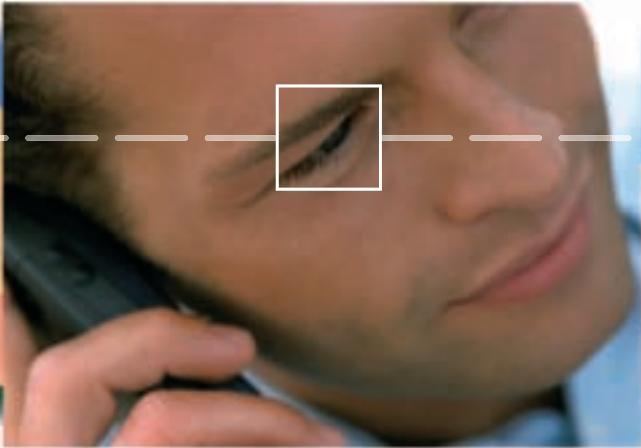




## ISO Horizon 2010

Standards for a sustainable world



**Consultations to update  
ISO's strategy for 2005 – 2010**

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# ISO strategy update

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## Consultation process

### Objectives



#### Unique opportunity

Updating the ISO strategy offers all ISO members and stakeholders a unique opportunity to provide insight and to effectively contribute by presenting their views on and expectations from ISO in the coming years.

ISO is called upon to consider major developments in the political, economic and social fields in the world that may have an effect on international standardization, to assess the position of the organization in relation to these major trends, and to reformulate its objectives and action plans accordingly.

#### Major accomplishments

If we consider the past five years (covering two “cycles” of ISO strategic plans, “ISO strategies 1999-2001” and the current “ISO strategies 2002-2004”), it can be said that ISO has made significant progress and achieved many of its strategic objectives. Let us briefly summarize some of ISO’s most noteworthy accomplishments in this timeframe :

- continuous growth of the organization – which, with some 146 national members, has reached an unquestioned global coverage ;
- strengthened institutional recognition – as witnessed by the close links with WTO and the growing acceptance of International Standards as one of the foundations of world trade, as well as a reliable reference for technical regulations ;

- increased capability to serve market needs, through a variety of options and deliverables, and effective collaboration with a large number of organizations with interests in standards development ;
- increased attention given to the needs of developing countries and implementation of more, and better articulated, assistance programmes ;
- substantial progress in process optimization, related to technical programme management improvements and the extensive adoption of information technologies (e.g. the average time needed to publish an International Standard has been reduced from 5,4 years in 1998 to 3,5 years in 2002).

#### New developments

The world is changing fast, however. Among new developments that are having and will increasingly have an impact on international standardization, it is useful to highlight :

- the confirmation of the **emergence of a world market not only for products, but also for services**, implying more competition between economic players with the progression of deregulation in major areas such as energy, telecoms, water production and distribution, postal and financial services, transportation or even conformity assessment, transatlantic “emulation”, the emergence of new industrialized countries, the increase in “mega-mergers” and the advent of ever more gigantic multinational companies,

calling for the development of “global” standards and for streamlining their production ;

- the pressure and **needs of developing countries and economies in transition**, as witnessed within the WTO or in the current extension of the European Union ;
- the **new developments in regional cooperation** and the multiplication of regional free-trade agreements ;
- the **crisis in trust with regard to corporate and public governance**, political tensions and the economic slow-down in some regions ;
- the urgency of **a responsible approach to sustainable development**, covering economic, social and environmental aspects, where all actors in society have a role to play and all companies and organizations have new commitments to make, as underlined at the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg in 2002 ;
- the **progress of information technologies, including the combination of telecoms and the Internet**, and their impact on social, technical and commercial practices, as well as on the methods and tools for producing standards ; such progress may increase the “digital divide” both in general and within the standards community ;
- the **acceleration and emergence of new technologies**, such as biotechnologies, nanotechnologies or new materials, whose penetration of, and expansion on, the market depend to an extent on the availability of International Standards ;
- the more **competitive environment and the economic challenges for national standards bodies** faced with a reduction

in their traditional financial resources, an increase in the share of International Standards within their basic collections of standards, and with the impact of electronic distribution of standards on sales and investments. They are seeking new sources of income by increasingly responding to market opportunities to diversify their downstream activities in information products and services, conformity assessment, training and consultancy, which also provide feedback from the market and insight into the standardization process.

