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International Organization for Standardization
Международная Организация по Стандартизации



**Alan Bryden
Secretary-General**

Your ref.
Our ref. GA 2004-STRAT UPDATE

**TO THE ISO MEMBER BODIES AND
CORRESPONDENT MEMBERS**

Date 2004-02-10

ISO Strategic planning process: results of the consultation and analysis of the responses

Dear Sir or Madam,

Further to my circular letter of 2003-05-19 launching the ISO Strategy consultation, I am pleased to send you at Annex the results of the consultation, consisting of a cover note with, at Appendix 1, an analysis of the respondents and, at Appendix 2, an analysis of the responses (a French version is in preparation and will be sent as soon as possible).

As previously announced, at its meeting on 26-27 January the Council Standing Committee on Strategy (CSC/STRAT) reviewed a first draft of ISO's Strategy 2005-2010. A revised draft will be submitted shortly to Council for consideration at its meeting in March. A final draft will subsequently be submitted to Council for confirmation by correspondence, before being formally submitted to the General Assembly for approval in September.

This letter has been made available on the ISODOC server and a notification to that effect has been sent by e-mail. Members who are not yet ready for electronic-only distribution continue to receive paper copies for the time being.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Alan Bryden', written over a horizontal line.

Alan Bryden

Enclosures

cc. President
President-elect
Vice-President (policy)
Vice-President (technical management)
Treasurer
General Secretary IEC



ISO STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS: RESULTS OF THE CONSULTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE RESPONSES

At its meeting on 13-14 March 2003, Council decided on a new method and timetable for the updating of ISO's Strategy and its implementation as of 2005 (see Council Resolution 05/2003).

It was decided that the period covered by ISO's Strategy would be extended **to cover five years** – i.e. 2005-2010 – and that between May and October 2003, the Secretary-General would organize a **consultation of the ISO members and stakeholders** to collect suggestions and expectations regarding ISO's strategy.

Members will recall that, to that end, the Secretary-General initiated the consultation process among the members on 19 May by circulating a document, endorsed by the CSC/STRAT, entitled *ISO Horizon 2010 – Standards for a sustainable development – Consultations to update ISO Strategy for 2005-2010*, inviting ISO member bodies and correspondent members to organize consultations with their stakeholders at national level to serve as a basis for their response to the questionnaire contained in the aforementioned document.

Council further decided that, in parallel with the members' consultation, the Secretary-General should organize targeted **consultations with ISO's major international partners**. Consequently, the Secretary-General has contacted a number of international organizations which are major stakeholders in international standardization and/or are likely to have a direct interest in the future in some of the issues covered by the 12 key questions.

The consultation process has been very well received by the community of ISO's stakeholders and has been instrumental in raising awareness of ISO's role and of the importance of participating in the ISO process. Many initiatives, following various approaches, have been organized by ISO members to consult stakeholders in their respective countries, giving the opportunity to a range of stakeholder groups to exchange views on the objectives and challenges of the Organization and to express their opinion on its future directions. The ISO Secretary-General has had the opportunity to present the process undertaken to update the ISO strategy by participating in a number of national and regional workshops organized in the framework of such initiatives, as well as through direct contacts with a number of international organizations.

As a result, a total of **54 formal responses** have been received: **41 from ISO members** and **13 from ISO's international partners**. These figures represent a substantial improvement over the past in terms of contribution from ISO's stakeholders to the elaboration of the multi-year ISO strategy.

An **analysis of the respondents** to the questionnaire is given at Appendix 1.

An **analysis of the contributions** received is presented at Appendix 2. A summary is proposed for each of the 12 questions appearing in the questionnaire, along with a compilation of the remarks/recommendations of the major stakeholders.

Special care has been taken to **highlight the input** received from the respondents, indicating for the various views and recommendations if they are shared by a vast majority of ISO members, by a group of organizations or just by a single entity.

The analysis presented at Appendix 2 clearly indicates the existence, among the ISO's stakeholders, of a common view on the present and future role of ISO and on its increasing importance as one of the essential mechanisms to support a sustainable world economy. There are of course different views and perceptions of the importance of a number of issues, but it is reassuring to see the level of consensus expressed by ISO's composite and broad variety of stakeholders on many of the key objectives to be accomplished by the Organization in the medium-long term.



STRATEGY CONSULTATION: ANALYSIS OF RESPONDENTS

1 Responses from ISO members (member bodies and correspondent members)

A total of 41 responses have been received: 40 member bodies and one correspondent member. 17 of these 41 are from members in developing countries.

