



# services

## ISO STRATEGY for **service standardization**



## Why a strategy for services?

Over the last two decades, world exports of commercial services have more than quadrupled, and international trade in services has continued to grow at a faster rate than trade in goods. The deregulation and privatization of public services (energy, transportation, telecoms); the delocalization of supply (health services, IT assistance, call centres); and the expansion of Web-based services (tourism, financial services, Webstores) are all trends that are contributing to a growing need for International Standards for the services sectors. There is even a new term – *servitization* – being used to describe the trend where companies that traditionally only developed products are progressively developing capabilities to offer services and solutions to complement their products.

Because of these trends, ISO anticipates that market demand for service standards will steadily increase and we want to make sure that ISO, and its members, have the tools and knowledge necessary to respond to this demand and to the challenges and opportunities it brings.

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## Objectives of this strategy

The objectives of this strategy are to:

1. Increase ISO's visibility as a developer of International Standards for services. ISO is famous for its standards for products and processes, but the concept and benefits of International Standards for services are not yet well known.
2. Help ISO members face the particular challenges associated with the development of standards for services. For example, identification and engagement of stakeholders in the services sector, which is very heterogeneous and where many stakeholders are SMEs.
3. Gain a better understanding of market interests and trends in international standardization for services and get feedback on the use of ISO service standards.

# The ISO strategy for services (2016-2017)

The ISO strategy for services has two prongs : communication & outreach, and understanding market interests. Over the next two years (2016-2017), ISO will concentrate on the following points :

## Communication & outreach

- Develop better/more communication products : help ISO members engage with their stakeholders in the service sectors and in particular with SMEs (targeted stakeholder engagement documents).
- Improve the promotion and visibility of ISO as a developer of service standards : develop clear arguments in favour of service standardization and address these arguments to stakeholders (e.g. SMEs).
- Conduct case studies of service standards and how they are used : use success stories to demonstrate their benefits and impacts (e.g. for educational/ promotional materials).

- Look at links between products and services : position service standardization as a natural extension of product standardization.

## Understanding market interests

- Identify where services are being traded (which sectors), and which could benefit most from/are positively disposed to the development of International Standards.
- Consult committees that have developed service standards to learn from their experiences with stakeholders and any market feedback.



# Current situation – Service standards in ISO

## ISO's definition of “service”

*“result of at least one activity, necessarily performed at the interface between the supplier and customer, that is generally intangible”*

(ISO/IEC Guide 76:2008, *Development of service standards – Recommendations for addressing consumer issues*)

ISO currently has more than 700 published standards related to services. Some of these standards are what we could refer to as “pure” service standards, in that their main purpose is clearly to help with the provision of a service (for example, service provision in the tourism sector). Other standards support the infrastructure necessary to the provision of a service (this is currently the largest category in ISO – for example in the IT and transportation sectors). Yet a third category consists of horizontal standards, such as management system standards (MSS), that can be applied to services.

By sector, the majority of published ISO service standards are in business services (brand valuation, customer

contact centres, outsourcing, assessment services, IT services, marketing, network billing, etc.), tourism and travel-related services (diving, adventure tourism), and financial services (banking and personal financial services).

For further information, see the ISO Website: [www.iso.org/iso/services.htm](http://www.iso.org/iso/services.htm).

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