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Guidelines for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises on the implementation of the principles of collaborative business relationship management

Lignes directrices relatives à la mise en application des principes de management collaboratif d'une relation d'affaire, destinées aux micro-entreprises, petites et moyennes entreprises

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Foreword

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The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see www.iso.org/directives).

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This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 286, Collaborative business relationship management.

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Introduction

Using the principles given in ISO/TR 44000, Principles for successful collaborative business relationship management, these guidelines addresses how collaborative working initiatives by Micro, Small and Medium size Enterprises (MSME), together or in networks, can develop mutually beneficial engagements.

This document can assist the MSME to gain advantages through, for example:

- quick access to complementary resources, markets and new customers;
- innovation, research and development;
- economies of scale;
- sharing risk, costs and resources;
- accessing knowledge, expertise and competences;
- efficiency and stability.

The guidelines within this document can support any number of MSMEs collaborating with any number of larger organizations or each other.

Examples of possible collaborative working models include:

- collaborating one to one, where MSMEs develop collaborations with other MSMEs
- groups of MSMEs, where MSMEs build collaborative networks; and
- MSMEs or groups of MSMEs collaborating with larger organizations.

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Guidelines for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises on the implementation of the principles of collaborative business relationship management

1 Scope

This document provides guidance for MSMEs to use the 12 principles of collaborative business relationships given in ISO 44000 to improve their collaborative capability.

This standard is applicable to MSMEs regardless of what they do, where they are, their operating environment, culture, social capital and objectives.

NOTE The definition of an MSME varies widely, this document is intended for the use of any organization that identifies or is identified as an MSME.

2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO 44001, *Collaborative business relationship management systems — Requirements and framework*

3 Terms and definitions

ISO/DIS 44003

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For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in ISO 44001 apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <https://www.iso.org/obp>
- IEC Electropedia: available at <http://www.electropedia.org/>

4 Structure of this document

This document is based on the 12 principles of collaborative business relationships given in ISO 44000.

For each principle there are three main subclauses:

- | | |
|------|----------------------------------------------|
| What | a summary of the intent of the principle; |
| Why | an explanation of its relevance to the MSME; |
| How | guidance on its implementation. |

5 Implementation of the principles of collaborative business relationships management

5.1 Relationship management

5.1.1 What: summary of the intent

Relationship management is important to managing and sustaining collaborative relationships and underpins their success. This does not have to be a complex process but should be one which can be easily understood and communicated across the organization and to external parties.

5.1.2 Why: explanation of relevance

To be sustainable and deliver value over time, a collaborative relationship needs to have a continued focus on effective relationship management. Collaborative relationships that are based solely on personal relationships, although important, are vulnerable where personnel can change over time. A documented approach enables consistency and improvement over time. Furthermore, those joining the relationship have a clear perspective on the way it is to be managed and the expectations of the parties involved.

5.1.3 How: implementation guidance

5.1.3.1 Establishment of the Relationship Management Plan (RMP)

The owners and/or managers need to understand their market, their business environment and the expectations of their stakeholders. They should identify those areas of the external and internal environment in which the business seeks to achieve its objectives.

The starting point should be an identification and internal assessment of the current relationships within which the organization is engaged. This is likely to include; customers, any external partners, key suppliers and on occasions where there is a split responsibility across the organization (e.g. products and services) internal coordination.

If it is decided that the collaborative approach is appropriate, the owners and/or managers should establish an RMP which captures the desired business approach to collaboration. Developing an RMP can be an iterative process.

The RMP should consider:

- roles and responsibilities;
- resources;
- objectives and benefits;
- initial risks.

5.1.3.2 Relationship segmentation

Evaluate the relative importance of external relationships including current, future and those approaching your company. In developing an approach, it is necessary to understand where collaboration could be an advantage and where a structured approach to building a sustainable relationship and promoting the appropriate behaviours would occur. Each business opportunity will be different in terms of the context and the parties involved and whether this is an existing or new activity.

5.1.3.3 Developing and managing the relationship

The collaborative partners should establish the right environment to support collaborative working, including contractual frameworks or agreements, roles and responsibilities. They should establish a joint management team.

Each collaborative partner should identify the Senior Executive Responsible (SER), or their appointed representative to support the joint programme and define its role, responsibility and authority to act as a joint management team.

The joint management team should:

- a) review the joint objectives, including continual value creation;
- b) establish effective measurements that are monitored through an agreed reporting process;
- c) identify any additional objectives that could mutually benefit the collaboration;
- d) define the primary roles and responsibilities for the team members;
- e) identify what information is required to meet the objectives together with any known interdependencies; and
- f) identify what resources, equipment, property and assets will be used from each.
- g) ensure ongoing management of activities in accordance with objectives and governance. The activity could include:
 - maintaining alignment and engagement;
 - overseeing initiatives;
 - issue monitoring and resolution;
 - risk monitoring and mitigation; and
 - negotiation and management of change.