1.1 Classification by continent

Africa	7 responses
America	5 responses
Asia	10 responses
Europe	17 responses
Oceania	2 responses

1.2 Classification according to member body ranking¹

Group 1	5 responses
Group 2	11 responses
Group 3	17 responses
Group 4	7 responses

2 Responses from ISO international partners

2.1 Responses received from international organizations

The following thirteen international organizations have responded to the consultation:

- BIPM International Bureau of Weights and Measures
- CI Consumers International
- IAEA International Atomic Energy Agency
- ICAO International Civil Aviation Organization
- IFAN International Federation of Standards Users
- IISD International Institute for Sustainable Development
- ILO International Labour Organization
- ITC International Trade Centre
- OECD Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
- UN/ECE UN Economic Commission for Europe
- UNEP UN Environmental Programme
- UNIDO UN Industrial Development Organization
- WIPO World Intellectual Property Organization

2.2 Personal interactions between the Secretary-General and the CEOs of other international partners

In addition to the consultations with the above organizations, the Secretary-General has had personal contacts with high-level officers of the following organizations:

- ICC International Chamber of Commerce
- WBSCD World Business Council for Sustainable Development
- WEF World Economic Forum
- WTO World Trade Organization

¹ Ranking used for the Council election process.



ANALYSIS OF THE RESPONSES – KEY POINTS IDENTIFIED FROM THE CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED

An analysis of the contributions received through the consultation process is presented below. A summary is proposed for each of the 12 questions included in the questionnaire, along with a compilation of the major stakeholders' remarks/recommendations.

For the readers' convenience, the text of the original 12 questions is recalled (in *italics*), followed by the analysis of the contributions relating to each.

1 Scope

ISO develops International Standards for products and services in all technical fields including management system and conformity assessment standards. In developing them, ISO follows a consistent process and set of procedures based on the representation at the national level of all stakeholders' interests. Coordination is ensured, both at the political and technical levels, with IEC, specialized in electrical and electronic equipments and technologies and with ITU-T, involved in telecommunication.

Do you support the extent of ISO's current work?

Are there new fields of activity or new work items within fields currently or potentially covered by ISO of interest and high priority for your organization that ISO should address in the future?

In general terms, ISO's stakeholders find the current extent of the ISO's work satisfactory and fully support it. Some respondents stated explicitly that ISO should respect its boundaries – in particular with reference to other international organizations with complementary roles (such as IEC, ITU-T or CODEX).

Concerning new fields of activity, there are different views and priorities – including a few who stated that ISO should not cover this aspect in its strategic planning, but leave it to the current "bottom up" approach to new work areas at the technical level (TC).

However, the vast majority of respondents expressed an interest in seeing the organization more focused and proactive in promoting its standardization processes in new fields, identifying four main high priority classes:

- standards for **services** (in general);
- standards concerning **emerging technologies**;
- standards for **cross-border infrastructures and transactions** (transportation, energy, water, etc.) and for most **commonly traded goods** (agricultural products, food processing, textiles, etc.)
- **management systems** standards and standards related to societal issues;

Responses indicate that the process for entering new areas must be monitored from the standpoint of market relevance and possible partnerships.

In the area of services, tourism and financial services are the most frequently cited.

Indications have also been given for emerging technologies, quoting primarily the following sectors:

- **nanotechnologies;**
- **biotechnologies;**
- **information and communication technologies**, considering in particular the "pervasive" role of ICTs and their impact on many other fields of activity (examples are those of new "database" standards or "taxonomy" standards, which inherently require the use of IT techniques to structure and access the technical content)

In relation to management systems, responses recommend:

- **improved coherence and consistency** of management systems standards;
- **wider coverage** in fields such as **CSR, Governance, OHS, Risk and Knowledge Management** and, more generally, **sustainable development;**
- standards for **public services.**

One answer, however, recommended that ISO should not increase its involvement in management standards and should concentrate on technical standardization.

In addition to the above-mentioned fields, many ISO members have indicated fields of interest related to priority industry sectors for their respective economies (e.g.: food processing and machinery, petroleum and chemical products, textiles, knitting machines, building construction, solar energy panels, etc.)

Recommendations have been made concerning the possible revision/update of the ISO processes for initiating new work items, with the aim of improving the understanding and support of market needs.

Several respondents indicated the possibility of **revising the current, strictly "bottom-up" approach**, which is not always considered suitable – in particular for fast-changing sectors, emerging technologies and the area of services.

In this respect, the opportunity for introducing a **business development function** at the ISO/CS, along with **market intelligence** capabilities has been proposed, with some suggestions concerning possible means of implementation (to be further investigated).

The idea of experimenting a **"vertical sector" approach** was also proposed, consisting in identifying a pilot industry sector within which to combine different TCs and introducing a "single TC – many SCs" structure.

2 Involvement of stakeholders

Participation in the ISO system is open to all concerned parties. ISO and its members actively promote participation and seek contributions from stakeholders representing a broad and balanced set of interests (both in terms of geographical spread and of market and social groups). This openness is a key for the market relevance and acceptance of ISO standards and deliverables:

Do you think that current practices are sufficiently consistent with ISO's stated principles?

