

1998

1999

2000

2001

Raising Standards
for the World

ISO Strategies

2002 - 2004

2002

2003

2004

2005

2006

2007

2008

2009

ISO/GEN 15: 2001



ISO strategies 2002-2004

Foreword

The ISO strategic plan for the period 2002-2004 provides a description of the goals that the Organization intends to achieve in this timeframe and of the main lines of action to be undertaken in order to reach those goals.

The first two sections – “ISO's Vision” and “ISO's Key Objectives” – cover a much longer period of time and represent a long-term commitment for the Organization. The statements contained in these sections are an essential component of the strategic framework as a whole, upon which hinge the major medium- and short-term strategies and related strategic elements highlighted in the rest of the document.

ISO's vision

1 On the threshold of the 21st century, the prevailing economic and social trends offer great opportunities for ISO to build and strengthen its position as the leading international standardization body in the world, but they also present risks. The considerable growth in international trade during the past decade has had an enormous impact on the traditional structure of the world's economy and seems likely to continue with renewed strength in this new century, bringing even more substantial and rapid change.

This transformation is driven by several forces, including the abundance of capital on the international markets, the speed of growth, the pervasiveness of technology and trends towards the opening of markets and free competition. Standards have served as an important tool in the development of international trade and will have a key role to play in the emerging world market.

Another major trend is the increasing demand for safety and for preservation of the environment and natural resources, leading to the development of new and more constraining regulations which may constitute barriers to trade. Here again, international standards can be used as a most appropriate means to avoid such undesirable results.

In this framework, the demand for products and services that ISO can provide has never been greater. ISO is called upon to lay down a solid and equitable foundation for the global exchange of goods and services, incorporating all the key elements required by market and societal forces: rationality, practical applicability, environmental protection for

sustainable development, safeguards for safety and health, and equal opportunity to engage in world trade.

ISO is in a unique position to support and equilibrate the continuous development of world trade. This position derives from its record of high-quality achievement and from the broad and balanced representation of interests ensured by its membership, which includes the national standards bodies of nearly 140 countries – the majority are in countries with developing or transition economies.

However, if this position is to be preserved and strengthened, ISO must take on more responsibility and proactively demonstrate its ability to meet the market and societal demands for global standards and conformity assessment programmes. To meet this objective, ISO shall continuously strive to:

- refine the application of consensus and transparency principles in standardization;
- increase the effectiveness of the Organization and its procedures;
- extend its dialogue with stakeholders and
- forge closer ties with other standards developing organizations.

ISO will also endeavour to make optimal use of advanced information and communication technologies with a view to continuously improving the efficiency of its processes and facilitating the effective, convenient and affordable participation of its constituency in all standardization activities.

ISO's strategies for the years 2002-2004 lay the groundwork required for facing these challenges by providing both short-term and long-term plans for the Organization's future.

Standardization is essentially an economic undertaking made possible by achieving widespread agreement on the coherent and mutually beneficial use of science, technology and business know-how. The prime object of ISO and its governance is laid down in the *ISO Statutes*, i.e. to promote the development of standardization and related activities in the world with a view to facilitating international exchange of goods and services and to developing cooperation in the sphere of intellectual, scientific and economic activity. In the light of present and anticipated developments, the key objectives of ISO may be enumerated as follows:

- 2.1** ISO shall produce International Standards and actively promote their voluntary adoption and use in order to assist worldwide industry and trade to become as efficient as possible.
- 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.
 - ISO standards will promote human and societal benefits whenever applicable in relation to health, safety and the environment, and in relation to general market and growing trade needs.
 - ISO standards will, where applicable, be suitable for reference in the regulatory and procurement activities of federal, state and local authorities.
- 2.2** ISO will foster and promote the use of International Standards to assist in harmonizing technical regulations and reducing the technical barriers to trade that the latter might create: this implies closer collaboration with intergovernmental agencies involved in such harmonization.
- 2.3** ISO shall be organized in a democratic manner and attempt to accommodate the views and wishes of all its members with governance values respecting the need for balanced representation and consensus-based decision-making.
- 2.4** In its capacity as the world's largest standardization body, ISO will make an active effort to counteract the tendency towards greater inequality between the developing countries and the rest of the world.
- 2.5** ISO will encourage maximum implementation of ISO standards in order to facilitate global trade.
- 2.6** ISO will make an active effort to ensure that the relationship between the three global standardization bodies – ISO, IEC and

ITU – develops in such a way that the three organizations together will become the worldwide focal point for standardization and conformity assessment and related activities.

- 2.7** ISO shall have an organization capable of quickly adapting to change and to the needs of the world community, which it serves. In each of its undertakings, ISO shall perform as well as, or better than, any other international standardizing organization in the world.
- 2.8** ISO will improve its visibility and cooperation with the various regions of the world and encourage regional activities that can form a direct basis for global standardization and conformity assessment.
- 2.9** ISO will offer its mechanism to process documents, prepared by organizations operating at international or regional level, into International Standards.
- 2.10** In addition to serving the traditional stakeholders, ISO will make a special effort to satisfy specific needs that arise from the emergence of transnational companies.

