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# Revision of SR 10

Public Consultation

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## 1. Initial Remarks

### 1.1 Introduction to IQNET Association

Established in 1990, IQNET Association is an international network of leading certification bodies. Currently the network consists of 38 Partner conformity assessment bodies (CABs), who share IQNET harmonized values, strategies and methodologies. IQNET's general focus is on conformity assessment services.

IQNET Association is based in Bern, Switzerland, from where the main common guidelines and joint initiatives are launched, managed and monitored for effectiveness. However, collectively, IQNET Partners work through more than 400 subsidiaries in 97 countries, employ more than 55'000 people (half of which are competent auditors) and have issued certificates virtually in every country in the world.

As referred to in its Mission, IQNET is committed to actively contribute to the development of effective, efficient and user-friendly conformity assessment processes ensuring credible output. The accomplishment of this institutional goal is promoted not only by active participation in the work of international organizations but also through cooperation with many other regional or local stakeholders and scheme owners, as well as engaging with the certification community around the world.

#### **IQNET. Building trust together.**

IQNET Association, through the cooperation of its Partners, harnesses vast amounts of information and expertise to develop vital knowledge for the benefit of the business sectors, standardization, and conformity assessment communities. Built on long time experience, IQNET Partners strictly adhere to the rules of the Association by maintaining and providing professional, reliable, and responsible services. Being 'Glocal' earns the trust of the business sector, thanks to our unique leadership and expertise combined with IQNET's global recognition.

The unique characteristics of IQNET Association (including but not limited to a strict Code of Conduct and Ethics, regular peer assessment activities and adherence to harmonized operational criteria and brand tools) support trust-based collaboration approaches and services that no other network has achieved.

Further information on IQNET Association may be found here ([About us](#)).

## 1.2 IQNET as a Scheme Owner

As stated, IQNET was founded with the objective of facilitating international trade and enhancing assurance worldwide, through promoting a credible, consistent and trustworthy conformity assessment infrastructure.

To achieve its purpose, IQNET focuses on several strategic pillars, including assuming a leadership role in the industry, making use of the potential and synergies of the network and addressing context challenges and market needs. This last imperative promotes moving forward in a sustainable way, being able to understand the business environment and endorse development initiatives in line with global threats and opportunities. This is the basic framework for understanding IQNET's role as a scheme owner.

Following its strategy, IQNET Association has been developing and making available conformity assessment related schemes for the last 25 years. With its profound knowledge of the market, permanently in contact with the most recent and supported by a "cache" of competence coming from its Partners, IQNET portfolio included different schemes over the years, notably:

- IBEC, an excellence-based evaluation model
- IQNet 9004, auditing beyond minimum requirements
- QWeb, evaluating good e-commerce practices
- Hello Hygiene, aimed to offer customer confidence during the pandemic

And more recently (these are the IQNET schemes still active):

- ACS (auditor Competence System), providing assurance and recognition of auditor competences
- IQNet Academy, focusing on compliance, adequacy and effectiveness of training activities
- IQNet SR 10, a management system certification scheme

## 1.3 IQNet SR 10 – 2015 Version

SR 10 is a publicly available specification that defines the requirements of a social responsibility management system which shall be complied with to satisfy an organization's stakeholders.

SR 10 considers the principles and core subjects of the international standard ISO 26000 Guidance on social responsibility and is aligned with relevant UN and ILO Conventions. While principles and guidance are largely available, SR 10 provides a practical pathway on how to implement them and what actions to take to ensure continual improvement in their overall performance, culture, operations, and processes.

SR 10 addresses the core subjects covered by harmonized and/or national legislations and facilitates the development of a system to ensure continual compliance with such requirements.

SR 10 condenses the social responsibility principles and recommendations into a verifiable format, based on the harmonized structure and the PDCA cycle of continual improvement. It is easily integrated with (and compatible to) other management system standards.

SR 10 integrates all organization's stakeholders. Without being limited to employees or supplier chain, SR 10 includes requirements to satisfy owners and shareholders, employees, customers, users and consumers, product suppliers, service providers and partners, governments, public authorities and regulatory bodies, community, society and social organizations, environment, and competitors.

SR 10 can be applied by all organizations, regardless of their size, complexity, or business scope.

## 2. SR 10 Revision Baseline

### 2.1 The need for a revision

The revision of the SR 10 Specification and certification rules is addressed through a specific working group within IQNET Association structure, called Social Compliance Technical Advisory Group, or SC TAG in short.

This working group has established the main goals to be achieved for the revision:

- Update the SR 10 specification and ensure alignment with UN SDG (Sustainable Development Goals), UNGP (UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights), PAS 24000 on social responsibility, and modern concepts and approaches to sustainable development. for a better positioning on the market.
- Review the SR 10 Rulebook, including the scheme requirements and the criteria for audit duration to promote market attractiveness, without compromising integrity and effectiveness.