If not, what suggestions could you make to improve the involvement of stakeholders in ISO?

ISO's current practices are considered to be consistent with ISO's stated principles, and it has been noted that the national delegation principle works well, ensuring substantial stakeholder participation.

However, the vast majority of responses indicate that it is difficult to guarantee access to all stakeholders and that there are significant margins for improvement, in particular as far as participation of certain stakeholders' groups are concerned, notably:

- **consumers and SMEs**¹ (indeed, most of the comments concern these two groups of stakeholders);
- **regulatory authorities** (their participation is sometime considered insufficient, in particular when standards with a potential for reference in technical regulations are concerned);
- **direct participation from industry** (notably concerning fast-changing fields and emerging technologies).

Many recommendations have been made concerning lines of action to be pursued by ISO to strengthen and extend stakeholder participation. These lines of action can be grouped into three main categories:

- communications and promotion;
- modification/improvement of processes (concerning participation and dissemination of information);
- development of new mechanisms to foster the participation of disadvantaged categories of stakeholders.

Proposals concerning lines of action to be considered for each of the above categories are outlined below.

Communications and promotion

- Increase communication efforts to raise awareness and promote the concept of balanced stakeholder representation;
- develop guides for national standards bodies, addressing the issue of how to associate civil society and small and medium enterprises;
- improve communication concerning ISO's deliverables other than standards, raising awareness of the alternatives to full standards development.

Process improvement

- **Develop statistics on stakeholder diversity** (representation within national mirror committees, delegations and experts) – to enable national standards bodies to document what they have done to ensure balanced representation of interests;
- **disseminate information more broadly at earlier stages in the process**, offering means for electronic consultation (or even "e-membership") to larger groups of stakeholders and encouraging national public enquiries at earlier stages;
- give the **right** (as opposed to Chair's discretion) to certain groups of stakeholders to participate in committee work as observers;
- target at an early stage for better participation of representatives from regulating authorities;
- assess the ITU-T model for direct participation and **pilot test balanced direct participation in selected fields** (most likely high tech, emerging technologies).

¹ Participation of developing countries is considered under question 4.

New mechanisms to foster participation of certain groups of stakeholders

- **Facilitate the development of international networks of stakeholders from civil society**, also leveraging the use of the Internet and electronic means for exchanging information, supporting their direct participation in ISO committees as liaison organizations;
- consider the **possibility of creating a fund to support participation of consumers** (in a way similar to what is currently done for developing countries).

3 Global market relevance

ISO is committed to producing standards for global players and to encouraging maximum implementation of ISO standards in order to facilitate global trade.

Clarification is underway to refine the principles to be followed by the ISO system to ensure the global relevance of ISO standards, stating that any International Standard published by ISO is, to the furthest extent possible, to represent a unique international solution, and defining in clear terms where the use of options applied within ISO International Standards may be technically justified.

Have you further recommendations concerning mechanisms and actions that should be undertaken by ISO and its members to ensure global relevance of ISO standards?

The issue of Global Market Relevance is considered essential by all respondents, who generally support the policy recently adopted by the ISO TMB and its ongoing initiatives.

Several replies merely referred to the TMB policy, noting that the subject is exhaustively covered in that framework, while some members wished to underline the risk for ISO (loss of value and legitimacy) inherent in accepting regional options or in promoting the concept of "umbrella" standards.

A number of important points were raised by some respondents and are summarized below.

- **Education and communication** efforts are needed to promote (primarily within TCs and SCs) the ISO principles to develop globally market relevant standards. It was also recommended to develop and disseminate case studies concerning ISO standards that **are not** globally relevant;
- **national adoption and implementation** of ISO standards should be carefully monitored to provide better understanding and input to the standards development process;
- **a consistent ISO, IEC and ITU-T approach** to global market relevance would be highly desirable;
- the first review of an ISO standard should take place sooner than 5 years after its publication to allow committees to correct possible initial problems through amendments;
- ISO should carefully consider the CEN approach to withdrawals;
- Again, respondents made reference to the need for reviewing the procedure for NWI proposals, notably in relation to the SVAT tool (which is considered insufficient) and the current 5-P-members' rule (*these aspects are considered under question 9 – Process and Deliverables*).

4 Participation of developing countries

Needs and expectations of developing countries in standardization are steadily growing as a consequence of their increased participation in the emerging world market. ISO is fully committed to supporting developing country members to build capacity and to upgrade their participation in the international standardization process.

Do you approve the policy followed by ISO and the recent initiatives undertaken to support developing countries?

Have you any further recommendations as to ways to improve the participation of developing countries?

