

# Transcript

September 30, 2025, 7:59AM

## UNTP-Conformity Mtg4



**Brett Hyland** 2:22

Well, I've hopefully started transcription. I usually forget completely, so I've at least got that right today.

Uh, let's make a start. I'll start with the usual rules of the road. I'll just have to share my screen to do so.



**Brett Hyland** 3:19

I think probably most of you are aware that UNCEFACT operates under an open development process, which is defined in the document linked. There is also an intellectual property rights policy. Effectively by contributing to this work, you are donating your intellectual property to the UN. If you don't wish to do that, then don't contribute. There is a distinction to be made between registered experts versus observers, but all are welcome to attend and contribute to these meetings. There is a code of conduct for these meetings. Nothing particularly surprising there, but you can check the linked document should you wish to. We do issue minute records and we ask that no AI note takers please.

The type of stakeholders that are interested in this work are listed on this page, and it's probably a good idea at this moment to ask if there is anyone attending their first meeting. Have we actually seen you at a meeting, Jeff, at the with the new group?



**jeff.ruddle** 4:41

Possibly not, no.



**Brett Hyland** 4:42

You were part of the subgroup. I just can't remember if you were part of the main group. Anyway, Jeff's a long-term supporter of the of the UN work. Do you just want to remind the group where you're where you're from and what you're what you're doing these days, Jeff?

 **jeff.ruddle** 4:50

Yeah, sure. So I'm Jeff Ruddle. I'm currently an independent consultant doing a number of activities in the TIC testing, inspection, certification sector, including running a global consortium around quality infrastructure for AI assurance.

 **jeff.ruddle** 5:13

And supporting tech businesses with mergers and acquisitions. I've long been involved with accreditation. I spent about 20 years at the United Kingdom Accreditation Service and towards the back end of that I spent quite a bit of time looking at digitalisation in conformity assessment. Involved in a number of global initiatives around bringing more transparency to management system certification and worked with Brett and others on the UNCEFACT DPCCE project and from that Brett roped me in to help out on this one as well.

 **Brett Hyland** 5:52

Very happy to have you, Jeff. Now, Alison, I think we've met you before, is that correct? Pardon me. Yes, I'm sure we had.

Roberto. Have we seen you at these meetings before?

 **Roberto Perez-Franco** 6:06

Probably not of the conformity one, but just for the general and the supply chain group too.

 **Brett Hyland** 6:12

Can you just let us know who you are and where you're from?

 **Roberto Perez-Franco** 6:16

Myself, yes. So my name is Roberto Perez Franco. I'm originally from Panama. I'm in Australia now. I work for GS1 Australia. I'm an engineer by training and training in logistics and systems and I work now in Credentials to identify products and to connect certifications with products as they flow through the supply chain.

 **Brett Hyland** 6:44

Can't ask for more relevant experience than that. Thank you very much. And Ulas has just joined us. Thank you very much, Ulas.



**Brett Hyland** 7:00

To bring us up to speed. So we're obviously here as part of the UN's implementation of UNECE Recommendation 49, Transparency at Scale. Hopefully you're all familiar with that document. It sets out of a range of design principles and our group is interested in adapting the design principles that relate to product conformity. Some earlier work defined the idea of a certificate issuer, continuing to issue a certificate - which may or may not be digital, but also issuing a conformity credential which can link to that certificate. And there may be an endorsement credential as well that may be may also be linked and so the conformity credential and the linked information can be accessed by various means, including through a digital product passport.

We also have investigated in recent weeks the idea of a sustainability vocabulary where scheme owners host hierarchical representations of their requirements and we developed a little bit of a schematic for that where we have supplier-generated product passports and CAB-generated conformity credentials, which all reference the relevant vocabulary defined by a scheme, this vocabulary being scheme-generated. So, I think we've got a reasonable handle on that now.

I'll stop sharing and we'll go to the agenda, for which the first item is a report from the worked example subgroup. Now I'm going to give that report because not many that attended the last meeting are here right now.

So I'm happy to say that the worked example subgroup has tentatively selected some examples among various current ongoing UNTP implementations that we think might serve to demonstrate the recommendation 49 design principles that relate to conformity. I think quite conveniently this gives us a good excuse to engage directly with the implementers, if they're willing to, because otherwise we have had the risk that we talk here amongst ourselves about what should happen and yet the implementers go off and do their own thing possibly in a divergent manner.