The key concepts underlying ISO's operational model and business stance are:

Value - Partnership - Optimization

These words summarize the key strategic lines to be pursued by ISO:

- to understand, serve and possibly anticipate market needs (*value*);
- to ensure the maximum participation and collaboration of all the relevant parties during the various stages of work within the ISO system (*partnership*);
- to continuously improve the core business processes of the Organization (*optimization*), by securing and effectively using the resources required to meet the standardization needs of the 21st century, while making substantial use of information and communication technologies.

From a full analysis of ISO's current strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, five major strategies have been built up from relevant strategic elements. These are expressed as commitments to:

- increasing ISO's market relevance;
- strengthening ISO's international influence and institutional recognition;
- promoting the ISO system and its standards;
- optimizing the use of resources; and
- supporting national standards bodies in developing countries.

3.1 Increasing ISO's market relevance

3.1.1 Better understanding market needs and improving the participation of enterprises

The most important factors affecting ISO's market relevance concern the Organization's ability to understand and serve market needs, and to assure the best possible participation of enterprises in the ISO system. These two aspects are clearly interrelated and mutually supportive because better participation of enterprises – with greater involvement of industry's management in important decision-making within ISO's standards development process – will improve the understanding of market needs which, in turn, will improve enterprise participation.

ISO will position itself to anticipate market needs for standardization so that, proceeding one step ahead of market consolidation, the Organization can take more proactive initiatives in standards development.

ISO will intensify its efforts to pursue these objectives, to be the leading force offering *international market-relevant standards*. More efforts will be dedicated to analyzing the standardization needs of various industry sectors, including a systematic review of the adoption/use of existing International Standards and of the status of current projects, together with a careful evaluation and planning of possible future initiatives, in accordance with characteristics and trends in the various industries. ISO should also keenly and proactively continue to search for new products and services to meet ever changing market needs.

Services (including, among others finance, insurance, tourism, engineering, retail, education) represent an exemplary group of "sectors" where the need for International Standards is felt very strongly, due to the increasing emphasis on free and open international trade. ISO is committed to making its best effort to extend its standards development programmes into these fields for the benefit of consumers of services at all levels. ISO intends to build up close cooperation with the various organizations representing relevant interests in the service sectors and to assume a coordination role in promoting more consistent standardization in these sectors.

E-business, probably the most important single phenomenon influencing the growth of international trade and the evolution of the world economy, is another exemplary case. E-business is a "horizontal" field which, in a complex way, combines information technology developments with a variety of business approaches, advances in general processes and changes in consumer and society behaviour. As e-business matures and expands, more and more issues regarding technical standards, legal agreements and "best practices" emerge. Businesses and public authorities need to create and apply a consistent framework that will support the development of the market, the confidence of customers and the protection of the rights of the various parties concerned. These agreements cover a wide variety of fields and a combination of aspects for which ISO can provide a substantial contribution. ISO is committed to making its best efforts to identify needs and eventually to promote standards development programmes in this area, seeking close cooperation with the various organizations that represent the relevant interests in the e-business field.

Flexibility is a key element in strengthening the ISO *value* proposition and in providing optimal service for different groups of stakeholders. ISO is committed to enhancing its ability to meet different interests and needs in a flexible way, focusing its efforts on:

- the development of sectoral initiatives, to forge new, and strengthen existing links with market forces, to gather input, open dialogue and raise issues beyond the "formal" ISO structures and processes;

- the effective launching and promotion of ISO's *new deliverables*, to serve the various levels of consensus needed by different sectors and communities;
- collaboration with other standards developing organizations, industry associations and consortia, to get closer to the specific needs and approaches expressed by particular communities or sectors (see item 3.2.2 and Annex);
- easier and more cost-effective access to the ISO system and application of the ISO procedures by means of a set of advanced software services (with the objective of offering to different interest groups a *plug and play* environment implementing rich functionality and structured procedures).

All of these elements will help to broaden and strengthen the participation of enterprises within the ISO system – small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) as well as large organizations. For this purpose, more active representation will be envisaged for enterprises or industry associations in the ISO activities.

Efforts will also be devoted to stimulate active participation and responsibility in the technical bodies for enterprises or other entities representing groups of enterprises (especially in the case of SMEs), making use of better communication and flexibility as described above.

3.1.2 More effective representation of consumers and social forces

ISO's key objectives state that the work of the Organization is carried out for the "ultimate benefit of consumers". ISO will therefore continue to be extremely concerned about the transparency of its activities and will improve its ability to meet the expectations of these end users, who are the ultimate beneficiaries of its standards.

ISO will strive to strengthen cooperation with international, regional and national consumer organizations wishing to support ISO's objectives, so that international standardization may benefit from greater consumer awareness and confidence, as well as from increased consumer-interest input to national delegations to ISO technical committees.

For addressing consumer and social issues, it is particularly important to introduce and promote "top-down" elements in the ISO approach, as already envisaged above in the case of sectoral initiatives. Areas of greatest concern at present include: the needs of elderly and disabled persons, issues related to climate change and the representation of consumer views in the fields of e-business and services.

