

Sustainable FM via the ISO 41000 series

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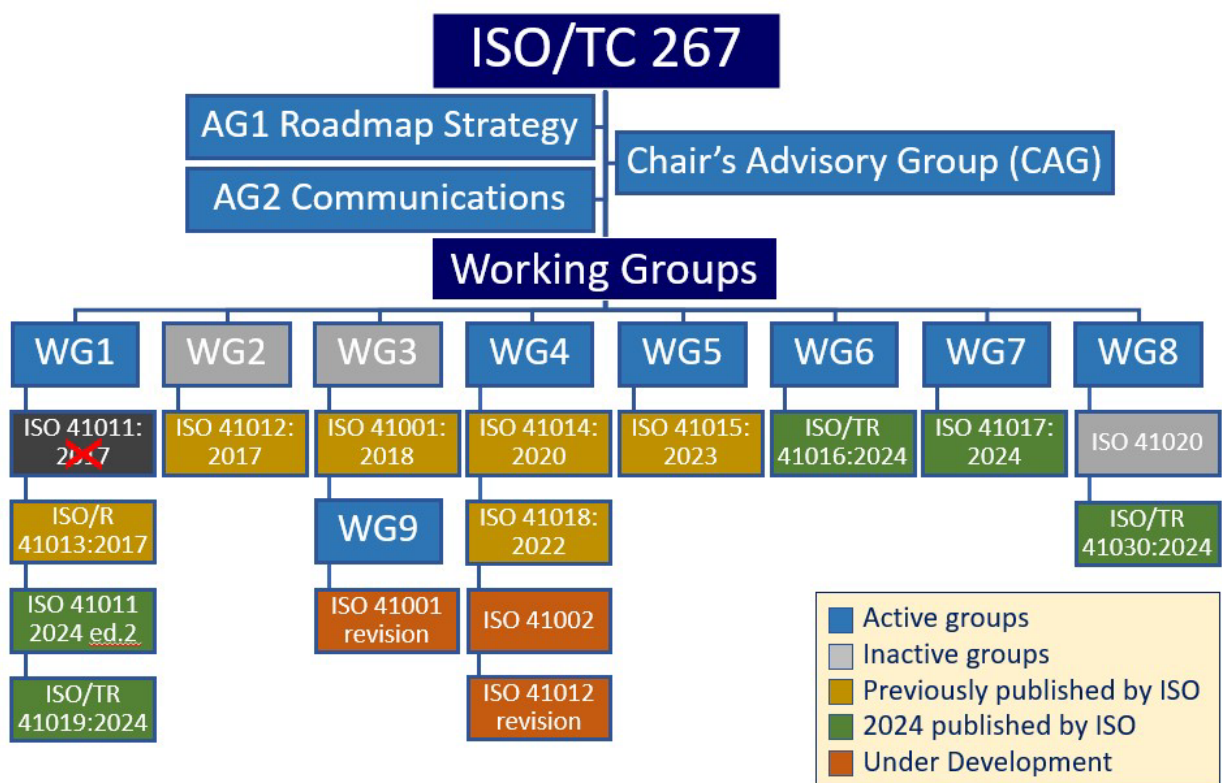
“**Sustainable FM**” is for anyone interested in making a difference to their community’s quality of life.

1. The role of standards

ISO provides a platform for developing practical tools through common understanding and cooperation with all stakeholders – motto: “*great things happen when the world agrees*”. ISO has committed to supporting the United Nations’ 2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Specifically, the ISO is actively identifying which ISO standards make the most significant contribution to our global challenges via alignment with the SDGs, along with guidance on improved standards.

ISO/TC 267 is the Technical Committee responsible for the development and delivery the ISO 41000 series of Facility Management (FM) standards. Today (5 July 2024) ISO/TC 267, comprises 53 countries (35 participating members and 18 observing members) including Australia as a founding member.

ISO/TC 267 maintains multiple Advisory and Working Groups (AGs and WGs) comprised of committed volunteers from across the globe. In addition, it has 17 liaisons, including with ISO/TC 251 for the ISO 55000 series of asset management standards, and ISO/PC 343 for ISO 59000 series of sustainable development goals (SDGs) management standards.



Source: [ISO/TC 267 - Facility management](#) as at 20 August 2024

ISO/TC 267 currently has now published 11 international FM standards and reports (with one withdrawn, plus a ISO 41001 climate change amendment) including for four (4) published so far in 2024 including:

- [ISO/TR 41019:2024](#) “*Facility Management’s role in sustainability, resilience and adaptability*”, published on 26 June 2024.

In addition, there are three (3) more publications (including the ISO 41001 edition 2 revision) currently under development.

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2. FM defined

Facilities Management / Facility Management / FM has been defined as an "organizational function which integrates people, place and process within the built environment with the purpose of improving the quality of life of people and the productivity of the core business" (ISO 41011:2024, unchanged since the 1st edition in 2017, locally refer to as [AS ISO 41011:2019](#)).

