ISO Focus+

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- Guest Interview: WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy
- Management systems integration
## Contents

### Comment
Dr. Boris Aleshin, ISO President 2011-2012  
Powering the future – ISO standards for a better world  ........................................... 1

### World Scene
International events and international standardization  ............................................ 2

### Guest Interview
Pascal Lamy – Director-General of the World Trade Organization (WTO) ............ 3

### Special Report
Driving to meet the needs of standards customers – Only the best will do ............ 6
Zooming-in – What the strategic plan is all about .................................................... 8
Roadmap to success – How to improve the standards development business ......... 11
Mapping the future – The consultation that shaped the ISO Strategic Plan .......... 14
The voice of the stakeholder – ISO members contribute to strategy ................... 16
The voice of the stakeholder – ISO liaison organizations contribute to strategy .. 21
The voice of the stakeholder – Industry contributes to strategy ............................. 24
Loud and clear – Getting out the standards message ............................................ 32

### Centre-fold

### Planet ISO
News of the ISO system ............................................................................................ 34

### CDC
Path to financial sustainability ................................................................................. 38
Conformity assessment in support of Lebanese industry ........................................ 38
Latest developments on accreditation .................................................................... 38
2010 ISO/CASCO plenary ....................................................................................... 39
Homes for tomorrow – Building through standards ............................................. 40
Consumers and ISO: “Who’s who” and “what’s what” ......................................... 40
Strengthening Caribbean NSBs ............................................................................ 41

### Management Solutions
Management systems integration – Spanish survey reveals key benefits .......... 42

### Standards in Action
Earthquake preparedness – The case of Standards New Zealand ......................... 46

### 360°
Norexport – Standards for the smallest enterprises ................................................. 48
Mobile banking services – ISO takes steps to address growing market need ...... 50

### New Releases
ISO/ITC handbook points way to greater export success for developing countries  ... 52

### Coming Up
53
Comment

Powering the future
ISO standards for a better world

The ISO Strategic Plan 2005-2010 was the first of its kind to benefit from extensive national stakeholder consultations about the strategic direction of the organization. Result: ISO has achieved substantial progress. For example, the time to develop ISO publications has been reduced to less than three years, and the number of member countries and influential organizations partnering with ISO has significantly increased.

In view of the success of the plan, a similar approach was applied to the development of the ISO Strategic Plan 2011-2015. Extensive input was again gathered from ISO members and major partners. Following its approval at the General Assembly in Oslo, the ISO Strategic Plan 2011-2015 sets new goals for the organization.

As I begin my term as the ISO President for 2011-2012 and see the number and range of ISO standards, it is clear to me that ISO has a growing reputation for developing solutions that are globally relevant. In subjects such as innovation and technology, health and food safety, security, climate change, and now social responsibility, International Standards in general and ISO in particular can, and are, making a major contribution.

On the threshold of the new ISO Strategic Plan 2011-2015, ISO must meet the needs of our customers by being influential, flexible, globally relevant, attuned to international trade, developing countries and consumer organizations.

In our Strategic Plan for the years 2011-2015, we have committed ourselves to seven major objectives:

- ISO deliverables meet customer needs
- ISO standards promote innovation and provide solutions to address global challenges
- The capacity and participation of developing countries in international standardization is significantly enhanced
- ISO excels in reaching out to and engaging stakeholders
- ISO fosters partnerships that further increase the value and efficient development of International Standards
- ISO and its processes are significantly improved
- ISO and the value of voluntary International Standards are clearly understood by customers, stakeholders and the general public.

As someone who has spent the last 30 years of my career associated with industry, particularly the aerospace industry, allow me to draw a parallel with the International Space Station, which marked its 10th anniversary of continuous human occupation in November 2010.

The International Space Station is the largest scientific cooperative programme in history, drawing on the resources and scientific expertise of more than 100 000 people in space agencies and contractor facilities throughout the world. Within the Central Aerohydrodynamic Institute (TsAGI), for which I serve as the Director General, we carried out the conceptual planning and mathematical planning for the International Space Station, but it is only one piece of a very complex system, one in which all the parts fit together.

ISO, in turn, is the world’s largest standards developing organization, with 163 national standards bodies that make up ISO’s membership, who collectively represent the bigger picture, 500 organizations in liaison and 200 committees with an extended system involving the contribution of some 300 000 experts. ISO standards are one, though a very important part, of a complex system of solutions for today’s global challenges.

Because the demands placed on ISO in the near future are going to be heavy and complex, ISO will need to build and strengthen its position. In other words, it will need to apply the principle of continual improvement embedded in its ISO 9000 series of standards. ISO will need to leverage the extensive network it has at its disposal to increase the visibility of International Standards and to promote the ISO system more broadly as an increasingly attractive platform for the development of globally and market-relevant standards.

As the ISO President for 2011-2012, I am privileged and honoured to lead ISO to achieve yet more by redefining its way of doing business and sharpening its performance. The new ISO Strategic Plan is the ideal moment to reach for higher performance. Together, I know that we can, we will, and we must. The citizens of the global village can count on ISO and its International Standards to provide and share solutions for making the world a better and safer place, and for ensuring its sustainable development.

My best wishes for a Happy New Year!

Dr. Boris Aleshin, ISO President 2011-2012.
Road safety collaboration

The World Health Organization (WHO) hosted the 12th meeting of the UN Road Safety Collaboration (UNRSC) in October 2010 in Geneva, Switzerland. More than 70 participants discussed the preparations for the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020 – a global initiative focused on reducing traffic-related injuries and fatalities. Among the subjects under discussion were the draft global plan for the decade, the symbol for the decade, and the launch scheduled for 11 May 2011.

Countries around the world will be called on to step up efforts to implement measurable programmes in the areas of building road safety management capacity, upgrading the safety of road infrastructure, developing the safety of vehicles, improving the education and behaviour of road users, and enhancing post-crash care. The programmes are intended to cut down on the more than 1,000,000 road traffic deaths that occur every year worldwide. ISO formed project committee ISO/PC 241 to develop an International Standard on road traffic safety management systems. The future ISO 39001, Road-traffic safety management systems – Requirements with guidance for use, will provide a voluntary and complementary tool to legislation and offer best practice to all organizations – international, national, and local – that address road traffic issues at some level.

Currently, traffic safety experts from 32 countries are actively participating in the development of the ISO 39001 standard, which is scheduled for publication mid-2012.

International Year of Forests

The United Nations has designated 2011 as “The International Year of Forests”.

Forests are an integral part of global sustainable development. According to World Bank estimates, more than 1.6 billion people depend on forests for their livelihoods. The forest product industry is a source of economic growth and employment, with global forest products traded internationally in the order of USD 270 billion.

The year will raise awareness and strengthen sustainable forest management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests for the benefit of current and future generations.

This is why ISO International Standards, which address all three dimensions of sustainable development, are important. ISO standards for the more traditional activities of wood products help to ensure business efficiency balanced by the intelligent and responsible use of resources.

In addition, ISO’s work on environmental labelling helps protect customers, consumers and the economies of developing countries from the confusion that can be caused by a proliferation of labelling and certification schemes.

ISO has developed standards in many of these related fields, and interoperability and linkage at this broader level require broad understanding and participation. A few examples of where ISO can and is making a difference include climate change, energy efficiency and renewable resources, sustainable building design, intelligent transport systems and carbon footprint.

Harvard addresses integrated reporting

In October 2010, ISO Deputy Secretary-General Kevin McKinley participated in an invitation workshop organized by the Harvard Business School (HBS) on the subject of “integrated reporting”. Such reporting combines financial, environmental, social, and governance performance measures into a single report, providing a consolidated view on how an organization is living up to its commitments in each area.

The workshop was the largest gathering of financial and accounting professionals, regulators, corporate executives, educators, fund managers and environmental sustainability advocates around the topic, according to the organizer, HBS Professor Robert G. Eccles.

During the workshop, Kevin McKinley used the recently published ISO 26000 as an example of a new global context for integrated reporting. He spoke of ISO standards for business, the stakeholder engagement process used to develop ISO 26000 and the linkage of social responsibility and other ISO standards to integrated reporting.

In the area of reporting, he said, extensive input and expertise from key players, including the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), was provided throughout the development of ISO 26000. The standard provides guidance on communicating the results of social responsibility initiatives within the organization, with other stakeholders, and with society as a whole. ISO, GRI and other global sustainability tools and initiatives are now poised to examine potential future standardization related to integrated reporting.

As an outcome of the workshop, the HBS has published an e-book, The Landscape of Integrated Reporting: Reflections and Next Steps. This freely accessible electronic-only publication contains a compilation of articles from contributing participants of the workshop, including an article by Kevin McKinley entitled “ISO standards for business and their linkage to integrated reporting”. The full publication is available in different eBook formats at www.smashwords.com/books/view/30930.
Pascal Lamy is Director-General of the World Trade Organization (WTO), a post he occupies since September 2005. He began his career in the French civil service at the Inspection Générale des Finances and at the Treasury. He then became an advisor to the Finance Minister Jacques Delors, and subsequently to Prime Minister Pierre Mauroy. From 1985 to 1994, Pascal Lamy was Chief of Staff to the President of the European Commission, Jacques Delors, and his representative as Sherpa in the G7. In November 1994, he joined the team in charge of rescuing Credit Lyonnais, and later became CEO of the bank until its privatization in 1999. Between 1999 and 2004, Pascal Lamy was Commissioner for Trade at the European Commission under Romano Prodi. After his tenure in Brussels, Pascal Lamy spent a short sabbatical period as President of Notre Europe, a think tank working on European integration, as associate Professor at the l’Institut d’études politiques in Paris and as advisor to Poul Nyrup Rasmussen (President of the European Socialist Party). Mr. Lamy holds degrees from the Paris-based École des Hautes Études Commerciales (HEC), from the Institut d’Études Politiques (IEP) and from the École Nationale d’Administration (ENA).
The WTO TBT Agreement encourages referring to international standards as a means to reduce technical barriers to trade that technical regulations may generate. How can ISO promote the effective use and reference of our international standards by regulatory authorities?

Pascal Lamy: In a nutshell, I think ISO can promote the uptake of its standards by making them globally relevant and of high quality. To achieve relevance and quality, both process and substance are important. The process whereby the standard is developed is crucial. Delegations at the WTO repeatedly emphasize the importance of transparency and accountability – that the process is open, impartial and based on consensus. A broad stakeholder involvement will boost the beneficial, confidence-building aspects of standards; in fact, the process for the development of the recently launched ISO 26000 standard is interesting in this regard.

ISO Focus+: What specific examples coming out of the WTO’s research and experience help illustrate the benefits of a quality infrastructure in a developing country (metrology, standardization and conformity assessment) and of a better access to and participation in international standardization? How do you perceive the importance of efforts to assist developing countries in increasing standardization capacity?

Pascal Lamy: Let me first address the last part of the question. Clearly, issues related to non-tariff barriers are becoming more important by the day. I should make one thing clear at the outset: some barriers are necessary. For instance, countries may restrict trade in order to protect human health, safety, or the environment. This may seem obvious, but the WTO is sometimes accused of wanting to remove all obstacles to trade! What the WTO seeks to do is to reduce or even eliminate those barriers that unnecessarily restrict trade, and, in this effort, international standards play an important role. The reason for this is that even though the objectives of the measure are not objectionable, the means to achieve them may cause friction. At a recent meeting of the TBT Committee, for example, over 47 trade concerns – all of them involving regulations – were raised as points of concern between WTO members. Many of these concerns relate to the use or non-use of international standards. Because harmonization facilitates trade, the use of relevant international standards is seen as one means to ensure that trade barriers do not become unnecessarily restrictive. Hence the importance of increasing standardization capacity.

Of course, it is also important that developing countries are able to meet the standard. This is where the quality infrastructure becomes important: markets crave confidence! A product may be denied access not because it does not fulfill the requirements in a standard, but simply for lack of ability to show conformance (for instance with a certificate) because there is no trust. This may be because a laboratory is not certified, or the certification body itself is not recognized. So quality infrastructure is essential for developing countries’ competitiveness. And WTO members have recognized this.

Only one year ago, WTO members encouraged technical cooperation in the area of conformity assessment specifically aimed at improving technical infrastructure (e.g., metrology, testing, certification, and accreditation). I can only encourage ISO as well as other standardizing bodies to step up their efforts in building know-how as well as institutions that underpin developing countries’ quality infrastructure, including standardization, and particularly in Africa.

Certification processes, too, must be looked at. I have recently seen, first-hand,
the high cost, complexities and challenges that can be involved in certifying products, upon a visit to a factory in Rwanda producing insecticides from flowers.

**ISO Focus+:** A key message from the WTO/TBT Committee workshop on international standards (held in March 2009) was that standards are a crucial link between research, innovation and markets, and an efficient tool for the transfer of technology. Can you please comment on this?

**Pascal Lamy:** If developed according to the principles I mentioned above, an international standard can be seen as comprising the collective know-how of the international community in a particular field. This is valuable. Almost by definition an international standard is the outcome of multilateral cooperation.

**Markets crave confidence.**

Participation in the process itself – or simply the use of the final product – is a form of technology transfer. In fact, the preamble of the TBT Agreement emphasizes the contribution which international standardization can make to the transfer of technology. However, quantifying the benefits of standards remains elusive, and more research, in fact, needs to be done on this. With this in mind, WTO members have been encouraged to share case studies on the economic benefits of the use of standards to shed more light on this issue.

**ISO Focus+:** You have written much about trade and globalization, and you are a staunch supporter of free and fair trade. What are the main benefits of the WTO trading system?

**Pascal Lamy:** The WTO and the global trading system are public goods which ensure that trade flows smoothly, transparently and more openly. Trade brings greater efficiency to our national economies because it encourages better specialization and more effective division of labour. Countries can play to their strengths through their comparative advantage.

For consumers, trade means lower prices and a wider selection of goods. Imagine if your country had to manufacture everything that its citizens consume. You would have to do without many items you take for granted. Trade brings greater competition, and with it greater efficiency. Trade also brings new technologies and better ways of doing things, and this in turn fosters innovation and job growth.

Companies which compete in the international market through exports tend to pay between 10%-20% higher wages and that is of benefit to workers as well. This is not to say that opening trade benefits everyone, everywhere, all the time. Trade brings about re-shuffling, and this can be traumatic and even tragic for some workers.

This is why adequate social safety nets – training, income support and assurances of medical care – are vitally important to securing public support for trade.