So I think the **first action** that we need to record today is to find a way to contact those relevant implementation groups or teams to see how we might engage. I'm not sure how we do that. Zach, do you have any sense of how we might approach that?



**Zach (Pyx)** 10:12

What will be important is that we describe from this group the sort of scope of the engagement and how and why we're engaging them. I think that would be an important piece.



**Brett Hyland** 10:30

Very good point. Thank you. Now the other task that the subgroup has been dealing with is in making sure that we understand exactly how the sustainability vocabulary catalogue works and the and possible limits of its applicability.

So, this was rather a more technical examination - we recently circulated the outcomes of those deliberations and I think we've got a pretty good handle on that too. But for me, more than anything else, what those discussions revealed is that this concept of a scheme published vocabulary is really, to my mind, just a specific application of the more general case where any digital product passport containing claims that a product meets a certain standard also needs to uniquely identify that standard such that it can be mapped to the same standard being called up in a linked conformity credential. And that, of course, is the exact idea at the core of the sustainability vocabulary credential. It's the idea of a common vocabulary that both passports and conformity credentials can use so that there's no ambiguity. But we don't have a good way of doing this for independently published standards.

I think we have this pretty nicely covered for scheme-generated standards, so the gap really is for independently published standards, like ISO standards for example. And you know there are going to be lots of these, so we do need an approach. I think that's the **second action** that's come out of our worked example subgroup, which is we need to articulate a framework for referencing independent standards such that everyone can digitally reference it in the same way, regardless of who's doing the implementation.

Now, I did discover only this week that there is actually an existing taxonomy for international standards, and it's called the International Classification for Standards. But as far as I know, that isn't actually a digital object identifier. It's a bit more like the, you know, the library system, the Dewey Decimal system. So I think there still does remain a gap. And I also hasten to add that whatever we do, it will effectively be a placeholder until the standards publishers themselves come up with their own systems for digitally identifying their own standards. We certainly don't want to become a permanent cataloguer of all the world's standards.

Now this is way outside of my expertise and I'm hoping that we might look towards some of our standards development organization friends for assistance with that action. And we do have plenty of standards development organization friends and maybe the maybe the answer is already known by them, but it's just that I I don't know it. So I might leave that report there and open up for discussion on those points. Phil, you have your hand up.

 **Phil Archer** 13:25

Just to say, oh, I think you may have been talking about someone like me when it comes to SDOs or Roberto. So most standard bodies, certainly the ones I work with, I'm thinking W3C and IETF and GS1 for that matter. We'll very happily give you a persistent until the heat death of the universe URL of the latest version, the standard and everything else. One standards body that doesn't do that is a little thing called ISO so it's actually easier to refer to pretty well any standard other than ISO standards.

 **Brett Hyland** 14:06

OK. Well, that's I guess good news and bad news taking as read every standards body except ISO is a very, very good stuff. So maybe we need to have some discussions with ISO directly, but thank you for that and we might ask you for some further information about that Phil and if anything occurs to you or anyone else about how we might reference ISO standards, please do sing out. Alison, you've got your hand up.

 **Alison GCN** 14:36

Yes, in regard to the work that's being done through CIRPASS 2, I'm in a textile expert working group and we did some work in relation to and it was Adriana who has previously been in this group. She did the bulk of the work and that was analyzing. I remember she said there was something like 300 standards that she went through and then created a spreadsheet related to tech standards for textiles. Let me just go back. I don't know if you are taking input from that from CIRPASS 2, but I will find that link and I'll share that with you and that might help drill down. In some cases there would be, yeah, there was ISO attached but a whole bunch of other different standards, so. I'll find that and offer that up.