The policy followed by ISO and its recent initiatives to support developing countries are broadly understood, supported and appreciated. However, most respondents agree that more needs to be done and that ISO needs to increase its investments and resources in this critical field.

Many recommendations have been made concerning lines of action to be pursued by ISO to strengthen developing countries' participation. These lines of action can be grouped into three main categories:

- modification/improvement of processes;
- use of resources and assistance;
- other mechanisms to favour participation of developing countries.

Proposals concerning lines of action to be considered for each of the above categories are outlined below.

Modification/improvement of processes

- Increase efforts to **design standards to accommodate the needs of developing countries** (e.g., principle of minimum requirement, as applied in cases such as TC 176/SC 3/WG 10);
- make efforts to **introduce and experiment online meetings**;
- **open "e-committee" membership** to all developing countries, and endeavour to support process improvements to enable progress to be achieved as far as possible outside of meetings;
- **review the policy on multilingualism** with a view to supporting wider adoption and use of ISO standards;
- participation in TC/SCs should be exempt from registration fees.

Use of resources and assistance

- **Implement the action plan adopted by Council** on the basis of the **recommendations** of the Developing Countries Task Force (**DCTF**);
- design and implement **assistance initiatives to target levels below NSBs**, i.e. local stakeholders' groups;
- suggest and promote **effective prioritization and focused use of resources** for participating in standards development (often the issue of "participation" seems to be addressed more as a "political" issue than as a practical one, i.e. responding to the specific needs, economic circumstances and social interests of the countries concerned);
- clarify the distinction between ISO membership, participation in standardization activities and responsibilities related with the implementation of the WTO-TBT Agreement;

- **strengthen ISO's fund-raising capabilities**, with dedicated resources and following a more structured, professional approach – possibly creating a specialized unit within the Central Secretariat;
- **continue and expand assistance in the IT field** (following the MED-2000 project approach and similar ones);

Other mechanisms

- Encourage **partnerships and twinning arrangements** between developed and developing countries in providing TC/SC chairs and secretariats;
- support regional and sub-regional cooperation and harmonization;
- encourage and support organization of TC/SC meetings in developing countries.

5 Collaboration with IEC and ITU-T

In view of current and future trends in technology (i.e. increased integration of electronics and communications capabilities in most products), as well as issues of coordination and an optimal allocation of the resources coming from market forces, ISO, IEC and ITU-T are making increasing efforts at collaboration with each other, with a view to serving the needs of their stakeholders in the most effective and efficient way. The creation of the World Standards Cooperation (WSC), the high level coordination group between ISO, IEC and ITU-T, and the first initiatives promoted by the WSC – such as joint sectorial workshops and common education and training programmes – represent an important step in this direction.

*Do you support the existing framework for cooperation between ISO, IEC and ITU-T?
Have you any recommendations concerning policies or initiatives to be undertaken to help make further progress in this direction?*

ISO members and stakeholders involved in the strategy consultation process noted with appreciation the efforts and the progress made so far, fully supporting the existing cooperation framework among the three organizations, under the WSC. Many of them, however, also noted that further progress is needed and made a number of recommendations concerning initiatives to be taken to strengthen this cooperation. A summary of the key input received is presented below:

- The **WSC** and the concepts underlying its creation need to be promoted – today, the WSC is not known among standardization's stakeholders and there is a need to raise awareness of its existence. WSC visibility and cooperation with other organizations (notably intergovernmental organizations with interests in standardization) should also be actively promoted;
- it is considered **imperative** to achieve and strengthen **harmonized policies** (at least between ISO and IEC) on **patents, intellectual property rights (IPR), global relevance and pricing**;
- the three organizations (and notably ISO and IEC) need to **share best practices concerning collaboration with other international organizations** (primarily intergovernmental) **and with other key SDOs**, and to coordinate their activities in this area;
- the three organizations (and notably ISO and IEC) need to **define mechanisms** (such as members' surveys, fora and workshops, follow-up from TCs) **to address issues of converging technologies** – ever more important given the current trends in industry;
- in this respect, opportunities for **improving mechanisms to coordinate programmes and work, possibly leading to the creation of joint committees** should be seriously explored.

A significant group of NSBs, members of both ISO and IEC, advocated the possibility of stronger integration between the two organizations – noting, on the one hand, the importance of current trends in converging technologies and, on the other hand, the potential for rationalization and optimization.

Finally, some members mentioned that ISO should support COPOLCO and CASCO in their request to participate in/obtain access to standards development activities of interest to them in IEC and ITU-T.

6 Inclusiveness

ISO considers itself inclusive rather than exclusive in its relationships with other international organizations and standards developing organizations and expresses the view that, as long as the fundamental values of the organization are protected, ISO can only gain from cooperative relationships that can increase the speed, scope and market relevance of ISO standards.