ISO will work actively to promote standardization activities in these fields, maintaining a focused effort to ensure the involvement of consumers and all other relevant social partners at the various stages in

the standards development process, and to extend the participation of consumer interest groups from developing countries.

3.1.3 Strengthening technical programme management

To increase market-relevance, it is essential to ensure that technical programme management follows guidelines that completely adhere to the focus set on market needs. The key strategies required for this purpose are presented below.

Improving systematic priority-setting

ISO has introduced and will continue to actively implement rules and procedures within the technical committee/sub-committee (TC/SC) system to improve the identification and ranking of priorities for International Standards in relation to the particular timing and market needs of specific sectors. For this purpose, a Business Plan template has been introduced for all TCs to identify market needs in their fields, with a view to relating their work programmes – and the resources available to their committee - to identified market priorities. As an additional measure, a *Standards Value Assessment Tool* has been introduced for the evaluation of new work item proposals, the establishment of new committees and the review of existing standards, to ensure that certain key criteria related to market relevance are considered when taking these decisions. These tools need to be effectively and consistently applied by the whole TC community, to optimize the work programme of each TC and to contribute to a harmonized application of the relevant criteria.

Emphasis will continue to be placed on the completion of high priority standard projects, and on making use of new types of publications that represent a lower level of consensus when full agreement on technical solutions and/or market needs cannot be reached within the available time frame. A further commitment will be made so that International Standards developed by ISO are periodically updated to preserve their market relevance, especially standards related to emerging/progressing technologies.

When responding to important issues related to ISO's policy and its new work, members of committees and experts in working groups should make all reasonable efforts to ensure that their decisions reflect the viewpoint of higher level management in the relevant industries and other parties concerned in their own countries.

Proactive application of project management concepts and techniques

ISO will insist much more on the fact that approved work has to be actively and successfully pursued to completion using appropriate project management techniques to ensure both the commitment of nec-

essary resources and timely results. Work for which these commitments are not met will be dropped from consideration, at least for the immediate future.

A planned completion date shall be set and a supporting timetable of actions shall be established for each project, with a requirement and procedure for the ISO Central Secretariat (ISO/CS) staff, the parent TC, and the responsible member body to be informed when slippage occurs or is expected, so that possible assistance or remedial action may be considered. Initiatives taken in the framework of the previous strategic plan have been deemed successful and will progress to ensure continuous improvement.

Periodic re-evaluation of the need to maintain standing committees

It is recognized- in nearly all standardization organizations – that TCs, SCs and other standing committees/groups tend to remain in existence indefinitely and that, as long as they exist, they will undertake new work. Therefore, ISO will periodically re-evaluate the market need for maintaining the existence of any of its standing committees, including all TCs and SCs.

Justification for the continued existence of TCs can be supported, for example, by the willingness of directly affected parties to provide funding to support TC/SC secretariats. Moreover, it is clear that

certain TCs dealing with fundamental and horizontal subjects (units, technical drawings, symbols, etc.) may always be needed. Nevertheless, it is true to say that unless ISO as a whole, i.e. its policy and technical governance bodies, are successful in assessing if there is a continuing need for all of its standing committees, it will be increasingly difficult to contain ISO's cost levels and maintain its long-term relevance.

Enhancing TC/SC leadership training and ensuring secretariat support obligations

To help ensure effective programme management, priority setting and project management, ISO and its members undertake to ensure adequate training of chairmen and secretaries of TCs and SCs, particularly in countries taking up secretariats for the first time. Performance standards for secretariats shall be developed to provide a basis for evaluating their work in administering work programmes and for determining what remedial action may be needed.

In addition, ISO will thoroughly enforce adherence to the obligations that TC/SC secretariats have to ISO as a whole.

3.2 Strengthening ISO's international influence and institutional recognition

3.2.1 Adopting International Standards and guides as a basis for institutional recognition

ISO has made substantial progress in the last few years and has achieved a remarkable level of institutional recognition by virtue of its core values, principles (voluntary consensus, openness, transparency of procedures, broadest representation of national interests) and proven record.

In particular, the outlook and practice of the ISO system is in complete harmony with that of the World Trade Organization (WTO). It is a policy of the WTO to encourage the adoption and use of international standards as a basis for technical regulations and standards, and of international guides as a basis for conformity assessment procedures, whenever possible. ISO is well aware of, and in line with the provisions of the WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) and with the recommendations of the WTO/TBT Committee. ISO members understand that the use of relevant international standards and international guides as bases for national standards and conformity assessment systems provide essential grounds for institutional recognition.

Today, however, ISO is in a position to make further progress and to reach the highest level of institutional recognition. National public authorities, intergovernmental and other international organizations increasingly recognize the trustworthiness of ISO standards and guides, which are the result of an open process and the expression of an optimal level of consensus among market and social forces in the community of nations. Their value can be fully exploited, therefore, to support the creation of the regulatory infrastructure needed by the world market.

ISO will continue its efforts to strengthen its partnership with the WTO and to establish similar relationships with other institutions, such as UN agencies and other international, regional or national organizations.