**Brett Hyland** 15:29

Thank you. And to resolve any possible lack of clarity, we are talking effectively about a digital object identifier. We don't need to know what the standards are. We need the digital object identifier if there is one, or if one does not exist then we need a framework to create those, preferably with the agreement of the publisher of the standards. So that that being the case, a couple of other things have occurred to me. One of the items on the agenda in just a little bit is the reworked webpage from GitLab regarding the Sustainability Vocabulary catalogue and it has been quite extensively reworked, to the extent that I've sent around today a clean copy because the edited version had become unreadable. But I'm already second guessing myself because you know this idea of having digital object identifiers for referencing independent standards is actually all part of the same scheme vocabulary problem. While we might have solved it for schemes, we still need to write something about how we articulate identifiers for independently published standards. So I now feel that that should be part of the rewrite as well. So I'm not actually convinced that we finished the job and then I guess if I really want to be annoying, I could comment that when you look at the broader picture of having digital object identifiers for criteria, so that passports and conformity credentials can talk about the same thing unambiguously then maybe the phrase sustainability vocabulary catalogue doesn't really intuitively convey that that idea. Now, I don't know if it's too late to contemplate a name change, but I just can't shake the idea that we might be able to think of a better acronym. And if we were going to do that, I guess the sooner we do it, the better. We've not released the specification for implementation yet, so I guess theoretically that's still a possibility, so I'll just lay those thoughts out and wonder if there's any reaction. I think I saw a clapping hand. I hope it wasn't a thumbs down, but if regardless, we'll take it as it was.



**Zach (Pyx)** 18:04

Neil's had his hand up for a while.



**Brett Hyland** 18:07

Oh, sorry. Now I can't see your hand there. My apologies.



**Neil Savery** 18:09

That's all right. I thought I thought you were ignoring me, Brett. So, for those online, Brett and I had a conversation offline in part to do with this issue around language, and that's because I missed one meeting and when I re-engaged in the conversation, I found that I was misinterpreting what the working group was doing because of some of the language that was being used and the sustainability vocabulary itself was one of those, because sustainability is now such a broadly used term and can encompass so many different things to so many different people. I do have a problem with that. I accept that if it's a commonly accepted term and it's too late in the process to change, so be it. But I would tend to agree with you, Brett, that there would be value if the opportunity exists. But the other one, and the reason I put my hand up initially, just going back one step, the conversation that I had offline with Brett was the confusion with the reference to standards and I know you clarified that with me, Brett, but just hearing you again talk about independent and scheme-published standards. I'm I am a little bit nervous about the way that we're, applying those terms because we tend to gravitate immediately when the word standards is used to think about standards development organizations, but at the same time you made several references previously to standards developed by scheme owners. Now many of the scheme owners are not standards development organizations. My employer is not a standards development organization, it develops not what I call standards, but it develops acceptance criteria which are technical specifications and I I'm not trying to sell anything or trying to direct traffic here, I'm just talking about the confusion that could exist about the way that we're referencing standards in this conversation. That's all.



**Brett Hyland** 20:33

Did you want to respond to that, Zach, or have you got another point? Because I I could respond to Neil.



**Zach (Pyx)** 20:37

I do want to respond to that and because I'm also uncomfortable Neil, because I think people do tend to gravitate towards when we use the language of standards to standards development organizations. And in my experience over the last sort of 18 months on various sort of implementation projects, we've in practice, we've used sort of SVC and conformity attestations in a wide, much wider definition, so standards development by standards development organizations is kind of a narrow

perspective on what we've seen in practice and so I think one of the things that might be helpful is to articulate a range of where standards development organizations are on the one hand and a company's unique special sauce that they still test against that is completely private, but they sort of do testing against it. So we sort of describe all of them and maybe then develop a name for that continuum, might be a way of helping to think that through or make it clear.

 **Neil Savery** 22:19

Yeah, I'm in agreement with you, Zach. I think you can make that clarification. I don't think that's an impossible thing to do.

 **Phil Archer** 22:31

I agree, which may surprise you. A standard is the consensus of the people who use it. It's no more than that. And if everyone uses it, whether it's gone through an SDO or not, who cares? Everyone does it, and that's the right way to do it, because that's what everyone else does. So there are a number of things that or protocols or things that you might think of as standards that were written by in some cases a very clever individual and everyone said we're going to do that and it became the standard. RSS is something you may remember, for example, never a standard, people use it, it's implemented everywhere, so a standard does not have to come from an SDO like ours or anyone else's.

 **Brett Hyland** 23:15

Jeff, you you've got your hand up.

 **jeff.ruddle** 23:20

I was going to echo the agreement on that and I was going to say actually I think in terms of some definition of different sources, I think there's something in ISO 17025 where it talks about, it talks about methodologies and different kind of organisations going from standard development organisations, through to things like technical research bodies, scientific journals, manufacturers, customer specified methods. So, there's a range of those defined in there. So that might be a starting point that that you want to use for that continuum.