To what extent is ISO putting this stated intention into application in its current practices and processes?

Should ISO take further steps to develop cooperation with other international organizations and standards developing organizations? If so, could you indicate which specific organizations should be considered first to extend such cooperation and what type of cooperation should be sought?

In general terms, the **respondents support the current policy** and consider that the application of ISO's inclusiveness intentions can be rated, depending on the different views, between "sufficient" and "highly satisfactory".

There is also **unanimous consensus on the importance of collaborating with other intergovernmental organizations and with private SDOs having a global impact**, as well as on the need to extend this cooperation further – although many underline that preserving the integrity of the ISO process is paramount, especially in relation to national voting and ISO members' rights to adopt ISO standards, whilst one respondent indicated the possibility of reconsidering ISO's "fundamental principles" with a view to achieving greater flexibility to relate with such SDOs.

In any case, the proposal to **develop a generic model agreement to deal with other standards developing organizations** was shared by many ISO members, with no conflicting position. Some members underlined, however, that the commercial implications of such an agreement for the ISO members must be addressed.

Only one response went as far as recommending that the possibility be explored of ISO's engaging in formal accreditation of SDOs developing global standards, under specific conditions.

Several members noted the positive role of the Vienna Agreement, and that it could be considered to some extent as a useful model, in particular for the actual implementation of ISO standards.

About the type of organizations to be considered first, the views of ISO members differ, with four different groups identified:

- CODEX, OECD, UN/ECE, IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) and other intergovernmental entities;
- US SDOs;
- industry associations and consortia (primarily in the high-tech fields);
- global sector initiatives such as the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI).

Some members mentioned that, in order to establish partnership agreements, **it was necessary to define precise criteria for selecting and prioritizing** the selection of partner SDOs.

7 Use of ISO standards in relation to technical regulations

As stated in the ISO Strategies 2002-2004, "ISO will foster and promote the use of International Standards to assist in harmonizing technical regulations and reducing technical barriers to trade that the latter might create, in line with the recommendations from the World Trade Organization (WTO). This implies closer collaboration with intergovernmental agencies involved in such harmonization".

What is your opinion of the current trend concerning the linkage between standards and technical regulations?

What kind of development do you think would be desirable and what should ISO do to progress on this matter?

There is general appreciation for the increased role that standards play in providing a foundation for use in technical regulations, and ISO's stakeholders believe that this trend is going to continue and intensify.

Among various positive aspects, it was underlined that reference to standards in technical regulations allows regulators to achieve substantial added value in terms of transparency and stakeholder representation (essential aspects of the voluntary consensus system). Reference to standards in technical regulations is also a very successful instrument for deregulation, another major trend for markets and society. It allows better use of technical expertise, ensures acceptance by stakeholders and provides adequate maintenance mechanisms to adjust to technological change.

However, a number of sensitive issues were underlined:

- so far, apart from the WTO TBT Agreement, which sets a principle, there is **no general mechanism in place at the international level to organize and monitor the use of standards in relation to regulations;**
- **participation of regulatory authorities** in the standards development process **is often insufficient;**
- **regulatory requirements to be considered are often diverse** or even conflicting – difficult to properly take into consideration and to manage.

Recommendations on desirable developments and action to be taken by ISO in this field can be grouped into three categories and are summarized below:

Collection of information and promotion

- A global survey of how ISO standards are used in technical regulations in the various countries should be undertaken;
- ISO should develop guides to facilitate the process of reference to standards in regulations and should promote the concept of Global Relevance in Technical Regulations;
- ISO should proactively seek collaboration with Intergovernmental Organizations involved in the harmonization of technical regulations.

Modification/improvement of processes

- The New Work Item proposal process should be revised to take into consideration from the outset the particular requirements of standards that might be suitable for use in technical regulations (*see below under question 9*);
- participation of representatives of regulatory agencies in the ISO process should be encouraged and facilitated – in general, but also particularly in relation to standards that are suitable for use in technical regulations;
- when it can ultimately improve the market relevance of ISO standards, specific needs of regulators (safety, health, environmental, security issues) should be identified and addressed from the very early stages, ensuring, for example, adequate participation of consumer and civil society representatives in the process;
- global relevance principles and performance-based standards are especially important for ensuring the suitability of standards for use in technical regulations, and should be adequately promoted;

Policy development and partnerships

- Establish closer contacts with intergovernmental agencies engaged in activities related to technical regulations (WHO, UN/ECE, CODEX, etc.);
- cooperate in the definition of guides/best practices for the development of technical regulations and the use of reference to standards in TR (consider e.g. the UN/ECE "Common Regulatory Objective" model).

8 Providing support to conformity assessment

As stated in the ISO Strategies 2002-2004, "ISO standards shall be amenable for use in conformity assessment and shall promote quality and reliability at competitive prices, while contributing to a sustainable development of the world economy, at all levels of industry and trade for the ultimate benefit of consumers".

