ASSE is the administrator of the U.S. Technical Advisory Group (TAG) to ANSI for the proposed International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 45001 Occupational Health and Management Systems Standard under the ISO Project Committee (PC) 283. The TAG advises ANSI on voting positions and submits the technical and professional comments addressing the proposed standard. At the time this issue went to press, the final draft international standard (FDIS) ballot for ISO 45001 was underway. We asked Vic Toy, CSP, CIH, and Kathy A. Seabrook, CSP, CFIOSH, EurOSHM, chair and vice chair of the TAG, respectively, to share their views on the development and importance of this highly anticipated global standard.

**PS: Why is diversity of thought important in the development of a global standard such as ISO 45001?**

**Kathy:** Diversity of thought is important because there are so many stakeholders that need to come together. On our TAG, we have more than 80 different stakeholders who are representatives of labor, business, nongovernment organizations, professional bodies and government. Not only do we have different perspectives, but we do not necessarily agree.

For example, the labor representatives want to ensure that the labor perspective, or that the participation or consultation of workers is included in a standard. The business perspective wants to make sure there are certain criteria determining who needs to be involved, their roles and responsibilities, policy requirements, and requirements regarding implementation of occupational health and safety management systems.

Everyone has to come together because there are a lot of differences relative to what the standard should look like. That is why diversity of thought is important, because the key word here is consensus. We always joke about consensus: If everybody walks away feeling that they did not get everything they wanted, that probably means you have consensus. What consensus means is it is not actually unanimous, but rather that two-thirds of the majority agree.

**PS: Can you give a high-level overview of the process used to review the comments regarding what should go into an occupational health and safety management system?**

**Vic:** As you might imagine, there are diverse thoughts regarding the best ways to manage occupational health and safety risks. A lot of this is predicated on experience, culture and the needs of the workplace in a variety of environments around the world. We literally had tens of thousands of comments over the past 4 years to digest and address in reaching a consensus standard for an ISO occupational health and safety management system. So, the process, one that we could all follow, is extremely important especially when working with more than 75 countries across six continents and more than a dozen key liaison organizations such as ILO.

Let me start with how it works with the TAG that represents U.S. interests under the auspices of ANSI. ASSE serves as the American administrator for the TAG that has more than 80 members of its own with representation from all interest groups. Like other countries and liaison organizations, this committee submits comments to the ISO secretariat for consideration by the international committee known as PC 283. Experts from each country and liaison organization work together to address comments that shape the development of the standard. Several drafts were produced over the course of the process beginning with a working draft up through the final product. All ISO member countries, which number around 129, are then balloted on the approval of the standard.

**PS: How does a large group such as the ISO PC 283 resolve conflict in order to come to consensus?**

**Vic:** Different points of view and perspectives on what we should see in a global OH&MS vary, but ultimately, it is based on the same core principles adapted from the plan-do-check-act model leading to integrated processes and continuous improvement. There are more than 40 OH&MS standards around the world including the American ANSI/ASSE Z10, as well as the Canadian Z1000 standards. You can imagine that these standards serve

Vic Toy, CSP, CIH, is president and principal consultant for Insyst OH&S, a consulting company specializing in safety and health management systems following more than 30 years in industry and government sectors, most recently with IBM as the firm’s leader in global H&S transformation, strategy and policy development. He has worked with various ASSE committees including his current post as Vice Chair of the ANSI/ASSE Z10 Committee on Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems.

Kathy A. Seabrook, CSP, CFIOSH, EurOSHM, is president and founder of Global Solutions Inc., a global EHS management consultancy working with domestic and multinational companies. Seabrook is the current chair of the Center for Safety and Health Sustainability and served on the ANSI/ASSE Z10 Committee, as well as in many ASSE leadership roles at every level, from chapter, region and practice specialty, to council and board of directors. Seabrook was the 2013-14 ASSE President and in 2016, she received the ASSE Fellow recognition, the Society’s highest honor.
as a starting point for many of the positions taken by PC 283 committee members. It is not so much conflict as it is differences of opinion based on cultural differences, as well as work settings, national standards and needs.