**Z Zach (Pyx)** 23:55

Was that ISO say it again, sorry, I I did quite catch it.

**J jeff.ruddle** 23:59

ISO 17025. It's the standard for competence in laboratory testing.

And it talks about the potential range of kind of standard methods that could be used by laboratories for testing.

**Z Zach (Pyx)** 24:07

OK.

**B Brett Hyland** 24:16

Look, it's probably not that surprising that our conformity group, which is mainly made-up of people with backgrounds in conformity, have a particular conception of what a standard is. And you know, it was all a surprise to me to learn in the sustainability space that standards can be written by a scheme, but I find myself using that terminology these days because I hear it all the time in certain sectors, textiles come to mind. Maybe it's a case that we are damned if we do and we damned if we don't, but at least I think we can try and define an array of various types of criteria documents. How well we can skirt around the niceties of using the term standard I still don't know, but I think that is another reason to have another go at our at our webpage edits because we've probably been a bit, I don't know, a bit gung ho in the way we've used that term. So thank you for raising it, Neil. And I think you've had good support from this group on that. We'll have another crack the at the webpage revision as an action. Any further comments before we leave the topic of the report from the work example working group subgroup?

No. OK, so the proposed edits of the GitLab SVC page is the next but one action. The only intervening action was the problem with the CFACT expert registration interface, which I think continues, am I right Zac that that is still a problem?

**Z Zach (Pyx)** 26:10

So I took a look at it this morning and it was down. So it was even worse than it was last week. And this evening it's now back up. We did get an e-mail from UNECE saying that their tech team restarts their Apache server every night, every night at

3:00 AM CET think. And so in the morning in Australia it's not going to work, but probably in the afternoon in Australia and in the morning in Europe it'll be OK. So if it doesn't work for you try it another time of day, because that might be what's going on. They're working to make it a more stable experience. But the issues we were seeing last month where you couldn't pick your country or head of delegation, that is resolved, I did validate that this afternoon.



**Brett Hyland** 27:02

OK. All right. So we fixed one problem, but there's another problem emerged. I think we better leave this as an open issue because if we're not following up, maybe no one is. But thank you for the update, Zach, which now brings us to the proposed edits.



**Brett Hyland** 27:16

With the GitLab page on SVC, I think I've already flagged that we need to have another round of edits. But has anyone had the chance to review or have any feedback on the edits that have been done to date? The current version was attached to the meeting in update this morning and it's called version 3 clean. I know some of you have already provided me feedback directly and hopefully I've captured your thoughts to your satisfaction, but let me know if not.



**NS Neil Savery** 27:58

But I suspect I'm on the earlier version. I haven't got the clean version.



**Brett Hyland** 28:03

Oh, is it? Is it attached to your meeting invite, Neil?



**NS Neil Savery** 28:05

Oh, look, it may, it may be. I've actually got the previous one open though. I was just going to ask the asterisks after the word independent. If you resolved that, I think you were going to use the word impartial instead of independent.



**Brett Hyland** 28:09

Oh, OK. It would have been, let me let me make a note to check that. I think I incorporated, your comments in version three, Neil, but you've just caused me a bit

of worry that I can't specifically remember resolving that, although I may have. It was a while ago.

NS



**Brett Hyland** 28:40

I'll follow that item up specifically because that is quite an important point, I agree with you. Now, Alison, you've got your hand up.

AG

**Alison GCN** 28:57

Yes, I'm just wondering if there is a purpose for the association to the waste framework directive hasn't been included in this document, in any of the criteria, I'm looking at the conformity topic classification and you've included the ESPR, the UNSDGS, the OECD guidelines for multinational enterprises, but what's really part of those regulations is actually the waste framework directive and particularly for non-OECD countries. So it's essentially the waste that is going to 1st need checking in the that's the new directive. It gets checked before it exits the country or EU and then going elsewhere. I know that in particular India has applied to be one of the non-OECD countries to take that in. So that's extra classification that I haven't seen mentioned.



**Brett Hyland** 30:02

So thank you for noticing that. It sounds like quite an important one. I don't know the answer, and I'm rather hoping that some other group will take over that taxonomy anyway. But I think we need to follow up that particular point that you've raised. Zach, do you know if there's any progress on a group sort of taking responsibility for that conformity topic code list, or is it our job to fix all that?

