

Experts Are Needed for US Technical Advisory Group to Technical Committee 258 Project, Programme, and Portfolio Management:

So Why Should You Participate?

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Upfront it should be noted that in other participating and observing countries the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) is referred to as the Mirror Committee. If you are reading this article as someone domiciled in one of those countries and after reading this article would like to participate in Technical Committee 258 (TC 258), you should contact the Standards Organization in your country of domicile or the Mirror Committee contact or the Secretariat of TC 258, Karl Best, at karl.best@pmi.org.

So what is the US TAG responsible for within the umbrella of ISO and in particular TC 258: Project, Programme, and Portfolio Management? The US TAG is the body under the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) that is responsible for the following items:

- determining the U.S. positions on various draft standards, draft documents, agenda items and ballots;
- submitting U.S. proposals for New Work Items and where applicable working drafts;
- providing adequate U.S. representation to ISO TC 258 meetings by designating the US head of delegation and members of delegations; and,
- nominating U.S. technical experts, known as Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) and representatives to serve on ISO working groups, study groups, and other ad hoc groups as approved by the TC or appointed by the TC Chair.

Membership to the US TAG is based on experience in the Project Management field and current US TAG interest category balance per the Operating Procedures of the US TAG. To be considered for membership, one should send an email to Lorna Scheel, administrator of the US at Lorna.Scheel@PMI.org. She will contact the interested party and set up a conference call to discuss the US TAG and what the two categories of being a member means: participating and observing. If the party is interested in being a member in either of those two categories of membership, Ms. Scheel will send an application to be completed by the requesting party. Once the application is completed, the application should be sent to Ms. Scheel and she will forward the application to the US TAG for consideration and input.

If the majority of the US TAG members vote to accept the requesting party as a new member, fees will be processed according to membership type selected. Ms. Scheel will explain the membership fees. Fees are used to support her position and travel as the

Administrator. Note, the fees do not completely cover her support, but do defray those costs.

So why should any SME want to participate?

The perspective that will be presented here is solely that of the author, but after several years including years, when ISO 21500 prepared by the Project Committee 236 (PC 236), the author has developed several perspectives based in fact as well as personal experience.

The connectivity to the broader profession is invaluable. The ability to hear how certain actions are interpreted throughout the global marketplace is something one does not have multiple forums to gain this knowledge with debate and discussion. One also gains industry knowledge of application and terminology. One may find certain standards are not applied throughout the broad spectrum of industry sectors or there are differences regionally in the industry, or that terminology is different.

Participation can provide one with the ability to re-affirm standards one is using, teaching, or providing to clients. The affirmation also takes the guise of re-affirming one's understanding of a selected topic, subject, or knowledge area. One can become very vested in the way something is applied in the industry one works in or with and failing to understand how it is approached throughout various organizations or regions can be limiting, if one moves, becomes a consultant, or instructor in the field.

Influence is another area that participation provides a participating SME. One may influence the US TAG or a given Working Group, Study Group, or Ad Hoc Group on a variety of topics. Seeing one's knowledge adopted, debated, or even denied makes one a better practitioner, consultant, or instructor in the field.

Networking also is a benefit to participation. Members participate for short or long periods of time dependent upon areas of interest, but your interactions with those members provides you growth in your professional network. This growth may be used for a variety purposes as any of your branches of your professional network may be used. Of course, one develops long-term friendships from such intense interactions on standards that should be put forth with quality and completeness.

One will interact with individuals whose names will be familiar to you as well as those who will be new, but who have worked in the field for several years. Each will bring something to the experience for you and the organization you represent.

Beyond the technical and networking benefits, one either learns how or enhances one's understanding of international negotiation, nuances of language and the issues surrounding translatability of idioms or phrases and acronyms that we take foregranted that everyone knows or should know.

One may also gain the satisfaction of communicating with the broader community of project managers. To transfer one's hard earned experience and learning in a manner that goes

beyond one-on-one mentoring is truly rewarding. Encountering individuals both online and in person who have questions about application of standards or how a standard was arrived broadens one understanding and allows for knowledge transfer.

There are many other benefits to membership and some of those go to the organization that sponsors one's participation or to those with whom one chooses to share the standards after they are complete. For the organizations which one represents, the involvement in the international market place and the understanding of practices globally may allow them to expand their market or allow for better development of proposals, just to name two potential benefits. The customers of the organization represented may also see benefits from the standards including deliverable acceptance and quality of the deliverables.

For government organizations, the ability to understand the global marketplace and practices in other government sectors can prove to be invaluable. Such understanding means they have accessed expert opinions and the consensus of multiple expert opinions that would potentially cost hundreds of thousands of dollars and be prohibited in any other forum.

After participating in ISO standards both with ISO TC 258 and other Technical Committees, I can say the benefits are significant, even when faced with the added effort and hours.

About the Author



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Rebecca (Becky) Winston, Esq., JD, PMI Fellow, is a former Chair of the board of the Project Management Institute (PMI®). An experienced expert on the subject of project management (PM) in the fields of research & development (R&D), energy, environmental restoration and national security, she is well known throughout the United States and globally as a leader in the PM professional world. Becky has over 30 years of experience in program and project management, primarily on programs funded by the US government. She is a graduate of the University of Nebraska's College of Law, Juris Doctorate (1980), in Lincoln, Nebraska and has a Bachelor's of Science (BS) degree in Education from Nebraska Wesleyan University. She is a licensed attorney in the states of Iowa and Nebraska, USA.

Active in PMI since 1993, Rebecca Winston helped pioneer PMI's Specific Interest Groups (SIGs) in the nineties, including the Project Earth and Government SIGs, and was a founder and first co-chair of the Women in Project Management SIG. She served two terms on the PMI board of directors as director at large, Secretary Treasurer, Vice Chair (for two years), and Chair (2002). She was elected a PMI Fellow in 2005. She has served as a reviewer of the Barrie Student paper for the PMI Educational Foundation for several years. She is also a member of the American Bar Association and the Association of Female Executives in the United States.

Ms. Winston periodically serves as an advisor to organizations such as the National Nuclear Security Administration (USA), U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) on topics ranging from Program and Project Management to project reviews, risk management and vulnerability assessments. She has also been serving on the Air Force Studies Board for five years for the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine.

Since 2008 she has also served in the capacity of Chair of the US Technical Advisory Group and Head of Delegation for Technical Committee 258: Project, Programme, and Portfolio Management, as well as serving on the various Working and Study Groups drafting guidance standards. She has extensive recent PM experience in the areas of alternative energy, national defense and security, and has worked closely with local, regional and national officials, including Congress and the Pentagon. She is also a global advisor to the PM World Journal and Library.

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