



The Global ESG Issue

**Perspectives from IFMA Experts
Around the World**



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STANDARDS FOR SUSTAINABLE FM: THE ISO 41000 SERIES

by Stephen Ballesty, FRICS, FAIQS, IFMA Fellow, CFM, CQS, ICECA

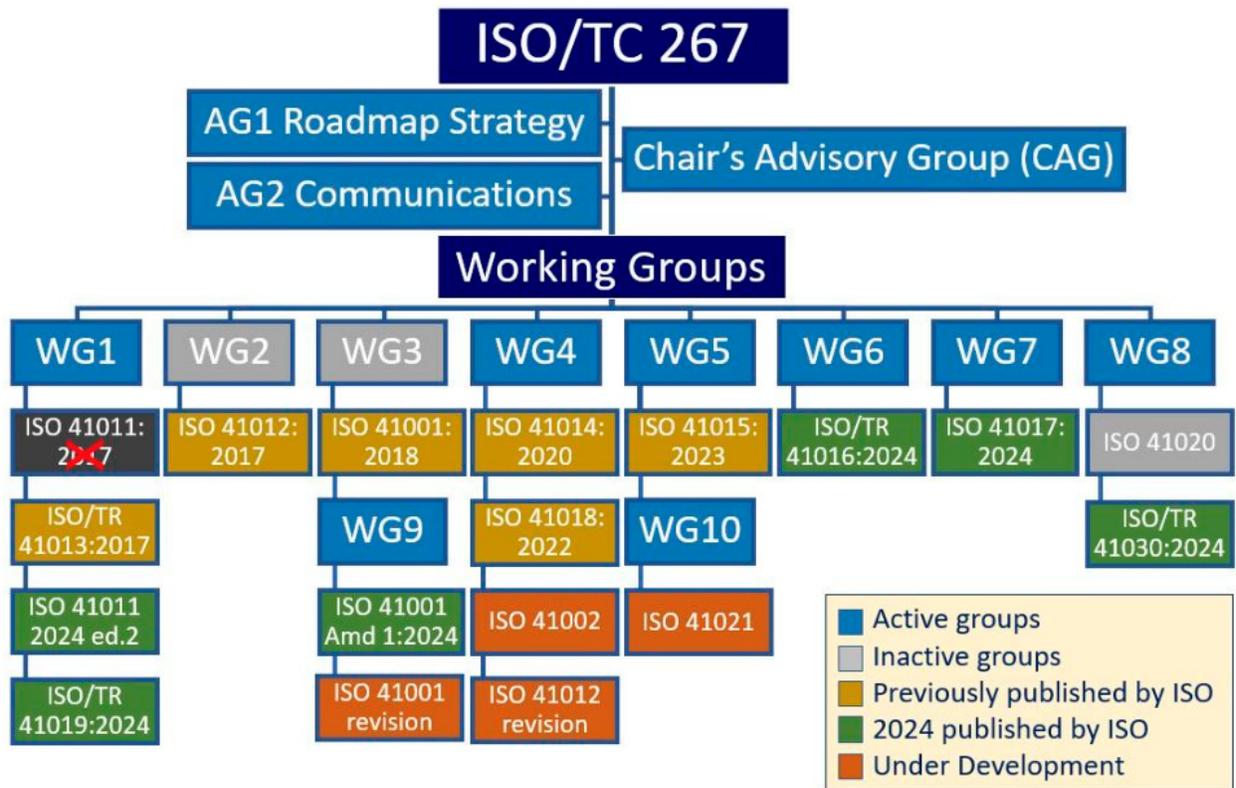
Facilities Management/Facility Management/ FM has been defined as an “*organizational function which integrates people, place and process within the built environment with the purpose of improving the quality of life of people and the productivity of the core business*” (ISO 41011:2024, this definition has remained unchanged since the 1st edition in 2017). 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 and 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.

ISO provides a platform for developing practical tools through common understanding and cooperation with all stakeholders. 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. Currently ISO/TC 267, comprises 53 countries (36 participating members and 17 observing members). ISO/TC 267 maintains multiple Advisory and Working Groups (AGs and WGs) comprised of committed volunteers from across the globe. In addition, it has 19 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](#) publications status as at 2025-08-12

ISO/TC 267 currently has 12 international FM standards and reports published (with one withdrawn, including the ISO 41001 climate change amendment). Six (6) were published in 2024 including:

- [ISO/TR 41019:2024](#) "Facility Management's role in sustainability, resilience and adaptability", published on 26 June 2024, and identically adopted by Standards Australia in January 2025.