Z

**Zach (Pyx)** 30:28

I'm trying to recall if there is move, there is some discussion about it, I'm trying to recall where that discussion is, but there is some discussion about updating that code list. So I let me, let me, I'll follow up with you directly Brett and we can distribute that to everybody following this this discussion. But there is a team kind of looking at that there's there is discussion about a team looking at that and it's current, like in the last week or so.



**Brett Hyland** 31:03

All right. So we'll call that an action.



**Zach (Pyx)** 31:05

Yep. And Allison it's an oversight.



**Alison GCN** 31:19

Right, because I can see like category one, four and five is speaks about it in regards to waste reduction, performance, recyclability and circularity, just of content of how that's moving through to the standards and the certification for the next iteration of the product. But yeah, they need to collect all of that data too, and I believe it's part of the waste framework directive.



**Brett Hyland** 31:47

Well, thank you. And I'm sure the new group that handle this will be very grateful for that feedback. I'll take that up with Matthias regardless, because I think we need to understand if we're supposed to be doing anything, well, we need to know that so we can get on with it, but hopefully someone else will take care of it.



**Adrienna Zsakay** 32:04

There's sorry to interrupt there. There's a lot of detail related to that particular to what Alison is referring to. So especially from the receiving countries from the non OECD, there's a lot of detail involved in that. So I just wanted to mention whoever's gonna deal with that, if they're going to include it, it's there's a lot, lot going on.



**Brett Hyland** 32:30

Thank you.

All right. Zac, is that an old hand of yours?



**Zach (Pyx)** 32:36

Yeah, I can't figure out how to put it down. I've when Jeff was talking about ISO 17025, the reason I missed the number was 'cause I couldn't figure out how to put it down. I still haven't figured it out.



**Brett Hyland** 32:38

OK, fair enough. All right. So I think regarding the next outstanding action item about the page edits, I think the new action is that we're going to have another try and circulate that again. So you'll see version 4 before long. Rather than going back to the original and capturing all the previous edits, I might do the edits on version 3, so that's what you'll see circulated between now and the next meeting. Anything else before we leave that leave that topic?

OK, the next outstanding action item we need to talk about actually relates to an outstanding issue on GitLab and it was whether the conformity credentials and product passports should have hierarchical lists for conformity outcomes corresponding to the same hierarchy in the scheme that's been referenced. And I think there was a bit of pushback really, you know, do CABs and do suppliers really want to bother about hierarchical structures defined by individual schemes? And I'm I'm thinking that they probably don't. Anyway Phil and Steve at the last meeting seemed to indicate that there were means, schema or something, for mapping just flat lists in a passport or a conformity credential to external hierarchies that might have been defined by a scheme for their criteria vocabulary. Now I didn't really understand the conversation to be honest, and the action was to get some help from someone who can articulate this in a sensible way so that we can capture it somewhere Steve's not here, so Phil, you got any thoughts?



**Phil Archer** 35:07

Yes, I should be able to explain that. Maybe I just said it in a very, you know, really, really bad way. The kind of relationships we're talking about are ones that absolutely everybody understands. So everyone understands it all.



**Brett Hyland** 35:26

Except us I think.



**Phil Archer** 35:32

Right. So all dogs are mammals. Not all mammals are dogs. Kangaroos are also mammals, but they're quite distant related to dogs and so on. And it's that kind of relationship and that's really what we're talking about now. I should take a look at that particular text and see if I can improve it. I may or may not refer to dogs as

mammals, which is my usual go to place, mainly because there's one snoring about 3 meters away from me right now. Anyway it's that kind of relationship. Let me let me take that as an action and I'll try and do that before I see you next time.



**Brett Hyland** 36:24

Well, that'd be that'd be wonderful because we haven't made a great deal of progress on that particular action. Now another action that we haven't made progress on is Outstanding Action 79 and I think this really is like to conformity people quite a quite an interesting question, so let me dig it up and share the screen. Found it. Uh, yes. So Phil, the open issue was #344 entitled Should claims and assessments be a hierarchical structure?



