Consumers

COPOLCO at a glance

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Introduction

The ISO Committee on consumer policy (COPOLCO) is a policy development committee that aims to enhance consumer protection by proposing standards and related policy initiatives, promoting consumer participation in standards development, and building members’ capacity. Established in 1978, COPOLCO advises the ISO Council on policy and standards-related matters from a consumer perspective.

COPOLCO brings together representatives from National Standards Bodies (NSBs) and consumer stakeholder groups, to collaborate on key global consumer policy issues, identify priorities and share best practices for building national and international consumer participation in international standards development.

The COPOLCO Team

COPOLCO Leadership*

*Acting Chair: Eunsook Moon
Vice-Chair: Vacant

The COPOLCO Secretariat*

*Secretary: Cristina Draghici
Managers: Dana Kissinger-Matray (until June 2024) and Adrian Popa

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Members

COPOLCO members are ISO members. Click here to see the full list of COPOLCO members. Additionally, the following organizations participate in COPOLCO’s work: the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC), Consumers International (CI), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the International Organization for Legal Metrology (OIML), ANEC – the European consumer voice in standardization, and the Environmental Coalition on Standards (ECOS).

Vision

Addressing consumer needs in international standards through consumer participation.

Mission

Encouraging ISO and its members to recognize and support the consumer stakeholder as a valued partner in standardization.
COPOLCO strategic directions

1. **Reaching out**
   Raising awareness of COPOLCO’s activities and the value of consumers’ participation in standards development.

2. **Reaching within**
   Developing and implementing sustainable, effective models for consumer stakeholder involvement with COPOLCO.

3. **Building up capacity**
   Increasing COPOLCO members’ capacity to engage with consumer stakeholders.

4. **Building around consumer interest**
   Identifying and proposing standards or policy initiatives that can promote consumer rights and societal benefits.
COPOLCO terms of reference

→ Helping consumers benefit from standardization
→ Providing a network for consumers to exchange information
→ Advising ISO on policies and actions to respond to consumers’ needs
→ Making recommendations on current and potential standardization work
Standing working groups

WG 01 – Chair’s Advisory Group
Advises the COPOLCO Chair on policy and strategic matters, ensuring the efficient and effective fulfilment of COPOLCO’s mandate.

WG 21 – Communication and outreach
The Communication and outreach working group implements COPOLCO’s communication strategy and assists the COPOLCO Secretariat in engaging external stakeholders. It endeavours to develop materials and extend outreach beyond the present COPOLCO membership. The goal is to promote the benefits of standards for consumer protection. The working group aims to build a network of interested stakeholders from international organizations and the ISO community, who are not yet connected to COPOLCO, and strengthen ties with organizations that currently participate in COPOLCO. The focus is on emphasizing the importance of standards as a tool for consumer protection and encouraging consumers’ involvement with standards.

WG 22 – Consumer standards action
The Consumer standards action working group assesses ISO’s technical activities from a consumer perspective, suggesting actions to meet identified needs. Specifically, the group explores how standardization and related policies can address gaps in consumer protection. It proposes initiatives to both COPOLCO and ISO, considering the specific needs of developing countries and emerging economies.

The group monitors market trends, providing recommendations on standards deliverables and policy actions for COPOLCO’s consideration. Furthermore, it identifies key standards crucial for consumer protection, keeping COPOLCO members informed about the participation of consumer representatives.
**WG 23 – Capacity building and training**

The Capacity building and training working group collaborates with ISO’s Capacity Building unit to enhance the ability of COPOLCO members to actively participate in ISO’s activities. Simultaneously, it strives to strengthen national consumer committees and their connections with national stakeholders. The group develops tailored training materials, hosts online and in-person events, and facilitates networking opportunities. The primary objectives include:

- Strengthening members’ capacity for engagement with COPOLCO, involving consumer stakeholders in COPOLCO’s activities and relevant standards committees
- Improving members’ ability to conduct national outreach on consumer issues to the wider community.

**WG 24 – Consumer safety**

The Consumer Safety Group delves into consumer safety matters within International Standards, offering recommendations to COPOLCO on standards and associated measures to mitigate the risk of harm to consumers from global goods and services. It also advocates for the protection of fundamental consumer rights, especially regarding sustainability issues.