Do you consider that ISO is on the right track to produce a comprehensive set of International Standards and Guides relating to conformity assessments practices and recognition?

How far should ISO move "downstream", and get involved in monitoring the implementation of ISO's standards and the use of ISO's name in relation to conformity assessment?

Should ISO be involved in operating, evaluating or promoting MRAs (Mutual Recognition Agreements)?

There is broad consensus on and general appreciation of the positive work of CASCO and the progress made with the production of International Standards and Guides for conformity assessment and recognition. Respondents strongly support the role of ISO as developer and supplier of a comprehensive, high quality foundation (standards and guides) for conformity assessment practices and recognition, and encourage the Organization to continue its efforts and remain focused on this mission.

Obviously there are serious concerns about the way ISO standards are applied and particularly about the different levels of application by different players in various countries around the world. ISO members clearly realize the global risk for ISO's image and integrity that arises from the misuse of ISO standards and from improper or unethical practices.

However, the vast majority of ISO members believe that **ISO should not be involved in monitoring the implementation** of its standards, for instance through accreditation practices, because that is not its intended role and the organization lacks the expertise, reach and resources needed to successfully conduct such an activity.

To support better understanding and promote correct implementation of ISO's standards, respondents have recommended three main lines of action:

- better **data collection by TCs and CASCO** concerning the application of ISO standards, along with reporting cases of malpractice and input on needed clarifications or improvements;
- stronger **involvement of ISO in education and promotion**, at different levels, regarding the role and practices of conformity assessment – including the development of supporting material (such as guides and training material) and organization of various initiatives;
- **strengthen the links and cooperation with IAF and ILAC.**

Among the other comments received, it is worth noting:

- the need to better define **minimum requirements** and the way they are to be treated (the inability to define minimum requirements represents an obstacle to trade, especially in the case of regulated products);
- the efforts to be undertaken to **strengthen the role of CASCO**, to allow CASCO to exercise leadership in regard to other international fora for accreditation and certification organizations.

Finally, the vast majority of ISO members clearly **indicate that ISO should not be directly involved in MRAs** (some members even expressed their opposition to MRAs as such, contending that they represent an obstacle to international harmonization).

The above positions, however, while shared by a large majority of ISO members, are not unanimous. One position expressly recommended ISO's direct involvement in monitoring the implementation of its standards, and another in the promotion and operation of MRAs.

9 Processes and deliverables

The ISO standards development process is designed to offer an optimal balance between key requirements such as effectiveness and relevance (including timeliness), openness, transparency, impartiality and consensus, coherence and the development dimension. Considering the history of the organization, the number and the success of the standards produced so far, it is legitimate to recognize that ISO follows a proven, comprehensive and stable process. This process, however, incorporates several levels of flexibility and offers to stakeholders a variety of deliverables, covering different needs and representing different degrees of consensus (Public Available Specifications, Technical Specifications, Technical Reports, International Standards, ISO Guides, Technology Trend Assessments, International Workshop Agreements).

What is your opinion on the existing ISO process and deliverables?

Do you see any particular problem or area for improvement that you would like to point out?

The respondents generally express a positive opinion about the existing ISO processes and range of deliverables, although there are different perceptions of the relative importance of various elements – for example, according to one position, pursuing *process optimization (notably further time reduction for developing full international standards)* is preferred to providing a choice of deliverables, whilst according to another view, *ISO's range of deliverables is an adequate response to meet different market needs.*

Recommendations from ISO stakeholders on actions to be undertaken by ISO to further improve its processes and deliverables are summarized below:

Deliverables

- There is a lack of awareness of ISO's deliverables other than International Standards – particularly regarding the adequate context for their application and the specific benefits and procedures relating to each of them. Awareness-building **and effective promotion** actions need to be undertaken;
- the number of deliverables and their differences contribute to confuse many stakeholder groups, often including professionals and experts with sound experience in standardization. A **simplification, possibly grouping several of the different documents**, should be seriously considered;
- **harmonization with IEC** should be pursued.

Process efficiency

- Further progress should be made to reduce the time needed to publish an International Standard. Main bottlenecks have already been identified (by the TMB and other groups, such as ITSIG, working on process optimization) primarily regarding the preparation of revised texts after completion of DIS and FDIS balloting, on one hand, and the adoption of project management techniques and prioritization, on the other hand. Action must be taken at the organizational/procedural and IT/technical levels to introduce and drive change;
- performance monitoring should be improved, introducing and measuring indicators at TC/SC and sectorial levels;
- two responses recommended that the impact of the current language policy on the efficiency of the standardization process be reviewed.

