ISO in brief

Great things happen when the world agrees.
We are ISO, the International Organization for Standardization

* August 2019

- We are an independent, non-governmental organization.
- We are a global network of national standards bodies with one member per country.
- Our job is to make International Standards.
- We are coordinated by a Central Secretariat in Geneva, Switzerland.
- We are not for profit: selling our standards allows us to finance their development in a neutral environment, to maintain them and to make new ones.
- ISO provides a platform for developing practical tools through common understanding and cooperation with all stakeholders.

164* members
22 500* International Standards
100 new standards each month
249* technical committees

* August 2019
We bring together experts to share knowledge and develop International Standards that provide solutions to global challenges.

**What is an International Standard?**

An International Standard is a document containing practical information and best practice. It often describes an agreed way of doing something or a solution to a global problem.

In short, ISO standards help:

- Make products **compatible**, so they fit and work well with each other
- Identify **safety issues** of products and services
- Share **good ideas** and **solutions**, technological know-how and best management practices
Standards for paper sizes (A4 family) make life easier for printer, photocopier and office supplies manufacturers, because they know their products will work with available paper formats.

Examples of standards in our everyday life.

The food we purchase is safe to eat thanks to internationally agreed hygiene and safety requirements outlined in standards.

Credit cards can be used anywhere because they meet standards that specify the dimensions, technology and communication protocols that can work with dispensers and payment systems.

The world sees eye to eye by using standardized codes for countries and currencies.
How do you benefit from International Standards?

**Industry:**
- Become more competitive by offering products and services that are accepted globally
- Enter new markets easily
- Raise profits by offering products with increased quality, compatibility and safety
- Reduce costs by not reinventing the wheel and using available resources better
- Benefit from the knowledge and best practice of leading experts around the world

**Regulators:**
- Harmonize regulations across countries to boost global trade
- Increase credibility and trust throughout the supply chain
- Make it easier for countries to outsource and specialize

**Society:**
- Wider choice of safe and reliable products and services at competitive prices
- Best practice and concerted action at the organizational level to practically address global challenges like climate change and sustainability
Why are we unique?

**Our global network.** ISO members come from virtually every country in the world.

**Our brand.** ISO is recognized globally and associated with confidence.

**Our integrity.** We have been publishing the standards the world needs since our creation in 1947. Today, the ISO brand is recognized globally.

**Our commitment to consensus.** We work with more than 700 organizations and over 100,000 experts from different industries and sectors.

**Our partnerships.** We work closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). We also have a strategic partnership with the World Trade Organization (WTO) to promote free and fair trade.
How does ISO work?

ISO only develops a standard if there is a market need for it.

International Standards are created by the people who will use and be impacted by them. We call them **EXPERTS** and they come from industry, government, consumer organizations, academia, non-governmental organizations, and more.

It is the **MEMBERS’** role to identify the experts and ensure an active voice for their country.

The ISO Central Secretariat – **ISO/CS** – coordinates the development process and publishes the standards.
The main players in the process are members, experts and ISO/CS.

- **Experts**: More than 100,000 in the world
  - Write the standards
  - Facilitates participation in standardization
  - Provides a neutral platform for the experts to get together and achieve consensus
  - Coordinates the standards development process and makes standards available
  - Enable national experts and stakeholders to participate and have a say in standards development

- **ISO members**: 161 national standards bodies
  - Represent ISO in their country
  - Help manage technical committees where the standards are written
  - Enable national experts and stakeholders to participate and have a say in standards development

- **ISO/CS**: 150 full-time staff
  - Propose new standards
  - Approve standards by voting
  - Strengthens relationships with partners
  - Increases awareness around International Standards and ISO
  - Coordinates the standards development process and makes standards available
  - Enable national experts and stakeholders to participate and have a say in standards development
Would you like to have your say on the rules governing world trade?

Do you want to know which standards can benefit your business?

Do you have a good idea for a much needed standard?

Contact your ISO member at www.iso.org/isomembers
International Organization for Standardization

ISO Central Secretariat
Chemin de Blandonnet 8
Case Postale 401
1214 Vernier, Geneva
Switzerland

The symbol on the cover comes from the International Standard ISO 7001, *Graphical symbols – Public information symbols*. It is used to indicate where information is to be obtained.

Available on our Online Browsing Platform at: gotoi.se/isosymbols.