

Kristian Glæsel

# How to Implement ISO 45001:2018 and the Story behind It

DS-handbook  
196:2019



# How to Implement ISO 45001:2018 and the Story behind It



by Kristian Glæsel

*How to Implement ISO 45001:2018 and the Story behind It*

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## FOREWORD

This book is meant to achieve two goals: Firstly, to give the author's view on how the standard should be understood and used, and secondly, to tell the story of how this standard was created and of the people behind it. The knowledge of the process will hopefully lead organisations to understand how they can benefit from the use of the standard and how the standard and the management system following the standard can be combined with other standards to support the organisation in the achieving the overall goals it might have. Since everybody may not have the same interest in the history of this standard but may have an imminent need to implement ISO 45001:2018, the book is divided into two parts – *need to know* and *nice to know*. This should spare the reader some frustration and enable the reader to find answers to specific questions quickly.



# excellence award

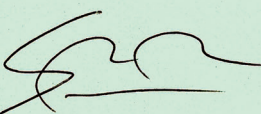
On behalf of ISO,  
this certificate is awarded to

**Kristian Glaesel**

Convenor in ISO/PC283/WG1, *Occupational Health &  
Safety Management Systems – OH&S Requirements*

In recognition of successfully leading the development  
of ISO 45001:2018 as working group convenor,  
over the period 2013-2018.

September 2018

  
Sergio Mujica  
ISO Secretary-General

  
Martin Cottam  
ISO/TC 283 Chair



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

For 15 years, I have been the lead auditor of the groups working with OHSAS 18001, ISO 14001, ISO 9001, and CSR. I have been involved in certification and 2nd party audit of organisations in Denmark and all over the world.

I work as a specialist in 2nd party audit, in concept development, and in leadership and coaching of large organisations with difficult management problems. Moreover, I work with certification in the following areas: environmental management, occupational health, and quality. Furthermore, I work with legislation, permits and approvals, clean technology, project management, risk analysis, and contingency planning.

I am the co-author and the Danish translator of OHSAS 18001:2008 and the appointed international convener for the development of the new ISO 45001 standard, and therefore a very experienced auditor and interpreter of the management and implementation of the management system.

I am often invited to speak at international conferences: Recently, I have been in Tunisia, Palestine, Mexico, UK, Australia, and at numerous conferences in Denmark.

On a daily basis, I am the director of Glaesel HSEQ Management and GAIA HSEQ Software where we offer consultancy and auditor training on all three levels and for all the major ISO standards. You can find more information on the webpage: [www.glaesel-HSEQ.dk](http://www.glaesel-HSEQ.dk).

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## INTRODUCTION

Looking at ISO management standards and where we are today it could rightfully be said that we have got it wrong; instead of writing standards for individual disciplines, e.g. quality, environment, health and safety (OH&S), and then trying to show users how to combine these, we should have written a standard on the good management of an organisation and then subsequently provided users with supporting standards on the specific disciplines. Such an approach would have been the logical one and might have helped many organisations to a better understanding of how to work efficiently with management standards. Maybe, this could have avoided the current silo approach, where management systems are being used individually and not together, as it is often seen in many organisations.

The development of standards is mainly defined by the needs of the users and the proposals that are put forward by ISO member bodies (International Standardisation Organization) for new standards and guidelines. The world of management standards had its starting point in establishing standards for quality management as the world needed such standards, and when the demand for an environmental management standard grew bigger, such a standard was established and issued. And so far, there has been no demand for a management standard on management of organisations as such, but maybe this will be an issue one day.

This book is intended to be an introduction on how to implement the ISO 45001:2018 from my point of view. The 2nd part of the book *Nice to Know* is an introduction to how standards are written to provide a general understand-

ding of why standards are not always perfect, and to show that the implementation of standards might differ from country to country and even from organisation to organisation.

One thing I would like to stress is that OH&S management is not rocket science. All too often I see systems that overdo everything, especially the risk assessments in an attempt to not miss anything. Keep it simple! Not much is gained in grand mathematical formulas trying to establish the scientific truth for a specific risk. What you need to do is identify the hazard, evaluate the **level** of risk, and then minimise it to the best of your ability.

When reading this book, I do advise you to have the ISO 45001:2018 standard next to you. I do not use text from the standard in the book. Instead, I try to explain in my own words how the specific clauses and requirements are to be understood.