But what we know for sure is that blocking trade results in catastrophic consequences. This was clearly true in the 1930s when countries imposed high tariffs on imports which helped to deepen and widen the depression. In today’s ever more interconnected global economy – with its global supply chains and international demand for the latest products – it is even more the case.

**ISO Focus+:** In a recent speech, you referred to more and more products as being “made in the world”. Could you expand on this idea and explain what role international standards play in this context?

**Pascal Lamy:** What this means is that, today, very few products are made exclusively in a single country. Global supply chains are the norm and companies – and countries – need to be able to move inputs smoothly across borders so that production of the final good is not delayed.

**Blocking trade results in catastrophic consequences.**

Whether you are talking about aircraft, automobiles or iPods, products today are made in several countries. The iPod, for example, was designed in California, the chip comes from Japan and the final assembly occurs in China. Standards are, of course, a very important part of this because if one element of the product is not of high quality, the whole product is undermined and the manufacturer’s reputation suffers. This may mean internal company standards of quality, or it may relate to health and safety standards set by national governments.
Driving to meet the needs of standards’ customers
Only the best will do

The call for globally relevant International Standards – based on a double level of consensus across stakeholders and amongst countries – is proof that ISO has an indispensable role in today’s fast changing world. With the unanimous adoption of our Strategic Plan 2011-2015, we are well placed to continue to make a positive contribution to globalization, and humankind.

Our standards are there to facilitate world trade, clarify the market and competition, disseminate useful technologies and good business practices. The recently published ISO 26000 for social responsibility, for example, provides harmonized, globally relevant guidance for private and public sector organizations of all types, and so encourages the implementation of best practice in social responsibility worldwide. With solid foundations in place, ISO standards have also contributed to restoring financial viability following the recent global economic crisis. Who else can say to have done the same?

2011 will be a busy year. As part of our customer focus activities, our fifth ISO Technical Committee/Subcommittee Chairs Conference in June will be one of the highlights of the year, providing an opportunity to address the broadening of our scope and the continual improvement of our processes.

Building on all these valuable insights, ISO will be better positioned than ever to give our customers only the best – the standards that they need, when they need them – for a better and safer world and a brighter tomorrow.

With my warmest wishes to the ISO family and the readers of ISO Focus+ for a successful and happy 2011.

Rob Steele,
ISO Secretary-General.
Imagine it is 2015. What has ISO achieved? That is the question we asked ourselves, ISO members and stakeholders when we began the consultation on the ISO Strategic Plan 2011-2015 back in March 2009.

The plan’s development was like that of a carefully prepared dish. All the right ingredients had to be there. In this case, it meant contributions from ISO members and partner international organizations. And the result reflects the considerable input of those involved. True to ISO’s nature, the plan is the outcome of a substantial degree of consensus from its constituency about what needs to be done.

From the beginning we knew that we wanted an inspiring, clear and consistent message, and I believe we have succeeded.

ISO’s vision for the future is straightforward, yet powerful:

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

Taking it one step further, the essence, or spirit, of ISO’s five-year strategy is to be customer focused. That is, to give our customers (by which we mean ISO members, users and stakeholders of standards) the standards that they need, when they need them and in the format they require.

Addressing global challenges

And this is reflected in the plan’s mission statement, which in two main points outlines ISO’s mandate.

First, to develop high quality voluntary International Standards which facilitate international exchange of goods and services, support sustainable and equitable economic growth, promote innovation and protect health, safety and the environment. ISO’s work aims to support trade and address pressing global challenges.

The second element of ISO’s mission is to develop International Standards through an effective process which delivers customer needs and:

• Ensures consensus amongst stakeholders and across countries, through the national delegation principle
• Is fully compliant with the core principles affirmed in the ISO Code of Ethics that require the process to be open, transparent and impartial
• Increasingly facilitates and supports the participation of developing countries
• Produces coherent, effective, widely recognized and relevant standards.

Or to put it even more simply, to be a transparent and impartial platform for building international consensus.

Action oriented

To meet its ambitious vision and mission, ISO set seven straightforward broad objectives explained in detail below. These objectives, together with a series of specific actions for their accomplishment, make up the ISO Strategic Plan 2011-2015. Its action-oriented focus ensures that the plan’s goals are practical and achievable. Furthermore, all objectives are connected, like links in a chain, around the plan’s overall vision and mission.

Meeting customer needs

Meeting customer needs is ISO’s first objective. Business, government, consumers and other stakeholders should be able to rely on ISO as the recognized leading platform
for the development and dissemination of global solutions.

ISO deliverables must be solutions-oriented, and create value for their users. It is important that ISO encourages the implementation of its standards, and learns from market experience to improve their relevance and uptake.

The design and development of advanced electronic deliverables will help make ISO standards more accessible to users in different media. One example is the new project to make standards available in XML, which opens up opportunities for how users choose to access ISO content.

ISO management systems standards will be made even more coherent and cost-effective based on users’ views. And stakeholder confidence will be increased with more comprehensive, harmonized and user-friendly conformity assessment practices.

**State-of-the-art solutions**

The second objective is to promote innovation and provide global solutions to global challenges.

ISO must reinforce its ability to identify, prioritize and develop International Standards that anticipate and meet market and society needs – supporting technological change, process improvement and transfer of know-how among sectors and across borders.

But it is also crucial to create awareness and communicate the role of International Standards in bringing innovation to the market place, facilitating the development of new markets and improving consumer understanding and confidence.

**Developing countries’ participation**

Developing countries constitute about two-thirds of ISO’s membership. Their participation is essential to ensure the global relevance of ISO standards. And by getting involved, they will benefit from easier access to world markets, technical progress and sustainable development.

ISO efforts for developing countries include processes, programmes and tools to help them build their standardization capacity, engage their national stakeholders, participate effectively in technical work and implement International Standards. These are consolidated in the new Action Plan for developing countries 2011-2015. And particular attention will be given to countries with limited resources.

**International Standards are key tools for taking action.**

ISO will identify priority sectors to optimize the involvement of developing countries, and address standardization issues of key interest to them.

**Engaging stakeholders**

Excelling in reaching out to and engaging stakeholders is the fourth objective. Active involvement of industry, government, consumers and other stakeholders (e.g. through national members), ensures the relevance, quality and use of ISO standards.

ISO needs to communicate standardization projects more effectively to international and national stakeholders, using new technologies and tools to extend its reach. We will support stakeholders with limited resources, such as small enterprises and consumers.

ISO will do more to clarify to public authorities that its standards are voluntary and do not seek to establish public policy. Rather, they can be used to support implementation of public policies and as an element of good public governance.

Finally, it is important to differentiate International Standards developed in compliance with recognized best practice and objectives, from other types of standards or specifications.

**Fostering partnerships**

Partnerships increase the value and efficiency of ISO standards. Our fifth objective is therefore to promote and manage partnerships with international organizations, standards development organizations, industry consortia, civil society and academia.

ISO’s partnership with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), to align policies and coordinate activities, especially in the area of converging technologies, is very important. ISO will also strengthen cooperation with other relevant standards developing organizations, industry consortia, the scientific community and civil society.

International organizations, such as the different UN bodies or the World Trade
Organization, can contribute business knowledge and identify new needs for ISO standards, as well as support their market acceptance.

Finally, we will focus on ensuring that liaison organizations provide a benefit to ISO committees that is comparable with the benefit they receive through their access and influence in ISO.

**Improving ISO processes**

The sixth objective is to significantly improve ISO processes, so that they are more clear, transparent and rigorous to support the development of high quality deliverables.

*There is no doubt in my mind that ISO will achieve its 2015 vision.*

We must therefore ensure that ISO’s structure and governance are efficient and support its vision and mission, linked closely with the needs and performance of technical committees.

The standards development process itself will continually strive to become faster and better. Participation and standards development must be enhanced by quality training, IT and support services. Secretariats and Chairs of technical and subcommittees will be assigned to organizations that are in the best position to achieve their goals.

**Highlighting value**

The last objective focuses on building awareness. ISO needs to consider customer, stakeholder and the general public needs and priorities, and we should clearly demonstrate the value of voluntary International Standards in terms that are relevant to these customer groups. Our 2015 vision is that communication raises ISO’s profile and recognition of the importance of its activities.

This includes the development of communication material, publications and services. Special attention will be given to Web-based services, new media and communication platforms such as social networks.

It is important to promote and develop studies that demonstrate the economic and social benefits of International Standards. The development of the ISO methodology for measuring the benefits of standards is a step forward. Strengthening cooperation with education institutions will also contribute to this objective.

**Ambitious but attainable**

With a clear mission, and well defined objectives and actions, there is no doubt in my mind that ISO will achieve its 2015 vision of becoming the global leader of high quality International Standards. And this is particularly important because ISO’s work is very much needed in today’s world.

Globalization has made the world smaller, making the challenges of the few into the challenges of the many. Issues like climate change, food and water availability, converging and new technologies, growing inequalities, economic development, etc. can only be addressed in cooperation. As representatives of mutual consensus and harmonized action, International Standards are key tools for taking action.

We invite you, whether ISO member or stakeholder, to work together with us to make a positive contribution to today’s challenges.

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**About the author**

Sadao Takeda is ISO Vice-President (policy) for the 2010-2011 term. Mr. Takeda has been Director-General of the Japanese Standards Association (JSA) since 2007 and a Member of the Japanese Industrial Standards Committee (JISC) since 1997. He has been the JISC representative on the ISO Council from 2003 until the end of 2009. At JISC, he has held different managerial positions including Secretary-General, Director of the Conformity Assessment Division, and Director of the Measurement Standards Division. During his career at the Japanese Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) from 1975 to 2002, Mr. Takeda held various responsibilities in the areas of Standards Policy, International Trade Policy, Research and Development Policy, Information Technology (IT) Industry, and Industrial Policy Planning. He has an academic background in IT engineering.
When asked in my capacity as Vice-President (technical management) and Chair of the overall management of ISO’s technical work about ISO’s most important objective, my reply is always the same: to produce quality standards that meet market needs – but better and faster than yesterday! In a positive way, a Sisyphean task; it will never stop – one can always improve one’s performance.

Though my reply to ISO’s number one challenge is relatively simple, its actual implementation is much more complex. But the good news is that ISO is already well on course and, what’s more, the outlook and prospects for further improvements have never been better.

Let us first look at ISO’s point of departure – where is ISO today? Well, the tangible result of ISO’s work is a collection of more than 18 500 active International Standards and standards-type documents. These are constantly maintained and complemented with approximately 100 new or revised standards that are published each month. The current stock of work items in progress is approximately 3 900, each of which will lead to at least one ISO publication.
Liaisons are maintained with more than 500 international and regional organizations, thus ensuring technical coordination and consistency, while avoiding unnecessary overlaps. It is these figures that make ISO the world’s largest standards developing organization. With all having a share of the work, we can indeed be proud of our great work.

The dynamism of ISO can be seen by the 40 new technical committees created during the current Strategic Plan, addressing new areas and a wide range of globally relevant subjects. Information and societal security, the response to climate change, energy efficiency and renewable sources, sustainable building design and operation, water services, nanotechnologies, intelligent transport systems, food safety management, health informatics and social responsibility, are just some examples illustrating ISO’s vast wealth of expertise. Some of these fields of activity originate from new market or society needs, while others are responses and contribution to innovative fields of work.

Addressing the future

I can think of no other more powerful management tool able to project an organization into the future than its strategic plan.

The ISO Technical Management Board (TMB), which has traditionally focused on technical issues, has taken over time a more management-focused approach.

With this new approach, the development of the ISO Strategic Plan 2011-2015 was seen as an opportunity for the TMB to be more visible in creating ISO’s response to future challenges and opportunities.

From the perspective of the TMB, the consultation process on the ISO Strategic Plan revealed three key areas of focus regarding ISO processes and procedures (see boxes).

Improvement projects

As mentioned earlier, the TMB has the responsibility to continually maintain, evaluate and improve ISO’s standards development processes to meet stakeholder needs and expectations. To this end, a number of improvement projects within the TMB have been established in recent years to address specific aspects of the development process.

In particular, two initiatives are noteworthy and directly related to ISO’s core processes. The first is to increase the acceptance and to assure market relevance of ISO standards through upfront measures at the proposal stage (through the TMB Market Relevance Task Force). A second initiative is the consideration of possible alternative models of development, as well as the examination of stakeholder engagement practices within national standards bodies and liaison organizations (through the TMB Process Evaluation Group). These initiatives will contribute to the evolution of key parts of the ISO process.

Redoubling efforts

The ISO Central Secretariat (ISO/CS) has a decisive role in the organization’s technical structure with a responsibility to support the continual improvement of performance by, for example, facilitating the achievement of target dates and the progression of work in the ISO technical programme.

The outlook and prospects for further improvements have never been better.

The ISO/CS must also continually improve its timeliness and performance, as well as adjust its own internal processes, to ensure that its services continue to meet expectations in the technical programme. These and other system improvements by the TMB have together with its adjusted operating mode contributed to a steady decrease in the average standards development cycle time from 47 months in 2003, to 32.8 months in 2009 (30 % decrease in seven years). Quite a remarkable result! 
Jacob Holmblad is ISO Vice-President (technical management) for the 2010-2011 (second) term. Mr. Holmblad had been Managing Director of Danish Standards (DS) from 1991 until the end of 2009. Since 2010, he holds a position as international consultant in DS and he is more and more active in several boards in the private sector. Before joining DS, he had long-standing experience within the Danish Ministry of Energy (1973-1991), including 10 years as Deputy Managing Director of the Danish Energy Agency. His career also includes commitments within the Danish Government such as Acting personal assistant to the Minister of Industry (1974-1978). Mr. Holmblad has also been involved in the board of several entities, such as the Danish Energy Society (Vice-Chairman), the Wind Turbines Capital Fund Ltd. (Vice-Chairman and Chairman), the Danish-Chinese committee for technological and scientific cooperation (Member 1997-2008), the Danish Energy Regulatory Authority (Deputy Chairman), the Science Park of the Technical University of Denmark (Chairman) and the Danish Innovation Centre (Vice-Chairman). From 2000 until 2004, Mr. Holmblad was Vice-President Technical of CEN.

Living Lab in progress.

But there is no time for us to rest on our laurels – we must continue to build on these solid gains and successes and reinforce them as well as introduce new tools to meet the unmistakable messages and clear demands expressed during the consultation for the ISO Strategic Plan 2011-2015, in order to further improve the timeliness, relevance and usability of ISO standards.