The group aids COPOLCO’s Chair and Secretary by providing information on the safety of consumer goods and services. Additionally, it draws attention to present and future safety concerns, with a particular focus on developing countries and emerging economies.
Recent past milestones

- COPOLCO Plenary and Workshop, *All voices heard for a sustainable world*
- Virtual international workshop, *Raising standards for sustainable consumption*
- Establishment of ISO/TC 338, *Menstrual products*, following consultations with COPOLCO members and demonstrated need for international standards benchmarking requirements for safe and fit-for-purpose sanitary products.
- Publication of ISO 22458:2022, *Consumer vulnerability – Requirements and guidelines for the design and delivery of inclusive service* (through ISO/PC 311 *Vulnerable consumers*), to address the needs of varying ability levels of consumers, especially for services provided online.
- Redesign of the COPOLCO strategy to align with ISO's 2030 Goals, and the launch of four new COPOLCO working groups (WGs 21, 22, 23 and 24)
- Outreach to ISO members with presentations on COPOLCO and consumer matters as part of the Regional Engagement Policy.
Current work and projects

• New Work Item Proposal (NWIP) on consumer product and service information, linked to the revision of ISO/IEC Guide 14, *Products and related services – Information for consumers*

• NWIP on Guidelines for providing product sustainability information in e-commerce

• Development of a methodology for identifying consumer priorities in standards

• Proposal on strategies to increase consumer participation in standards development

• Position paper on the vital role that consumers and civil society have to play in achieving sustainability goals through ISO standards

• Engagement with ISO’s regional engagement policy and outreach meetings

• Update of learning materials

• Support to the development of a NWIP on digital legacies

• Study of consumer needs in digital issues and artificial intelligence

• Promotion of *ISO 31700, Consumer protection – privacy by design for consumer goods and services* (published in January 2023 by ISO/PC 317)

• Adoption of a stakeholder engagement strategy

• On-going coordination with the Chairs of ISO’s two other policy development committees on conformity assessment and developing country matters (CASCO and DEVCO).
• The 44th COPOLCO Plenary (May 2023) and related workshops, New Delhi:
  ◦ Challenges and good practices for consumer engagement
  ◦ Identifying and acting on consumer priorities in standards
  ◦ Empowering consumers for a sustainable future – What can standards do?
• Capacity building mentorship programme workshop, Consumer participation in standardization, Ecuador
• Policy Development Committee Chairs panel discussion during the DEVCO Plenary, in September 2023, on finding sustainable solutions through standards.
• The 45th COPOLCO Plenary (May 2024) and related workshops, Nairobi
  ◦ Capacity building workshop: Navigating consumer engagement
  ◦ Capacity building workshop: Empowering consumers: Engaging in the development of circular and sustainable trade standards
  ◦ Interactive workshop: Building circularity into sustainable trade – Standards as solutions for consumer protection
COPOLCO-originated technical work under development

- ISO 5665, *Consumer incident investigation – requirements and guidance* (through ISO/PC 329)
- ISO 31031, *Managing risk for youth and school field trips* (through ISO/TC 262)
- ISO 21800, *Guidelines for organizations to increase consumer understanding of online terms and conditions* (through ISO/PC 335)
- ISO/TC 338, Standardization in the field of menstrual products, covering all products intended for both single and multiple use, regardless of material.

→ Click here to find published COPOLCO guides for standards-writers on matters affecting consumers.
Standards areas of consumer interest (non-exhaustive list, evolving according to identified consumer priorities):

- Artificial intelligence
- Consumer warranties and guarantees
- Cosmetics/sun protection
- Elderly and persons with disabilities
- Electronic cigarettes-vape and vapor products
- Ethical claims and environmental labelling
- Fire safety
- Food safety and labelling
- Furniture
- Graphical symbols
- Healthcare organization management
- Health informatics
- Household appliances (safety and performance)
- Nanotechnologies
- Packaging (child resistant packaging)
- Privacy and data protection
- Robotics
- Safety of toys
- Security and resilience
- Services (energy)
- Sharing economy
- Vulnerable consumers.
About ISO

ISO (International Organization for Standardization) is an independent, non-governmental international organization with a membership of 170* national standards bodies. Through its members, it brings together experts to share knowledge and develop voluntary, consensus-based, market-relevant International Standards that support innovation and provide solutions to global challenges.

ISO has published more than 25 200* International Standards and related documents covering almost every industry, from technology to food safety, to agriculture and healthcare.

For more information, please visit www.iso.org.

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