ISO Action Plan for developing countries

2011-2015

ISO
the International Organization for Standardization

ISO has a membership of 163* national standards bodies from countries large and small, industrialized, developing and in transition, in all regions of the world. ISO's portfolio of over 18 500* standards provides business, government and society with practical tools for all three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, environmental and social.
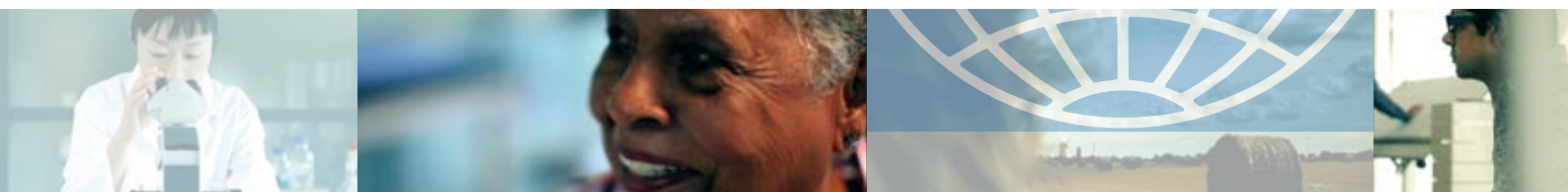
ISO standards make a positive contribution to the world we live in. They facilitate trade, spread knowledge, disseminate innovative advances in technology, and share good management and conformity assessment practices.

ISO standards provide solutions and achieve benefits for almost all sectors of activity, including agriculture, construction, mechanical engineering, manufacturing, distribution, transport, medical devices, information and communication technologies, the environment, energy, quality management, conformity assessment and services.

ISO only develops standards for which there is a clear market requirement. The work is carried out by experts in the subject drawn directly from the industrial, technical and business sectors that have identified the need for the standard, and which subsequently put the standard to use. These experts may be joined by others with relevant knowledge, such as representatives of government agencies, testing laboratories, consumer associations and academia, and by international governmental and nongovernmental organizations.

An ISO International Standard represents a global consensus on the state of the art in the subject of that standard.

* At the end of October 2010.

2011-2015

ISO ACTION PLAN FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

GLOBAL VISION FOR ISO IN 2015

To be the world's leading provider of high quality, globally relevant International Standards through its members and stakeholders

ISO'S KEY OBJECTIVE FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

The capacity and participation of developing countries in international standardization is significantly enhanced

Foreword

Developing country members play a major role in directing the whole process of ISO technical assistance. The tools used to implement the current Action Plan 2005-2010 will continue to be used and refined, as necessary, to help developing country members identify their needs and measure the effectiveness of actions undertaken.

Developing country members have a responsibility to monitor the implementation of the Action Plan through the annual meeting of the ISO Committee on developing country matters (DEVCO). They also have a duty to ensure that the technical assistance they receive benefits all stakeholders at the national level and they are expected to assist ISO in measuring the impacts of such assistance.

While ISO, with support from donors, can assist developing country members to make the best use of being a member of ISO, the objectives of this Action Plan can only be achieved if members take full ownership in the implementation of the activities identified under each output. In particular, ISO members should make every effort to promote standardization in their countries in order to secure funds from stakeholders and relevant organizations to implement the activities of the Plan.

The *ISO Action Plan for developing countries 2011-2015* will be administered by the Development and Training Services (DEVT) unit at the ISO Central Secretariat (ISO/CS).
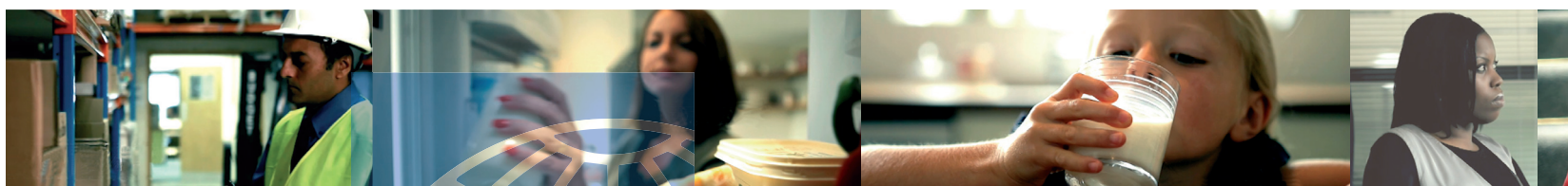
Goal
(overall objective)

