights



# Accountability and Transparency

- Accountability is the: “state of being answerable for decisions and activities to the organization’s governing bodies, legal authorities and, more broadly, its stakeholders” (those who are affected by its actions)
- Transparency is “openness about decisions and activities that affect society, the economy and the environment, and willingness to communicate these in a clear, accurate, timely, honest and complete manner”

Source: ISO 26000:2010 Clause 2.1 and 2.24

- Accountability and Transparency involve taking responsibility for decisions and policies
- Accountability and transparency involve the top decision-makers, as well as everyone throughout a chain of command
- Leaders need to know and acknowledge who has made what specific decisions

# Principle of Ethical Behaviour

- Ethical behaviour involves deciding what is the right course of action, day to day
- Ethical behavior is defined as “behaviour that is in accordance with accepted principles of right or good conduct in the context of a particular situation...”
- Ask yourself: would you be comfortable if your actions were to become public knowledge?

Source: ISO 26000:2010 Clause 2.7

# Principle of Respect for stakeholder interests

- This involves identifying groups of stakeholders - those who are affected by your decisions and actions - and responding to their concerns.
- It does not mean letting them make your decisions.

Note that, by definition, “social responsibility” is not decided in a vacuum; it always involves reference to the guiding principles, and awareness of impacts on others

# Principle of Respect for the rule of law

- “In the context of social responsibility, respect for the rule of law means that an organization complies with all applicable laws and regulations....even if they are not adequately enforced.”

Source: ISO 26000:2010 Clause 4.6

# Principle of Respect for international norms of behaviour

- “In situations where the law or its implementation does not provide for adequate environmental or social safeguards, an organization should strive to respect, as a minimum, international norms of behaviour.”
- International norms of behavior are “...derived from customary international law, generally accepted principles of international law, or intergovernmental agreements that are universally or nearly universally recognized.”
- These can be found in authoritative international instruments from organizations such as the United Nations, International Labour Organization (ILO).

Sources: ISO 26000:2010 Clause 2.11 and 4.7

# Principle of Respect for human rights

- ISO 26000 urges its users to identify the vulnerable populations among its stakeholders, and to work to ensure their fair treatment
- “..In situations where human rights are not protected, take steps to respect human rights and avoid taking advantage of these situations...”

Source: ISO 26000:2010 Clause 4.8

## In summary, the 7 Principles:

- Establish the underlying framework for socially responsible decision-making
- Link each user of ISO 26000 to a global community of those who share the principles
- Emphasize that Social Responsibility is a process that develops and evolves with practice



# The 7 Core Subjects



# The 7 core subjects

- **Each** of the 7 **core subjects** is relevant to every organization and should be considered.
- Users then review **specific issues** (37 in all) listed under each core subject to identify those issues that are relevant and significant.
- Not all of the 37 specific issues will be relevant to each user.
- Cross-cutting considerations appear in all the 7 core subjects:
  - economic aspects
  - health and safety
  - the value chain
  - gender balance
  - communication with stakeholders

*See Appendix for the complete list of issues for each Core Subject*

# Core subject: Organizational governance

- Leaders should practice and promote ethical behavior, accountability and transparency
- ISO 26000 suggests tools for integrating SR into core organizational decisions

## Some specific issues for SR improvement:

- Develop incentives for performance on social responsibility
- Adjust organizational structure to include third-party review of sensitive areas such as financial management, etc.
- Create ways to track decisions and their implementation, to ensure accountability and follow-through
- Implement processes for meaningful (two-way) communication with stakeholders

# Core subject: Human rights

- ISO 26000 encourages users to identify and respond to members of vulnerable groups within their sphere of influence
- Users should avoid complicity; that is, avoid assisting those abusing others, and avoid benefiting directly from abuses committed by someone else