During the international PC 283 meetings, time is provided for entities to speak to their concerns and issues. Often, we are able to work through these issues to address different thoughts and opinions about requirements contained in the standard. That said, there are times when suggestions are not accepted, which happens for all committee participants. It is important to note that consensus is not unanimity but agreement with a two thirds majority. There is also dialogue between participants on compromises acceptable to the full committee. Needless to say, there is plenty of discussion among members of the committee to resolve differences.

Kathy: While it is important to be technically adept as a delegate to the PC, it is really important to be a relationship and consensus builder. The U.S. delegates have been very good at this. Not only do we understand the technical aspects of the standard, but we also understand how to interpret them, both from a labor perspective as well as a business perspective. And we have worked very hard to build relationships with the other delegates from around the world.

So, when we come upon a scenario, there is some trust between us so that we can sit down and say, “This is why we think it should be this way,” “Well, we think the wording should be that way,” and it could be perceived as a conflict. And while there might be differences of opinion on something, you can talk through and figure out what the actual outcome is that you are trying to get to, and you can understand what the concerns are based on: perhaps cultural interpretation or language differences.

There are a lot of offline discussions, a lot of dialogue and a lot of debate. And sometimes it was very strong debating, but at the end of the day, we did leave with some consensus in mind that this FDIS is the final document.

There is no simple answer. It is a fine art—I think it is more an art as opposed to a science, and this science is really understanding the technical side. It is really all about the people, and how they build and gain trust in relationships.

**PS: And understand each other’s points of view I would imagine.**

Kathy: That is the key and that is when the trust comes in, because if you trust somebody you are going to be willing to listen. Negotiation goes both ways. The end goal is to trust that there will be some sort of win-win.

“While it is important to be technically adept as a delegate to the PC, it is really important to be a relationship and consensus builder.” —Kathy A. Seabrook

**PS: What is the ultimate goal of developing an international standard such as ISO 45001?**

Vic: There is the notion of the intended outcome of an OHSMS that is stated in the standard, which is to prevent injuries and ill health in addition to providing a safe workplace. However, I see this a bit more broadly on how an organization manages its risks in a way to not only meet safety and health objectives, but also those of the organization itself.

When we started the development of the standard in 2013, the proposal for a new work item for an ISO standard referenced a study by ILO indicating 2.2 million work-related fatalities annually around the world. This 2005 study was reaffirmed in 2013 as 2.3 million work-related fatalities each year. A more recent study of the same data set shows an increase to 2.78 million fatalities a year. Clearly, we need to do better.

It is the goal of this standard to do just that, to adopt a methodology by which or through which an organization can better manage its occupational health and safety risks and improve its overall performance.

Kathy: It is really to have a standard that every country and every organization around the world is working toward. So, everyone understands that the end game is a management system that has these requirements, which are outlined in 45001.

The ultimate goal of developing ISO 45001 is to have one standard that is recognized globally around the management of safety and health risks. This goal applies across countries, across industry sectors, across the supply chain, across contractors and any other kinds of procurement. So, every entity within the whole business supply chain understands the role and the responsibility within its particular organization for managing safety and health through a management system.

The other piece is to create safe and healthy workplaces around the world. We all share that goal.

**PS: Can you explain why Z10 might still be relevant for some organizations after ISO 45001 is published?**

Vic: This is a great question, as the goal for ISO 45001 was to put forth a single global standard for an occupational health and safety management system. OHSAS 18001 has been used by many organizations around the world and also served as a starting text in the development of ISO 45001. From the beginning, the British Standards Institute, which put forth the proposal for the ISO standard, stated that one of the outcomes for producing a global standard was to replace 18001, which will likely take place over a 3-year period after publication of the ISO standard.

Each country or entity will make an independent decision on sunsetting its own standard. In the case of the U.S., we have decided that there are many advanced principles on safety and health risk management that we believe can further assist organizations in managing those risks.

That said, this is not necessarily a case of choosing between ISO 45001 or Z10. The Z10 committee is working hard to go one step beyond the international standard for risk management practices that can work particularly well for the U.S. in addition to what you find in 45001.