**NS Neil Savery** 37:25

Just on that, Brett, and I'm sure Phil knows this better than me, but as far as I'm aware, and certainly in the schemes that I've been involved in, both as scheme owner and as a representative of a scheme owner, an accredited scheme, the accreditation body doesn't ask that scheme owner to have a hierarchical structure.



**Brett Hyland** 37:52

No, quite right. I'm not sure accreditation's the right word, I think it's an endorsement.



**NS Neil Savery** 37:58

Yeah, endorsement of a scheme. But either way, you know, if the accreditation bodies aren't asking for it, why? Why would we?



**Brett Hyland** 38:07

Yeah. So, the scheme owners are under no obligation to do anything like that, let's be very clear. It would only be if a scheme's criteria might cover a range of seemingly unrelated things like forced labor, water usage, carbon footprint. So the scheme owner may wish to segregate between those different types of criteria, I guess. And in the process of segregating them, they might want to have some subdivisions. So, you know, there might be broad labour rights, which might then be divided into forced labour and underage labour. But it but this is a purely voluntary undertaking by the scheme and would only apply if the scheme themselves saw value to their

clients and users of documentation arising from that scheme. Geoff, you can probably explain it better than me.

 **jeff.ruddle** 39:16

I was going to say something slightly different, Brett, there. What I was going to say, sort of listening to this discussion and coming into it a bit fresh. I think what's being said here is actually sometimes there's hierarchy and sometimes there's not and therefore that both need to be accommodated for. But when there's hierarchy, going back to what Phil said in Phil's example is what I would describe as a parent-child relationship in there and that you've got something that that clearly relates to something higher up the chain. Maybe that's what we need to describe in there. That where there is a hierarchical, it needs to be used, but there shouldn't be a hierarchy forced when there's no relationship between the items.

 **Brett Hyland** 40:03

Yeah. So I don't think we're disagreeing at all and maybe it would help to actually use the phrase 'parent child relationship', so you know where it's applicable and noting that it won't always be applicable. In fact I have had feedback that we've been over stressing this hierarchy. I suppose we spent a bit of time unpacking it just because it has been confusing, but it's not the default scenario and is perhaps the tail wagging the dog to an extent and we don't want to burden CABs unnecessarily. Unless it's a scheme requirement placed on CABs. So that's another challenge for us, to get the balance right in our in our next revision of the GitLab page for the vocabulary, where we really want to have a proportionate explanation of all this stuff and don't get bogged down in what might end up being managed as UNTP extensions.

Anyway, to get to get back to our outstanding issue #79 which, by the low number you can see is a very old issue. So, this is the idea, it really comes into its own in areas of low digital maturity, but I think she's asking, can we get away from a rigid idea of conformity assessment and think about data that comes from sensors, for example, or auditors making observations, like human rights comments. I think probably the question could be worded in a more structured way so that it would be easier to tackle. But having thought about it for a little while, I tend to think that for us to see this as relevant to our group that we would need to be convinced that there was an outcome and that that outcome related to some criteria because I suspect if those two conditions are not met then we're not really talking about a conformity

assessment at all. In which case, if it does belong in any group, it's probably not ours. That was my only thought on the matter. But there's more expert people in the group than I, so I'll open that one up for questioning.

**Z Zach (Pyx)** 42:31

Yeah, I tried to. I had to raise my hand the old-fashioned way. So I think, Brett, I agree with you. We need to be able to draw the line somewhere, right? An outcome against a criteria, I think is a clear way to do it, but I also think this goes back to a little bit of maybe how we articulate the answer to Neil's question, which is the range of attestations that fits in the scope of what we're considering here and we need to draw the line somewhere and but that that that continuum probably shows where we draw it the line. Beyond that it is no longer meets a conformity attestation. It's kind of the way I would kind of think about and that line may move over time, we may learn more that type of thing. But I think that gives us a way of saying, here's where conformity attestations stop.

**NS Neil Savery** 43:53

Just adding to Zach there. I'm just thinking more broadly in the context of the reference to encouraging third party auditors and observers. So in the context of attestations and in the context of digital product passports, where you're wanting to be able to verify the claims that are being made because it's been through a rigorous, robust, you know, all the usual words. I don't know how you could achieve that or be confident in that if you don't know where's the process behind third party auditors and observers that gives you that credibility? And so you'd almost be setting up a system or a framework where you haven't got a comparison between apples and apples. You're creating almost two different streams if you go down that path.