## Some specific issues for SR improvement:

- develop mechanisms for “due diligence”: ways to identify, address and prevent actual or potential human rights damage resulting from your activities
- examine the treatment of vulnerable groups in your context, such as: indigenous peoples, girls and women, those historically discriminated against on the basis of race, ethnicity or religion, people with disabilities, the elderly, migrants, etc.
- provide remedy and grievance procedures

# Core subject: Labour practices

- Everyone should be able to earn a living wage through freely chosen work (not forced labor or slavery)
- All workers should experience just and favorable conditions at work
- Responsibility goes beyond workplaces that an organization owns or directly controls

## Some specific issues for SR improvement:

- Eliminate child labour and forced labour (\*)
  - Comply with laws and regulations on the rights of unions and collective bargaining, and social protection (medical coverage, disability leave, etc. (\*))
  - Eliminate discrimination in hiring and dismissals (\*)
- (\*) These are recognized as basic human rights (ISO 26000:2010, 6.3)
- Understand and control the health and safety risk involved in activities; provide safety equipment and training
  - Consider the impact on workers' family lives when making scheduling decisions
  - Avoid contracting with suppliers or sub-contractors who use unfair or abusive labour practices, including child labour

# Core subject: Environment

Some specific issues for SR improvement:

- Prevent pollution; reduce emissions of pollutants into the air, water and soil as much as possible
- Practice green procurement – evaluate suppliers of goods and services on their environmental impacts
- Use sustainable, renewable resources whenever possible
- Conserve water in operations
- Practice life-cycle approach(including disposal) – aim to reduce waste, re-use products or components, and re-cycle materials

# Core subject: Fair operating practices

Some specific issues for SR improvement:

- Practice honesty – don't ask for or accept bribes; don't attempt to break laws through use of political influence
- Respect property rights; pay fair compensation for property you acquire or use
- Treat suppliers and customers/consumers fairly, including prompt payment of bills and prompt attention to problems
- Examine your value chain/supply chain, and be sure you are paying enough to enable your suppliers to fulfill their own social responsibilities

# Core subject: Consumer issues

Some specific issues for SR improvement:

- Protect consumers' health and safety; design and test products to ensure this
- Reduce waste by minimizing packing material and, if appropriate, offer recycling and disposal services
- Eliminate or minimize negative health and environmental impacts of products and services, such as noise or waste
- Pay particular attention to the information needs of vulnerable individuals (for example, those with limited vision or hearing, or poor reading ability)



# Core subject: Community involvement and development

Actions that benefit communities - such as job creation, skill development, and provision of health, welfare and other services - should be integrated into the core “business model”

Some specific issues for SR improvement:

- Consult directly with community members before designing programs
- Focus on increasing local procurement and hiring
- When investing in a community, consider the economic, social, and environmental impacts of your investment
- Respect the traditional uses of natural resources by local populations, especially indigenous peoples
- Fulfill tax and other legal responsibilities as described in law, even when punishments are not likely
- Consider “social investment”: programs and infrastructure which will improve quality of life, and which will increase the capacity of the community to develop sustainably

# A note: “Community involvement and development” is different from philanthropy

- Philanthropic giving is an important element of SR use of wealth, in many cultures. However, philanthropy is basically “top down” (the giver decides what projects and programs to fund).

***SR in the ISO 26000 context should encourage reciprocity – benefits and obligations for all involved – rather than exalting “givers” and treating “receivers” as dependants***

- This is also an important point for charitable organizations to keep in mind, as their recipients are also some of their stakeholders.

# Stakeholder engagement and communication: a crucial component

- “Stakeholder identification and engagement are central to addressing an organization’s social responsibility.” (ISO 26000:2010 Clause 5.3)
- Communication establishes channels for exchanging knowledge, suggestions, complaints and ideas for solutions.
- Identifying stakeholders and developing channels of communication with them is one of the most rewarding and most challenging parts of Social Responsibility.
- Start to communicate respect and willingness to engage **before** a crisis emerges.
- The goal is to build trust and credibility for the long term, not to find “quick fixes” for problems.