I should stress that any interpretation of the ISO 45001:2018 is mine and does not necessarily express the opinion of the Working Group, of the PC or ISO, even if the book has been commented by the leadership of ISO/PC 283, the Danish Technical Committee as well as good friends and experts on management system and OH&S.

The book is not written to support the achievement of certification; it is written to provide a guideline on how to benefit from your management system and secure the support from the system to the progress of your organisation. If you follow the suggestions in this book, certification should not in any way be difficult – the hard part has always been to get the system to work as planned and achieve its intended outcome.

I owe many people thanks for helping me write this book, and the following people are indeed subject of my gratitude:

**Mr Charles Corrie**, (BSI), Secretary ISO/PC/283. A solid help and support ever since the early days working with OHSAS 18001. Mr Corrie is the main reason that OHSAS 18001 came to life, and he pushed on for the realisation of ISO 45001. Mr Corrie deserves the gratitude of us all for persistently following his vision of having a OH&S standard for the ISO family. Without his effort the ISO 45001:2018 would probably not have existed.

**Mr David Smith**, Chairman of ISO/PC/283. Mr Smith has as a member, as chairman, and in many other capacities taken part in the creation of ISO 45001 as well as previous versions of ISO 14001. Mr Smith has written a number of books on these subjects. Mr Smith has been a solid and highly appreciated help both during the meetings and outside the ISO work.

**Mr Ludvig Hubendick** (Former SIS). Mr Hubendick was the secretary of WG 1 for the first three years, and without his calm oversight and skills I would never have been able to get through the meetings at all.

**Mrs Jane Nyamvumba** (RSB) and **Mrs Peace Ababo** (RSB), Mrs Nyamvumba and Mrs Ababa shared the secretary role with Mr Hubendick and Mr Nilsson and made sure that all the information that we might have missed during the meetings were secured and brought to our attention.

**Mr Björn Nilsson** (SIS). Mr Nilsson took over after Mr Hubendick left for an important position elsewhere much to my protest and fear of how the meetings would now proceed. But if one single person has impressed me and set aside all my worries it is Mr Nilsson. Steady as a rock even when thrown to the lions on his very first day. He has my deepest respect.

I wish you all the best of luck with your management system and hope you will benefit from the advice in the book.

Frederica, juni 2019

Kristian Glæsel

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## **NEED TO KNOW**

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## BEFORE BUILDING YOUR MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The approach I have taken to explain on how the standard works and should be implemented is not necessarily the approach of certification. My experience with both ISO 9001:2015 and ISO 14001:2015 tells me that many organisations do the minimum level of implementation to get certified in accordance to these standards. Unfortunately, this level of effort is not enough if you want your management system to work efficiently and your organisation to benefit from the implementation.

The statement here is not in any way meant to disrespect the certification schemes, but there is a significant difference between having a management system that “merely” complies with the *wording* of the standard – and a system that really works according to the *intention* of the standard.

In recognition of the fact that every sentence and every word in the standard is there for a reason, I am very strict in complying with the standard to the letter. This is not because I, amongst others, wrote these words – this is to make sure that you will gain the maximum benefit in following the intention behind all these words. The requirements of this standard are basic as we cannot foresee exactly which needs the specific organisation will have. Therefore the standard only describes the basic requirement you need to fulfil – but not to what extent. If you look at 4.1 as an example, you are required to identify your internal and external issues. The standard does not set the bar for how many issues you are to determine or the severeness of these issues. This is entirely up to you and to your expectations of the outcome of your management system. You may have no issues at all or maybe you have a few issues.

So, if you try to verify compliance with the single clauses, you could easily build a management system that complies with every single requirement but has limited value or no value at all.

As you read this book, you will notice that I emphasise the importance of following the intention of the standard and the requirements to the letter. This is not only to provide you with an effective and suitable management system but to make sure that your clients/customers can rely on the validity of your management system. If you do not follow the intention of the standard – what guarantee does your customers have that your certificate actually verifies that you have an effective system?

For that reason, you need to evaluate – when working through every clause – how this applies to your organisation and how thorough you need to be in order to achieve the best result of the investment you are making.

I try to keep all explanations as straightforward as possible. OH&S is not necessarily rocket science and having an OH&S management system must not be complicated beyond what is absolutely needed. It is so easy to make processes and risk assessments over-complicated and way beyond what is needed to have an effective and dynamic management system.