 **Brett Hyland** 44:56

Yeah, there seem to be two related issues. One is just a bare data point, nothing more, you know, a temperature readout. Well, and I don't think any of us think that's a conformity credential. Maybe someone could try to issue it in the form of a conformity credential but I don't think it would ever happen in practice. And then you've got Neil's point, where someone has seen something and they want to report it, but you don't know against what criteria and as Neil says, well, what process? So maybe there's an outcome, a criteria and a process. Maybe that's what we're looking at. The question that arises, for all of the other types of observations or data

flows, who looks after that? Is it just data points stated in a digital product passport?

 **jeff.ruddle** 46:09

I'm just going to muddy the waters even further to talk about that point. I think whatever goes in there, whether that's a very clear data point like a simple temperature reading or whatever, or whether it's an observation from an individual, there's got to be processes behind that to give assurance in that information wherever it comes from. And that's normally through process like certification, accreditation depending upon the activity. There's something sits behind that, that process of producing that data point or a professional judgment or an opinion. But when you come to perhaps some of the things with individuals making observations, or potentially even AI systems making observations using image recognition and so on, it no longer objective, it's more in that in that subjective field, potentially an electronic system making a subjective decision. So I think we need to find some way of wording it to cover all of those potential activities.

 **Brett Hyland** 47:33

So before I go to David, I do agree with what Jeff said. I would, I would note that we might bring our preconceptions to what we think certification means, what we think validation means, verification and all the rest of it, but it might be, it might be a step in the right direction if the proponents of these types of outputs were able to nominate which type of conformity assessment they thought was being represented. It, you know, it might not be a very fancy certification or a very fancy validation, but at least if they say, well, we think it's a validation and we think it more or less lines out up with ISO 17029, lines up, then maybe we could be a bit welcoming of that. But if it's not even clear what type of conformity assessment it is in the first place, then I think they are not doing themselves any favours asking it to be covered by our protocols. Anyway, David, you've had your hand up for a while.

 **David McNeil** 48:41

Thanks and I think I agree with what's been said before and I think at the very simplest level, if it's not against an assessment or it's not being done by someone who's recognised as a competent assessor then you can record it as an observation. And I think that's probably where whether or not we have gradations of level of observation, you know, if it's not, if it's just someone observing something and they

think it's important to record that observation, OK. That doesn't mean it whether it carries any weight, because they're not, you know, assessing it against anything or they've got competency to make that assessment. So I think that's where you start, it's just purely an observation.



**Brett Hyland** 49:31

Yeah. So if we think back to first principles, I think recommendation 49 expresses the idea of a conformity credential in UNTP is to add trust. And if there's no criteria, no process, no competence, there's really no basis for trust. And so it is just an observation.

So I don't think we wish to rush into embracing observations as part of our work, but we probably want to be fairly clear about why we're choosing to be discriminatory, if that's the right word.



**Neil Savery** 50:09

Well, just picking up on that point, Brett, I think the reason we do want to be discriminatory is because we risk the credibility if the exercise that we're involved in is providing the opportunity for what we might all regard as the lowest common denominator, which people gravitate to, as opposed to setting the bar of expectation a bit higher. And to David's point, OK, there may be an opportunity to at least acknowledge what an observation represents, but we don't believe that meets the threshold test for a conformity credential.



**Brett Hyland** 50:54

Thank you. I believe Alice has her hand up as well.



**Alice** 50:58

Yes, hello and amazing timing. I just have a giant huntsman on my steering wheel in the car, so I'm pulled over with my hands up. Anyway, my understanding of standards certifications, what we're referring to as scheme owners and initiatives and kind of voluntary claims for employees to make reports which would maybe classify as an observation. There are kind of the example of an employee making a claim anonymously is an aspect that sits within different certifications which can also sit on the top of standards. So it kind of feels like this hierarchy for me in the way and I understand it between standards like iOS and the larger governing universal

standards and then certifications which kind of are built on top of the standards and indicators like the observable factors that we're capturing belong within those, which creates that trust. So there may be ones that seem independent, but I do feel that we will find that they all belong within a scheme and a standard when we actually conduct it.