# What is meant by the term “stakeholder”?

- ISO 26000 defines a “stakeholder” as “an individual or group that has an interest in any decision or activity of an organization.”
- “Stakeholder engagement” is defined as “activity undertaken to create opportunities for dialogue between an organization and one or more of its stakeholders, with the aim of providing an informed basis for the organization’s decisions.”

Source: ISO 26000:2010, Clause 2.20; 2.21

# Who are your stakeholders?

**Stakeholders** are people or groups who are affected by the actions of your organization. Often they also have the ability to affect you. This is why ISO 26000 emphasizes stakeholder involvement, and provides suggestions on how to go about it.

**Stakeholder categories** include workers, clients, purchasers, consumers, owners, investors, government officials, community residents, and suppliers. For example, a hospital's stakeholders could include doctors, nurses, patients, patients' families, the owners of the hospital (could be a branch of government, or private investors), the community where the hospital is located, the suppliers of medical items, etc.

# In order to improve organizational performance, stakeholder engagement should:

- Include leaders of different stakeholder groups (ex. community, workers, stockholders), and also seek to involve the broader population to ensure fairness and to obtain different viewpoints
- Emphasize two-way communication (listen to your stakeholders, as well as explaining yourself to them)
- Keep a realistic and positive tone; avoid making vague or ambitious promises that can't be kept
- NOT be used mainly as a vehicle for publicity or photo opportunities

## 4. HOW TO USE ISO 26000

- ✓ Setting the direction from the top; building SR into governance and procedures
- ✓ Determining relevance and significance; establishing priorities:  
matrix, mapping, gap analysis
- ✓ Assessing your responsibilities in your sphere of influence
- ✓ Performing “due diligence”
- ✓ Reporting and other communications with stakeholders

# Integrating SR throughout an organization, clause 7

## Setting direction toward SR

- Owners and top management need to lead
- Use mission and vision statements to define values
- Involve relevant stakeholders, including those working for the organisation
- Set short-term and long-term goals

## Governance and operating procedures

- Incorporate transparency and accountability at all levels
- Apply SR to decisions on purchasing, investing, hiring and promoting, advertising, community relations, etc.



# Identification of SR Issues

The seven core subjects

Every core subject, but not necessarily each issue, has some relevance for every organization. (ISO 26000, 5.2.2)

Organizational  
governance

Human rights

Labour practices

Environment

Fair operating  
practices

Consumer  
issues

Community  
involvement &  
development

Recognizing  
relevant  
issues of SR  
(5.2.2)

Identifying  
relevant  
issues of SR  
(7.3.2.1)

Determining  
significance  
(7.3.2.2)

Setting  
priorities  
(7.3.4)

# Checklist-approach: identify issues that need improvement

Issues identified as relevant and significant:

- Governance: 1
- Human rights: 8
- Labour practices: 5
- Environment: 4
- Fair operating practices: 5
- Consumer issues: 7
- Community Involvement and Development: 7