To contribute to improving developing countries' economic growth and access to world markets, enhancement of the lives of citizens, fostering innovation and technical progress and achieving sustainable development when considered from each of the economic, environmental and societal perspectives

Purpose
(short-term objective)

To strengthen the national standardization infrastructure in developing countries in order to increase their involvement in the development, adoption and implementation of International Standards in sectors and subjects of interest to them

Outputs
(results)

Expected outputs from the implementation of the activities under the Action Plan 2011-2015 aim at increasing participation of developing countries in ISO technical work, enhancing capacity-building efforts, raising awareness of the benefits of standardization and the need for involvement in standardization activities, strengthening ISO members in developing countries at the institutional level, encouraging better regional cooperation, and better integrating the subject of standardization in educational curricula.

1

Output 1: Increased participation in ISO technical work

The involvement of developing countries in the technical work performed by ISO technical committees (TCs), subcommittees (SCs) and working groups (WGs) is essential in order to ensure that their interests are taken into account, and this contributes to strengthen the global relevance of ISO and of its deliverables.

Activities

- Developing countries identify relevant subject areas so that activities to assist involvement are focused. ISO/CS and TC/SC leadership provides information on the role and activities of TCs to facilitate this

- Encourage the establishment of twinning/partnership arrangements between ISO members in developing and developed countries. Measure the effectiveness of such arrangements by the increase in leadership positions held by developing countries over the period of this Action Plan

- Provide resources for developing country participants to attend and effectively contribute to meetings of TCs, SCs and WGs that are of relevance to them

- Clearly identify what skills and experience are needed to increase participation in ISO technical work and provide regional training and/or distance-learning courses to help ISO members build these skills and experience directly and amongst their stakeholders. Specifically provide training that will equip developing country representatives to carry out roles related to leadership positions in ISO committees (chair, secretary, convener) or to enter into twinning/partnership arrangements

- Organise regional/national training for ISO members in developing countries on the use of ISO e-tools to participate in standards development work. Ensure ISO e-tools evolve to meet developing country needs.

Target group

ISO members in developing countries and their key stakeholders including industry; national, state/provincial and local government; consumers and consumer groups; professional bodies/associations; the quality/conformity assessment institutions; organized labour; educational and research establishments; non-governmental organizations (NGOs); all ISO members on issues such as twinning/partnership.

2

Output 2: Capacity built in standardization and related matters for ISO members and their stakeholders

Capacity-building activities for the staff of national standards bodies (NSBs), their key stakeholders and national experts aim at providing guidance on good practices in standardization that the NSB applies in the national standardization infrastructure. Activities are also carried out to develop the skills and knowledge of experts to participate in international standardization work.

Activities

- Developing countries identify relevant subject areas so that activities to build capacity are focused. ISO/CS and members provide assistance and mentoring to facilitate this

- Identify needs and develop and conduct regional/national workshops and courses on selected standardization subjects, in particular those where International Standards of relevance to the developing country are under development or review

- Identify needs and conduct regional/national training-of-trainers programmes, including subsequent mentoring of trainees, aimed at creating a pool of resources at the disposal of users of International Standards in order to guide them in applying these standards

- Identify needs and develop and disseminate training manuals and packages (e.g. presenter's pack, participant's pack, videos and background documents) on selected standardization subjects that are of relevance to ISO members in developing countries and their stakeholders

- Provide information and communication technology (ICT) equipment and train NSB staff in its use in selected countries to enable ISO members to participate more effectively in ISO technical work

- Provide and encourage the use of distance learning courses in key aspects of international standardization

- Establish modules and training courses that show the value of participation in standardization activity by stakeholder groups of the ISO member in developing countries. Target initiatives to areas where the NSB is carrying out standardization activity or sees potential in carrying out standardization activity.