### **Paving the way forward**

On all these issues, ISO is concerned and challenged in its mechanisms and resources to produce truly International Standards and other relevant collective documents **optimising efficiency and consensus, and to find new answers by imaginative new approaches**. More than ever ISO’s standards can facilitate relations between the players involved and ensure the crystallization and exchange of best practices, knowledge and assessment of products and services that enter into world trade and that impact on the health, safety, environment and social progress of mankind.

At this crossroads in ISO’s development, updating the organization’s strategy is a very important exercise. By taking account of market and societal trends, and input from a broad base of stakeholders, including those represented by ISO’s members and by international organizations, **this consultation will contribute to defining a clear, rational and well-planned path forward for ISO in the years ahead.**

# ISO strategy update

## Consultation process

### Introduction to questionnaire



Council resolution 05/2003 invited the ISO members to convey to the ISO Secretary-General their suggestions and expectations regarding ISO's strategy.

The ISO members are being called upon to organize a consultation process at the national level, involving the various groups of stakeholders, and to take the approach and apply the methods that best suit their respective environments.

A questionnaire has been prepared by the Secretary-General to help coordinate and harmonize the collection of input from the

ISO members. The latter are expected to provide a consolidated national view, offering a summary of the input expressed by the various groups of stakeholders. They will indicate how the consultation was conducted.

It is suggested that, in addition, the respondents highlight some success stories concerning major achievements (at the national or international level) of the national standards bodies or of groups of stakeholders, that can be quoted and promoted as exemplary cases.

## Questionnaire

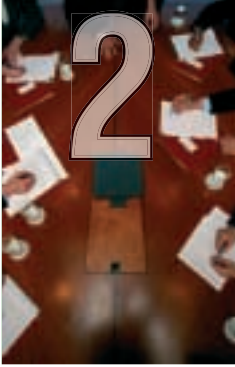


### Scope

ISO develops International Standards for products and services in all technical fields (except those covered by IEC and ITU-T)

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, at both the policy and technical levels, with IEC, specialized in electrical and electronic equipments and technologies and with ITU-T, specialized in telecommunication.

- ➔ *Do you support the extent of ISO's current work ?*
- ➔ *Are there any new fields of activity or new work items in fields currently or potentially covered by ISO that are of interest and high priority for your organization and that ISO should address in the future ?*



## Involvement of stakeholders

Participation in the ISO system is open to all parties concerned. ISO and its members actively promote the participation of, 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 to 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 would you make to improve the involvement of stakeholders in ISO ?*



## 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, by stating that any International Standard published by ISO aims to provide,

to the furthest possible extent, a unique international solution, and clearly specifying where the use of options applied within ISO International Standards may be technically justified (according to the WTO/TBT Agreement, Annex 3, such options are those that may be necessary due to fundamental climatic or geographical factors or fundamental technological problems).

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



## Participation of developing countries

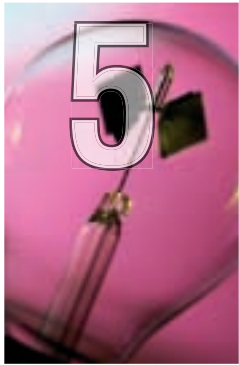
Needs and expectations of developing countries in regard to standardization are steadily growing as a consequence of their

increased participation in the emerging world market. ISO is fully committed to

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

supporting developing country members to build capacity and to increase their participation in the international standardization process.

➔ *Have you any further recommendations on ways to improve the participation of developing countries ?*



## 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 optimal allocation of resources coming from market forces, ISO, IEC and ITU-T are making increasing efforts to collaborate 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 that direction.

