

ISO establishes sustainability principles for building construction sector worldwide

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The new ISO 15392:2008 standard establishes internationally recognized principles for sustainability in building construction. It thus provides a common basis for communication between stakeholders such as builders and architects, product manufacturers and designers, building owners, policy makers and regulators, housing authorities, and consumers.

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ISO 15392 is based on the concept of sustainable development as it applies to buildings and other construction works, from “the cradle to the grave”. Over their life cycle, construction works absorb considerable resources and contribute to the transformation of the environment. As a result, they can have considerable economic consequences, and impacts on both the environment and human health.

The foundations elaborated in ISO 15392:2008, *Sustainability in building construction – General principles*, form the basis for a suite of standards

intended to address specific issues and aspects of sustainability. They are applicable to buildings and other construction works individually and collectively, as well as to building materials, products, services and processes.

Key sector

The building and construction sector is a key sector in national economies and the built environment is a major element in determining quality of life, as well as contributing to cultural identity and heritage.

Addressing sustainability in buildings and other construction works includes the interpretation and consideration of sustainable development in terms of its three primary aspects – economic, environmental, and social aspects – while meeting the

requirements for technical and functional performance.

The principles elaborated in ISO 15392 take into account that while the challenge of sustainable development is global, the strategies for addressing sustainability in building construction are essentially local and differ in context and content from region to region.

The standard thus acknowledges that these strategies will reflect the context, the pre-conditions and the priorities and needs, not only in the built environment, but also in the social environment. This social environment includes social equity, culture, traditions, heritage, health and comfort, social infrastructure and safe and healthy environments. It may, in addition, particularly in developing countries, include poverty reduction and job creation.

ISO 15392:2008, *Sustainability in building construction – General principles* was prepared by ISO technical committee ISO/TC 59, *Building construction*, subcommittee SC 17, *Sustainability in building construction*. It costs 96 Swiss francs and is available from ISO national member institutes (listed with contact details on the ISO Web site www.iso.org) and from ISO Central Secretariat (sales@iso.org).