Target group

ISO members in developing countries and their key stakeholders including industry; national, state/provincial and local government; consumers and consumer groups; professional bodies/associations; organized labour; educational and research establishments; NGOs; organizations from the national quality infrastructure; organizations with limited resources, e.g. small and medium enterprises.

3

Output 3: Awareness improved on the role and benefits of International Standards and their use. International Standards are therefore increasingly used

Building awareness on the importance of using standards in all spheres of economic activity to achieve sustainable development goals is a key element of national quality policies. It is also useful in engaging stakeholders and the ultimate users of International Standards in national and international standardization work.

Activities

- Developing countries identify relevant subject areas so that activities to raise awareness are focused. ISO/CS and members provide assistance and mentoring to facilitate this

- Identify those key stakeholders where activity should be concentrated and develop a programme that will result in a consistent and coherent message, of relevance to the stakeholder, and show the benefit of International Standards and their use to that stakeholder

- Conduct global/regional/national awareness raising events (conferences, seminars, workshops)

- Organize contests at the global level to sensitize specific target groups on key standardization issues

- Develop and disseminate ISO publications related to standardization (in printed and in electronic forms, including use of Web-based services, new media and communication platforms such as social networks)

- Where a standard is published that is of particular interest and value to a stakeholder or stakeholders, publicise this to them, showing clearly how this will assist them in meeting their objectives and goals.

Target group

ISO members in developing countries and their key stakeholders; government policy makers, e.g. in the area of environment, industry, economic planning, health and safety, international trade, consumer protection; regulatory authorities; the general public; export industry sectors; trade promotion organizations; World Trade Organization (WTO) and Codex Alimentarius Commission focal points.

4

Output 4:
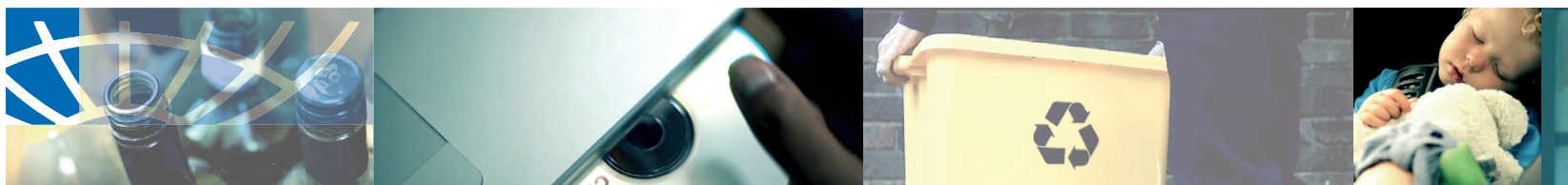## ISO members in developing countries strengthened at institutional level

National standards bodies operate in various types of legal and institutional frameworks, as well as in different business environments not sufficiently aware of the benefits of standards, which sometimes makes it difficult for them to operate at optimum level. A strong, competent and credible NSB is key for ensuring adequate participation in international standardization work and for the implementation of standards.

Activities

- Developing countries identify impediments so that activities to strengthen their roles at the institutional level are focused. This includes ensuring processes and systems used in standardization assist in strengthening the role of the NSB. ISO/CS and members provide assistance and mentoring to facilitate this

- Organize global/regional/national workshops and courses for senior and middle management NSB staff based on ISO publications on institutional strengthening matters; topics that may be covered include formulation of a national standardization strategy; marketing and communication; management support; diversifying sources of revenue; ICT infrastructure; enhancing NSB role in national quality infrastructure-building with partner international and regional organizations; stakeholder involvement; support for good governance in NSBs and in ISO's governance bodies; etc. Measure effectiveness of such events and use this to further improve such events

- Provide guidance and advice to senior management of NSBs through short-term consultancy missions to meet a clearly identified need(s)

- Encourage partnerships between the beneficiary ISO members and other ISO members, both from developing as well as developed countries (attachment training and fellowships, mentoring, exchange of good practice manuals and procedures). Measure effectiveness of such partnerships and use this to further improve all such partnerships.