Process structure

- Many respondents pointed out that **more attention should be devoted to the phase preceding the initiation of work. Feasibility studies** should be undertaken including consideration of **GMR principles, cost-benefit analysis, potential link and relation with technical regulations**. This implies, as already mentioned with reference to other fundamental questions, reviewing the procedure for New Work Items approval. On one hand, this will require the introduction of more elaborate feasibility studies to replace (or supplement) the SVAT tool (Standard Value Assessment Tool) and, on the other hand, it will mean re-considering the 5 P-members rule (noting that in some highly specialized sectors, key industry interests could be quite concentrated as a result of mergers and consolidation processes and other factors, and that in other cases it could be difficult for developing countries to attract P-members even if a subject is important for many countries);
- a special process should be defined to **more effectively address converging technologies** (including IEC and ITU-T), minimizing the risk of duplication of efforts and the lack of harmonization;
- some aspects of the standards development process should be revised to provide more effective mechanisms to involve external expert groups (*cf. the comments already reported under question 2, Stakeholders, concerning facilitation of participation, broader dissemination of documents at early stages, etc.*)

Other aspects

- Simplification of terminology;
- change in the current way of managing amendments and corrigenda (to be treated in full);
- development of further supporting material for technical experts, such as guides, best practices, case studies, training material;
- strengthening the role of working group conveners;
- updating of forecast delivery/production dates.

10 IT tools

In the course of the past few years, ISO and its members have developed IT systems, services and tools, creating what we is today ISO's Enterprise Portal, which offers the ISO community a state-of-the-art and evolving technical infrastructure supporting international standardization activities. These services (ISO eServices) allow more and more the various ISO stakeholders – and notably standards developers – to work electronically in a harmonized, user friendly but highly structured environment, and have been instrumental in achieving important efficiency and quality gains.

*What is the level of use of the ISO eServices within your organization and how are they judged?
What should ISO do to make further progress in this matter?*

ISO's **e-Services are extensively used and even considered indispensable** by a vast majority of respondents. Interestingly, many positive remarks have been received from ISO members in countries with economies in transition and developing countries, as well as from industrial nations geographically remote from Geneva, which have found great value in using ISO's e-Services to support standardization activities.

To quote some respondents, it appears that the *ISO portal offers the right mix of technical, commercial and PR information and ISO's e-Services have greatly improved NSBs' work efficiency.*

There is unanimous support of the need and importance of further progress and investment in this field.

Recommendations from ISO stakeholders on initiatives and developments to be undertaken by ISO to further improve its e-Services are summarized below:

Extension and harmonization of the use of ISO's e-Services supporting standards development

- Many respondents have commented that, unlike the case of DIS and FDIS circulation and the related e-Balloting application (for which the process is harmonized and coordinated by the ISO/CS), there are significant problems with the distribution of, and access to, TC/SC documents for many TC/SCs that do not use the ISOTC server (and in some cases also for those using the ISOTC server, due to a lack of harmonization). For this reason, it was **strongly recommended that the working methods of all TC/SCs** be unified by adopting the policy and rules applied by ISO/CS (following the requirements specified by the TMB and ITSIG), particularly as far as the distribution of documents is concerned. Some members also recommended making the use of the ISOTC server mandatory, after a given period of time, for the circulation of TC/SC working documents;

- in connection with the above point, the **need for standardized electronic notifications** was underlined (an issue also applicable to other fields – although notifications relating to the standards development process are the first priority);
- many ISO members underlined the importance of extending the ISOTC server's functionalities, introducing e-Balloting at all stages, new tools to support committee work and further implementation of the ISO Global Directory (actions already envisaged in the framework of the ITSIG and ISO/CS plans);
- it was stated that ISO and its members should actively support the **replication of ISO's e-Services at national level** and should even favour regional harmonization.

Other areas of improvement

- Some respondents noted that further efforts need to be made to simplify the current systems and increase their user-friendliness;
- the flow of automatic notifications should be reviewed – with a view to reducing the amount of information and communication received by users, in particular the TC/SC Chairs;
- easier and faster ways for ISO members to search and retrieve documents should be introduced;
- new developments in document authoring and data exchange (e.g. based on XML) should be pursued, aimed at supporting further productivity increases for the ISO members;
- some respondents would like to see more documents available in free areas (not password protected) of ISO Online;
- other respondents pointed out that the introduction of harmonized principles and solutions for Digital Rights Management (DRM) would be highly desirable.

Training and communications

- It was stated that ISO's e-Services are not yet very well known among ISO's stakeholders and that promotion is needed to increase awareness (these services are an important achievement of ISO and offer significant value to stakeholders);
- the visibility of the international helpdesk should be increased (another important and valuable service that should be actively promoted);
- training has been a very important factor in facilitating the understanding and use of ISO's e-Services – it should be extended and strongly promoted.