**Speeding up the process**

One of the solutions to meet the demand for continuous improvements in speeding up production is the project, “ISO Living Laboratory”. The project which is underway is intended to develop a tool and performance improvement environment for modelling the end-to-end ISO standardization process; for quantifying the impact of potential changes in the process; and for delivering increased value to ISO stakeholders. Personally, I am convinced that the Living Lab will add to our core processes with the same significance and effect which ISO 9000 has added to our brand.

The Living Lab together with the themes highlighted in this special report will form the pivotal issues at our upcoming ISO/TC Chairs’ Conference next June. Besides giving the ISO Central Secretariat and the TMB an excellent occasion to inform and discuss key topics relevant for our chairs, secretariats and committees, the conference will also give us an excellent occasion to receive input from our key customers – all those who, through their work and dedication, contribute to the development of ISO standards and publications. In so doing, we will be better equipped to satisfy our customers, to serve our markets, and ultimately, fulfill ISO’s mission as the world’s largest standards organization.

**About the author**

Jacob Holmblad is ISO Vice-President (technical management) for the 2010-2011 (second) term. Mr. Holmblad had been Managing Director of Danish Standards (DS) from 1991 until the end of 2009. Since 2010, he holds a position as international consultant in DS and he is more and more active in several boards in the private sector. Before joining DS, he had long-standing experience within the Danish Ministry of Energy (1973-1991), including 10 years as Deputy Managing Director of the Danish Energy Agency. His career also includes commitments within the Danish Government such as Acting personal assistant to the Minister of Industry (1974-1978). Mr. Holmblad has also been involved in the board of several entities, such as the Danish Energy Society (Vice-Chairman), the Wind Turbines Capital Fund Ltd. (Vice-Chairman and Chairman), the Danish-Chinese committee for technological and scientific cooperation (Member 1997-2008), the Danish Energy Regulatory Authority (Deputy Chairman), the Science Park of the Technical University of Denmark (Chairman) and the Danish Innovation Centre (Vice-Chairman). From 2000 until 2004, Mr. Holmblad was Vice-President Technical of CEN.
Mapping the future
The consultation that shaped the ISO Strategic Plan

by Daniele Gerundino

An African proverb says, “Tomorrow belongs to the people who prepare for it today.” It is no surprise, therefore, that the ISO Strategic Plan 2011-2015 was developed through the most comprehensive exercise ever conducted by ISO to map its future strategy.

Lasting legacy

But to tell the story of its development we must first go back to 1998, the year that I joined ISO. The organization’s strategy was then codified within a three-year strategic agenda, developed through a formal process that involved primarily ISO members.

In 2004, this approach was revised under the leadership of the then ISO Secretary-General, Alan Bryden. The strategy’s timeframe was extended to five years (six, for that first plan, which covered 2005 to 2010). At the same time, the revision was taken as an opportunity to promote extensive national stakeholder consultations consolidated through ISO members and channelled to ISO.

The new approach was a success. It was agreed that the exercise would be repeated for the next five-year plan. At its meeting in 2008, the ISO Council therefore requested the ISO Secretary-General to carry out a consultation to collect suggestions and expectations for the ISO Strategic Plan.

And so it begins

The development of the new plan coincided with another important event for ISO – the appointment of the new ISO Secretary-General Rob Steele, as of January 2009. This meant that the new Secretary-General could lead the initiative from its inception, a positive move for orienting the future of the organization.

The project was well received by the community of ISO stakeholders.

The consultation became one of the main goals of the new ISO Secretary-General and the members of the ISO Council Standing Committee on Strategy (CSC/STRAT), starting with the development of a comprehensive, 14-page long questionnaire comprising 10 detailed questions covering all major strategic issues facing the organization.


Reaching out

In March 2009, the questionnaire was distributed to ISO members. It was requested that they organize consultations with their national stakeholders, to serve as a basis for their recommendations to the ISO Strategic Plan. Consequently, the ISO members held a number of initiatives to gather input from stakeholders in their respective countries. These followed various approaches, but overall gave them the opportunity to exchange views on the objectives and challenges of the organization, and to express their opinion on ISO’s future direction.

At the same time, the ISO Secretary-General contacted a number of international organizations considered to be major stakeholders in international standardization, and invited them to submit their contributions. The ISO President, Dr. Alan Morrison, and the ISO Secretary-General, Rob Steele, took every opportunity to present and update stakeholders on the strategic consultation.
process, through participation in a significant number of national and regional workshops.

The project was well received by the community of ISO stakeholders. It was also instrumental in raising awareness of ISO’s role and of the importance of helping shape its strategy.

Overall, the consultation process took place between March and September 2009.

Results and antacids

As a result, a total of 52 responses were received: 43 from ISO members and nine from ISO’s international partners. Contributions were also submitted by the ISO Technical Management Board and the Chair’s Advisory Group of the ISO Committee on developing country matters (DEVCO CAG).

The input received made up an overwhelming total of about 700 pages, which I started to digest (with some apprehension and a few antacids…) at the beginning of October 2009.

Contrary to whatever my initial concerns may have been, the development of the plan has been relatively smooth – proof of ISO’s and its members’ solid consensus-based culture and the convergence of our joint objectives.

ISO members and their stakeholders expressed satisfaction and support for ISO’s current operating mode and scope of work. The majority of contributors conveyed clear views on the strategic directions to strengthen ISO’s value proposition and its responsiveness to global challenges.

Shared views

Overall, ISO members expressed shared and consistent views on ISO’s major strategic directions over the next five years.

While opinions could differ in regard to specific issues (e.g. the extent and modalities to approach new standardization activities in domains such as societal issues or management systems standards), it was always possible to identify a common denominator shared by all. On this basis, a strong level of consensus was achieved through open and constructive discussions within CSC/STRAT and the ISO Council, and this is reflected in the final plan.

It is also interesting to note the positive comments received from partner international organizations, which emphasized their appreciation for ISO’s work. Their contributions were valuable additions that incorporated the specific perspective of each organization on the issues that mattered to them.

In addition to their views on ISO’s future, many of the contributions submitted by ISO members provided suggestions for implementation. All of these comments have been recorded by the ISO Central Secretariat, and will be duly considered in the framework of the strategy implementation process.

To action

Having been deeply involved in the consultation process from its inception, I can say that it has been a tremendous and enriching adventure. Mapping the future of an organization is not an easy task, but when it involves reaching out to, and obtaining consensus from stakeholders around the world, it is a considerable but rewarding challenge.

I now look forward to the next step, in which we put all of the plan’s good ideas into action.

Dr. Daniele Gerundino is Strategic Advisor to the ISO Secretary-General.

About the author
Capitalizing on the process used to develop the current ISO Strategic Plan 2005-2010, and on its successful implementation, the preparation of the new strategic plan has been based on a broad consultation of ISO members and their stakeholders, as well as of key international and regional partners. This gave them a unique opportunity to contribute to shaping ISO’s future.

ISO encouraged its stakeholders to submit their input in the form of statements on where they would like ISO to be in 2015 having successfully implemented ISO Strategic Plan 2011-2015. Stakeholder organizations were also invited to express their opinions on the work that has been done during the current 2005-2010 plan.

ISO has a membership of 163 national standards bodies. This article is gleaned from more than 500 pages of comprehensive comments received from ISO members in answer to an ISO questionnaire. The following 13 excerpts have no pretension to provide a complete picture, but rather to offer a flavour of the quality and variety of inputs. In the interests of space and publication in a magazine, they have been edited.
ISO’s expanding scope to address societal issues such as social responsibility and social security illustrates ISO’s ability and potential to foresee the needs of its broad base of stakeholders. The demands for these subjects will only grow with time, and it is thus crucial that ISO provides efficient answers to these and upcoming new trends. Environmental issues, for example, also need to be highlighted as they are progressively inserted in the productive chains.

In the area of ISO’s management systems standards (MSS), ISO seems to be handling the situation very appropriately. The MSS approach has proved to be a powerful solution for several important issues for organizations worldwide. It is therefore likely that new themes for future MSS will emerge and it will be important to ensure that useful and effective solutions are be developed. Sustainability, for instance, could benefit from an ISO MMS.

ANSI and its stakeholders commend ISO for its organization of the dynamic and participatory process to contribute to the development of ISO’s next strategic plan. We are encouraged by your openness and attention to the interests of ISO members in these important efforts to ensure the continued strength and vitality of the organization as a key international standards solutions provider into the future. ANSI’s input builds from our current concerns to express what ANSI wants ISO to be in 2015.

ANSI supports ISO in recognizing that the goals of partnering and cooperation are to support the greatest possible efficiency and cost savings for the participants in standards development and the users of standards, and the greatest possible flexibility for cooperation with other relevant standards developers.

Regarding the diversification, expansion and development of ISO MSS in 2015, ANSI agrees that the ISO family of MSS shall be based on sound business justification and that ISO MSS development processes will be optimized by utilizing best practice and best technology.

The next 10 years will be challenging ones dominated by significant geo-political decisions, followed by global governance agreements. This will, in turn, call for corresponding International Standards with the global reach that can be provided by ISO as the only really international standardization body with such a generic scope. Relying on the expertise of a broad variety of stakeholders, ISO is in an excellent position to provide International Standards that can support policy objectives. The ISO system has proven to be an effective means of fulfilling the expectations of the World Trade Organization (WTO) as well as those of the ISO member countries and other stakeholders – and it will do so in the future.

The involvement of all relevant stakeholders is an important cornerstone of voluntary standardization. The principle of national delegations provides competent, sustainable and balanced stakeholder input. It is the obligation of ISO members to ensure that this happens in an appropriate way. It is important to find ways of improving the involvement of stakeholders groups that find it difficult to participate actively (e.g. employees, small and medium-sized enterprises). There are several ongoing initiatives addressing this issue and ISO members should be encouraged to share best practice.

Addressing the strategic importance of standardization in education is considered as being of the greatest importance. ISO should continue to play a proactive role in this area, and promote such ideas in establishing close contacts with universities and business schools, offering them appropriate material, advice and guidance.
ISO members receive a very good quality of service from the ISO Central Secretariat. Perhaps more attention should be given to members from developing countries. ESMA supports ISO in the continuity and development of more efforts destined to disseminate information and organize training for people involved in standardization.

ESMA supports ISO’s efforts in the field of information technology and eServices, which can be applied by national standards bodies as good practice at the national level.

ISO standards can contribute to public policies, with special attention given to helping developing countries and least developed countries reach out to the public sector. ISO itself must reach out more to policy makers particularly in developing countries and regional economic communities. These efforts will complement the efforts undertaken by member bodies at the national level.

The results achieved in the framework of the current ISO Action Plan for developing countries 2005-2010 have been remarkable as far as Ghana is concerned. This plan should continue to be the basis for a new action plan for future projects.

GSB encourages ISO on the development of some specific recommendations such as enhancing mentoring programmes for technical committee Chairs and Secretaries, as well as strengthening capacity building in developing countries.

The current mechanisms in place to provide competent, sustainable and balanced stakeholder input and consolidated views in the development of ISO standards are being reviewed by ISO with particular attention. Now it is necessary that the national member bodies contribute in the same way in their national mirror committees.

It is very important to monitor more systematically the actual involvement and representativeness of interested stakeholders to prevent later objections at the end of the development of a technical project.

We consider the activities undertaken by the ISO Committee on developing country matters (ISO/DEVCO) in the previous ISO Action Plan for developing countries 2005-2010 as very good and extremely useful. These activities must be used as the basis for the new action plan.

Including results of Research and development (R&D) and innovation in International Standards is where the value of ISO’s work lies. It provides the global market, including developing countries, with access to innovative products and state-of-the-art technologies.

Carried out in an appropriate way, standardization facilitates and accelerates innovation, providing value to the stakeholders in the relevant innovative fields. In effect, standardization should be carried out in integrated manner with R&D activities while the latter are taking place. Public and private entities carrying out R&D activities should be encouraged to consider drafting and proposing International Standards in order to develop and facilitate new markets. They should be persuaded that such integrated activities are to their own benefit as well as to that of the public. An idea would be for ISO to consider collaboration with international R&D fora.

JISC supports ISO’s efforts to improve communication with relevant international organizations and to further improve its visibility and status in the United Nations to encourage more successful collaborations.
The promotion of ISO standards to academia is important for professions in standardization and for technical work. ISO and its members, for example, should be involved in designing curricula for universities and in offering lecturers, as well as textbooks, on standardization.

JISM encourages ISO to reach out to academia and standards users. Some ideas include eLearning modules, free training materials through the ISO Website and training courses on “train the trainers” programmes.

Standards Australia acknowledges the vital role of ISO in development of International Standards. These standards play a critical role in global engagement and facilitation of trade and commerce. Standards Australia is proud to play its role in support of ISO in development of International Standards in accordance with principles outlined in the WTO’s TBT Agreement.

Standards Australia recognizes the need to maximize effective coordination globally to achieve essential standardization outcomes for all engaged nations and interest groups. There is an overwhelming, critical need to optimize global coordination/cooperation in standards development for both business and public benefit and resource sustainability for all parties.

ISO needs to conduct proactive research and development work in order to cater for end user requirements well ahead of global challenges such as we have experienced in the areas of energy efficiency; global financial integrity; climate change. This would provide ISO with the needed edge to anticipate future challenges and provide the tools in the form of standards to support these challenges as they materialize.

The broad consultation on the ISO Strategic Plan 2011-2015 (held by SABS in August 2009) provided our stakeholders with the opportunity to capture their expectations on the ISO system, communicate on the benefits of international standardization and participate in the future direction of the organization.

We compliment ISO on the work being conducted regarding the economic value of standards. We also encourage broader participation at national level to further inform the process and promote the ISO added value. It would be useful to develop a targeted communications plan that further entrenches the good work of ISO.
From a consumer perspective, greater clarity and better linkages between standards and related conformity assessment practices are needed to address the growing demand for standardization to provide credible solutions to marketplace demands.

To be effective strategically, ISO needs to consider the impact on standardization of various global trends including “mission based” programmes such as fair trade, as well as among others, the increased reference and use of standards and conformity assessment in regulation.

As long as the associated social and economic benefits can be articulated, international standardization will continue to positively affect the decisions made by Canadian consumers, companies and governments.

We think ISO should monitor more systematically the actual involvement of the interested stakeholders in its technical work. Apart from their involvement, tools aimed at assessing stakeholder representation and their technical expertise. For those stakeholders considered “underrepresented” in the standard development process, such as consumers, trade unions, NGO, experts coming from developing countries, and, in some cases, SME’s, it would be useful to provide tools to support their participation, as was done for the recent activities covering issues of social relevance.
ISO’s stakeholders include some 500 international organizations who have liaison status with ISO. This article is gleaned from more than 500 pages of comprehensive comments received from liaison organizations in answer to an ISO questionnaire. The following six excerpts below have no pretention to provide a complete picture, but to provide a flavour of the quality and variety of inputs. In the interests of space and publication in a magazine, they have been edited.