Kathy: I am part of the Z10 committee, and Vic is the vice chair of Z10. The committee will determine the outcome of what Z10 is going to look like, but what I am going to share with
you is based on our last meeting: what that outcome actually looks like right now. The caveat is that there have been no final decisions made, so this could change.

But the intent right now with the Z10 committee is that we feel that there is need for more guidance, and we are really looking at an American perspective on an occupational health and safety management system. In the U.S., we understand that there are a lot of proactive, forward-thinking views on how safety and health should be managed.

ISO 45001 represents a global consensus. In the U.S., the consensus is that we should be talking about topics like system thinking. We should be talking about things like human and operational performance and how that ties in with organizational change, and we should be talking about how managing safety and health integrates with commercial excellence.

With Z10, we do not want to lose these important methodologies for managing safety and health, such as those related to preventing fatalities and serious injuries. We really believe these concepts must be part of a management system, and we feel Z10 can do that.

**PS: What are some of the key differences between Z10 and ISO 45001 that might give organizations a reason to choose Z10 instead of ISO 45001, or vice versa?**

**Vic:** We know, based on sales of the standard since its introduction in 2005, that organizations love ANSI/ASSE Z10 and many have adopted it. It is a very readable standard with great interpretations on the requirements as well as some implementation guidance. The Z10 committee is looking to add more best practices and concepts for managing risks. Organizations such as SMEs (small and medium-size enterprises) may find that they may want to start with 45001 or even the OSHA safety and health management program guidelines or go straight to ANSI/ASSE Z10. As they progress in managing risks, Z10 can offer advanced concepts. Organizations that currently follow Z10 as their model for an OHSMS can be assured that it will continue to deliver high value and work well with 45001.

**Kathy:** It is all predicated upon what the organization’s purpose is, for example, whether it is looking to go for registration or certification. Again, the committee has not made the decision as to what Z10 will look like in the future.

If the committee makes the decision that it is going to be a standard by which an organization can certify to, then a company, typically a U.S.-based company, might choose to implement Z10 because it is aligned with U.S. government regulations, and aligned with the way American businesses operate.

Those organizations not looking at certification may consider 45001 and Z10, and they will take the best of both worlds. Z10 will have some amazing facets, likely including a separate guidance document. In 45001, you have a global document, which means it is a level playing field no matter where you are in the world.

**PS: Some consider ISO 45001 the most significant safety and health standard in the past 50 years. Why will this standard have such a great impact on both the profession and on business outcomes?**

**Vic:** This comes back to the concept of risk management, which all organizations do to meet growth and sustainability objectives. First, this standard will offer the first of its kind in a global consensus model for managing health and safety risks. Whether you are a global organization or have a global reach in your supply chain, 45001 offers a standardized way of managing health and safety risks regardless of country location. In other words, it becomes a minimum standard of practice.

However, I think what is key is how it works within an organization integrating with overall processes, goals and objectives. In addition, everyone in the organization has a role, a responsibility and a part to play in the management system. So, as you can see, one of the significant aspects of this standard is to have health and safety as a part of everyone’s role in an integrated, cohesive way for managing risks. If done right, this means that the OSH professional continues to advise on high-level practices and risk management techniques rather than focusing on the operational execution of programs, which then becomes part of everyone’s role.

**Kathy:** It is global consensus on how safety and health should be managed, period. Global consensus is the key. That means no matter where you are in the world, these are the requirements that have been agreed on. For example, if you want to manage through a voluntary management system process, such as 45001, these are the requirements that you must meet to manage safety. The intended outcome is safe and healthy workplaces and the reduction of injuries and ill health. At the end of the day, it is global consensus that this is the best way to do it. That is why it is so significant.

What makes this the most important standard in 50 years is the fact that it will impact safe and healthy workplaces everywhere in the world, and there will be this commonality of what actually looks like. It is exciting, "Whether you are a global organization or have a global reach in your supply chain, 45001 offers a standardized way of managing health and safety risks regardless of country location."

— Vic Toy