Note: only SR 10 specification is subject to a public consultation process.

### 2.1 The revision's objectives

The work was conducted by a specific Task Force within the SC TAG, and aimed to pursue a series of objectives, as follows:

**Check for alignment with ISO Guide 82 (Guidelines for addressing sustainability in standards).**

Clear correspondence and alignment with ISO Guide 82 guidelines were noticed, notably when:

- Using the same general reference, ISO 26000;

- Having a systemic approach as the baseline for the management system requirements, notably through adopting ISO's Harmonized Structure or High-Level Structure but also being supported by improvement cycles;
- Adopting a comprehensive risk-based approach to management;
- Promoting a wide stakeholders focus.

However, some gaps were also identified and supported changes introduced during the revision process.

### **Identify correspondence and contribution to United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs).**

Based on IQNET internal analysis on organizational and scheme contribution to pursuing UN SDGs, a correspondence matrix was included in SR 10 as an annex.

### **Reinforce SR 10 positioning, as a path for sustainable development.**

SR 10 is a unique specification, clearly differentiating itself from other social responsibility standards and initiatives, through its certifiability, comprehensive set of sustainability-focused requirements, wide-range of stakeholders covered and versatility in being applied and integrated in the organizational systems of all types and sizes.

### **Inclusion of requirements related to new concerns, threats and opportunities.**

The advent of a global movement within the conformity assessment industry, notably focused on ESG (Environment, Social Responsibility and Governance) disclosure criteria; the publication of new standards applicable to social responsibility management systems (such as PAS 24000) and the disseminated debate on global issues (e.g. climate change, diversity and inclusion, modern slavery, migrations, ...) supported a SC TAG analysis on the technical content of SR 10 and on issues/requirements to add.

## **3. SR 10 – 2024 Version**

### **3.1 General Aspects**

Some changes are of a general nature and impacted the entire Specification. These include:

- Changing the document type, from “Standard” to “Specification” so as to better differentiate from the publications of standardization bodies and be more in line with a document supporting a proprietary certification scheme owned by IQNET Association.
- Changing the name of the Specification, from “IQNet SR 10” simply to “SR 10”. Reasoning is based on a recent rebranding process by IQNET Association (“IQNet” name format is no longer used by IQNET Association)

and to facilitate market communication by licensed certification bodies when providing the certification service and issuing own certificates.

- Reducing the focus on “social responsibility” so as to better demonstrate SR 10 positioning towards “Sustainable Development” and alignment with ISO Guide 82.
- Modernizing terminology and wording, eliminating typos and clarifying the meaning of sentences and/or requirements.

### 3.2 Specific content changes

Some changes are of a specific nature and address new or revised content. These include:

Clause	Description of the change
2. Normative and other references	Update normative references to include new standards (e.g. related to environment, occupational health and safety, governance, social responsibility and sustainability areas, as well for other, notably related to non-financial reporting standards.
3. Terms and Definitions	Inclusion of new definitions related to ‘Impact Materiality’ and “Climate Change”, as well as revised definitions for “Organization” and “Sustainability”.
4. Context of the organization	Not limiting but giving examples of internal and external issues to be considered by the organization when conducting a context analysis.
4.1 Understanding the organization and its context	Alignment with the ISO standards’ amendment on climate action changes.
4.2 Understanding the needs and expectations of stakeholders (interested parties)	Alignment with the ISO standards’ amendment on climate action changes.
4.5. Social Responsibility obligations	A new clause to accommodate the identification and compliance with legal requirements (see also changes to 6.4).
5.2 Social Responsibility Policy	Clarifying that, although the global scope of the Specification is wider (see 1) the requirement is for the establishment of a “Social Responsibility” Policy.
6. Planning	Adding additional supporting criteria for the identification of issues relevant to the management system, an evaluation of its relevance and materiality.
6.2 Identification and evaluation of issues	Inclusion of a note on sources of information for better understanding of what can be used for the identification and evaluation of issues.
6.3 Objectives and planning to achieve them	Inclusion of a note on the “precautionary approach” promoted by ISO Guide 82.
6.4 Planning of Changes	Previously “Legal and Other Requirements” which was relocated (see also changes to 4.5), allowing to include requirements applicable to when the organization addresses changes to its management system.