Consumers International (CI)

CI is the world federation of consumer groups that, working together with its members, serves as the only independent and authoritative global voice for consumers.

In the area of ISO’s scope covering societal issues, ISO has a valuable role to play in this, as seen in the development of ISO 26000 on social responsibility.

In its development, ISO has recognized the need for positive action to involve under-represented groups such as consumers and developing countries to produce representative and meaningful consensus-based international standards.

It would be useful for ISO to provide guidance to users, especially for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), developing countries and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) / public bodies on the actual implementation of ISO standards. It was suggested that the guidance be adapted to the audience and oriented towards a flexible, step-by-step application of standards to encourage the closing of gaps in technical and economic situations.
International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC)

ILAC is an international cooperation of laboratory and inspection accreditation bodies formed more than 30 years ago to help remove technical barriers to trade.

International Accreditation Forum (IAF)

IAF is the world association of conformity assessment accreditation bodies and other bodies interested in conformity assessment in the fields of management systems, products, services, personnel and other similar programmes of conformity assessment.

The ISO management system standards (MSS) concept has proven to be successful in addressing specific issues: first with quality, then the environment, and now issues such as food safety. With regards to conformity assessment, ILAC and IAF support the continuation of ISO’s neutrality policy.

ISO’s continual improvement of the conformity assessment tool box developed by the ISO Committee on conformity assessment (ISO/CASCO) is of great importance in view of the demand for impartial competent conformity assessment. In order to minimize market confusion, it was suggested that more attention could be given to the scope of conformity assessment standards. It would be helpful for ISO to also get involved in the promotion of mutual recognition agreements (MRAs) relating to conformity assessment services since it will widely promote the use of ISO standards in a consistent manner.

ISO is a good forum for obtaining international consensus and it would be useful to pursue development of information, guidance and standards that can be used as tools for effectively meeting society’s needs.

International Trade Centre (ITC)

ITC enables small business export success in developing countries by providing, with partners, sustainable and inclusive trade development solutions to the private sector, trade support institutions and policymakers.

The use of International Standards in technical regulations will facilitate trade, and it would be good for it to be promoted as much as possible. The activities undertaken by developing countries have yielded positive results and could be considered as the basis for ISO’s new Strategic Plan. It would be useful for ISO and ITC to work together to link their networks of counterparts and beneficiaries in the field (trade support institutions (TSIs) and national standards bodies (NSBs)) to strengthen the promotion of the use of International Standards. ISO’s involvement in mutual recognition agreements (MRAs) would contribute to a greater use of International Standards by countries and to facilitating trade.

The development of guidance documents by ISO to facilitate implementation of International Standards by developing countries would be very useful. ISO, together with IAF, could strengthen mechanisms to protect the integrity of certificates to ISO MSS, so as to address growing concerns about the integrity of certification to MSS, particularly ISO 9001.
Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)

OECD uses its wealth of information on a broad range of topics to help governments foster prosperity and fight poverty through economic growth and financial stability.

International standardization is a powerful tool in developing realistic rules for providing information between producers and consumers. Although it might be a big challenge to build consensus among consumers, producers and standards experts, ISO could provide a suitable standardization framework for different stakeholders.

With the worldwide challenge to overcome limitations on energy and environmental constraints, it is essential to globally disseminate energy-saving, low-carbon, and environmentally friendly technology. ISO could help in this area by initiating internationally harmonized standardization for more visible environmental performance, and providing a standardized framework to disseminate excellent environmental technologies globally.

“Open innovation” is delivered from new frameworks such as combinations of different technologies, processes and organizations and this is becoming increasingly common. To encourage innovation in this new environment, adequate standardization will be important to ensure more effective communication across different technologies and organizations. Hence, it would be useful for ISO to develop a standardization framework to encourage open innovation.

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

UNEP’s Division of Technology, Industry and Economics (UNEP DTIE).

UNEP1) provides leadership and encourages partnership in caring for the environment by inspiring, informing, and enabling nations and peoples to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations.

As ISO’s aspiration for a good mix, participation by member countries from all regions, as well as relevant experts and interest group stakeholders will result in a healthy balance between harmonization for the sake of trade and harmonization driven by the public interest of raising the bar in certain normative fields.

Possible areas for ISO to look more closely at are: ecosystem services and resource efficiency, global supply and value chains management.

In the area of standards and conformity assessment, it may be useful if ISO provides more information on performance, content and third party assurance.

The use of ISO MSS could be promoted via business school courses, for example, a network of business schools in a region. An idea would be for ISO to involve national members to do special projects with relevant local ministries, for example the local environment ministry, on life cycle standards, eco-labeling and environmental certification.

1) UNEP’s Division of Technology, Industry and Economics (UNEP DTIE).
The voice of the stakeholder

Industry contributes to strategy

Industry stakeholders are an essential pillar of international standardization, and they are substantially engaged through the national standards body (NSB) structures and processes. Needs and expectations from industry stakeholders were captured by NSBs and channeled to ISO during the consultation process for the ISO Strategic Plan 2011-2015. The main recommendations from industry are outlined on this page.

Strategic direction

To consider strategically the global needs and the future direction of the organization.

In particular the identification of, and focus on, areas where its members and stakeholders consider it should play a leadership role in the international arena. ISO needs to set clear and achievable strategic goals for key sectors, build a delivery plan, and improve the standardization process through stronger business cases and impact analyses.

Implementation

To strive for a better global implementation of ISO standards.

Competing or conflicting national standards generate additional cost for industry, without any added value.

Market relevance

To fully support market relevance.

ISO is perceived as an appropriate platform for developing International Standards, provided that key stakeholder groups are in agreement. ISO should therefore continually improve the mechanisms for identifying and developing new standards, ensuring that they address clear and justified market needs.

New needs

To carefully consider new needs for technical standards.

Both in consolidated and emerging fields, standards for the design, manufacturing, use and disposal of products and systems need to be reconsidered and improved taking into account sustainability, health and safety, confidence-building and accessibility aspects.

Standards users

The views of industry stakeholders were also reflected in the contributions received from the International Federation of Standards Users (IFAN) which underlined that:

* IFAN members would like to see greater cooperation/coordination between ISO and other standards development organizations.
* IFAN members are after “one standard accepted and used everywhere,” irrespective of who develops it.
* What is critical is that standards bodies do not compete in a way that confuses markets and adds significantly to development costs.
There is a better way.

ISO Focus+ on the road ahead.

It’s good to know where we’ve come from. It’s how we avoid, for example, reinventing the wheel. But driving by looking permanently in a rear view mirror is not recommended. ISO standards are a rich source of existing know-how, distilling years of experience and expertise. But brand new standards, standards now under development and standards identified as needed in coming years shape our present, immediate future and beyond. You can stay up to speed on all these developments by reading ISO Focus+ magazine, published in English and French, in print and online editions, 10 times a year. To get where we want, the best way is to “focus+” on the road ahead.

Available from ISO national member institutes (listed with contact details on the ISO Website at www.iso.org) and from the ISO Central Secretariat Webstore at www.iso.org/isostore or e-mail to sales@iso.org.
ISO deliverables meet customer needs

In each sector that ISO addresses, business, government, consumers and other stakeholders recognize and rely on ISO as the leading platform for the development and dissemination of globally relevant solutions.

ISO excels in reaching out to and engaging stakeholders

Active involvement in the ISO standards development process of industry, government, consumers and other stakeholders is essential and ensures the relevance, quality and use of ISO standards. Through the national members, ISO ensures the engagement of all relevant stakeholders, facilitates their participation in standards development and recognizes their contribution.

ISO fosters partnerships that further increase the value and efficient development of International Standards

ISO effectively promotes and manages partnerships with international organizations, standards developing organizations, industry consortia, civil society and academia, to increase the value and the efficient development of International Standards.
ISO standards promote innovation and provide solutions to address global challenges

ISO standards incorporate state-of-the-art knowledge of relevance to standards users and are broadly used to address the global challenges of the 21st century.

Participation of developing countries in international standardization is essential to ensure the global relevance of ISO standards and to contribute to developing countries’ access to world markets, technical progress and sustainable development.

ISO succeeds in enhancing developing country participation through processes, programmes and tools which assist them in building their standardization capacity, engage national stakeholders, participate effectively in technical work and implement International Standards.

ISO and its processes are significantly improved

ISO uses clear, transparent and rigorous procedures and implements optimal structures, systems and processes, to support the development of high quality deliverables that meet the needs of standards users.

ISO and the value of voluntary International Standards are clearly understood by customers, stakeholders and the general public

ISO communication to all categories of stakeholders, both in support of its members and through its information services and networking initiatives, has significantly raised the profile of ISO and led to an increased recognition of the importance of its activities.
Robins have a reputation for “punching above their weight”. Small birds, they nevertheless defend their territory energetically. At the same, they are curious and will sometimes approach surprisingly close. Qualities like courage, energy and curiosity are among those often possessed by managers of small businesses. But such qualities can be usefully complemented by knowledge of the benefits to efficiency and effectiveness brought by implementing an ISO 9001 quality management system. The latest, 2010 edition of the handbook, *ISO 9001 for Small Businesses*, explains in user-friendly language, with lots of practical examples, how to achieve these benefits. A business can be little, but also very good.
There is increasing realization among policy-makers in developing countries that international trade, which contributes to economic growth and alleviation of poverty, is underpinned by the adoption and application of standards in all spheres of economic activity. The importance of International Standards is further stressed by the World Trade Organization (WTO) rules. Its agreements on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) and Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) encourage WTO members to use, as far as possible, such standards as a basis for mandatory technical regulations.

Regional integration efforts, which concern many of the ISO members, also rely on harmonization and mutual recognition of standards and of results of conformity assessment such as testing, inspection or certification.

There is thus a tremendous need, especially on the part of developing countries, to understand and implement good practices in standardization as well as to contribute in the process of standardization.

**ISO’s technical assistance programmes**

ISO has been implementing technical assistance programmes targeted at its members from developing countries since the early 1980s. The current *ISO Action Plan for developing countries 2005-2010* sets the direction for the support to be provided to members in developing countries, which account for three-quarters of ISO’s 163 members, all of whom are the recognized national standards bodies (NSB) in their respective countries.

The Action Plan defines five key objectives, namely to raise awareness, build capacity, foster regional cooperation, develop expertise in information and communication technologies (ICTs) and enhance the participation of developing countries in ISO technical work.

In aggregate, over 400 activities covering the five objectives of the Action Plan have taken place during the period 2005 to October 2010 and more than 15 500 participants from developing countries have benefited. Around CHF 7 500 000 have been spent directly on the implementation of these activities, excluding the operational costs borne by the ISO Central Secretariat and its dedicated team within the Development and Training Services (DEVT) unit which plans and executes them.

The volume of ISO technical assistance provided to developing countries, funded by donors and ISO members, has nearly quadrupled from their 2005 level of CHF 575 000 to reach CHF 2 150 000 in 2009, while the same level of expenditure as 2009 is expected for 2010.
Financial support is achieved either through ISO member contributions to the Funds-in-trust, the ISO/DIN Endowment (set up by Deutsches Institut für Normung, the ISO member for Germany) or through funding agreements with national development agencies or government ministries. To date the donors who have supported the Action Plan are the government of Finland, the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO).

### Formulation of the new Action Plan 2011-2015

The Chair’s Advisory Group of the ISO Committee on developing country matters (DEVCO CAG) has led the preparation of the new Action Plan since March 2009. Between December 2009 and May 2010, five workshops on “Developing country strategy and planning” were conducted covering all regions of the world to consult members as to the challenges they faced and the measures needed to address them. The accompanying table shows that 85 ISO members, among whom 27 were represented by the respective CEO of the national standards body (NSB), actively participated in the consultations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISO region (members)</th>
<th>Venue</th>
<th>Members represented</th>
<th>Participation</th>
<th>Participant profile</th>
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</table>
| Central and Western Africa (15)       | Accra, Ghana (December 2009) | 28                  | 76%           | - 9 CEOs  
                   |                           |                     |               | - 12 Senior Managers  
                   |                           |                     |               | - 7 Standards Officers |
| Arab (17)                             | Amman, Jordan (January 2010) | 11                  | 65%           | - 4 CEOs  
                   |                           |                     |               | - 4 Senior Managers  
                   |                           |                     |               | - 3 Standards Officers |
| East and South East Asia (16)         | Bali, Indonesia (March 2010) | 15                  | 63%           | - 2 CEOs  
                   |                           |                     |               | - 11 Senior Managers  
                   |                           |                     |               | - 3 Standards Officers |
| South America (9) and the Caribbean and Central America (16) | Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (April 2010) | 20                  | 80%           | - 8 CEOs  
                   |                           |                     |               | - 9 Senior Managers  
                   |                           |                     |               | - 3 Standards Officers |
| Central and Eastern Europe (14) and Central Asia (6) | Belgrade, Serbia (May 2010) | 11                  | 55%           | - 5 CEOs  
                   |                           |                     |               | - 4 Senior Managers  
                   |                           |                     |               | - 2 Standards Officers |
| **Total 123 members**                |                            | **85**              | **69%**       |                                        |

Table 1: Participation in the formulation of the ISO Action Plan for developing countries 2011-2015.

The consultation process for formulating the new Action Plan was key to ensuring greater ownership by the beneficiary countries themselves. Developing country members have a responsibility to monitor the implementation of the Action Plan at the global level through the annual meetings of DEVCO.

The volume of ISO technical assistance has nearly quadrupled.

They further have to ensure that the technical assistance benefits all stakeholders and help measure the impacts of the activities. While ISO, with support from donors, can assist, it is up to the members to take all steps for the implementation of the activities at the national level.

### Meeting the needs of stakeholders and customers

The ISO Action Plan for developing countries 2011-2015 implements the elements of the ISO Strategic Plan 2011-2015 relating to developing countries. The goal and the purpose of the former are thus closely aligned with the mission and objectives of the latter as shown in the two illustrations.

The new Action Plan consists of the following six outputs:

- Increased participation in ISO technical work
Dr. Bambang Setiadi has been the Chair of the ISO Committee for developing country matters since early 2010. He has been Director-General of the National Standardization Agency of Indonesia (BSN) since 2008. His previous occupational experiences include positions as Deputy to the State Minister of Research on Science and Technology (2005-2008), Senior Advisor to the Minister of Research and Technology on Industrial Economy and Trade (2003-2005), and Deputy to the Chairman of the Agency for Assessment and Application of Technology (2000-2003).