This general objective is served by initiatives such as the creation of the Forum for Standards Actions in the Global Market (SGM Forum), established in 1999 with an active contribution from ISO. The SGM Forum now includes 11 member organizations (ICC, ICSCA, IFAN, IEC, ISO, ITU, ITC-UNCTAD/WTO, UNCTAD, UN/ECE, UNIDO, WIPO¹⁾, and WTO as an observer. The intention is to bring together international organizations with a stake in standardization, representing both the private and governmental sectors, to exchange views and to coordinate their activities.

1. **ICC:** International Chamber of Commerce

ICSCA: Industry Cooperation on Standards and Conformity Assessment

IFAN: International Federation of Standards Users

ITC-UNCTAD/WTO: International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO

UNCTAD: United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

UN/ECE: United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

UNIDO: United Nations Industrial Development Organization

WIPO: World Intellectual Property Organization

3.2.2 Providing unique added value for the ISO constituency and its partners

The institutional recognition of ISO standards and guides, in turn, is one of the most important added values that ISO can offer its constituency and stakeholders, and a key differentiating factor compared to industry consortia and other organizations which develop standards intended for use in world trade.

In line with its strategic goal of meeting different interests and needs in a flexible way, the ISO community is open to the possibility of providing alternative paths to different interest groups and standards developing organizations – through the new ISO deliverables or through other specific collaborative frameworks in partnership with ISO – to achieve a higher level of influence and institutional recognition. The guiding principle for ISO's relationship with other standards developing organizations are set out in the Annex (Council Resolution 14/2001).

Within this flexible environment, the ISO standards portfolio continues to stand as a coherent set of international agreements recognized as making a significant and efficient contribution to the removal of technical barriers to trade.

This added value deserves to be promoted and ISO should further its offer to develop collaborative efforts with regional or international interest groups or bodies that are ready to accept ISO's core principles and to see joint work evolve towards the status of International Standards.

3.2.3 Increasing the harmonization of the international standardization and conformity assessment system

ISO will increase its efforts to improve its collaborative relationships with IEC and ITU with the aim of establishing common lines of action which, while respecting the specificity of each organization, will provide credible evidence of a well-designed, coherent and effective "International Standardization System".

ISO will increase its efforts to harmonize and promote a global conformity assessment framework, i.e. a unified set of rules and consistent application at national level. This is the key to facilitating trade in goods and services and, in effect, to further improving the welfare of people throughout the world – under balanced, regulated, public protection and fair commercial competition. The WTO/TBT Agreement promotes the recognition of conformity assessment results produced in exporting countries, thereby reducing barriers to trade, and emphasizes that confidence in the continued reliability of conformity assessment results is a prerequisite to recognition of conformity assessment. In this regard, the fact of meeting the requirements of ISO/IEC standards and guides for conformity assessment activities

prepared by the ISO Committee on conformity assessment (CASCO) can be a useful benchmark of the technical competence and performance of conformity assessment bodies.

ISO will actively work to ensure that maximum transparency, openness and impartiality are maintained in agreements between ISO and regional standardization bodies, so that all regional and national views are reflected in ISO standards in a balanced manner. At the same time, the ISO members need to intensify their efforts to increase the scope and usefulness of International Standards and thereby minimize the need for specifically regional and national standardization activities (i.e. activities that do not have a related counterpart at international level).

3.3 Promoting the ISO system and its standards

3.3.1 Improving outreach to industrial leaders

It is necessary to convey the concept that standards have a strong impact on businesses and that involvement in international standardization and in ISO brings strategic and practical benefits to the participants and their sponsoring organizations.

Direct contacts with business, industrial, governmental and association leaders organized by the members, with support from the ISO Principal Officers and the Central Secretariat, will significantly help to improve understanding and appreciation of ISO at top and middle management levels in companies and other organizations, and to encourage these to become involved in ISO's major decision-making process on strategies, priorities and technical work.

It is also extremely important to improve understanding of:

- how the consensus principle actually operates in ISO (consensus among substantially affected parties, which does not mean unanimity, but rather an open and demonstrable attempt to achieve unanimity); and
- how it is possible for any grouping of enterprises, consumer associations or other organizations to maintain a balanced approach between adoption of the full consensus principle, on one hand, and quick response to specific, urgent needs, on the other hand, within the ISO framework, with the various products and services offered by the ISO process.

3.3.2 Improving communications and information delivery

A continued, strong effort to renew and improve communication is needed. The community of the ISO members should devise and implement, with a high degree of coordination: richer, updated and easy-

to-access information on the activities of the ISO system; comprehensive and modern information resources covering the whole spectrum of news, facts, points of view and reference information on standardization (to demonstrate how much it can affect business and human/social relationships); and new means for managing relationships with customers and the general public.

Confirming the trends anticipated a few years ago, the Internet is unleashing unprecedented potential in terms of access, interactivity and availability of information, which makes it now imperative to consider the Internet as the primary channel of communication to the various audiences potentially interested in the standardization system. This will require continuous rethinking of the overall information and communication strategy, with an "Internet-centred approach". The Internet should become the definitive reference medium, meaning that information and communication should be designed and delivered through the Internet first, all other forms of communication being regarded as "by-products".

3.3.3 Strengthening member commitments to demonstrate and promote the use of ISO standards

Creating ISO standards is a costly endeavour; to justify these costs, it is important to identify new and better ways of demonstrating that ISO standards are widely used.