Clause	Description of the change
8. Operation and Stakeholders	Better alignment with ISO 26000 with respect to the grounds for discrimination.
8.3.1 Non-discrimination, diversity and inclusion	Including a reference to the mechanisms relevant to support an effective diversity and inclusion focus.
8.3.2 Right to privacy	Inclusion of 'Data protection' with respect to employees' personal data.
8.3.3 Forced Labour and child labour	Clarifying the need for special attention to forced labour includes subcontractors and labour providers as well.  Adding of a requirement related to the identification, evaluation (and action on) of modern slavery risks.
8.3.4 Health and Safety	Clarifying requirements applicable to "Fire safety" related infrastructure and equipment, as well as including new requirements to be applied to worker accommodations, and to the testing and inspection of infrastructure and equipment.
8.3.10 Respect for employee dignity	Clarifying that actions against human dignity include mental or physical coercion or abuse of any kind.
8.4.6 Quality and safety of goods and services	Inclusion of sustainability among the criteria for goods and services.
8.5.2 Execution and performance of contracts	Inclusion of sustainability among the criteria for selecting suppliers.
8.6.2	Clarifying the types of improper interference in the political arena.
8.8.1 Prevention of pollution, climate change and efficient use of resources	Further develop the content of the clause to include requirements related to sustainable consumption and climate change.
9. Performance evaluation 9.3 Grievance Mechanism	A new clause on complaint handling and on the existence of a grievance mechanism accessible to workers and external parties.
Annex A Guidance and recommendations A.0 General	Updating references to standards and other Specifications for which SR 10 compatibility is noted.
A.5. Communication and report	Clarification that SR 10 management system implementation supports ESG and sustainability information reporting.
Annex B International reference documents	Updating with new UN declarations/conventions, reviewing references to ILO conventions.
Annex C C1 correspondence with ISO26000	Updating correspondence due to introduction of new SR 10 clauses.
C2 Correspondence with UN SDGs	New annex to include a description of SR 10 correspondence and contribution to UN SDGs.



## 4. Public Consultation process

### 4.1 General Aspects

- The proposed SR 10:2024 Specification can be accessed here ([link to document](#)).
- Kindly use online submission tool to post and submit your comments ([to the commenting form](#)).
- Institutions/organizations are highly encouraged to collect comments internally, collate and consolidate comments in one submission.
- The deadline to post comments is on 30 September.

### 4.2 Terms and Conditions

Users of the online submission tool will need to follow the dispositions listed below:

- Identify themselves through name, profession, and country (mandatory information).
- Consult IQNET's Privacy Policy on the use of cookies and handling of personal data <https://www.iqnet-certification.com/en/iqnet-privacy-policy>.
- Be aware and committed to the purpose of the Public Consultation and on basic rules of participation, notably:
  - Commit to commenting in an appropriate manner, by using non-offensive words or phrases; without directly or indirectly criticizing the works of individuals, groups, organizations involved in this revision.
  - Confirm that the commenter possesses the appropriate knowledge about this field or any related field, which makes comments relevant and insightful.
  - Be aware that this public consultation doesn't offer any compensation, rewards, fees for my submitted comments, and that the participants will not receive any royalties or other fees when the document is published.
  - Understand that the contribution may be subject to a request for access to documents, when referred to in the comment and when considered relevant. Cooperation on this matter will be highly appreciated and is aimed at additionally supporting the relevance of the comments.

### 4.3 When Commenting

Users of the online submission tool have the possibility to comment on each clause of the specification using different tools, depending on the nature and scope of the comments:

#### **General Comments.**

Provide in the General Comments the considerations and implications for adapting and implementing specific clauses, including gaps identified that should be addressed by the IQNET Association Task Force in charge of this revision. Comments on the strengths or appropriateness of each clause will also be appreciated.

### **Suggested Amendments.**

Provide specific comments to enhance clarity, address technical/typography errors, and missing information, or specific suggestions of new or revised content be included in each clause.

## **5. Final Considerations**

### **5.1 Revision process**

This Public Consultation will be complemented by an internal consultation of all IQNET Partners, being or not being involved (as licensed Partners) in the provision of certification services based on SR 10 Specification.

All comments will be addressed by the IQNET SC TAG and considered amendments or changes introduced in the SR 10 Specification to finalize its 2024 version.

As the Scheme Owner, IQNET Association may consider not to follow a recommendation, address a specific comment, or introduce a suggested amendment, notably when not aligned with the purpose or intent; scope; positioning of the SR 10 Specification and Scheme or not feasible due to existing legal or regulatory frameworks.

Comments may also be disregarded in case of determination of irrelevance; confirmed duplication; use of inappropriate or offensive or discriminatory language; if comments are based in incorrect information or unfounded speculation; if are promoting extreme positions or being primarily aimed at supporting a particular cause, rather than providing constructive feedback on SR 10 Specification.

The SR 10 2024 Version will be presented to the IQNET Association Members.

### **5.2 Manifestation of appreciation**

IQNET believes that the success of this consultation will be a testament to the strength of our community and the shared commitment to promote sustainable development through management system certification. Internal and external involvement will be instrumental in shaping an adequate, complete, and effective SR 10 Specification.

As so, and in advance, IQNET expresses its gratitude to all who can participate in the SR 10 public consultation process, not only by providing us with critical insights, but also if considering challenging us to pursue new perspectives and solutions.