

Risk Management and ISO 31000 in Sweden

Interview for isotc262.org with

Omar Harrami, Head of the Swedish delegation to TC 262



Omar Harrami is a graduate of the University of Lund in Fire Protection Engineering and since 2009 has worked as an executive officer at the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB), currently at the Office for Cyber Security and the Protection of Critical Infrastructure. Omar has been the national representative at EU Expert Meetings on Guidelines for National Risk Assessment and Mapping and guidelines for Risk Management Capability Assessment. Previously, Omar worked for Swedish Rescue Services Agency (SRSA) as Fire Protection Engineer and Risk Analyst. Omar is also a member of ISO/TC 292/WG 2 - Continuity and organizational resilience.

isotc262.org: Omar you were the head of the Swedish delegation to the ISO/TC 262 meeting in October 2016 in Amman. Can you briefly introduce the Swedish Standards Institute, your national standardization organization, and yourself please?

Omar: SIS, Swedish Standards Institute is a member-based, non-profit association specialized in national and international standards, with 1,700 member-organizations and 4,400 experts involved in standardization. More than 14,000 customers represent government agencies, publicly quoted corporations, small and midsize companies, as well as local authorities, county councils and other organizations. The national technical committee SIS/TK494 is the mirror-committee to ISO/TC 262 Risk management, ISO/TC 292 Security & resilience, CEN/TC 391 Societal and citizen security and CEN/TC 439 Private security services.

My experience in risk management is from different types of organizations and contexts for example fire safety, tunnel safety, land-use planning, civil protection and critical infrastructure. The last years I've been developing methods, regulation and guidelines on risk and vulnerability analysis for the public sector. Today I support private and public

organizations with guidelines on risk management and business continuity management in critical infrastructure.

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

Omar: In general, the use of risk management in Sweden has developed from being project and system specific, to be used also in a whole organization context. This development has taken place in most private organizations, and lately also in many organizations in the public sector. ISO 31000 has contributed to support organizations in coordinating and merging different risk management activities, by providing a common language and framework. The standard also has been proven to work as a bridge between different domains that over the years have developed specific methods, regulations and practices on risk analysis and risk management.

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

Omar: All types of organizations including private, public and non-profit organizations.

dfh: *What are the biggest obstacles for integrating risk management in all organizational activities for managers in Sweden?*

Omar: First, that top management doesn't recognize the long-term benefits of integrated risk management, which results in weak mandates or insufficient resources. Second, that the implementation of risk management is perceived as complicated and time-/resource-consuming by the organization. These factors are common when risk management is only conducted as an isolated activity or implemented for some parts of 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?

Omar: I think the standard can continue to be the natural reference for all other standards that address risk management issues. In order to do that the standard has to continue to be relevant for all types of organizations and contexts. Also, the development of the standard has to take into consideration the development in adjacent domains and management communities that also contribute to organizations' goal-fulfillment and resilience.

isotc262.org: What message do you want to give to the risk management community?

Omar: One of the future challenges for the community is to recognize that there is a need to consolidate and diversify at the same time. There does not need to be any contradiction

between continuing to develop both methods and standards that are generic and accessible, as well as specific risk standards and more complex methods.

isotc262.org: *What advice can you give to interested parties in Sweden who want to offer their input to the work of ISO/TC 262 and who should they address?*

Omar: Please contact Susanna Björk, the project leader for the national technical committee SIS/TK 494, at susanna.bjork@sis.se to get more information about how to join the committee and other possible ways to contribute to the future development of risk management standards.

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

Omar: Thank you, Frank!