The ISO system must ensure the development and/or acceptance of internationally applicable standards that facilitate international trade. Standards developed within the ISO environment must focus on projects that are market relevant and globally acceptable.

This should lead to less expenditure and greater use/implementation of the resulting International Standards, providing better justification of the cost of their development. ISO will look forward to:

- strengthening the commitment of all its members and other appropriate entities to using the ISO system where appropriate;
- linking positive votes with the commitment of the member bodies to effectively promote the implementation of the approved standards in their countries through formal national adoption and/or other techniques;
- demonstrating the wide use of International Standards (if there is insufficient evidence of wide use, consideration shall be given to withdrawing the International Standards concerned).

3.4 Optimizing the use of resources

3.4.1 Serving market needs and funding the operations accordingly

ISO will increase its efforts to gear its activities towards best serving the needs of the market. In line with this major objective, a specific initiative has been undertaken to describe and categorize the various services provided to different customer groups by the bodies comprising the ISO system (members, TC/SCs, policy development committees, Central Secretariat). The value added by the core services is being thoroughly assessed and compared with the costs incurred in providing them, and the exercise shall be taken further to optimize the allocation of resources and find the best "fit" with identified market needs.

The ISO governance bodies need to define and carry through a medium to long term optimization programme for this purpose, with clear indications, targets and monitoring for the allocation of resources among the different categories of services and among the different bodies that make up the ISO system.

The activities of the Central Secretariat have been subdivided into "basic services", for the performance of general statutory tasks, and "additional services", for providing specific added value to members and third parties. Funding sources can be divided into three main categories: subscription fees, sales (of products and services) and sponsorships/donations (to support specific programmes, such as assistance to developing countries). The ISO governance bodies should define clear strategic objectives with regard to the relative share of these funding components.

The *ISO Statutes* state that the Organization's objective is "*the development of standardization in the world with a view to facilitating international exchange of goods and services and to developing cooperation*". To meet this objective and face the challenges of the years to come, "basic services" (mostly supported by members' subscription fees) and "additional services" (mostly supported by revenues from services and sponsorships/donations) should both be pursued in an well balanced manner.

3.4.2 Focus on priorities and strict cost management

To optimize the use of available resources, it is essential to maintain a focused approach. ISO has introduced, and intends to consistently apply, strict criteria to ensure that appropriate resources are allocated to its highest priority programmes and lines of action.

To succeed, this approach has to be followed consistently at all levels within the system (Central Secretariat, policy development committees, technical committees) and requires the best possible coordination among the various bodies concerned.

Continuous improvement and cost reduction are also key factors. In all of its operations, central and distributed, ISO will make every conceiv-

able effort to improve its performance, devising new ways of working more intelligently by redesigning its processes, and by using Information and Communication Technology (ICT) solutions to make better use of available human resources. A careful cost-benefit analysis has to be undertaken, providing clear economic justification for each service required and for all new developments planned for improving the efficiency and the quality of operations.

3.4.3 Full exploitation of the ICT enabling potential

The use of modern ICT infrastructures and applications has proven to be extremely helpful in improving the efficiency of the standardization system's processes (reducing development times and costs) and in improving its openness (lowering the barriers to access).

Significant progress has been achieved in the last few years with the systematic introduction of Internet-based, computerized services to support mission-critical applications. Productivity at the Central Secretariat and within the member organizations has increased, and new services have changed the way the whole Organization works, including in particular the electronic distribution of official information to the ISO members, the creation of the repository of standards in electronic form, which is feeding the production and distribution chain of many members, and the introduction of electronic balloting. Strong collaboration and mutual understanding among peer organizations has fostered interoperability and the implementation of integrated solutions.

While continuing to pursue this objective, ISO has conceived, and is actively working on, the next step forward, towards a deep and complete transformation of the Organization. The ISO system is indeed on the verge of being re-designed as a virtual organization, whose core business processes are structured and managed to take full advantage of available ICT infrastructures and applications.

The cornerstone of this approach is the Internet, with a variety of underlying technologies, products, computing and business-related models that currently drive the fast-moving ICT sector. In strategic terms, there are four major areas of development (some of which are already partially covered by current projects) that ISO is addressing with a view to building a consistent virtual organization where:

- a) the entire standards development process is supported by a set of integrated modules that will provide a more open, flexible and productive working environment;
- b) decision-making and consensus-building are supported by structured, assisted electronic procedures;
- c) a comprehensive information resource is available to serve different communities of stakeholders (the ISO members, experts and the general public); and

- d) advanced electronic commerce models are available to support the delivery of products and services.

3.4.4 Protecting ISO's image, integrity and intellectual property

The protection of ISO's image and integrity, and of its intellectual property rights, are matters that deserve growing attention, especially in connection with two basic trends:

- the widespread use of ISO standards for management systems, and the related accreditation/certification/market control cycles where misinterpretations and misuses undermine ISO's image and integrity, and
- the substantial growth of electronic communication, creating new challenges in regard to the use of the ISO name and logo in cyberspace, and to possible infringements involving unauthorized duplication of ISO's copyrighted content.