**About the author**

Developing countries will continue to be a priority for ISO. The ISO Council has made a special fund allocation of around CHF 1.2 million to support developing country programmes in 2011, thus supplementing other resources that could be mobilized from ISO members and donors. ISO technical assistance is critical in ensuring that NSBs participate fully in international standardization activities (as recommended by the 2009 Triennial review of the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade of the World Trade Organization (WTO TBT)).

The NSB is the linchpin in many developing countries with regard to the knowledge base connected to standards, metrology, conformity assessment and accreditation. Strengthening NSBs, therefore, provides the pathway to establishing wider quality infrastructures under other projects.

ISO technical assistance thus builds the foundation for wider quality projects.


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

ISO succeeds in enhancing developing countries’ participation through processes, programmes and tools which assist them in building their standardization capacity, engage national stakeholders, participate effectively in technical work and implement International Standards.

(OBJECTIVE 3 OF STRATEGIC PLAN)

**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.


ISO develops high quality voluntary International Standards which facilitate international exchange of goods and services, support sustainable and equitable economic growth, promote innovation and protect health, safety and the environment.

(ISO’S MISSION IN STRATEGIC PLAN 2011-2015)

**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.
Special Report

Loud and clear

by Nicolas Fleury

An article in the September 2010 issue of ISO Focus+1) underscored the remarkable level of brand recognition achieved by ISO. Paradoxically, despite such visibility, standardization and its benefits often remain a mystery to the general public. Yet ISO is responsible for raising awareness of its work and value among all its stakeholders – this includes not only standard users, but society as a whole, since all benefit from standards.

Communication and strategy

Recent studies have shown that today, no company or organization can afford the luxury of ignoring the communication factor when devising a strategy. As the economy struggles to get back on its feet after one of its most severe crises, an organization must be visible and show its competitive advantage, actively promote its products and services, and advertise the impact of its activities on society. Consequently, creating a sense of interdependence between strategic planning and communication is a prerequisite to the success of any organization.

ISO fully understands this requirement, and has included communication as one of the seven objectives of the ISO Strategic Plan 2011-2015. In addition, the remaining six objectives that ISO has resolved to achieve by the end of this five-year plan all have a communication component.

A true challenge

There is a significant gap, however, between saying something and doing it. Our times are marked by the circulation of massive information flows from an almost infinite number of sources. For any organization, making sure that its message is read, and thereby increasing its visibility, its market share and, as the case may be, its profits, is a real challenge.

As far as ISO is concerned, developing a winning communication strategy remains difficult despite the ISO brand name recognition. Its task is all the more complex as its work covers a broad spectrum of subject fields – as evidenced by a catalogue of more than 18,500 standards and the diversity of its audience and geographical reach, which encompasses all countries in the world with their economic and cultural specificities. When it comes to deciding which message to get across and to which audience, making choices is inevitable.

Fortunately, the wealth and power of the network of ISO members facilitate the development of ISO’s communication. The organization can rely on its members who serve as national intermediaries. Indeed,

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they know their markets and maintain close links with stakeholders in their countries, and expend efforts on translating, adapting and often, developing the standardization message. And we should not forget the experts involved in technical committees who, due to their specialist knowledge, are key contributors to the development of ISO’s image and its work.

Proven techniques

Today, the ISO Central Secretariat develops and uses a variety of proven communication tools and cooperates closely with the organization’s members and technical committee experts. This collaboration is often reflected in the press releases that are regularly issued, and in the monthly publication of the ISO Focus+ magazine in English and French editions, which is now offered in print and electronic formats (www.iso.org/isofocusplus).

Press releases are posted on ISO’s Website (www.iso.org), one of the key tools of the organization’s communication strategy. E-mail alerts to the press releases are sent to targeted journalists, identified through a Web-based media contact database. It is also possible to subscribe individually to our specific press release RSS (Really Simple Syndication) feeds.

The Central Secretariat also develops a wide range of publications designed to provide information on ISO and to promote its activities. Once again, ISO members can reproduce, translate, adapt and disseminate such materials for their own audiences.

Finally, the organization hosts a growing number of conferences, workshops and launch events as a means to further promote its activities.

The new opportunity offered by social media

In order to better address the above-mentioned challenge, ISO has expanded its communication strategy to popular social media such as Twitter (twitter.com/isosstandards), Facebook (facebook.com/isosstandards), YouTube (youtube.com/planetiso) and Flickr (flickr.com/isosstandards), and professional networks such as LinkedIn. Actively using these media is no longer a choice but an obligation for any organization, because:

- Information, whether general or specific, on products and services, is mainly searched on the Internet
- Audiences create their own information on organizations with which they interact and on the products and services they use, and share it through social media which now bring together more than a billion people
- Social media enable direct interaction between an organization and its audiences, so that organizations no longer have to wait for a journalist to pick up their press releases.

After a few months using these networks, the experience has been conclusive and has culminated with the launch of ISO 26000 on 1 November 2010\(^2\), echoed by many Internet users.

ISO produces new videos

Social networks help disseminate a variety of content with a marked preference for videos, which are acknowledged as one of the most efficient communication tools. Based on its experience with the two films celebrating the anniversaries of the ISO 9001 and ISO 14001 series of standards which have been viewed by several thousand Internet users, ISO has decided to produce two videos – one intended to promote the benefits of standards to businesses and governments, and the other one aimed at the general public in order to illustrate the impact of standards on daily life. Both videos are now available on ISO’s Website, as well as on YouTube and iTunes, and may be freely used and shared.

ISO will be following up with a series of video clips presenting the benefits of standards for specific challenges such as the environment, food safety and healthcare. Do not hesitate to subscribe to ISO’s YouTube channel, ISO’s video podcast or related RSS feed on ISO Online (www.iso.org), and to follow the activities of ISO members who also use social media platforms.

About the author

Nicolas Fleury is Director, Marketing, Communication & Information at the ISO Central Secretariat.
Focus on consumer issues

Norma McCormick, Chair of the ISO Committee on consumer policy (ISO/COPOLCO), shares her thoughts on the priorities for addressing consumer issues.

What motivated you to get involved in consumer interests?

Norma McCormick: My interest in consumer issues parallels my interests in the standards world. My career has been in the field of occupational health and safety, which is heavily influenced by the standards system. Standards are essential to protecting the health and safety of workers and workplaces. But I soon learned that standards are equally important to the personal aspects of my life as a consumer, and contribute significantly to the health, safety and wellbeing of society as a whole. And when something interests me, I want to get involved and influence outcomes.

What do you hope to achieve during your term as Chair of ISO/COPOLCO?

Norma McCormick: I have been greatly impressed during my years of involvement with ISO/COPOLCO (both in Canada and at the international level), that many of the important issues identified by the committee become priorities for ISO. We are in a sense an “early warning system”, identifying issues and concerns of importance to consumers. While we serve this function extremely well, we must be very careful not to overextend the capacity of our volunteers to do the research and validation necessary to provide good information to ISO. This means that we must continue to renew and expand our volunteer resources, both from our existing, and an increasing, membership base. This is an important priority.

With the new ISO Strategic Plan 2011-2015, stakeholder involvement is given even greater significance. In your view, how does the new Strategic Plan meet the needs of consumers?

Norma McCormick: There are two aspects which I see as key to meeting consumer needs. I greatly appreciate the emphasis of the new ISO Strategic Plan on customer service. In the standards world, consumers are the customers who obtain products and services. Standardization benefits both those who produce these goods or services, and those who acquire and use them. The second aspect of importance in the ISO Strategic Plan 2011-2015 is the recognition of consumers as not just stakeholders, but as experts who have an important contribution to make in the standardization process.

2011 conference for ISO chairs and convenors

The fifth ISO technical committee (TC) and subcommittee (SC) chairs’ conference will be held in Geneva on 16 and 17 June 2011, and will be open for the first time to working group convenors. Under the general theme “Simpler, faster, better”, the main focus of the conference will be the ISO Strategic Plan 2011-2015.

The conference will also share information about the Living Laboratory project that began in 2010, and under which a software model of the end-to-end ISO standards development process has been developed. The project has also identified factors key to ensuring ISO’s future success. These include stakeholder engagement, which is being addressed by the ISO Technical Management Board’s Process Evaluation Group (PEG); assuring global and market relevance when considering proposals for new work, and the need for simplification and streamlining of the standards development process.

Other themes are also under consideration, but it is hoped that the committee chairs themselves will contribute and help to define the issues that they consider need to be addressed in the conference.

Such conferences are generally held every three years and provide a unique opportunity for the leaders of ISO committees to network and exchange views, experiences and best practices with respect to the conduct of their work.
fitting choice for a week of productive debate on how standards can continue to assist government, business and society to reap the benefits of the digital revolution.

Harmonizing management standards

It all started with ISO 9001, the quality management standard that today is applied worldwide by more than one million enterprises and organizations of all types and sizes. Then followed the ISO 14000 family on environmental management. The series has also been implemented by numerous companies, together with other management system standards, such as for information security (ISO/IEC 27001), security in the supply chain (ISO/IEC 27007), and safety of the food chain (ISO 22000), among others.

To support users in the joint, integrated application of these standards, ISO has set up a dedicated working group. Its task is to review and harmonize the various terms and definitions, as well as the structure, outline and standard text elements of all existing management standards, in order to facilitate implementation by the standards’ users.

In its meeting held at the Austrian Standards Institute in Vienna in October 2010, the committee made up of around 30 experts from more than 30 countries decided to update the future work programme. Among its key decisions was the establishment of a new working group to develop harmonized text blocks and establish a common terminology.

The committee’s Chair, Neil Reeve, concluded: “ISO/TC 67’s vision statement is ‘Global standards used locally worldwide.’ This meeting has demonstrated that we are achieving our goals of preparing standards that are formally adopted worldwide for our industry sector. We are being increasingly recognized by regulators. And we are enabling companies to minimize their technical specifications.”

Oil spill inspires development of new standard

The ISO technical committee for materials, equipment and offshore structures for petroleum, petrochemical and natural gas industries, ISO/TC 67, met in Doha, Qatar, in October 2010 for its first plenary in the Gulf region.

The meeting brought together oil and gas industry stakeholders from over 20 countries, welcomed by Dr. Mohamed Bin Saif Al Kuwari, General Director of Qatar Standards, and Mr. Saif Al Naimi, Director of HSE Regulations and Enforcement of Qatar Petroleum.

Over the past 20 years, the committee has developed in many ways, including covering standards for integrated oil and gas industry equipment. Its membership has diversified with enhanced participation and leadership from Brazil, China, Russia and the Gulf countries in addition to North America, Europe and Japan. To date, the committee has published over 145 standards.

At the meeting, ISO/TC 67 addressed some of the key issues for the oil and gas sector. An example is the establishment of a new working group on well integrity in response to the Gulf of Mexico oil spill in 2010.

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“ISO/TC 67 standards are developed by experts from oil companies, manufacturers, certification bodies and regulators from all over the world in a spirit of ‘cooperation, not competition’.”

Volcanic activity for water committee

Hydrometry (water measurement) is essential for water management and conservation. The ISO technical committee responsible, ISO/TC 113, Hydrometry, met in Portland, USA in October 2010. Representatives from China, India, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the USA attended the event.

A number of technical issues were resolved, the future work programme was discussed, and it was decided that the committee will update its business plan. Among its key decisions was the establishment of working groups to develop standards entitled, Liquid flow in open channels – Sediment in streams and canals – Determination of concentration by surrogate techniques, and, Artificial recharge to groundwater.

The value of new ISO solutions such as the ISO Concept Database (bringing together terms, definitions and symbols from all ISO standards) and the online conference tool, was highlighted and appreciated.

A technical field trip was organized by the US Geological Survey, including a visit to Columbia River Gorge, the path of numerous historic gigantic floods and landslides. Delegates were told about the modernization of the hydropower generation unit of the Bonneville dam, and systems of conserving fauna and flora in the region, especially the fish ladder. Participants had the chance to visit the White River and learn about pyroclastic flow deposits (fast moving current of extremely hot gas and rock caused by volcanoes). At Mount Hood (3,425 metres), an active volcano until recently, delegates learnt of glacial lake outburst floods, causing mudflows of volcanic material that can block streams and road bridges.

The next group meetings of ISO/TC 113 will be held in April-May 2012 in Bern, Switzerland.
First general meeting of the Society for Standards and Standardization (SSS) in Seoul, Republic of Korea.

Society for standards and standardization launched

To promote academic research and exchanges of experts on standards, the Society for Standards and Standardization (SSS) was established, and a first general meeting held in Seoul, Republic of Korea. More than 100 experts on standardization participated at the launch event in October 2010. Dr. Sang-hee Park, professor at Yonsei University, was elected as its first president.

SSS plans to carry out various interdisciplinary and integrated studies to play a central role in active communication and discussions among standards experts and interested parties, as an opinion leader in the standards community. The Republic of Korea is the world’s fourth ISO member for the country, and the Korean Agency for Technology and Standards, the Korean Standards and Standardization Institute (KOSIS), has received the 2010 Library Assessment Career Achievement Award. Two librarians from the USA were also recognized.

“...The awardees are three librarians who were instrumental in the definition and use of standardized and consistent statistical data and helped make it possible for libraries to contribute and use high-quality comparable data for effective library management,” announced the Association of Research Libraries.

The Library Assessment Career Achievement Awards are offered in conjunction with the biennial Library Assessment Conference organized by the Association of Research Libraries, the University of Virginia, and the University of Washington. The awards were presented in October 2010, during the conference in Baltimore, USA.

In addition to being Chair of SC 8, Dr. Poll, former chief librarian of Münster University Library, is Convenor of the working groups for library statistics, data for library buildings, and impact of libraries.

Library achievement for Dr. Roswitha Poll

Dr. Roswitha Poll, Chair of subcommittee SC 8, Quality – Statistics and performance evaluation, within ISO/TC 46, Information and documentation, has received the 2010 Library Assessment Career Achievement Award. Two librarians from the USA were also recognized.

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Cosmetics goes nano

Over 100 participants from 21 countries came together to discuss standards for cosmetics at the 10th plenary meeting of ISO/TC 217 in Kyoto, Japan, in November 2010.

The event was hosted by JISC, the ISO member for Japan, and the Japan Cosmetic Industry Association.