11 Education and communication

ISO, along with IEC and ITU-T, recognize that there are steadily growing education and information needs among the various stakeholders involved in international standardization.

At the same time, the international standards organizations are conscious that increasing communication efforts should be undertaken to raise the awareness of industry, governments and society forces with respect to the importance of standardization and the benefits it brings to society. Several initiatives are underway in ISO, including an e-Learning project, considered the best option for addressing some of the identified needs.

Do you concur with this view?

Which are the most important stakeholder groups needing to be served, and which fields deserve the highest attention in your opinion?

Respondents broadly concur with the proposed view and on the need for a global effort to be undertaken by ISO and its members to address the growing education and information needs of ISO's stakeholders.

On the one hand, surveys of material developed and experience gained by ISO members should be regularly undertaken and updated. On the other hand, ISO should be involved in developing material designed for "training the trainers" and intended to be disseminated at national level. The need to follow a multicultural approach was also underlined.

In terms of communication, **campaigns targeting the main categories of stakeholders** (industry – particularly management and business leaders, consumers, governments, civil society) should be planned and coordinated. **Their primary purpose should be to highlight the benefits that standardization** brings to the economy and society.

Concerning the stakeholder groups to be served and fields to be covered by ISO's education and training initiatives, opinions vary in regard to relative importance and priority. In general terms, however, ISO members confirm the **three high priority categories identified** in ISO's feasibility study on e-Learning, i.e.: **learners in higher education** ("the managers of the future"), **technical experts** (and especially TC/SC Chairmen and secretaries and WG conveners) and **staff of NSBs, in particular from developing countries**.

Specific interests in particular fields have been indicated by several ISO members (including management systems standards; standards for the IT sector; patents and IPR issues for standardization, etc.).

12 Resources and services provided by ISO/CS

The activities of the ISO Central Secretariat can be subdivided into "core services", for the performance of general statutory tasks, international and regional relations, assistance to the membership, monitoring of the standardization processes, promotion and communication, and "additional services" (such as IT services, sponsored initiatives and training), for providing specific added value to members and third parties. Funding sources can be divided into three main categories: membership subscription fees, direct sales and royalties and sponsorships/donations (to support specific programmes, such as assistance to developing countries). Taking into account the existing situation and the trends that are most likely to characterize the medium-term future (such as the impact of economic slowdown on sales, desired increase in national adoptions and increased demands for services required of the ISO/CS on the part of ISO members and third parties), ISO's policy on the question of the balance between these various funding components will have to be adjusted to its strategic objectives.

What is your organization's view on the services required of the ISO/CS and on the mechanisms being used to fund the ISO/CS?

In general terms, the current situation is considered satisfactory. Many ISO members have commented that the ISO/CS offers highly competent and good quality services – good value in exchange for the membership fees paid by the ISO members – and the current balance of funding sources is also considered appropriate. Only one response addressed the issue of the location of the ISO/CS in Geneva, indicating that, whilst not recommending a transfer, consideration should be given to IEC's experience in opening overseas offices.

Three main sets of comments have been received for this question, concerning:

- analysis, planning and new options;
- charged services;
- specific activities.

Analysis, planning and new options

- The ISO/CS should regularly conduct studies of NSB operations and benchmark with other NGOs – to assess its relative performance;
- analysis of functions that could be outsourced to NSBs or external service providers should be undertaken at regular intervals, assessing "make-or-buy" options and identifying potential for improvement;
- the possibility of introducing mechanisms of "sector funding" could be investigated, with the objective of reducing reliance on ISO members;
- it was noted, according to one position, that one element of the existing funding model (ISO/CS sales) leads to inherent conflict between ISO/CS and NSB interests – a conflict primarily involving sales of ISO "original" standards versus national adoptions – and should be revisited.

Charged services

- Most members have not expressed a specific view on this issue, supporting – at least implicitly – the current ISO policy approved by Council in 2001 and introducing the concept of "charged services" to be paid, other than by third parties, by ISO members benefiting from ad hoc services provided by the ISO/CS on top of the "basic services" covered by membership fees;
- one position expressed concern about the possible additional pressure on larger ISO members due to the application of the concept of charged services. In particular it was noted that IT services represent today a key driver for the organization, and should be considered part of the basic services covered by membership fees;
- several members (including some from developing countries) suggested that the ISO/CS should be engaged in additional activities, such as technical consultation and training services, on a charged basis.

Specific activities

- Concerning ISO/CS technical work it was noted, according to one position, that more efforts should be devoted to investigating the technical correctness of standards as opposed to editorial checking (as practiced at present);
- stronger involvement/participation of ISO/CS technical programme managers (TPMs) in TC/SC activities (such as attending plenary meetings) was recommended;
- Finally it was noted, according to one position, that the structure and format of the ISO General Assembly could be revised to make it more interactive.