To protect ISO's image and integrity, the Organization has approved a set of recommendations, and the ISO members are encouraged to use all legal means to deal with the main problems, in particular mendacious publicity, and to use their influence with accreditation bodies. More coordination among the ISO members and stronger action is needed to limit the spread of problems that could undermine consumer and business confidence and thus seriously damage the entire ISO system.

To protect ISO's intellectual property, the Organization urgently needs to define a set of principles and operational guidelines. These will have to be shared and consistently applied by the ISO members, with the assistance of the Central Secretariat, in all countries where there is evidence of violations, and with all the relevant international authorities (e.g. international arbitration frameworks, etc.).

3.5 Supporting national standards bodies in developing countries

3.5.1 Upgrading standardization infrastructures in developing countries

Experience gained by ISO in providing training and advisory services to ISO members from developing countries shows that assistance programmes could usefully be extended to focus on securing basic "threshold level" standardization infrastructures (metrology, calibration, standards information, testing and certification), which can become and remain viable in the particular social and economic environment of the country concerned. To a certain extent, similar needs exist in some ISO member countries that are in the process of transition

to market economies. There is significant opportunity here for ISO to use its experience to play an educational and focusing role with respect to international aid agencies and other donors, as emphasized by ISO and WTO in the framework of the WTO/TBT Committee.

3.5.2 Enhancing participation to international standardization by means of information technology

International standardization is adopting information and communication technologies (ICT) at a fast rate to support its working procedures and the delivery of and access to information. While the minimum level of infrastructure required to participate in the ISO system is now normally affordable and achieved by the vast majority of the ISO members, there is a risk that some ISO members in countries that do not have adequate ICT infrastructures or – as is more often the case – an adequate understanding and mastering of ICT solutions may become more isolated from mainstream international standardization.

For developing countries and countries with economies in transition, rapid progress in this area represents a great opportunity to catch up with the industrialized countries, if they can face the challenge of rapidly developing the necessary infrastructures and exploiting their potential to obtain easier and more affordable access to information, work processes and decision-making.

ISO intends to design and implement focused and systematic initiatives aimed at helping the national standards bodies in developing countries and economies in transition to make use and take advantage of ICT solutions, new working methods and ways of exchanging information in the areas of standardization and conformity assessment.

ISO will allocate resources and funds (at a level to be agreed by its governance bodies) and will seek synergy with donor programmes targeting specific countries or regions (such as the "Mediterranean 2000" project, a precursor in this approach) in order:

- to provide generalized informative support and helpdesk services;
- to assess the situation and needs of national standards bodies;
- to provide focused information and training material.

In addition, the national standards bodies in countries targeted by particular donor programmes will receive:

- equipment and customized software;
- training and on-site assistance services.

ISO intends to take advantage of all opportunities to extend the number of countries receiving support. In the medium-term, this support should reach most (if not all) of the ISO members in developing countries.

3.5.3 Donor programme support

Technical assistance programmes for developing countries are sponsored by many organizations, some at international level (e.g. UNCTAD, UNIDO and UNDP²) and many in the bilateral assistance context, involving national and regional governmental agencies. ISO members in donor countries are those best positioned to influence their own agencies, with appropriate support as needed from the ISO Programme for Developing Countries. The Programme should focus on influencing those agencies operating at international level.

2. UNDP: United Nations Development Programme

Summary of ISO's major strategies 2002-2004

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<i>Major Strategies Strategic elements</i>	<i>Initiating and responsible ISO body</i>	<i>Key tasks*</i>	<i>Implementing ISO bodies</i>
4.1 Increasing ISO's market relevance. Strategy addressing key objectives: 2.1, 2.3, 2.9 and 2.10			
Better understanding market needs and improving participation of enterprises	Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>Organizational improvements</i> – <i>Sector initiatives</i> – <i>Partnerships</i> 	Member body management, ISO/CS, TMB
More effective representation of consumers and social forces	Council (strategic guidelines) and COPOLCO (input and recommendations)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>Partnerships</i> – <i>Raising awareness</i> 	Member body secretariats, ISO/CS, COPOLCO
Strengthening technical programme management	Council (strategic guidelines) and TMB (rules, procedures)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>Enhancement and continuous management of procedures</i> – <i>Implementation support (e.g. tools, training)</i> – <i>Monitoring and control</i> 	Member body secretariats, ISO/CS (support functions)
4.2 Strengthening ISO's institutional recognition. Strategy addressing key objectives: 2.2, 2.5, 2.6, 2.8 and 2.9			
Adopting International Standards and guides as a basis for institutional recognition	Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>Awareness and implementation of WTO/TBT recommendations</i> – <i>Promotion of ISO's mechanisms and achievements to the WTO, working more closely with the TBT Committee</i> 	Members Central Secretariat
Providing unique added value to the ISO constituency	Council TMB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>Raising awareness</i> 	Members
Increasing harmonization of the international standardization and conformity assessment system	ISO/IEC/ITU-T World Standards Cooperation, ISO Council, CASCO (input for global conformity assessment framework)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>Definition and implementation of cooperation framework</i> 	Members, ISO/CS, CASCO