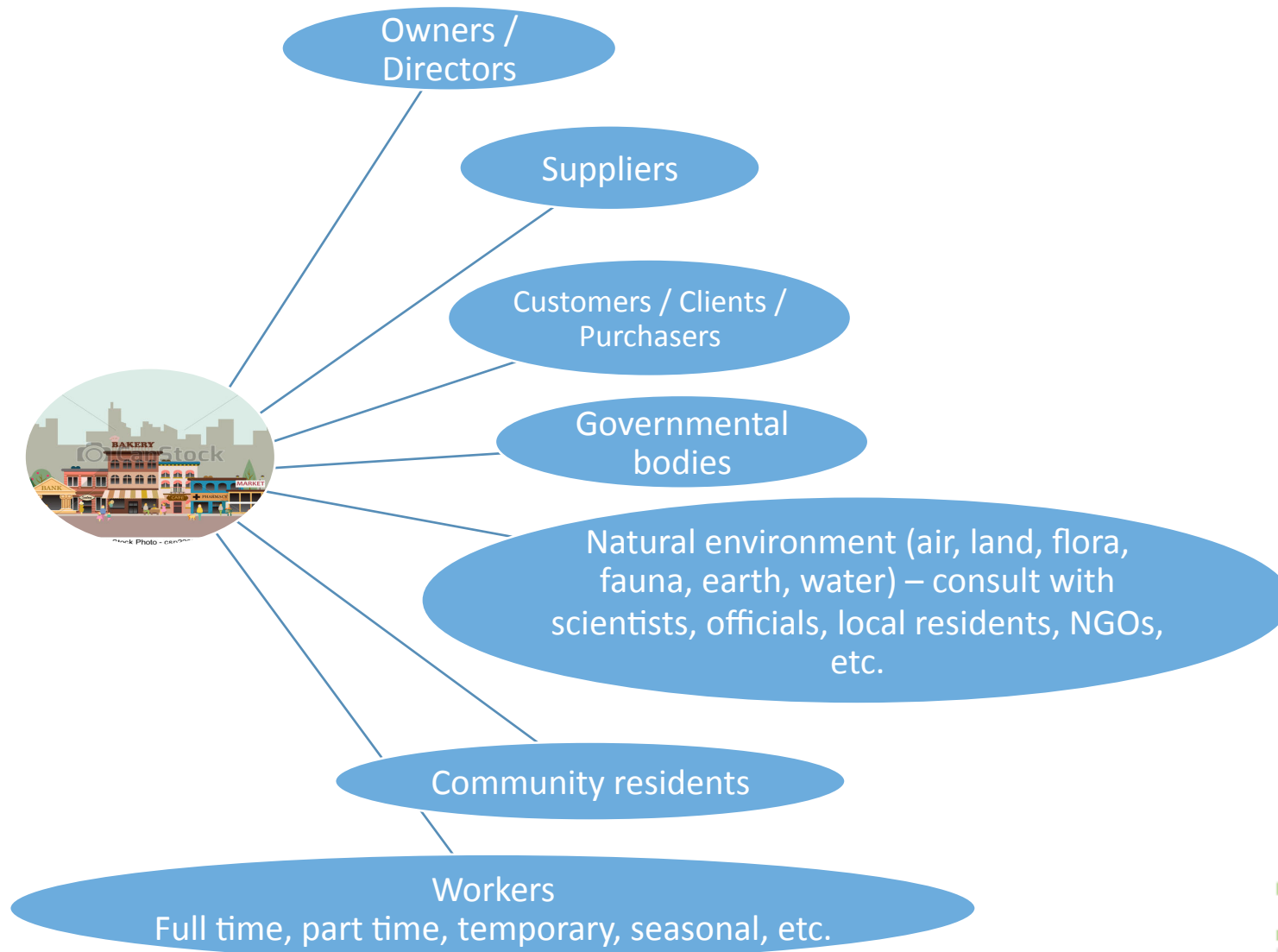
Total = 37

“Related actions and expectations” identified under issues

- Governance: 12
- Human rights: 33
- Labour practices: 44
- Environment: 39
- Fair operating practices: 29
- Consumer issues: 53
- Community Involvement and Development: 48