Among the standards discussed were microbiological and analytical methods, terminology and sun protection test methods. A new working group was established to look at nanomaterials in the field of cosmetics.

Celebrating the committee’s 10th anniversary, Ms. Mojdeh R. Tabari, ISO/TC 217 Secretary, highlighted the importance of active participation from experts in standards development. She said that “Many new countries have joined the committee in the last few years – an encouraging sign of our work’s reputation, and its wide interest and usefulness. They have also come to realize that ISO provides the best arena for setting the right technical conditions for the world market in cosmetics.” She thanked the efforts of all delegates for their hard work, understanding and support which made the committee a success.

Remembering Dr. Kwak

Dr. Yun Sik Kwak, immediate past Chair of ISO technical committee ISO/TC 215, Health informatics, passed away on 23 November 2010. Born in 1937, in the Republic of Korea, Dr. Kwak was a respected professor of laboratory medicine. He is perhaps best known for his leading role in promoting the development of health informatics in Asia, and through ISO, in the world.

Health informatics refers to the electronic processes for acquiring, storing, retrieving and using information, such as personal patient data. These are helping to revolutionize health care, but standards are needed to ensure privacy and longevity of data among other issues.

Dr. Kwak’s outstanding leadership of ISO/TC 215 lasted from January 2003 to November 2010.
December 2009. Previously, he had actively participated in the committee as Head Delegate from the Republic of Korea (1999-2002). Always a leader and prolific author, Dr. Kwak’s experience outside of ISO involved several chairmanships and presidencies of various Asian health informatics societies and university departments, as well as inspecting laboratories for accreditation in the Pacific Rim. He was a long-time Chair of HL7 Korea.

Dr. Kwak was instrumental in getting the organizations developing health informatics standards – such as CEN (Europe), ISO and HL7 – to work side by side and to harmonize their efforts. He will be missed by his ISO colleagues for his invaluable personal qualities and professional knowledge. Our deepest condolences to his wife, children and grandchildren.

Austrian Standards’ new brand

The Austrian Standards Institute (ASI), ISO member for Austria, launched a new logo and marked the occasion with a special event in December 2010, in Vienna, attended by ISO Secretary-General Rob Steele.

From left: Dr. Elisabeth Stampfl-Blaha, Vice Director, Austrian Standards Institute, Rob Steele, ISO Secretary-General, and Dr. Gerhard Hartmann, Director, Austrian Standards Institute.

Austrian Standards

The decision to change the organization’s logo follows on the heels of several transitions undertaken by ASI during the last years. In 2008, the subsidiary, Austrian Standards plus GmbH with its publishing, training and certification departments was created and, in 2009, the institute’s name officially changed to Austrian Standards Institute. The new logo, representing both organizations under the new family brand of Austrian Standards, is a timely event in view of the organization’s 90th anniversary celebrations held in 2010.

On the occasion of the launch, ISO Secretary-General Rob Steele met Dr. Elisabeth Stampfl-Blaha, Vice Director, and Dr. Gerhard Hartmann, Managing Director of Austrian Standards Institute, with whom he discussed ISO’s vision for the future, encompassed in the ISO Strategic Plan 2011-2015. He also underlined the role played by the Austrian Standards Institute and the importance of International Standards, which contribute to economic growth, environmental integrity and social equity.

50 years of ensuring the reliability of structures

It is not hard to realize the importance of the standards developed by ISO/TC 98, Bases for design of structures, which held its 2010 plenary in Delft, the Netherlands, on 29 November – 3 December 2010. Over 30 delegates from around the world attended the event hosted by NEN, ISO member for the country. In addition to advancing and initiating standardization work, participants celebrated the 50th anniversary of the committee. Attention was drawn to the memory of Prof. Stefan Janicki, the first Chair of ISO/TC 98, who held this position for over 22 years, remembered fondly by those who knew him, for his outstanding personality and leadership.

What lies ahead – Interview

Prof. Andrzej M. Brandt, ISO/TC 98 Chair, talks about the past, present and future of the committee.

How has ISO/TC 98 evolved through its 50 years of existence?

Prof. Brandt: When ISO/TC 98 was created in 1960 – with its secretariat in Poland, and at the initiative of the late Prof. Stefan Janicki – its members consisted mainly of a few European countries from both sides of the “Iron Curtain”. Yet, there was great ambition to develop the key basic ISO standards for the building sector. It was at the time one of the few initiatives that brought together countries from various political systems to improve communication – at least in the field of building and construction – an achievement that continues to this date with the most technically advanced countries on board..

What is the most important work that the committee is working on today?

Prof. Brandt: ISO 2394:1998, General principles on reliability for structures, strongly influences the activities of national and international standardization bodies in the building sector. Our current efforts to establish a new working group that can revise the standard is certainly our most important task right now. Two years of preparation have permitted us to build a list of key items that should be modified and/or introduced to bring the standard up-to-date with new knowledge and technology.

It might be difficult to predict how the committee will change over the next 50 years, but what are your expectations for ISO/TC 98’s future evolution?

Prof. Brandt: Predictions about the future are always difficult! Our expectations for the next 50 years consist of the gradual achievement of a few targets:

• Establishment of sound bases for the development of standardization in the field of structural reliability that respond to changing needs in the field
• Use of ISO/TC 98 standards by the major- ity of countries and regions of the world
• Systematic representation of principal advances in science and technology in ISO/TC 98 standards.

Participants at the ISO/TC 98 plenary in the Netherlands.

Path to financial sustainability

Financing a national standards body (NSB) is not an easy task. To help its members, ISO has published a guide for NSBs in developing economies to better organize their finances. *Financing NSBs – Financial Sustainability for National Standards Bodies*, is being presented in a series of workshops for CEOs and senior personnel of NSBs.

The first of these workshops took place in Pretoria, South Africa, in October 2010, hosted by SABS, ISO member for the country. Some 20 CEOs from sub-Saharan African NSBs attended the event.

The workshop provided a platform for NSBs to share experiences and learn from each other to meet the many financial challenges of an NSB in a modern economy. Among the topics covered were sources of revenue, how to finance standards development work and conformity assessment activities, and financial management and budget practices. In addition, key discussions covered capital expenditure, surplus funds, regulatory related business, payment for committee members and certification.

ISO Secretary-General Rob Steele noted the particular challenges of developing countries. He mentioned that the workshop was an opportunity to communicate and share valuable best practice. NSBs, he said, need to be clear on what they are doing, act with integrity and engender trust in order to meet the needs of their customers.

Good governance is key, and this includes finances. Mr. Steele highlighted the value of the “Balanced Scorecard” in this respect, which can be used by NSBs to evaluate elements relating to finances, customers, internal business process and learning and growth.

ISO/CASCO toolbox – the ISO/IEC standards and guides that set out the internationally agreed practices on conformity assessment activities. A specific focus was put on expectations and requirements for laboratories and/or certification practices.

Some 30 participants from the different Lebanese ministries and conformity assessment bodies attended the workshop, which was led by ISO expert Ms. Wendy Da Cruz. Certificates of attendance were presented to participants by the Lebanese Minister of Industry, who stated that implementing International Standards in the field of conformity assessment builds trust and confidence in the Lebanese industry.

LIBNOR Acting Director General Ms. Lena Dargham stressed the importance of standards for the quality infrastructure, and noted the work undertaken by LIBNOR to enhance Lebanese participation in international standardization activities.

The message of World Standards Day 2010, “Standards make the world accessible for all” was highlighted, and brochures and information were distributed to participants.

Conformity assessment in support of Lebanese industry

A workshop on conformity assessment and accreditation was organized in Beirut, Lebanon, in October 2010, by LIBNOR, ISO member for the country, in collaboration with ISO.

The three-day workshop provided an opportunity to learn and understand the

Latest developments on accreditation

by Sean MacCurtain

The joint General Assembly of the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) and the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) took place in Shanghai, China, in October 2010.

Addressing the audience, ISO Secretary-General Rob Steele emphasized that all stakeholders had a responsibility to ensure that standards are implemented in the
manner in which the technical committee that developed them originally intended. He added that accreditation bodies, certification bodies and industry had an important role to play in maintaining the integrity of the conformity assessment system.

In this regard, he welcomed the recent IAF resolution on ISO 26000 for social responsibility, that there would be no accredited certification to this standard, in line with the intention of the committee that developed it.

At the plenary, a number of important decisions were taken by both IAF and ILAC members:

• Responsibility for accreditation of inspections bodies would become the sole responsibility of ILAC, and no longer a common ownership with IAF
• IAF agreed a transition period of two years from date of publication of ISO/IEC 17021 (requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems) expected in January 2011. All certification bodies should have implemented the revised standard by January 2013. IAF and ISO will issue a joint communiqué on the subject
• The IAF technical committee task groups addressed objectives in the IAF-ISO action plan to monitor and improve the effectiveness of accredited management system certification. A document on harmonized sanctions to be applied by accreditation bodies has been agreed
• A document on certification body indicators (metrics) to be reported regularly is in the final stages of preparation. The initiative will alert accreditation bodies to any unusual activities by a certification body, and allow them to investigate.

The task group dealing with accreditation body assessor competence has made good progress and it is expected that its work on identifying the specific tasks for assessors with the associated required knowledge and skills will be finalized by March 2011. This will be the first time that such a scientific analysis has been done on the tasks of an assessor and lead assessor. The results of this work have been validated by over a 1000 assessors from both the management systems and the laboratory sides.

ISO also attended the IAF and ILAC joint committee for developing countries, helping ISO to better understand the perspective and needs of developing countries in relation to conformity assessment. This information will be submitted to the ISO Committee for developing countries (ISO/DEVCO) for consideration.

The UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) took the opportunity to present the first results of the survey on the implementation of ISO 9001 in the Asian and South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation regions. The workshop was well attended and initial results indicated the positive impact of ISO 9001 on end users and major purchasers. This survey was supported by both ISO and IAF and the methodology was approved by both organizations.

Despite the tight meeting schedule, participants had the chance for a unique visit to the EXPO 2010 being held in Shanghai. Over 1.2 million visited the EXPO in one day. This may appear an incredible figure, but the Shanghai EXPO has the record for highest number of visitors ever.

Sean MacCurtain, Secretary of ISO/CASCO.

by Sean MacCurtain

The ISO Committee on conformity assessment (ISO/CASCO), held its 26th plenary meeting in Paris, France, in November 2010, hosted by AFNOR, ISO member for France and the ISO/CASCO Chair, Olivier Peyrat. Over 125 delegates from 40 national member countries participated. As usual, the event was preceded by ISO/CASCO policy group meetings whose recommendations are then presented at the plenary: the STAR (Strategic Alliance and Regulatory Group), Chairman’s Policy and coordination Group (CPC) and the IAF-ILAC-ISO joint working group.

This year the plenary recognized Mario Wittner, former ISO/CASCO Chair, for his long-standing and excellent participation in ISO/CASCO, and for his contribution to global conformity assessment.

Among the important resolutions passed at the plenary meeting were:

• To ensure adequate representation from all stakeholders in ISO/CASCO working groups over the next 12 months, by working with member bodies
• Given the results of a survey on National Mirror Committees (NMC), ISO/CASCO will encourage the establishment of NMCs by sharing best practice amongst members
• Category A liaisons organizations will be given the opportunity to submit requests for interpretations
• It was recognized that it was necessary to develop a process to maintain expertise in ISO/CASCO long after a working group has completed its tasks. Given that ISO/IEC 17021 will be systematically reviewed within 12 months of publication, it was agreed not to disband the working group.

• A communication strategy proposed by the STAR group will be finalized after comments are obtained from all members in early 2011.

A workshop on risk-based approaches to designing conformity assessment strategies took place immediately prior to the plenary. The event was attended by over 120 delegates and was also available via the web. Programme details and presentations are available on the workshop Website http://tinyurl.com/ISOCASCO. A summary of outcomes and actions has been posted on the Website.

At the workshop, it was agreed that reliable conformity assessment is as important as good standards. You need both to have an effective and efficient system. The level of conformity assessment activities should be consistent with the level of risk. It is also necessary to consider the level of knowledge of end users, which differs depending on whether they are B2B (business to business) or B2C (business to customer) activities. It was agreed that ISO/CASCO would investigate the need to develop guidance on risk management in conformity assessment standards.

It was also emphasized at the event that there is often a very real need for a sector to develop sector standards. The nuclear industry, for example, requires a sector document based on ISO 9001. It may also be necessary to develop sector documents based on ISO/IEC 17021. Although ISO/CASCO recognized this need, it indicated that unnecessary proliferation of sector documents must be avoided. This is vital for industry not to be faced with a multitude of management system standards that call for unnecessary implementation.

Many of the sectors who made presentations indicated that in their schemes they mitigated risk by being very clear on the expectations from internal audits, auditor competence and training as well as audit time and duration. ISO/CASCO will review the actions form the workshop and have a discussion statement for the next CPC meeting in 2011. www.iso.org/cascoworkshop2010

Sean MacCurtain, Secretary of ISO/CASCO.

The facade of a modern low-energy apartment house in Switzerland.

Homes for tomorrow – Building through standards

by Dana Kissinger-Matray

How can standards help our homes best reflect trends and daily realities in an evolving world? The ISO Committee on consumer policy (ISO/COPOLCO) will explore this theme in a workshop on 24 May 2011, in London, United Kingdom.

“Homes for tomorrow – Building through standards” will focus on two major areas: “greening our homes” and “rebuilding after disasters”, and consider where standards could provide added value. These areas of focus respond in part to a shift of consumer priorities worldwide towards a growing demand for more sustainable consumption of goods and services. Furthermore, recent media attention to disasters has highlighted a number of evident consumer needs: these include viable and effective housing options for stricken populations, and appropriate design to help mitigate the effects of disasters when they occur.

ISO/COPOLCO holds a workshop every year on a theme of current interest, with the objective to identify interesting potential subjects for standardization, or indicate areas where policy initiatives would be desirable.

The newly-published standard, ISO 26000, Guidance on social responsibility, is an example of such a project – it was ISO/COPOLCO’s workshop on social responsibility (SR) held in Trinidad & Tobago in 2002 that ultimately led to the establishment of the ISO working group on SR and publication of ISO 26000.

The 2011 workshop will be held in conjunction with ISO/COPOLCO’s annual plenary meeting on 25-26 May 2011, along with a number of working group meetings and a training event aimed at ISO/COPOLCO members from developing countries. All events will be held in London, at the invitation of the British Standards Institution, ISO member for the country.

More information about ISO/COPOLCO’s meeting event programme will appear in forthcoming issues of ISO Focus+.

