



# New guide promotes interpretation, application of ISO 9001:2015

The International Federation of Consulting Engineers' (FIDIC) Quality Management Task Force recently held its first working meeting.



Sonja de Klerk

Hosted by Aurecon, the goal of the task force meeting is to create a new guide that will give practical and useful information on how ISO 9001 clauses can be applied within engineering and construction companies.

Sonja de Klerk, head of quality, Environment & Sustainability at Aurecon, says that engineering consultancies and contractors are often required to have formalised quality management systems and be ISO 9001 certified to compete in today's marketplace. The new guide, which will be entitled *Guide to the Interpretation and Application of ISO 9001:2015 in the Consulting Engineering Industry* when it is released, will demystify many complex aspects of the standard.

"This guide will be helpful to any quality management practitioner in the consulting engineering industry. The clauses in ISO 9001 can seem abstract, but the new guide will help clarify them in the context of our industry through the use of explanations and examples," says de Klerk.

## Interpreting application of the standard

FIDIC is the global voice of consulting engineers and member firms are encouraged to commit to implementing quality management systems that involve all levels of management and every employee within their companies. In 1997, FIDIC first released an implementation guide, with further revisions released as the ISO 9001 Standard continued to evolve. In 2015, a fundamental review of the standard was released, namely ISO 9001:2015. It was the catalyst for FIDIC and the European Federation of Engineering Consultancy Associations (EFCA) Task Force on Quality Management to come together and create a guide that will help quality management professionals interpret the application of the standard.

De Klerk explains that: "Companies are not required to instantaneously switch over to the new ISO standard. Instead, a transition period of three years from date of publication of the new standard has been agreed for accredited certification. This period will end on 15 September 2018, which means that all certified companies need to be fully compliant with ISO 9001:2015 by that date. The new guide helps them on this journey."

The Task Force on Quality Management is chaired by Walter Painsi from Austria and includes as members, thought leaders from Switzerland, New Zealand, Australia and South Africa, which is represented by Sonja de Klerk.

Painsi says the new ISO 9001 Standard introduces some far-reaching changes to previous revisions, such as a prominence of risk-based thinking and engagement with interested parties.

"These concepts are highly relevant for the consulting engineering industry and the guide will provide much needed guidance, not only on how to comply with the Standard, but on how to do so in a value-adding manner. Further meetings will be held in the future, with the goal of publishing the guide in the next few months," concludes Painsi.