Total = 258

# Stakeholder identification and engagement: examples



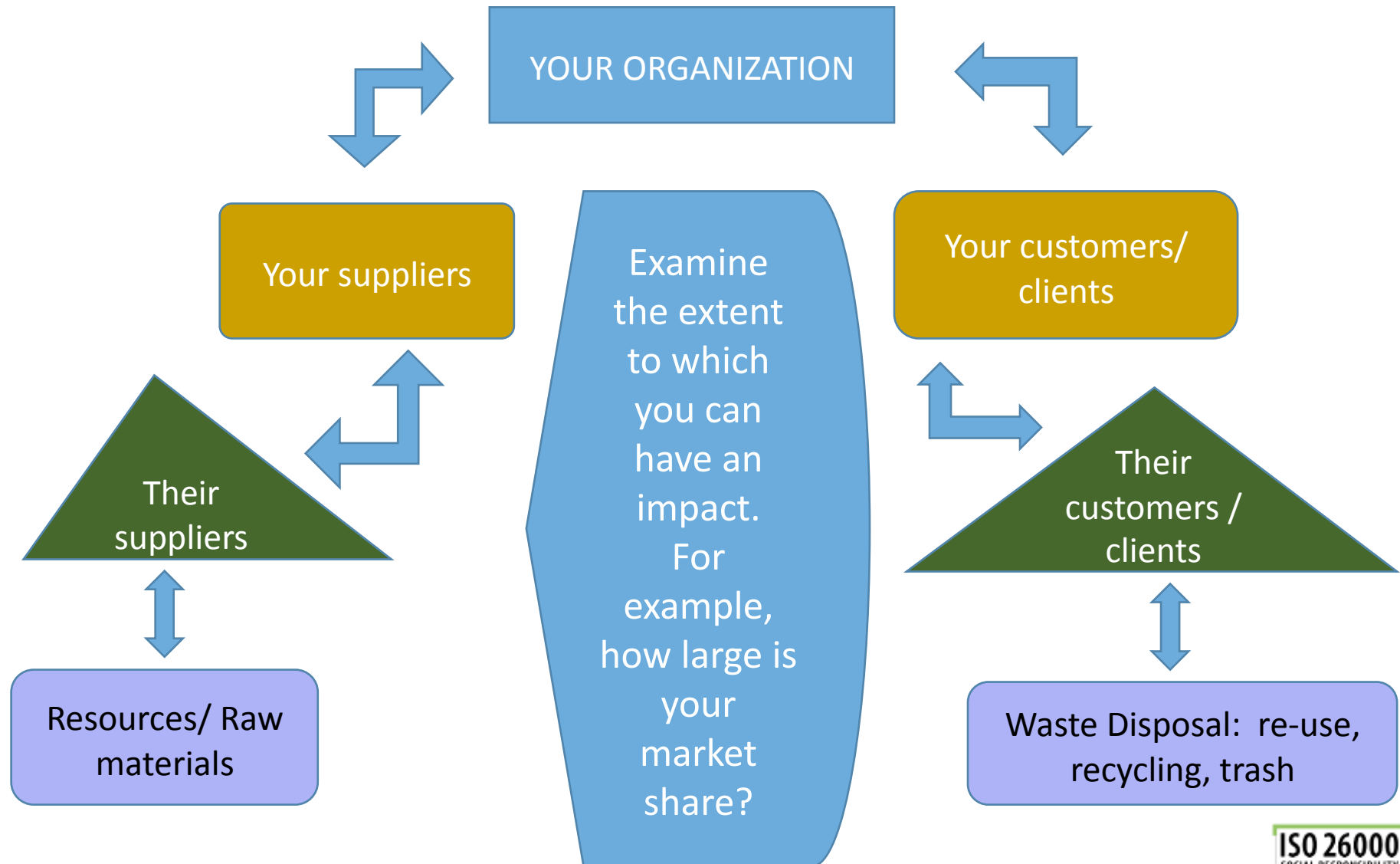
## Who are your stakeholders? These are some questions to help you identify them.

- To whom does your organization have legal obligations?
- Who might be positively or negatively affected by your decisions or activities?
- Who would be disadvantaged if excluded from the engagement?
- Who in your value chain is affected?
- Who is likely to express concerns about the decisions and activities of the organization?
- Who can help the organization address specific impacts?

