

Risk Management and ISO 31000 in Tunisia

Interview conducted for isotc262.org by
Dr. Frank Herdmann with

Feten Ammar, Tunisian delegate to TC 262



Feten Ammar is the secretary-general of the Tunisian mirror committee of ISO/TC 262. She is an auditor of Quality Management Systems. She has recently joined ISO/TC 262, and as an Engineer in the National Institute of Standardization and Industrial Propriety, she was asked to coordinate with different stakeholders of risk management in Tunisia and to help promoting a robust risk management culture. Feten was the head of the Tunisian delegation to TC 262 at its meeting in Amman in October 2016.

isotc262.org: *Feten you were representing Tunisia at the ISO/TC 262 meeting in October 2016 in Amman. Can you briefly introduce the INNORPI, the Institut National de la Normalisation de la Propriété Industrielle, your national standardization organization, please?*

Feten: Thank you Frank. As an engineer in the Tunisian standardization body, let me introduce the National Institute of Standardization and the Industrial Propriety (INNORPI) which was created in 1982. Under the supervision of the Ministry of Industry, it is endowed with civil personality and financial autonomy and it is managed by a Board representing different ministries. INNORPI has a mission to undertake all actions concerning standardization, the quality of products and services and the protection of industrial property. In this context, the Institute centralizes and coordinates all works, studies and surveys in these areas. It plays an informational and a training role. As a standardization body, in collaboration with relevant organizations, INNORPI establishes the general program of standards, creates the technical standardization committees, organizes their work and provides the secretariat. INNORPI also provides the national inquiry point on standards. The institute also certifies compliance with standards of products, services and management systems and manages national marks of conformity to standards. INNORPI represents Tunisia in the ISO, IEC and other international and regional standardization organizations (e.g. SMIIC, AIDMO, ARSO).

isotc262.org: *How long have you been mirroring the TC 262 work in INNORPI and have you been to meetings of the Technical Committee before?*

Feten: Recently, in September 2016, Tunisia joined ISO/TC 262 as P member, because we believe that risk management is so important, especially with the increased volatility of the business environment due to the effects of economic crises and the political and security situation surrounding Tunisia.

isotc262.org: *What is the impact of risk management and in particular ISO 31000 in Tunisia?*

Feten: If we go back a few years earlier, Tunisian firms faced mutations and changes posing many uncertainties. Since ISO 31000 was published as a national standard in 2010, more organizations started implementing a risk management system and consulting companies offered more products relating to this subject (e.g. training, assistance). Through the implementation of risk management, companies are better able to achieve their strategic objectives. Similarly, credit institutions have deployed considerable efforts to adopt a global approach to risk management.

isotc262.org: *Who are the key stakeholders of risk management in Tunisia?*

Feten: First of all, anyone who may be affected by an occurrence can be considered a risk stakeholder, whether they are directly involved or not, private or public. Currently, in Tunisia the sector most interested in risk management is finance and we can explain this by the existence of a regulatory and legal framework governing this activity. Indeed, the Central Bank of Tunisia (BCT) has established governance rules for credit institutions to ensure their sustainability. Among these rules, the BCT states that at these institutions, the board must have independent support and assistance structures. According to Circular No. 2011-06 of 20 May 2011 of the BCT, credit institutions should create a risk committee that assists the Board to fulfill its responsibilities for risk management, policies, monitoring and compliance.

isotc262.org: *What are the biggest obstacles for integrating risk management in all organizational activities for managers in Tunisia?*

Feten: In Tunisia, mainly financial companies that have a legal policy which oblige them to apply risk management have taken a global and structured approach to risk management. We can also find companies having risk management committees: mainly those that are large and have significant financial and human resources. Although risk management is a means that can be integrated into various business management processes independently of the size, the activity field and the available resources. So, companies must provide more attempts to have a comprehensive and structured approach in risk management especially as Tunisia will continue to face major challenges

including those connected with growth, employment and the financial system over the coming years. Also, the redesign of certain functions seems to be necessary within companies, in particular, functions of risk management and audit, which can ensure a more rigorous management of risks. However, it is essential to establish a risk culture that is well understood and well developed, so that it is supported by staff and enables effective integration within the organization.

isotc262.org: *ISO 31000 quickly became one of the bestselling and most well recognized standards in ISO. What do you think about the future of the standard and how will it change to adapt to new challenges?*

Feten: If we don't actively attack risks, they will actively attack us!!! Risk management is a good way to take appropriate actions to deal with risks. So, ISO 31000 is good guidance and offers support helping organizations to control not only the likelihood of an event occurring, but also the magnitude of its impact, regardless of the size and the field of activity.

isotc262.org: *Having been to the Amman Meeting, what was your experience and what advice can you give to interested parties in Tunisia who want to offer their input to the work of ISO/TC 262 and who should they address?*

Feten: We have a new mirror committee in Tunisia and we are looking for new members from diverse sectors. We are counting heavily on their contribution to benefit from their experience in the work of ISO/TC 262. So, I'm waiting for their relevant proposals.

isotc262.org: **Thank you very much!**

Feten: With pleasure ☺