Other defined terms include 'Demand Organization' defined as the: "entity which has a need and the authority to incur costs to have requirements met", and the 'FM organization' as an "entity responsible for facility management". (ISO 41011:2024)

The development of ISO/TR 41019:2024 "FM's role in sustainability, resilience and adaptability" represents a seminal piece of work. This Technical Report (TR), makes the case for FM being well placed for meeting our global challenges, an providing practical solutions.

Australia took the lead on the delivery of this defining project for "Sustainable FM" in the pursuit of a more productive, sustainable and liveable Built Environment for all.

3. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

In 2015 the United Nations (UN) General Assembly formally adopted "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" (also referred to as "Agenda 2030") a plan for achieving a better future for all.

Agenda 2030 has at its heart the 17 SDGs and associated 169 targets and 248 indicators, covering five (5) main themes: humankind, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership.



The SDGs were developed for governments, primarily to be actionable by countries, not investors and businesses. With the SDGs addressing an array of global challenges it can seem difficult to translate them into the core business strategy and actions, but FM has a major role to play.

4. ISO/TR 41019:2024 published

In 2021, ISO/TC 267's SDG Task Group (SDGTG) found that FM aligns with 14 of the 17 SDGs (being SDGs 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16).

ISO/TR 41019:2024 represents the tireless work of ISO/TC 267's Working Group 1 (WG1) during 2022-23 to review hundreds of reference materials and industry consultations to confirm that FM has the potential to indirectly contribute to all or most of the 17 SDGs, and in collaboration with other built environment professions, significantly influence on: SDGs 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12 and 16.

The resulting technical report, ISO/TR 41019:2024, specifically provides a broad societal context for FM to inspire organizations that wish to:

- establish and improve a sustainable integrated FM system;
- embrace the wide-ranging and positive contribution that FM makes in managing the built environment; and
- support the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

ISO/TR 41019:2024 is intended to provide concise and practical guidance for busy Built Environment professionals and stakeholders on FM practices and contributions on some big issues, such as climate change, net zero emissions and the circular economy, etc. Additionally, the annexures provide SDG alignment matrix, a 10-step process, practical examples, links to related standards and a bibliography of 96 resources for more details.

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5. Sustainability, Resilience and Adaptability

The “**sustainable development**” concept officially had its origins within the 1987 Brundtland Report, but long before that the idea of living in balance with nature and the logic of long-term lifestyle and business practices were well-understood.

- **Sustainability**, simply put, meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Increased attention on sustainability, has led to more focus on “Sustainable FM” practices, to date a major challenge has been an apparent lack of comprehensive resilience strategies. This is despite the widespread changes, potential disruptions, and acknowledged interdependencies of social, economic and environmental challenges that the communities now face. These combine to create risks, complexities and opportunities for the planning, delivery and management of our built environment.
- **Resilience** is the capacity for systems to cope with a hazardous event, trend or disruption, could be addressed by involving more pre-emptive design.
- **Adaptation** implies activities of a retroactive nature.

Beyond embracing sustainability, and understanding reliance, FM will be more called upon to maintain facilities, services and productivity via risk mitigation strategies and adaptation to changed circumstances. Adapting to climate-induced hazards can require changes in physical and functional aspects of facilities, this may go beyond adjusting existing practices including new approaches to decision-making on facility planning integrate resilience and adaptation actions to advance sustainable development for both new developments and existing facilities.

6. Towards Sustainable FM

FM is central to sustainable development, and underpins aspects of economic growth and delivers the services that are essential to supporting the productivity of the core business and improving the quality of life of people. At the same time, an unsustainable, poorly planned, delivered and maintained built environment can have disastrous effects on organizations, communities, and individuals.

Sustainable FM can also contribute to mitigating risks, increasing resilience, integrating technologies, generating decent jobs, addressing inequalities and delivering on broader sustainability objectives. For example, accepting SDG 13 climate change FM could, in conjunction with a range of other initiatives, contribute to significant carbon dioxide (CO₂) emission savings by:

- Extending the life cycle of facilities.
- Improving facility design and construction.
- Increasing reuse and recycling rates.

7. Conclusions

The world has no shortage of global challenges, and it is apparent that “business as usual” is no longer an option. The ISO has committed to align standards with the UN’s SDGs, refer ISO/UNDP PAS 53001:2024.

To support Demand Organizations, and ultimately equip our community, to face an uncertain future it is imperative that FM embeds the principles of sustainability, resilience and adaptability into its systems and services for the managing the Built Environment.

FM practitioners will increasingly find themselves on the frontlines of the risks associated with climate change in terms of sustainability, resilience and adaptability of the built environment. This will involve the direct and indirect impacts on assets, people, and services contributing to our quality of life.

ISO/TC 267 has responded by identifying the alignment of the ISO 41000 series of FM standards, as published and under development, with the UN’s 2030 Agenda with the UN’s 17 SDGs and associated targets and indicators to provide an overarching framework for FM to better address a range of global challenges.

ISO/TR 41019:2024 equips Built Environment professionals to advance the concept of “**Sustainable FM**”.