# Establishing priorities

- 1. Describe your current situation with respect to the seven “core subjects” of ISO 26000
- 2. Identify your desired situation - specific SR improvement
- 3. Focus on the gaps between the two; identify the most significant issues
- 3 A. Identify current weaknesses and the causes behind them
- 3 B. Identify resources needed to overcome the weaknesses: personnel, time, money, partners, etc.
- 3 C. Develop a time-line and action plan to bridge the gaps

# Assessing responsibilities in your sphere of influence



# “Due diligence” – investigating situations and avoiding SR risks

- Definition: “process to identify the actual and potential negative social, environmental and economic impacts of an organization’s decisions and activities, with the aim of avoiding and mitigating those impacts”
- Examine the impacts of decisions throughout your sphere of influence
- Review the legal requirements and context of activities
- Consider the viewpoints of those impacted by your decisions – your stakeholders

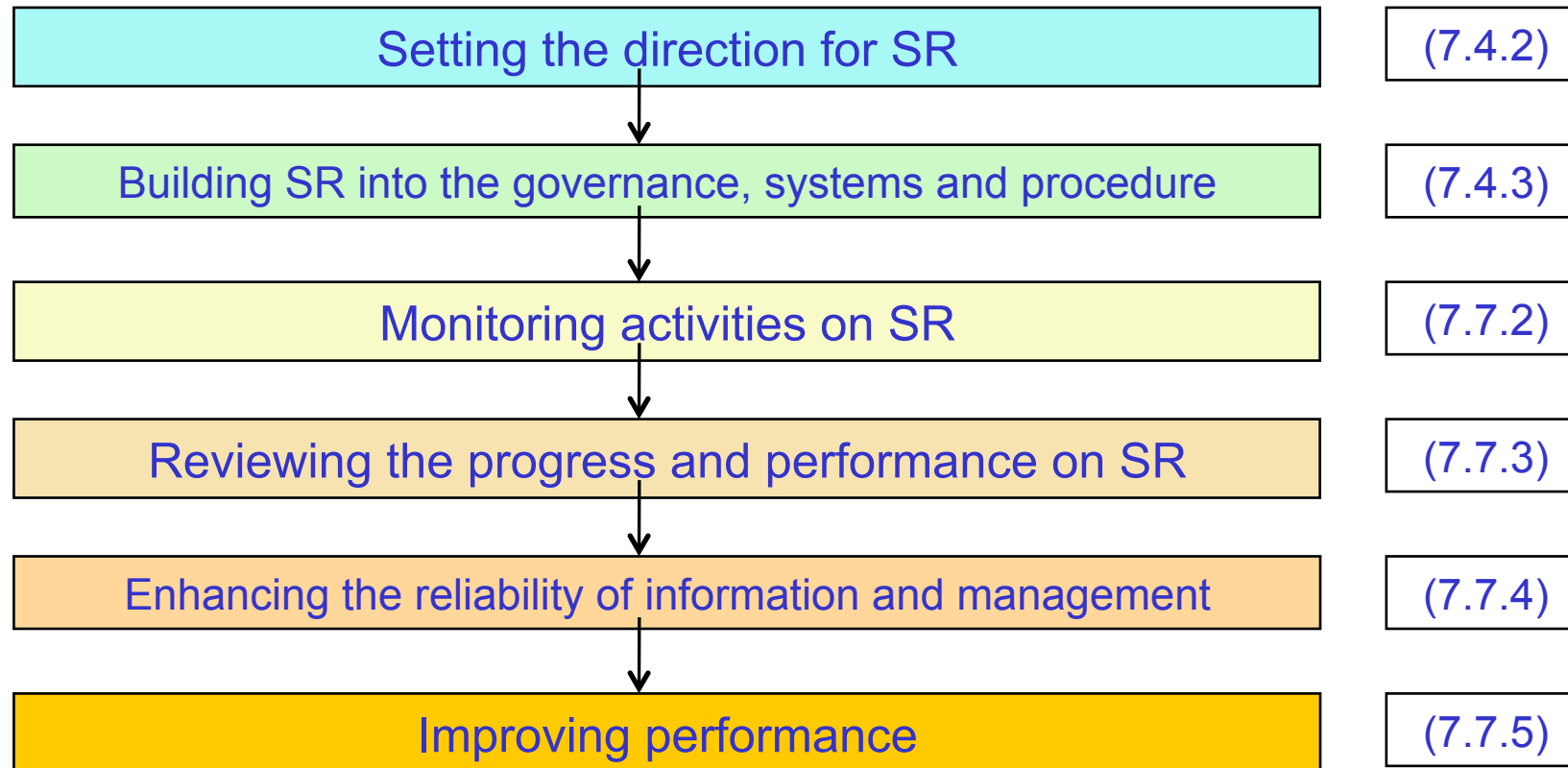
Source: ISO 26000:2010 Clause 7.3.1

# Communicating about your Social Responsibility

- Communicate activities on relevant issues within each of the Seven Core Subjects
- Use communicating and reporting as part of a continuing dialogue; be honest when you have fallen short on some of your goals
- Communicate to different audiences of stakeholders in appropriate and understandable ways
- Consider involving third parties in commenting on progress and goals



# Reviewing and improving SR performance



Stakeholders can play an important role in reviewing an organization's performance on social responsibility. (ISO 26000: 2010 Clause 7.7.1)

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Sources of guidance: authoritative international instruments, and other SR tools and initiatives
- Claims of using ISO 26000
- Where to go for more information about ISO 26000

Optional: Questions for discussion

# Examples of SR guidance materials

## <Authoritative International Instruments>

**These express widely accepted international norms of behavior, and encourage actions based on those principles**

- U.N. Global Compact
- U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- U.N. Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights
- ILO Conventions and Recommendations