➔ *Do you support the existing framework for cooperation between ISO, IEC and ITU-T ?*

➔ *Have you any recommendations concerning policies to be applied or initiatives to be undertaken to help make further progress in this direction ?*



## 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 safeguarded, ISO can only gain from cooperative relationships that can increase the speed, scope and market relevance of ISO standards.

➔ *To what extent is ISO applying this stated intention in its current practices and processes ?*

➔ *Should ISO take further steps to develop cooperation with other international organizations and standards developing organizations ?*

➔ *If so, would you indicate which specific organizations should be considered first in extending such cooperation and what type of cooperation should be sought ?*



## 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 in this matter ?*



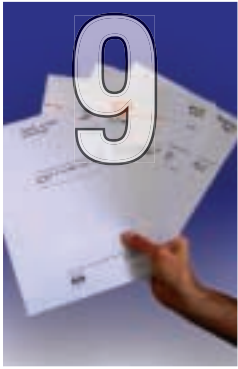
## Providing support to conformity assessment

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 taking the necessary actions to produce a comprehensive set of International Standards and Guides relating to conformity assessments practices and recognition ?*

➔ *How far should ISO go “downstream”, and become 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) ?*

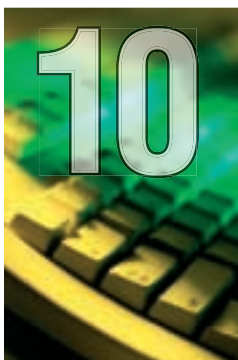


## Processes and deliverables

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, in addition, incorporates several levels of flexibility and offers to stakeholders a variety of deliverables, covering different needs and representing different degrees of consensus (Publicly 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 range of deliverables ?*
- ➔ *Do you see any particular problem or area for improvement that you would like to point out ?*



## IT tools

Over the past few years, ISO and its members have developed their IT systems, services and tools, creating what 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 e-Services) increasingly allow 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 significant efficiency and quality gains.

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



## Education and communication

ISO, along with IEC and ITU-T, recognizes 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 need to be undertaken to raise the awareness of industry, governments and societal 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 prominent stakeholder groups that need to be served, and which fields deserve the highest focus in your opinion ?*



## Resources and services provided by the ISO Central Secretariat

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 demand for services from the ISO/CS by the ISO members and third parties), ISO’s policy on the question of 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 currently used to fund the ISO/CS ?*

# ISO in brief

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ISO (International Organization for Standardization) is the world's largest developer of voluntary technical standards.

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## **Strong national membership base from industrialized and developing countries**

ISO is a network of the national standards bodies of 146 countries, on the basis of one member per country, with a Central Secretariat in Geneva, Switzerland, that coordinates the system.

ISO standards make the development, manufacturing and supply of products and services more efficient, safer and cleaner. They make trade between countries easier and fairer. They provide governments with a technical base for health, safety and environmental legislation. They furnish tools for meeting the challenges of sustainable development. They aid in transferring technology to developing countries. They safeguard users and consumers, and make many aspects of their lives simpler.

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## **An important portfolio of knowledge**

ISO has published nearly 14 000 International Standards, including the ISO 9000 and ISO 14000 families for quality and environmental management. These latter are implemented by more than 540 000 organizations in 160 countries.

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## **Diversified scope**

ISO's work programme includes something to offer for the entire range of business and technology, from standards for traditional activities, such as agriculture and construction, through mechanical engineering, to medical devices, banking cards and toys, to the latest information technology developments.

ISO develops standards to meet market requirements. The work is carried out by 3 000 technical bodies, involving some 35 000 experts coming from the industrial, technical and business sectors which have asked for the standards, and which subsequently put them to use. Others may join these experts with relevant knowledge, such as representatives of government agencies, consumer organizations, educational establishments and testing laboratories.

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## **Experience of international consensus building**

Although ISO standards are voluntary, the fact that they are developed in response to market demands, and are based on consensus among the interested parties, ensures widespread use of the standards.