## HOW TO READ THE STANDARD

Before you start working with this standard, you should be familiar with the purpose of management systems and how they should interact with your organisation.

Many organisations just identify their hazards and put controls in place to manage them and then forget about them. This standard expects you to identify your hazards and control your risks, and then to seek to reduce the level of risk on an ongoing basis by being proactive about how they are managed. All of this in close cooperation with the strategy of the organisation and of the top management.

When you read the standard, you can choose to do this from the beginning to the end in a straight line as you read a book, and that would make much sense. The only catch is that the standard is not working in a straight line from clause 4.1 until clause 10.3. The starting point would surely be clause 4 but not necessarily all of chapter 4. Next step would be chapter 5 – but again not necessarily all of chapter 5. So, when reading the standard one must observe the flow of information that is exchanged to understand the dynamics and the interrelations between the different clauses and subclauses.

While the standard is written in a fixed clause sequence, this does not reflect how the requirements are used in an organisation's management system. Many activities can be carried out in parallel, e.g. a management review can take place at the same time as a hazard analysis. The standard uses the PDCA cycle to encourage formal planning of activities, the doing, the checking and

then their improvement; however, the clause is not meant to be used that way and there is no step-by-step way of implementing the standard.

Naturally, the information flow of the standard follows the PDCA cycle. However, even if the PDCA cycle is straightforward, the information flow is nothing of the kind.

You could argue for the sake of simplicity we have four basic clauses of the standard and the rest are tools to either plan, support, control or improve these four main clauses.

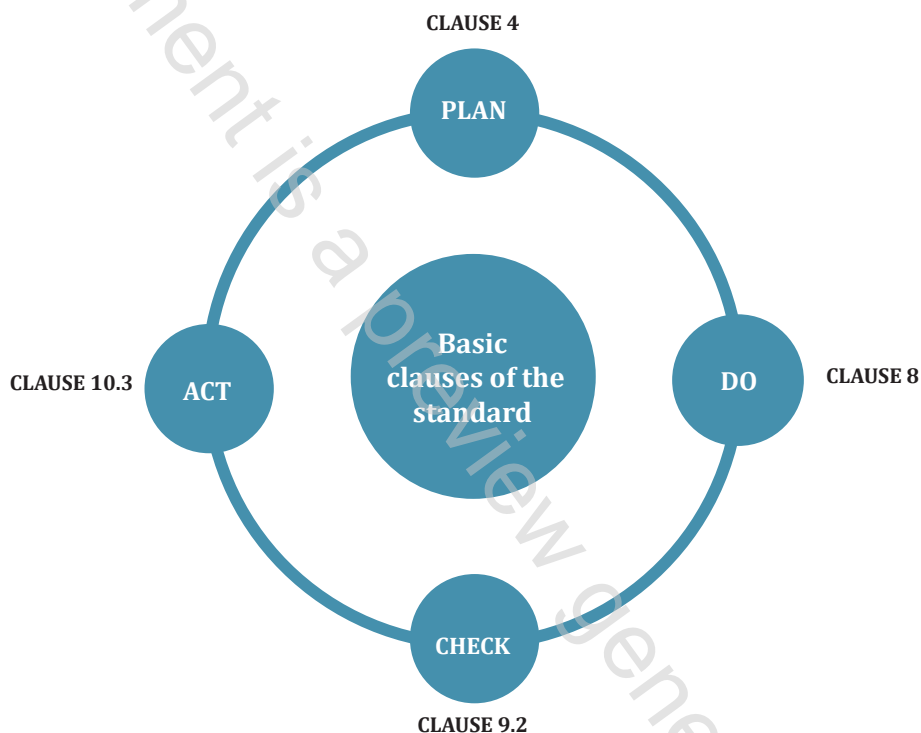


Figure 1 – Adapted PDCA (DS)

### Why these clauses?

Let us start with Clause 4. Everything in this standard – every risk assessment and every basic information – originates from this clause. 4.1 identifies whatever is on the horizon that may harm the organisation and 4.2 identifies the expectations of the surrounding world (including legal and other requirements), that we should consider if we want to survive as an organisation. Furthermore, these two subclauses establish the foundation for what is to be identified a "The intended outcome" of the management system. 4.3 establishes the manuscript for the management system, and 4.4 identifies the processes. This is by all accounts setting the scene for the management system.