- U.N. Agenda 2030 (Sustainable Development Goals)

## <Initiatives>

### ISO Standards

- ISO 14000 Family – Environmental management
- ISO 9000 Family – Quality management
- ISO 45001 - Health and safety management systems (draft)
- ISO 20400 – Sustainable procurement (draft)
- ISO 37001 – Anti-bribery management systems

### Other Guidelines

- GRI – Global Reporting Initiative
- OSHAS 18001 – Occupational health and safety management systems
- OECD Guidelines for multi-national enterprises



# Claims of using ISO 26000

Examples of accurate communication about using the ISO standard (remember, there is no “certification”):

- *“We have **used/applied** ISO 26000 as a **guide/framework/basis** to **integrate/implement** social responsibility into our values and practices.”*

OR

- *“We recognize ISO 26000 as a reference document that provides guidance for integration/implementation of social responsibility / socially responsible behaviour.”*

Source: ISO 26000 PPO SAG N 15 rev 1

# Where to obtain ISO 26000 and other resources

- General information about ISO 26000 can be obtained from the ISO SR website [www.iso.org/sr](http://www.iso.org/sr)
- ISO 26000 is available in over 30 languages, including Arabic, Chinese, English, Farsi, French, German, Hebrew, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Vietnamese...
- ISO 26000 may be purchased from ISO's national member bodies, which are listed with full contact details on the ISO website at [www.iso.org](http://www.iso.org)
- ISO 26000 can also be purchased from the ISO webstore on ISO's website at [www.iso.org](http://www.iso.org)

# Optional: Questions for Discussion

Discuss arguments and examples that both support and oppose each statement. There is no “right” or “wrong”. This can work well when participants divide into small groups.

- (1) SR only makes sense when there is a clear “business case” - economic justification in terms of increased profit.
- (2) SR encourages companies and other organisations to take on the obligations and responsibilities that should be done by governments.
- (3) Anyone can become more Socially Responsible even when some others in their sphere of influence - e.g. suppliers, communities, customers, workers - are not.
- (4) Integrating ISO 26000 with the operations of an organization is challenging, but not impossible.