For inquiries contact: copolco@iso.org

Dana Kissinger-Matray, Secretary of ISO/COPOLCO.

Consumers and ISO: “Who’s who” and “What’s what”

by Dana Kissinger-Matray

Have you ever wanted to know:

• Where consumers participate in ISO’s technical committees?

• What ISO work most interests consumers?

• Which ISO standards are relevant to consumers?

• How other ISO members involve consumers nationally?

The answers to all of these questions are at your fingertips under the ISO Directory of consumer interest participation. It can
be found on ISO’s Website (www.iso.org) within the consumer interest area, or directly at www.iso.org/isoconsumerdirectory.

In 2009, ISO published the Directory to facilitate the exchange of information about consumer interest involvement in ISO’s standards and policy work. Its objective was also to provide a central repository of such information as a complementary resource for ISO members and their constituents, and the wider public.

The Directory provides enhanced, easily updatable information on the state of consumer participation in standards setting, particularly in the priority areas identified by ISO/COPOLCO.

Data supplied by ISO members through an input form is automatically integrated into the online directory, providing real-time information on consumer participation organized by priority area or by country. A query page allows users to generate listings of standards (published or under development) within each priority area.

For each country listed in the Directory, users can find:
- The contact person for consumer matters
- Types of consumer participation in policy and/or governance committees
- Support that the ISO member provides for consumer interest involvement
- Publicly available resources for consumer stakeholders.

For specific priority areas, users can find:
- Consumer representation on international committees of ISO or the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC)
- National committees or mirror committees
- Other related initiatives.

The Directory is a valuable tool for ISO/COPOLCO members, consumer representatives, researchers, and interested members of the general public who wish to gain insight into the structures and processes of consumer participation within ISO. The more complete it is, the better for all.

The richness and relevance of the Directory depends on input from ISO members and contacts. If data is missing for your country, please contact us at copolco@iso.org to find out how to complete the information, or for any other enquiries.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Dana Kissinger-Matray, Secretary of ISO/COPOLCO.

Technical officers were trained in using the ISO eServices to optimize the benefit from their participation in ISO committees.

Stakeholders and national committee members joined in discussions and presentations about ISO’s services in support of national mirror committees. Ms. Tzarmallah Haynes, SLBS Head of Department, Standards Development, said, “This initiative will greatly assist us to improve our participation in international standardization and our stakeholders will greatly benefit.”

The second mission took place in Barbados. BNSI, ISO member for the country, recently increased its involvement in international standardization and is now participating in 60 ISO committees. The NSB has a good voting performance (100%) on ISO draft International Standards and final draft standards. A strategy was developed to ensure that national stakeholders have full access to ISO committee documents, so that their interests can be optimally taken care of. Ms. Lynn Sealy, technical officer at BNSI, stated that the possibility to learn and practise the ISO eServices was most beneficial for her work.

ISO communication and information technology missions (ICTDEV) continue to support developing countries in organizing a national standardization process. They provide information and training for NSB staff and stakeholders, and encourage their involvement in ISO eCommittees. The missions also help the ISO Central Secretariat to better understand the needs and processes of national member bodies. These experiences are taken into account for further development of ISO eServices and missions.

Jan-Henrik Tiedemann, Business Analyst, ISO Central Secretariat.
Management system integration is a relatively recent trend that began little more than 10 years ago. As a result, research to learn how such integration is implemented in practice and the main consequences of doing so, has been somewhat limited to date. Therefore, a recently published Spanish survey helps to fill in the gaps. The survey, of 102 Spanish organizations that integrated their ISO 9001, ISO 14001 and OHSAS 18001 management systems has shown that further resource optimization and better internal communication are among key benefits.

The survey was carried out in 2009 to analyze the impact of the management system integration process on organizations, particularly in relation to occupational health and safety. All had implemented management systems based on the ISO 9001 quality (QMS) and ISO 14001 environmental (EMS) management standards, as well as the international OHSAS 18001 occupational health and safety standard.

The goal of the survey was to gather systematic and extensive data on the various aspects of any integration process. This was achieved via a questionnaire divided into four topics: strategic aspects, methodological aspects, characteristics of an integrated management system (IMS), and assessment of the consequences.

Data analysis was carried out which combined an early review of the survey responses with a subsequent explorative analysis aimed at revealing possible statistically relevant ratios between some of the questions.

Of the organizations surveyed, 84% claimed to have implemented an IMS, of which 92% had integrated the three management systems – quality, environmental, and occupational health and safety, while only two systems were integrated in the remaining 8% of cases.

**Strategic aspects**

The two strategic aspects analyzed refer to the hierarchical level (management or department) at which the strategic decision to integrate the management systems was made, and the point in time when such a decision was made. Concerning the first aspect, 70% of organizations stated that the decision was made at top management level.

With regard to the second aspect, there was a turning point in 2004 when implementation growth accelerated rapidly compared with the 1999-2003 period, when only a few organizations had integrated their management systems (see Figure 1). The low 2009 value is explained by the fact that...
the survey forms were collected in May of that year. This indicates that businesses have only recently begun to consider the topics addressed in this survey.

This chronological development is partly due to two complementary reasons. First, there is a delay in time from the point at which a new management concept or technique is defined at the theoretical and/or academic level, to its actual implementation in an organization. To some extent this is the result of uncertainty prior to the consolidation, implementation and assessment of the conceptual and methodological bases.

The other reason relates to two events that took place in 2004 – the publication of the revised ISO 14001, and the withdrawal of the experimental Spanish UNE 81900:1996 EX occupational health and safety standard. As a consequence, organizations had to resort to OHSAS 18001:1999 as the only reference standard, which, as stated in its foreword, was “developed to be compatible with the ISO 9001 (quality) and the ISO 14001 (environment) management systems standards”.

Methodologies

Only 17% of organizations opted for a simultaneous implementation sequence, that is, a joint initial integration of all management systems concerned. Most of the organizations introduced the systems progressively, frequently by implementing a QMS first, followed by EMS integration, and finally OHSAS.

The most frequently used methodology related to the principles or process map of Total Quality Management (TQM). Some 44% of respondents applied an exclusively TQM-based methodology while 36% used it in combination with that based on the correspondence tables included in the annexes of their implemented standards.

Characteristics of an IMS

An IMS can be analyzed via the three basic characteristics that define it – organizational structure, level of integration of written procedures, and level of integration of operating processes.

Management system integration is generally seen as a positive process.

While, according to some, the merging of departments cannot be considered as a categorical variable of the level of integration of an IMS, we believe that the division of departments, which leads to stand-alone management systems, can be excluded during the integration process, usually with a view to avoiding potential conflicts among departments arising from organizational culture.

This means that integration not only involves management systems, but also organizational issues. To verify this, the survey included questions about the organizational structure governing an IMS concerning the unification/division of departments, and unification/division of responsibilities.

We saw a stronger trend towards the unification of responsibilities (76%), than departments (48%), even though the most frequent organizational structure consisted of one department monitored by one manager (48%).

Written procedures can be most helpful in understanding the characteristics of an IMS in more detail, since they describe the main actions in the system. To some extent, they also give an indication of its relevance and complexity. The survey results showed a wide variability among the participating organizations in this respect.

An in-depth analysis of the statistical data related to dispersion and localization leads to the formulation of two working hypotheses, which define new fields for future research:

- Hypothesis based on results – “in a management system integration..."
The most important benefit is higher resource optimization.

Concerning the second hypothesis, systematic mechanisms seem to match the following parameters:

- There is a trend to maximizing the number of written procedures covering the three technical functions of quality, environment and occupational health and safety and to manage the remaining aspects on an individual basis, thereby minimizing the number of written procedures covering aspects partially integrated between two technical functions.
- Environmental management and OHSAS are the elements most likely to be integrated with written dual-extent procedures.
- Quality is the function requiring the highest number of stand-alone written procedures.

Organizations that opted to implement procedures in a progressive and sequential way experienced a reduction in bureaucracy compared to those that implemented all simultaneously.

Process integration

Process integration was the final MSI feature to be addressed (whether the related written procedure was integrated or not). While the analysis of written procedures described above specifies the level of documental integration of the system, the study of process implementation helps to indicate the level of operational integration.

Organizations were asked if they implemented the eight processes common to the three management systems in an integrated way. The survey results shown in Figure 2 (on previous page) indicate a generally high level of integration.

Benefits of integration

The most important conclusion that can be drawn from the results is that management system integration is generally seen as a positive process by those organizations that have done so (see Figure 3). Approximately 50% of the responses showed a “high” or “very high” assessment of the benefits experienced.

Figure 3 – Benefits of management systems integration.
It is interesting to note that this generally positive assessment covers both internal and external aspects of the organization. The three most highly rated benefits were “better resource optimization”, “better internal communication” and “improvement in the organization’s external image”.

Several pairs of variables were evaluated to determine if such benefits were connected with the integration sequence used and/or the resulting organizational structure. From this we can conclude that those organizations opting for progressive integration experienced a greater reduction in levels of bureaucracy than those deciding on simultaneous integration.

In addition, those organizations that carried out integration at high responsibility levels experienced reduced bureaucracy in the new system, while those that carried out integration at departmental level experienced an improvement in the organization’s external image.

Difficulties experienced

In the light of the results shown in Figure 4, it can be concluded that the main system integration difficulties faced by organizations relate to internal culture, such as resistance to change and the lack of staff involvement. Conversely, the lack of involvement of system managers and supervisors, including top management and accident prevention delegates, does not seem to cause much difficulty in most cases.

Furthermore, none of the difficulties seem to affect the integration sequence, except in the case of “resistance of employees to change”, where greater difficulties seem to exist in those organizations that opted for simultaneous integration, than in those that chose the progressive route.

Conclusions

As the results show, there is a high degree of variability from one implementing organization to another in the process of management system integration, the structure of the organization, the distribution of written procedures, and the integrated execution of processes in conformity with the standards.

Even though there is, as yet, no international standard for management system integration that can be used as a model for integration, there seems to be an underlying systematic mechanism in the way management systems are integrated, based on the following parameters:

- There is a trend towards maximizing the number of written procedures covering the three technical functions and managing the remaining aspects on an individual basis, thereby minimizing the number of written procedures covering aspects that are partially integrated between two technical functions.
- Environmental management and OHSAS are the elements most likely to be integrated with written dual-extent procedures.
- Quality is the function requiring the greatest number of written procedures.

Concerning the consequences of the integration process, there seems to be a degree of agreement that there are many related benefits, the most important being higher resource optimization, better internal communication and enhanced external image of the organization.

The latter is more obvious in those organizations that integrated the departments of the technical functions involved, than in those that kept them as “stand alone” departments.

Moreover, the reduction in management system bureaucracy is more clearly seen in those organizations that opted for progressive integration than in those that integrated simultaneously.

Although the participating organizations experienced few difficulties on the path to integration, the most important was the resistance of employees to change. This could be overcome, or at least mitigated, by implementing communication plans during the integration process, by explaining to staff the reasons why the organization decided to integrate its systems, and the benefits expected, as well as their participation in the process.

About the authors

Jéssus Abad and Pedro Rodríguez Mondelo are Professors of the Business Organization Department of the Polytechnic University of Catalunya, Spain.

Agustín Sánchez-Toledo is Occupational Safety and Health Manager for the Spanish Association for Standardization and Certification (AENOR).
New Zealand’s building codes and standards have been tested more rigorously than at any time since the genesis of Standards New Zealand following the 1931 Hawke’s Bay earthquake – and they passed.

On 4 September 2010, Canterbury experienced its largest modern-day natural disaster, destined to be the most costly our country has ever faced.

The statistics are sobering:
- The Treasury estimates the overall cost will top AUD 4 billion
- The Earthquake Commission is expecting up to 100 000 claims
- Hundreds of houses and other buildings will have to be demolished.

But, incredibly, no one was killed in the Canterbury quake. In the words of Bob Parker, mayor of nearby Christchurch: “We’ve all lost something but the miracle is that we didn’t lose lives.”

Hugh Morris, senior lecturer at the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, University of Auckland said, “The survival of large buildings in Christchurch is testament to the quality of the New Zealand construction standards based on the work done at Canterbury and Auckland – and the work of the entire engineering earthquake community in the past 50 years.

“The earthquake caused major ground deformation under a lot of light timber framed houses, and in spite of houses suffering major foundation issues, people were still safe within them due to good standards and general construction practices.

Building owners survey building damage in Christchurch.

We owe a lot to those people who had the foresight to think about the need for standards.

“New Zealand has high-quality building codes and standards that are the result of many years of research and collaboration between universities, engineering consultants, the New Zealand Society for Earthquake Engineering, government agencies, seismologists and others.”
Emerging from debris

As our country gives thanks, it is worth remembering that Standards New Zealand was founded out of the debris of the 1931 Hawke’s Bay earthquake, after which the government decided that New Zealand needed an effective set of building codes.

The government’s “Encyclopaedia of New Zealand” Website (teara.govt.nz) relates this harrowing description of that event:

As buildings began to disintegrate, many people fled outdoors into a lethal rain of chunks from ornate facades, parapets and cornices. Buildings swayed violently and their walls bulged and collapsed into the streets in avalanches of brick and masonry that crushed vehicles and people.

Roofs caved in on buildings that had large open internal areas, such as churches, libraries and theatres. In some buildings the internal floors pulled free of the swaying walls, collapsing inward in a jumble of girders, wood and plaster.

Up to 260 people are reported to have died in the magnitude 7.8 Hawke’s Bay earthquake.

The fact that not a single person was killed in Canterbury is testimony to the far-sightedness of the government decision after the Hawke’s Bay earthquake and the work of Standards New Zealand, which was founded the following year.

Preventing devastation

Standards New Zealand was formed to ensure that future seismic events would not result in such extensive loss of life and devastation to buildings and infrastructure.

In fact, Standards New Zealand developed New Zealand’s first earthquake standard within a year after its founding. There are now more than 650 building-related New Zealand standards.

Many of these standards provide a means for designers and builders to comply with the New Zealand Building Code – all of which benefit industry and New Zealand communities.

Standards development processes in New Zealand are very robust; indeed, they are often seen as an International Standard in themselves.

From an international perspective, the value of standardization was highlighted by the earthquakes in Haiti and Chile earlier this year. Journalists around the world compared the two countries’ earthquake preparedness and responses.

While the Sydney Morning Herald’s headline following Chile’s earthquake – “Chile was ready for a quake, Haiti wasn’t” – isn’t the whole story, the two countries do present interesting lessons.