Target group

Selected ISO members in developing countries and their related bodies (Council/Board members, committee members, organizations providing direct financial resources, etc.).

5

Output 5: Regional cooperation strengthened

Regional cooperation to foster exchange of experience among ISO members and other partners at the regional and sub-regional levels, including in the field of harmonization of national and regional standards to International Standards, is an essential step to enable developing countries to address the challenges of globalization and integrate more effectively in the multilateral trading system. Issues such as regional economic, environmental and societal sustainability are identified and appropriate responses from ISO members in the region are formulated

Activities

- Developing countries identify areas for regional cooperation so that activities to strengthen this cooperation are focused. ISO/CS and members provide assistance and mentoring to facilitate this

- Organise fora and meetings involving the CEOs of ISO members to exchange experience, *inter alia*, on good practices in standardization; NSB governance and stakeholder involvement; raising awareness of policy makers; financial sustainability; linkages between the NSB and regulatory authorities; and meeting customer needs for achieving long-term sustainability. Measure effectiveness of such events and use this to further improve future events

- Encourage the development of cooperation/collaboration agreements among ISO members, potential ISO members and other partners at regional and sub-regional levels. Measure effectiveness of such agreements and use this to further improve future agreements

- Create and share a pool of training resources/expertise on standardization and related matters. Measure effectiveness of such resources and use this to further improve the skills and experience available in such resources

- Cooperate with regional and sub-regional organizations, involved in standardization or standard-related activities, in the field of technical assistance (training, awareness-raising, capacity building) and for translation of ISO publications in the language most used within the respective regions. Measure effectiveness of such cooperation and use this to evaluate the benefit of such cooperation to all parties and further improve all such cooperation.

Target group

ISO members in developing countries and their key stakeholders; regional and sub-regional organizations involved in standardization or standard-related activities.

6

Output 6: Introduction of the subject of standardization as part of educational curricula initiated

It is widely recognized that knowledge of standardization and its benefits for business, government and society is increasingly considered an essential "toolbox" for future professionals and managers in both public and private sectors. While the need for integrating the subject of standardization in higher education is clear, there is also scope for educating the younger generations at the level of primary and secondary levels on specific topics.

Activities

- Developing countries identify areas for discussion / working with academia so that activities to strengthen this cooperation are focused. ISO/CS and members provide assistance and mentoring to facilitate this

- Encourage the strengthening of relations between ISO members and academic institutions at the national level. Measure effectiveness of such encouragement and use this in training or other fora

- Develop and disseminate educational material (information booklets, publications, distance learning tools) in cooperation with ISO members and academic institutions

- Organize conferences and seminars on standardization in collaboration with institutes of higher education and relevant international organizations involved in this area

- Promote the ISO Award for Higher Education in Standardization. Measure effectiveness of the Award and use this to ensure the objectives of the Award are being met.

Target group

ISO members in developing countries; institutions of higher education (universities, colleges, business schools, institutes of technology, etc.); primary and secondary schools.

ISO's added value is based on:

- Recognized experience in international consensus building

- Wide recognition of brand and name on the world scene

- Robust, well-proven processes that are transparent, inclusive and open to ensure that ISO standards are the result of strong consensus among a wide range of relevant stakeholders

- A broad range of deliverables covering most sectors of the economy, and core issues affecting the environment and society

- Strong national membership base which ensures broad consensus, wide dissemination of ISO deliverables and market feedback for their maintenance and development

- Extensive networking, at both international and regional levels

- Ability to provide International Standards to assist in the implementation of regulations

- Leadership in the production of standards and guides for conformity assessment

- Leadership in the use of IT tools for the production and dissemination of standards.