# Appendix

- More about ISO
- More about the multi-stakeholder process of the Working Group on Social Responsibility that developed ISO 26000
- More about the Core Subjects: complete list of issues

# More about ISO, [www.iso.org](http://www.iso.org)

- The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) is an independent, non-governmental membership organization, and the world's largest developer of voluntary International Standards, based on global and market relevance
- Founded in 1947, ISO now has more than 160 members, one per member country (National Standards Bodies (NSBs)) coordinated by a Central Secretariat based in Geneva Switzerland. About 75% of ISO members today are NSBs of developing countries.
- ISO standards (now over 20,000) are designed to encourage international trade, safety and quality in creation and production of goods and services.
- There are different types of ISO standards, e.g. specifications, measurement, guidance, assessment, processes and management systems.
- ISO relates to sustainability  
[http://www.iso.org/iso/home/news\\_index/iso-in-action/sustainable\\_development.htm](http://www.iso.org/iso/home/news_index/iso-in-action/sustainable_development.htm)



# More about the multi-stakeholder process of developing ISO 26000

[www.iso.org/wgsr](http://www.iso.org/wgsr)

- ISO 26000 was internationally negotiated through ISO's consensus method, and developed by a multi-stakeholder process that took over five years (2005-2010). There was a Working Group involving over 450 representatives from 100 countries and 40 international organisations.
- Representatives were from developing and developed countries.
- Representatives were from six "stakeholder groups": Industry, Labour, Consumer, Government, NGO, and SSRO (service, support, research and other).
- Specific provision was made to achieve gender balance, including in the leadership.
- Leadership of the entire process, and of separate committees within the Working Group, followed a "twinning" process: representatives from a developing and a developed country shared leadership responsibilities. For the entire Working Group, leadership came from Brazil and Sweden (ABNT and SIS, the Brazilian and Swedish National Standards Bodies).
- Many participating countries replicated the international process through their national mirror committees.

# Complete list of Issues for all of the 7 Core Subjects

Each issue has a definition and description, followed by a list of related actions and expectations

## **Organizational governance**

- Issue 1: Decision-making processes and structure

## **Human rights**

- Issue 1: Due diligence
- Issue 2: Human rights risk situations
- Issue 3: Avoidance of complicity
- Issue 4: Resolving grievances
- Issue 5: Discrimination and vulnerable groups
- Issue 6: Civil and political rights
- Issue 7: Economic, social and cultural rights
- Issue 8: Fundamental principles and rights at work

## **Labour practices**

- Issue 1: Employment and employment relationships
- Issue 2: Conditions of work and social protection
- Issue 3: Social dialogue
- Issue 4: Health and safety at work
- Issue 5: Human development and training in the workplace

## **The environment**

- Issue 1: Prevention of pollution
- Issue 2: Sustainable resource use
- Issue 3: Climate change mitigation and adaptation
- Issue 4: Protection of the environment, biodiversity and restoration of natural habitats

# Complete list of Issues for all of the 7 Core Subjects, continued

## **Fair operating practices**

- Issue 1: Anti-corruption
- Issue 2: Responsible political involvement
- Issue 3: Fair competition
- Issue 4: Promoting social responsibility in the value chain
- Issue 5: Respect for property rights

## **Consumer issues**

- Issue 1: Fair marketing, factual and unbiased information and fair contractual practices
- Issue 2: Protecting consumers' health and safety
- Issue 3: Sustainable consumption
- Issue 4: Consumer service, support, and complaint and dispute resolution

## **Consumer issues, continued**

- Issue 5: Consumer data protection and privacy
- Issue 6: Access to essential services
- Issue 7: Education and awareness

## **Community involvement and development**

- Issue 1: Community involvement
- Issue 2: Education and culture
- Issue 3: Employment creation and skills development
- Issue 4: Technology development and access
- Issue 5: Wealth and income creation
- Issue 6: Health
- Issue 7: Social investment