**Brett Hyland** 52:23

Well done articulating all that with a spider on your steering wheel. I think what you're saying is that, in practice, we will find that these things pop up in the context of a defined scheme where there are defined outcomes, criteria and processes and perhaps competencies. So that that's what that would be fine, I think. So we might have rushed too quickly to judgement there and context will be quite important. Perhaps the way the issue #79 was written originally made it look like just a bald, bare data point with nothing behind it. So maybe, maybe that maybe the questioner didn't put their absolute best foot forward. Based on our discussion, I think I'd rather draft something and circulate it to this group for your thoughts before jumping in and annotating the issue in Gitlab.



**Zach (Pyx)** 53:34

So Brett, I kind of want to add a little bit because it opens a very real discussion that that we're having with a scheme owner as we speak. So what we've kind of talked about is quality of the scheme and quality of the process, quality of the review, quality of the auditor like is kind of is where this discussion kind of starts to lead to because if we if we're saying that a standalone assessment is not sufficiently robust, then we're starting to say, well, we need to have a minimum standard of governance and audit and third party, whatever that is. Like we start to sort of answer the question that has been raised by an implementer, which is, hey, we want to make sure that our scheme is recognized for its high quality features, not just the conformity criteria on which it is based.



**Brett Hyland** 54:50

So I acknowledge that this is a ridiculously complex area but I can say that back in the original DPCCE work we identified 2 UN codes. One is the Assessor assurance code, which is, you know, third party independent, second party buyer arrangements, second party contractual, first party and so on. The other code we defined was the

Assessment assurance code which related to things like, is there a regulatory approval for this scheme, is it recognised under IAF multilateral arrangement or if it was a test, is it covered under the ILAC MRA, or is there some other industry endorsements that could apply. So, so you can select one of those Assessment codes as applicable to your scheme. I don't think this group ever wants to go down the path of talking about the quality of individual criteria or scheme outputs. I see schemes as operating in a competitive space doing their best to build their market share while trying to balance quality outcomes. That has nothing to do with us. However, an industry body may wish to define minimum criteria for a particular sector and I suppose a scheme could self-declare their compliance to such independent criteria. So while I don't think it's our job, some industry bodies or even global bodies might be willing to take on. Even so, I would still doubt whether we could take at face value a scheme saying that their scheme meet a set of criteria, I think that would need to be verified by an independent party. But again, that's a CAB function. It's not, it's not up to UNTP to worry about that sort of stuff.

 **Zach (Pyx)** 57:28

Brett I agree but I'm wondering about definitional elements of the sort of attestation that a scheme owner might make and how might they say it in a way that people can evaluate in a consistent way and so.

 **Brett Hyland** 57:53

Well, it's going to be a self-declaration so they can self-declare whatever they want. Ideally they'd have that verified by a third party. But what would make most sense is if they were self-declaring that they meet some external criteria. Otherwise the whole thing is just self-referential.

 **Zach (Pyx)** 58:12

Yeah. So I'll look at the DPCCE, the codes that you mentioned here, that'll be helpful as a starting point. We are going to build kind of a self attestation for their work because that's what they've asked to ask for and we'll bring that here so we can kind of explore it as a group here and see if there's relevance to this group or if we do think it kind of sits outside the scope here. I think it's worth bringing forward.

 **Brett Hyland** 58:41

Well, if their self-declaration about some attribute of their scheme was verified by a third party, then I guess that's a form of endorsement that can be that can be linked from the scheme which is called up in the conformity credentials. So there's probably a structure for that, I'll check.



**Brett Hyland** 59:14

And that does remind me, I became aware of another structure only this week, which is the Global Food Safety Initiative, quite a big organization that that seems to have some sort of global gatekeeper role amongst food certifiers. They conduct benchmarking processes amongst certification programs, so that is a higher level of governance which comes over the top of accredited certification providers. So that might be a model that could be looked at as well. I realise our time is just about gone. Let me see if there's anything else on the on the agenda that we didn't get to. It was a been a wonderful meeting. We covered some ground!

I see the last outstanding issue was Steve Capel was going to look into any implications for information security in our work in the light of the EU CapGemini initiative. Well, Steve's not here, so I'll follow that up offline and that gets us to the end of our agenda any final comments before we wrap it up?

Well, I hope that you feel, like me, that this was a fascinating meeting and covered some very rich and interesting ground. Thank you so much for your time and contributions.

**Brett Hyland** stopped transcription