Standardization and the adoption of far-sighted systems – from a robust building code to a comprehensive emergency response scheme – protected Chile and Canterbury. While the damage was great for both, the seismic events did not shake the very foundations of the two countries.

At the other end of the spectrum, the magnitude 7.0 earthquake that hit Haiti on 12 January 2010 has been catastrophic. An estimated 230 000 people died, including 17% of all government workers, so getting the bureaucracy operational in Haiti again will take years.

About the author

Debbie Chin is the Chief Executive Officer of Standards New Zealand.
It is a belief not only in Colombia, but also in much of Latin America and, indeed, around the world that participation in standardization processes is best suited to large, multinational companies and perhaps some medium and large-sized enterprises. While not entirely correct, this perception is not entirely without basis either. Involvement in standards work by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is relatively limited due to a lack of money, time and qualified expertise.

Participation by microenterprises is even smaller. In Colombia, these companies are generally family-owned businesses, with no more than 10 employees, working primarily in the services sector. This article refers to these small, medium and micro enterprises together known as SMMIEs.

Essential for development

Some 95% of all Colombian companies are SMMIEs. Not only do they represent the majority of companies in Colombia, but they also make a significant impact on the economy, accounting for more than 65% of the country’s total employment. Similar figures are found in other developing countries. One of the main problems is that about half of SMMIEs are informal.

In general, these micro and small companies are not well suited for innovation; they also face commercialization problems and limited access to markets. These problems are often related to the use (or more accurately the lack of use) of standards. Standards are almost unknown among owners and managers of SMMIEs, and it is difficult to get them to participate in their development.

An important factor affecting the competitiveness of these small and micro enterprises is the failure to use internationally recognized standards in the design of their products and services.

Norexport

With the financial help of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), we initiated the Norexport project to increase the participation of SMMIEs in the standardization process in Bolivia, Colombia, and Peru. Lasting for five years, Norexport began with a study of the three countries’ economies and the need for standards to help SMMIEs increase their market participation and export capabilities.

Standards for the smallest enterprises

by Fabio Tobón

With the active participation of the national standards bodies, IBNORCA (Bolivia), ICONTEC (Colombia) and INDECOPI (Peru), a programme was developed to meet the needs of manufacturers of indigenous products. Additionally, the programme aimed to assist the
organizations in implementing quality management systems. As a complementary activity suggested by the governments involved, we also developed a guide to assist the formalization of SMMIEs.

**Project achievements**

ICONTEC has worked for some 47 years developing more than 5,700 Colombian national standards with minimal participation from small and micro enterprises. One of the main achievements of the programme with the IDB in the three countries was the active participation of SMMIEs and the production of standards for indigenous products that could be exported to neighbouring countries.

The programme produced 465 standards, 58 of which became regional standards for the Andean Pact countries. Certain special standards were designed for micro and small enterprises, including ICONTEC’s standards NTC 6001, *Quality systems* (equivalent to ISO 9001, but for SMMIEs) and NTC 5520, *Quality of service for small businesses*. These two standards will play an important role in improving the management of SMMIEs.

Norexport developed special courses and seminars to help SMMIEs by raising awareness about standards and learning how to work with them. Some 18,700 people attended seminars intended to increase awareness of the significance and importance of standards.

For our institution, as well as for the NSBs of Bolivia and Peru, another big step in standardization was the production of some 111 implementation guides for specific products, helping micro and small entrepreneurs learn how to implement standards in their companies.

![Image of Fabio Tobón](image.png)

**About the author**

Fabio Tobón is Executive Director of Instituto Colombiano de Normas Técnicas y Certificación (ICONTEC), ISO member for Colombia.
Mobile banking services
ISO takes steps to address growing market need

by Mark Tiggas

Following extensive deliberations, a new work item proposal (NWIP) on mobile banking has been approved, marking the opening of a new phase in the drive toward one or more International Standards that could help bring efficient bank services to cellular phone users around the world.

In the rapidly expanding markets for Internet-enabled smart phones, banking services – especially mobile payment systems – are among the most popular applications. While the mobile market is currently dominated by digital goods such as ringtones, music, games, news and entertainment, a huge expansion in the field is in the works with growth in money transfers and physical goods purchases via mobile devices.

Of particular importance in developing countries, micropayments via mobile phones show tremendous possibilities for expansion of economic opportunity by allowing simple, secure cash-free transactions to even the very smallest vendors of goods and services. Tremendous growth is expected in mobile payments over the next few years, driven in large part by rapid expansion in the number of mobile subscribers in the developing world.

In short, the multifunctional mobile phone will soon become a wallet for many users.

Meeting global customer needs

Mobile payment systems are considered the most important subtopic in need of standardization, and SC 7 welcomes participation in this effort from throughout the ISO community.

A comparison with the state of the credit card industry a generation or so ago shows how standards will be crucial to the achievement of universally accepted mobile payments. It has not been very long since a credit card could be used only for purchases from merchants who had relationships with the bank that issued the card, and consumers wishing to withdraw cash from automated teller machines would have to find a local branch of their financial institution.

Tremendous growth is expected in mobile payments.

The first bank card, named “Charg-It,” was introduced in 1946 by John Biggins, a banker in Brooklyn, according to MasterCard. When a customer used it for a purchase, the bill was forwarded to Biggins’ bank, which reimbursed the merchant and obtained payment from the customer. But purchases could only be made locally, and Charg-It cardholders had to have an account at Biggins’ bank. In 1951, the first bank credit card was issued by New York’s Franklin National Bank for loan customers. Like Charg-it, this card could also be used only by the bank’s account holders.

But the simplicity and security offered by charge cards proved compelling for consumers, and by 2008, a survey conducted by CreditCards.com found that 82% of Americans feel credit cards are “essential.” Millions of merchants all over the world now accept the ubiquitous plastic cards.

Rapid growth projected

Adoption of mobile payment systems can be expected to go much, much faster. A recent study by Juniper Research projects that the global mobile payment market will reach some USD 600 billion as early as 2013.

The benefits of mobile payment systems for consumers are clear and, at the same time...
time, the banking industry has a tremendous interest in ensuring that customers can easily use the services they’ve grown accustomed to without regard to where in the world they may be. The advent of Internet banking in the last 10 to 15 years has done much to whet this expectation. Just as a business traveller can now log on to a Website from Beijing, Nairobi or Calcutta to access an account in a US or European bank and pay bills or transfer funds, mobile phone users will soon expect the same service whenever they are within reach of a cellular phone mast.

Balancing interests

But before this vision can be fully realized, standards will be needed to address geographic hurdles, as well as the varying interests of carriers and handset manufacturers. The recently adopted NWIP calls for work in three main areas:

• Provisioning of banking applications and their management
• Security
• Person-to-person and person-to-merchant sales.

Standardization needs to address the areas that cannot be handled individually by each bank, and applications that are unique to particular institutions will not be standardized. For example, each bank will continue to develop its own applications for bill payment, just as online banking systems are different today.

The working group formed to implement the NWIP will focus on bringing together experts to specify the rules by which payment initiation will be managed at the phone; that is, what is expected of the consumer and what is expected of the merchant. The working group will also specify rules for person-to-person interaction, which is especially important when the receiver of a payment does not have a merchant relationship with a bank.

A new standard will be essential to the introduction of payment systems.

Another important area will involve expectations around managing the application on specific phones so that security is as tight as possible. Any mobile banking application must be able to interact seamlessly with various mobile phone operating systems on the market, such as Microsoft’s Windows Mobile, Google’s Android or Apple’s iOS.

Framers of the NWIP had to wrestle with deciding how broad the process needed to be. Most of the participants argued that greater specificity on precisely what the NWIP should cover would give the greatest chance of drafting a successful standard.

A new standard will be essential to the introduction of payment systems in regions where economies have traditionally been largely cash-based. And because mobile banking leapfrogs the need for expensive brick-and-mortar bank branches in remote areas, other banking services are sure to follow.

Work gets underway

While the needs of the community may vary, ISO/TC 68/SC 7 has taken positive steps in the formation of a new work effort around mobile banking and mobile payments. The subcommittee has begun establishing the new working group and is actively reaching out to experts in the field to join in.

In addition the group will reach out to other constituencies to determine how best to liaise with all the concerned parties. Despite concerted efforts to rein in the scope of the effort, the task is large and will require further rationalization and segmentation. But the goal of establishing some order in the emerging markets of mobile banking – and in particular mobile payments – will have significant impact.

There is still time for all ISO members to get involved.

French and American leadership

Recognizing a need for standardization, ISO technical committee ISO/TC 68, Financial services, sub-committee SC 7, Core banking, led by The then Chair Jean-Yves Garnier of Association française de normalisation (AFNOR), ISO member for France, encouraged the US delegation to develop an NWIP for an international mobile banking and payment standard.

The NWIP was approved on 1 October 2010, opening the way for a concerted push to develop a new standard for mobile banking services.

About the author

Mark Tiggas, Senior Vice-President for Enterprise Payments Architecture at Wells Fargo Bank, N.A. He is currently Secretary of the Board of Directors of the IFX Forum (and past Chairman and President). He also participates in the ISO 20022 PaySEG and the X9 PaySEG. Mr. Tiggas led the US team responsible for generating a New Work Item Proposal for Mobile Payments/Mobile Banking to ISO/TC 68/SC 7.
ISO/ITC handbook points way to greater export success for developing countries

by Roger Frost

ISO and the International Trade Centre (ITC) have published a new handbook setting out the advantages for exporters in developing countries of closer collaboration between national standards bodies (NSBs) and trade promotion organizations (TPOs).

Building linkages for export success has been written for officials with responsibilities for international trade working for NSBs, TPOs or government agencies.

NSBs and TPOs have specific and important roles to play — NSBs as developers of national standards and representatives of their country in international and regional standardization organizations, TPOs as the source of much needed foreign market information, and facilitators of export trade. In most developing countries, the NSB is the national enquiry point as required by the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on Technical barriers to trade (TBT), and may also be a provider of conformity assessment services. However, in many countries, little or no formal cooperation existed in the past between NSBs and TPOs.

ITC Executive Director, Patricia Francis and ISO Secretary-General, Rob Steele, state in the Foreword to the new book, “The growth of international trade and the increasing importance of high level standards and technical regulation in developed markets present greater opportunities for NSBs and TPOs to collaborate and create more opportunities for exporters to demonstrate compliance with market requirements and enhance national competitiveness.

“This collaboration may assist any enterprise looking to export but especially small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) who find it difficult to gain the information necessary to evaluate and comply with market access requirements in another country.”

To explore how such collaboration could be achieved, ISO and ITC jointly organized a regional consultation on “Quality Management: Linking TPOs and NSBs for Export Success” in Malaysia in December 2009, partly funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida).

The new handbook is based on the outcome of that meeting, and reflects the position of those participating. The examples given are drawn from their shared experiences, and can be used by developing economics in all regions to review local situations. This handbook therefore offers pointers for any country to utilise in developing its own approach to help open avenues of collaborative effort between the national TPO and NSB to leverage their services for the benefit of local exporters.

Building linkages for export success – Trade Promotion Organizations and National Standards Bodies working together, A5 format, is printed in English (85 pages, ISBN 978-92-67-10536-9), French (91 pages, ISBN 978-92-67-20536-6) and Spanish (91 pages, ISBN 978-92-67-30536-3) editions. It is available free of charge (fee for postage and handling) from the ISO Central Secretariat, through the ISO Store or by contacting the Marketing, Communication & Information department (sales@iso.org). It can also be obtained from ISO national member institutes. The handbook can also be downloaded as a PDF file free of charge from the ISO Website (www.iso.org).

Roger Frost is Head of Communication Services, ISO Central Secretariat.
From terrorism to fraud, to piracy and identity theft, security has become one of the highest priorities of government, business and the general public at large.

Whether concerned about airport safety or leaked data like the latest Wikileaks cables, security issues know no borders and can impact trade and society at many levels, affecting individuals, processes and organizations alike. The results can be catastrophic, whether in loss of life, serious harm, compromised data and national security or even bankruptcy to name a few.

ISO offers solutions to address security gaps by both anticipating and managing eventual threats. The February 2011 issue of ISO Focus+ highlights some of the most important standards in this area. In particular, the ISO standard for risk management, ISO 31000, helps organizations deal with uncertainty in the achievement of their objectives, whether this be due to financial, operational, market, employment, insurance, reputational or any other risk that may arise.

With the exponential growth of international commerce, it becomes harder for any one country to manage supply chain security on its own. The ISO 28000 series of International Standards for supply chain security management system harmonizes global efforts to help organizations in industries such as manufacturing, service, storage and transportation to reduce risks to people and cargo.

Freight containers are particularly vulnerable as they are always on the move and routinely cross borders. International Standards for container seals help authorities fight related crime and facilitate the work of professionals in the transport industry by air, sea, road or rail.

Earthquakes, floods, volcanic ashes, attacks are some examples of the risks dealt with by the ISO technical committee developing standards for societal security. Their first document, ISO/PAS 22399, helps organizations to be prepared for incidents, so that they can continue to be operational in the event of crises, increasing confidence in business, community, customer, first responder and organizational interactions.

Most of us are conscious of the serious security risks posed by identity theft and fraud. ISO is working on a standard for financial security that will help address security gaps. Biometrics is increasingly being used to guarantee personal security. International Standards help enhance the development and efficiency of this technology.

Telebiometrics gained importance 10 years ago when identification and authentication was made a central issue in anti-terrorism efforts. ISO, the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) are jointly developing documents for simple, secure transmission of unique object identifiers for the quantities involved in its measurement.

Finally cybersecurity is perhaps one of the greatest challenges of our digital age. ISO standards in this field can help prevent attacks such viruses, worms and phishing. Clearly, managing security is challenging. Find out more in the next issue of ISO Focus+.
Wouldn’t it be great to feel strong, calm, ready for anything?

ISO has standards that can help.

We’ve all met managers who like to pass themselves off as “real tigers”. But bluster can often be a mask for a lack of confidence. Real confidence comes from knowing you have done all in your power to prepare your organization for anything that an uncertain world can throw at it. And the power of confidence can be developed by implementing the ISO 31000 series for risk management. These standards enable organizations of all types and sizes, in both public and private sectors, to manage risk effectively. They can make all the difference between paper tigers and the real thing.

ISO 31000:2009, Risk management – Principles and guidelines
ISO/IEC 31010, Risk management – Risk assessment techniques

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International Organization for Standardization – www.iso.org
Central Secretariat
1, ch. de la Voie-Creuse
Case postale 56
CH-1211 Genève 20

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