NOTE The collaborative partners could benefit from the establishment of a Joint Relationship Management Plan incorporating the above.

5.2 Visions and values

5.2.1 What: summary of the intent

The degree of alignment of vision and values provides guidance to stakeholders on the future direction, culture, ethics and behaviours to support effective collaboration.

5.2.2 Why: explanation of relevance

As each party considers the value of a collaborative relationship, the profile of the organization and potential compatibility with partners will be a factor in establishing and aligning their capabilities and joint performance.

5.2.3 How: implementation guidance

5.2.3.1 Defining what is important to your organization

The owners and/or managers of MSMEs need to have clarity and alignment on their vision and values when engaging with others. The nature of the relationship between partner organizations will be influenced by each party's perceptions of the other in terms of the level of effective engagement,

perceived risks and opportunities created through a more integrated relationship. This in turn is likely to have a direct impact on the behaviours of the individuals.

5.2.3.2 Assessing and maintaining alignment

The vision and value of an organization will be a factor in developing alignment and the behaviours to work together effectively.

In a collaborative model there should be consideration as to the ability of two or more organizations to work together and the behaviours necessary to facilitate success. When working together it is often the case that day to day pressures will challenge what is important to each partner. As such it is important to regularly ensure that the values of each partner are not being compromised. As particular engagements reach their conclusion it is important to assess whether the way in which each party's values have been respected lays the foundation for further engagement.

5.3 Business objectives

5.3.1 What: summary of the intent

Objectives that are clear and commonly understood across the organization help engender a more efficient focus at all levels, ensuring that the collaboration's objectives can be achieved through the relationship to support continued effective engagement at all levels and sustained mutual benefit.

5.3.2 Why: explanation of relevance

Chances of success are improved when drivers for collaboration support the business objectives of each organization. Such approaches will require effort and resources to achieve the desired goals and outcomes.

5.3.3 How: implementation guidance

5.3.3.1 Establishing objectives

The owners and/or managers should identify the objectives of each specific collaborative business relationship. For each of them they should define and prioritize the desired outcomes and evaluate the significant benefits and the risks that could arise. Defining the objectives for the operation and ensuring these are communicated across the organization is crucial particularly where it can be advantageous to adopt a collaborative approach to achieve them.

5.3.3.2 Define a business case

Having defined what are the opportunities to be developed the owners and/or managers should create a strategy and business case for each of them. This document should clearly identify the opportunity, objectives, value, risks, resources and partners for the potential collaborative relationship. The main results of this assessment for any specific opportunity should be incorporated into the RMP.

5.3.3.3 Aligning objectives for specific relationships

During the engagement process it is important to address the objectives of each party and ensure that whilst these may be different they are aligned and not in conflict. Ensuring that each partner's objectives can be achieved through the relationship will support continued effective engagement at both organizational and individual levels to sustain mutual benefit.

5.3.3.4 Engagement process

5.3.3.5 Identification of operational objectives and value

The owners and/or managers should assess their overall business objectives and the added value that a collaborative approach could support. A value analysis approach will help to focus development and resources towards area which can deliver maximum value. See Table A.1 for some examples of benefits to be gained from collaborative working.

5.3.3.6 Assessment of joint objectives

The owners and/or managers should identify where collaborative working can deliver shared benefits and understand which of each partner's objectives overlap and common goals can be achieved. The parties should jointly follow these steps:

- Each party should identify their own objectives;
- The rationale behind them should be explained to the other party;
- Joint objectives should be established;
- Ensure other individual objectives are compatible.

5.3.3.7 Managing the objectives

Ensuring that each partner's objectives are being achieved through the relationship will support the right behaviours and continued effective engagement at both organizational and individual levels to sustain mutual benefit. Throughout the relationship regular reviews should assess the performance and behaviours.

5.4 Collaborative leadership

5.4.1 What: summary of the intent

Appointing a senior person who is empowered and with the appropriate skills responsible for collaborative business relationships ensures support for the collaboration.

5.4.2 Why: explanation of relevance

A clear commitment to the collaborative business relationship from the owners/ managers, leading by example and forging alignment to a shared vision, is essential to successful implementation. Visible participation by a senior person provides both focus and confidence for those directly involved in any collaboration, which in turn fosters the appropriate behaviours.

5.4.3 How: implementation guidance

5.4.3.1 SER role

The SER role is to ensure that the operating processes are effective and that the practical application follows these. They provide high level support in terms of oversight management and resource allocation. Their visible participation provides both focus and confidence for those directly involved in any collaboration which in turn fosters the appropriate behaviours at all levels. The owners and/or managers should appoint an SER to drive the collaborative processes and establish their role, responsibility and authority. In a small company the SER could be the owner itself. See 5.6.3 for guidance on the experience, skills and competencies that may be appropriate to this role.