ISO is a nongovernmental organization which occupies a special position between the public and private sectors. On the one hand, many of its member institutes are part of the governmental structure of their countries, or are mandated by their government; on the other, members in some countries have their roots uniquely in the private sector, having been set up by national partnerships of industry associations.

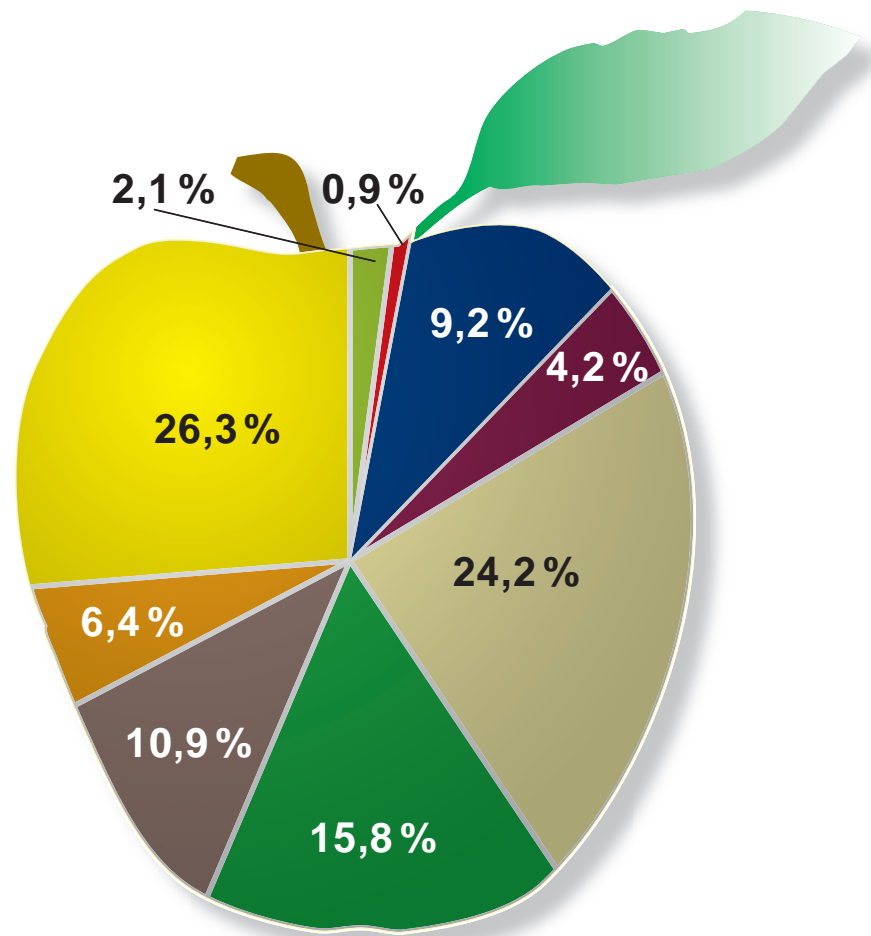
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## **International and regional acceptance and networking**

ISO is able to act as a bridging organization in which a consensus can be reached on solutions that meet both the requirements of business and the broader needs of society, such as the needs of stakeholder groups like users including consumers.

ISO – together with IEC (International Electrotechnical Commission) and ITU (International Telecommunication Union) – has built a strategic partnership with the World Trade Organization (WTO) with the common aim of promoting a free and fair global trading system. The political agreements reached within the framework of the WTO require underpinning by technical agreements. ISO, IEC and ITU, as the three principal organizations in international standardization, have the complementary scopes, the framework, the expertise and the experience to provide this technical support for the growth of the global market.

# Portfolio of ISO standards by technical sector at the end of 2002



-  Engineering technologies
-  Health, safety and environment
-  Generalities, infrastructures and sciences
-  Special technologies
-  Construction

-  Materials technologies
-  Agriculture and food technology
-  Transport and distribution of goods
-  Electronics, information technology and telecommunications



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