* Detailed indications concerning initiatives and target dates for the various strategic elements will be included in the pertinent working documents to be examined by Council

<i>Major Strategies Strategic elements</i>	<i>Initiating and responsible ISO body</i>	<i>Key tasks*</i>	<i>Implementing ISO bodies</i>
4.3 Promoting the ISO system and its standards. Strategy addressing key objectives: 2.1, 2.5, and 2.8			
Improving outreach to industrial leaders	Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>Ad hoc initiatives</i> – <i>Management of relationships</i> 	ISO/CS, Principal ISO Officers, member body senior management
Improving communications and information delivery	Council and GA (strategic guidelines) and ISO/CS (planning and control)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>Identification of issues and lines of action</i> – <i>Coordination of implementation</i> – <i>Monitoring and control</i> 	ISO/CS, regional organizations, member bodies
Commitment to demonstrate use of ISO standards	Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>Policy definition</i> – <i>Monitoring and control</i> 	Members
4.4 Optimizing the use of resources. Strategy addressing key objective: 2.7			
Serving market needs and funding operations accordingly	Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>Evaluation of alternative scenarios</i> – <i>Policy definition</i> – <i>Monitoring and control</i> 	Council (through ad hoc committees), ISO/CS, member bodies
Focus on priorities and strict cost management	Council TMB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>Priority setting</i> – <i>Policy definition</i> – <i>Monitoring and control</i> 	ISO/CS, member body secretariats
Full exploitation of the ICT potential	Council (together with ad hoc groups reporting to Council, e.g. ITSIG**)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>Definition of strategic objectives</i> – <i>Project planning and implementation</i> – <i>Monitoring and control</i> 	ISO/CS, ITSIG, member bodies, TCs
Protecting ISO's image, integrity and intellectual property	Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>Policy definition</i> – <i>Ad hoc initiatives</i> – <i>Monitoring and control</i> 	Members, ISO/CS
4.5 Supporting national standards bodies in developing countries. Strategy addressing key objectives: 2.1, 2.4, and 2.8			
Threshold infrastructures concept development	DEVCO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>Planning and priority setting</i> – <i>Projects implementation</i> – <i>Monitoring and control</i> 	Members, ISO/CS, donor agencies
Enhancing participation by means of IT	Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>Priority setting</i> – <i>Programme planning</i> – <i>Projects implementation</i> – <i>Monitoring and control</i> 	Members bodies
Coordinated donor programme support	ISO/CS (DEVPRO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>Collection of requirements</i> – <i>Programme planning</i> – <i>Ad hoc initiatives</i> 	Members, ISO/CS, donor agencies

** Information Technology Strategies Implementation Group

5.1 Critical success factors

The success of any strategic planning exercise is, of course, fully dependent on the degree of commitment within the organization as a whole to implement the plan. In the case of ISO, those ultimately responsible for implementing the required improvement actions are the member bodies, particularly those responsible for TC and SC secretariats, and the Central Secretariat.

In ISO, the actions required to achieve the objectives have to be initiated and agreed by the elected representatives of the member bodies, i.e. the Principal Officers and the member body representatives serving on Council, the Technical Management Board and the policy development committees. If full commitment to act – even in cases where governing body decisions were not unanimously supported - is not achieved then neither will be the objectives of the plan.

Staff development is the final critical factor. To deliver the directions and strategies outlined in this document, investment in the development, performance management, and motivation of the ISO staff is extremely important. In all of its operations, central and distributed, ISO will develop systems that reward and manage the performance of the staff, that motivate and encourage behaviours consistent with best practice and the directions and values embedded within ISO's strategies.

5.2 Performance measures

Performance measures have to be defined for each strategic element thus far identified and proposed, and for the various initiatives that will be undertaken to achieve the objectives of the ISO strategic plan. A continuous effort is required to identify and perfect objective indicators and appropriate procedures to monitor them, as the basis for any evaluation of strategy implementation.

During the past few years, several important elements have been introduced by ISO, laying the groundwork for an effective and articulated system of performance measurement. These elements are mainly the result of initiatives undertaken in the framework of the ISO strategic plan for 1999-2001 and include, in particular the:

- a) TC business plans (TCBP);
- b) Standards Value Assessment Tool (SVAT);
- c) standards development and standards production statistics (derived from the ISO/CS Project Management Database);
- d) sales analysis;
- e) website statistics (available for ISO Online version 3);
- f) database of the technical assistance projects for developing countries in the field of standardization, testing and metrology (SGM Forum database).