In addition, there are four (4) more publications (including the ISO 41001 revision) currently under development. ISO 41001:2018 specifies the requirements for FM systems when an organization:

- Needs to demonstrate effective and efficient delivery of FM that supports the objectives of the Demand Organization;
- Aims to consistently meet the needs of interested parties and applicable requirements; and
- Aims to be sustainable in a globally-competitive environment.

ISO 41001:2018 is non-sector specific and intended to be applicable to all organizations, or parts thereof, whether public or private sector, and regardless of the type, size and nature of the organization or geographical location. ISO 41001:2018 management systems standard (MSS) provides a basis for the certification of FM systems. This MSS is currently under review and the 2nd edition could be issued in 2025/26.

Conformity with ISO 41001 can be demonstrated by any organization via:

- First-party self-determination and self-declaration, i.e. self-certifying supported by your organization formally aligning and documenting its processes with reference to the ISO 41000 series of FM standards.
- Second-party audits are managed externally or internally by either the Demand Organization or FM Organization auditing the service providers and suppliers.
- Third-party audits are external and conducted by a certification body. A third-party audit is required for CASCO accredited certification.

All three (3) approaches can claim to provide “certification”, but a third-party audit is required for ISO accredited certification.



Source: Racetrack diagram adapted from ISO 41001:2018

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.

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).



Source: [ISO/TC 267 - Facility Management publications status as at 2025-08-12](#)



Source: United Nations <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

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. 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.

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

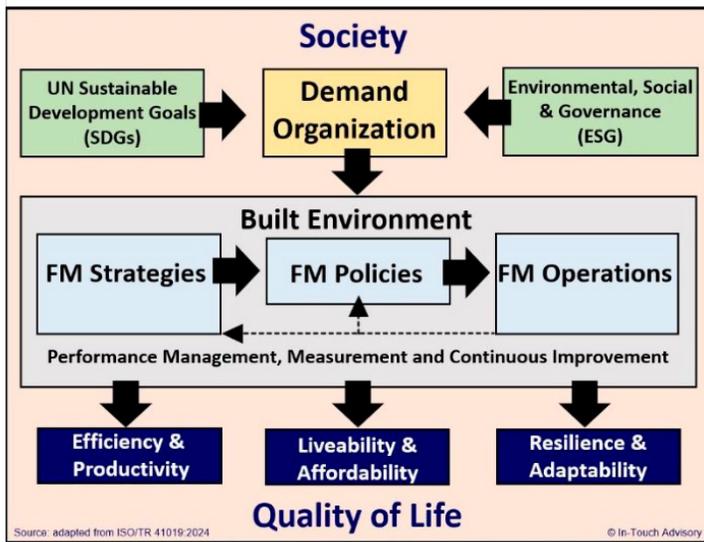
of comprehensive resilience strategies. This is despite the widespread changes, potential disruptions, and acknowledged interdependencies of social, economic and environmental challenges that the communities now face. These combine to create risks, complexities and opportunities for the planning, delivery 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 continue to be 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.

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.



Source: adapted from ISO/TR 41019:2024

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.

Conclusions

There is no shortage of global challenges, and “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”**.

Stephen Ballesty, FRICS, FAIQS, IFMA Fellow, CFM serves as Director, In-Touch Advisory; Regional Director - Asia Pacific, IFMA’s FM Consultants Council; Standards Australia MB-022 Committee member (AIQS representative) and an Australian delegate to ISO/TC 267 since 2012, most recently in the role of ISO/TR 41019 Project Lead.

Stephen is an FMA Australia Life Member and Past Chair of our association. Professionally he is an RICS Chartered Surveyor (QS & FM) and an IFMA Certified Facility Manager with extensive design, delivery and operational phase experience. Currently he serves as an RICS Governing Council member, Asia Pacific seat; on the board of IFMA’s FM Consultant Council; and is the EuroFM Ambassador to Australia. Since 2012, Stephen has been a member of the Standards Australia MB-022 committee for FM standards, and an Australian delegate to ISO/TC 267 developing the ISO 41000 series. In addition to participating in multiple ISO/TC 267 advisory and working group, he serves as the global liaison to the ISO 53000 (sustainable development goals) and ISO 55000 (asset management) series. Additionally, he has served on multiple industry bodies over an extended period including leadership positions with the Australian Government’s FM Action Agenda, AIQS, FMA Australia, IFMA, IFMA Foundation, Property Council of Australia, the RICS and the ISO.

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