The tools that have been developed and the processes that have been put in place to collect data and perform analysis will be refined and enhanced during the next few years. New tools and procedures to improve performance measurement will be introduced as well, but the existing structure already provides a "good-enough" basis, if supported and consistently applied by all the parties concerned (ISO/CS, TCs, member body secretariats) to evaluate the degree of success with which the strategies are being implemented, as presented below.

a) TC business plans (TCBPs) provide a framework and a guide:

- to define precisely the reference market for the aggregate of products, services or other meaningful entities of interest for a particular TC, e.g. overall size and trend of the market – combined revenues, number of enterprises and number of employees, growth rates, market share structure, breakdown of revenues per region and per country, volume of international trade;
- to assess the market representativeness of the participants in the standardization process, e.g. the number of worldwide or regional market leaders involved, associations, consumer organizations, etc.;
- to set and justify priorities, define target dates and milestones; and
- to justify, on a quantitative and qualitative basis, the activities pursued by the TC.

b) The **Standards Value Assessment Tool** (SVAT) has been developed to help TCs follow objective criteria in terms of market relevance when evaluating new work item proposals, the establishment of new committees and the review of existing standards.

c) Regarding **statistics**:

- those provided by the ISO/CS Project Management Database offer detailed data enabling the Central Secretariat to reconstruct the history and development status of the various work items with multiple levels of aggregation, and to monitor several key performance indicators (elapsed time between stages, average processing time, etc.);
- new technical developments and new procedures will enable the Organization to perform a more detailed estimate of the costs associated with the most important phases of the development and production process, to improve the global assessment of process efficiency; and

- the increasing use of IT services to provide information and to support standards development and standards delivery is generating a wealth of new data (related with access and use of services) that will offer some ways to analyze the behaviour and the satisfaction of different categories of stakeholders.
- d) The process of data collection and **sales analysis**, begun in the year 2000, will allow the Central Secretariat:
- to consolidate data from all ISO members; to aggregate data regarding the sales of ISO standards and national adoptions;
 - to extract detailed information on the sales of individual ISO standards; and
 - to make estimates of the standards penetration within the various industry-sectors and geographies.
- e) **Web site statistics** supplied by the new version of ISO's web site (ISO Online) and by the ISO/CS web store will provide for substantial progress in evaluating the number and quality of contacts with the different kinds of users, which can be combined with measures of customer satisfaction and evaluations of ISO's image.
- f) The **database of technical assistance projects for developing countries** (SGM Forum database), completed in 2001, is another very useful tool to improve the management of projects and to support the coordination of initiatives with partner agencies.

In general terms, the most significant effort to be pursued in the coming years is a timely and coherent application of the criteria and procedures throughout the system. It will be necessary to collect data, track processes, and ensure an extensive adoption of the appropriate decision-support tools.

5.3 Financial considerations

Meeting all of the proposed objectives will naturally imply increased financing by at least some elements of the ISO system. For example, the establishment of new TCs requires the commitment of net additional resources by participating member bodies, secretariats and working groups, if all existing TCs in which the member participates are to continue to be supported. These considerations are of importance mainly to each individual ISO member.

ISO maintains liaison relationships at the TC/SC level with a large number of international and broadly based regional organizations that have an interest in specific sectors of ISO's work. Until now, the

costs involved in maintaining these liaisons (providing documents, sending invitations and hosting meetings, handling correspondence, etc.) have been paid entirely by ISO, and this policy needs to be reviewed and possibly modified. As a guiding principle, organizations in liaison should be invited to ensure that their contributions to the ISO processes (technical and/or monetary) are in balance with the benefits they obtain from the liaison relationship.

For jointly shared costs (those normally assigned as central expenditures for basic services), it is anticipated that the diligent, system-wide application of process simplification, process re-engineering, and extensive use of electronic information processing and communication tools should enable the Organization to maintain a constant rate of productivity improvement. These gains should at least counterbalance the increasing demand for high quality services from members and the expansion of higher value-adding activities.

For new programmes and additional services, the cost of which might also be centrally financed (e.g. specific initiatives to support developing countries, to improve communication, to improve the quality and efficiency of tasks of common interest to the members...), mechanisms should be sought to cover additional costs by obtaining resource support from direct participants, sponsors and donors. Proposals for such programmes need to be considered by Council as packages that include finance mechanisms.

New programmes of a "strategic" or "political" nature, such as the establishment and maintenance of collaborative relationships with WTO or other international organizations, may also require net increases in central expenditure, as well as new expenditure for the members deriving from their relationship with national members of WTO and other organizations.

Following traditional practices, revenues derived from sales of ISO standards will be shared between the ISO members and the Central Secretariat in accordance with the policies established by Council. This remains necessary to sustain the Organization at all levels and to safeguard the sources and levels of revenue needed to help support ISO work at national level.

Council Resolution 14/2001

Council, referring to the discussion it had during its brainstorming session on the ISO relationship with other standards developing organizations,

confirms the fundamental principles of the ISO system as set out in Annex 1 to Council 12/2001,

decides that ISO should position itself to be inclusive and flexible rather than exclusive in its relationships with other standards developing organizations,

expresses the view that ISO can only gain from such cooperative relationships as long as ISO's fundamental values are protected and when such partnerships increase the speed, scope and market relevance of ISO standards,

appreciates that the brand name "ISO" should only be used in resulting publications with partners in ways that will not depreciate the value or market understanding of the ISO brand,

endorses the partnerships thus far established, which conform to the current policies, and decides that ISO should become more proactive with other standards developing organizations that are having a significant impact on the global economy,

entrusts the Secretary-General to promote agreements with possible new partners, in consultation with the TMB to ensure that no duplication or conflicts would result, and when appropriate to propose new agreements for approval by Council,

invites the Secretary-General to take the steps required to implement the conclusions of the Council discussion.