International Organization for Standardization
Organisation internationale de normalisation
Международная организация по стандартизации

STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN – ISO/TC 186

Executive summary

Business Environment

ISO/TC186 is the committee responsible for the development of standardization in the field of cutlery, flat-ware and table and decorative metal hollow- ware, including terminology, requirements specifications and test methods. Cutlery and other items are manufactured in many countries and traded internationally. Most of the items purchased are for domestic use but they are also used in hotels, restaurants, canteens and other institutions where food is served.

Benefits

The cutlery and other items sectors, including government regulators and managers, industry and/or other interested parties, would benefit from international standards where:

− there will be common judgements on performance as assessed against specified benchmarks (e.g., under global sustainability market certification regimes).

− there is a desire amongst the sectors to learn from each others' experience and develop best practices and efficiently exchange knowledge and utilize international expertise in the field.

− there is a desire for materials and articles in contact with foodstuff business operators to reduce workload by avoiding conflicting documentation requirements and improve product quality by implementing standard.

− there are global markets for equipment and technology, and sufficient similarities in operating conditions to warrant the establishment of, for example, design, testing or performance standards.

− there is a desire for international transparency in import requirements used by various countries, in order to support fair trade.

Objectives and Priorities

Within the domain of cutlery, flat-ware and table and decorative metal hollow- ware, the main objectives and priorities of ISO/TC 186 include:

− provide maintenance on existing standards and revise regularly.

− create new standards according to the development of new technology and new materials.

− ensure that the standards fulfill societal requirements with respect to health, material and product safety and quality.

1 Introduction

1.1 ISO technical committees and business planning

The extension of formal business planning to ISO Technical Committees (ISO/TCs) is an important measure which forms part of a major review of business. The aim is to align the ISO work programme with expressed business environment needs and trends and to allow ISO/TCs to prioritize among different projects, to identify the benefits expected from the availability of International Standards, and to ensure adequate resources for projects throughout their development.

1.2 International standardization and the role of ISO

The foremost aim of international standardization is to facilitate the exchange of goods and services through the elimination of technical barriers to trade.

Three bodies are responsible for the planning, development and adoption of International Standards: ISO (International Organization for Standardization) is responsible for all sectors excluding Electrotechnical, which is the responsibility of IEC (International Electrotechnical Committee), and most of the Telecommunications Technologies, which are largely the responsibility of ITU (International Telecommunication Union).

ISO is a legal association, the members of which are the National Standards Bodies (NSBs) of some 164 countries (organizations representing social and economic interests at the international level), supported by a Central Secretariat based in Geneva, Switzerland.

The principal deliverable of ISO is the International Standard.

An International Standard embodies the essential principles of global openness and transparency, consensus and technical coherence. These are safeguarded through its development in an ISO Technical Committee (ISO/TC), representative of all interested parties, supported by a public comment phase (the ISO Technical Enquiry). ISO and its Technical Committees are also able to offer the ISO Technical Specification (ISO/TS), the ISO Public Available Specification (ISO/PAS) and the ISO Technical Report (ISO/TR) as solutions to market needs. These ISO products represent lower levels of consensus and have therefore not the same status as an International Standard.

ISO offers also the International Workshop Agreement (IWA) as a deliverable which aims to bridge the gap between the activities of consortia and the formal process of standardization represented by ISO and its national members. An important distinction is that the IWA is developed by ISO workshops and fora, comprising only participants with direct interest, and so it is not accorded the status of an International Standard.

2 Business Environment of the ISO/TC

2.1 Description of the Business Environment

The following political, economic, technical, regulatory, legal and social dynamics describe the business environment of the industry sector, products, materials, disciplines or practices related to the scope of this ISO/TC, and they may significantly influence how the relevant standards development processes are conducted and the content of the resulting standards:

2.1.1 Industrial dynamics

Products covered by the scope of ISO/TC186 can be divided into two main groups, metal hollowware (including flatware) and cutlery, with the latter having by far the larger share of the market. In the material aspect, the stainless steel is generally used.

Europe is the birthplace of stainless steel cutlery and hollowware in the world, leading the world in the development, design and manufacturing. Nowdays production is well distributed around the world with substantial industries in North and South America, Europe, Asia and Australasia. Only Africa has few major manufacturing facilities. Approximately 70% of production is sold to the domestic market with the remainder going for commercial or institutional use. In the market, consumption in North and South America and European countries is relatively stable, there is a slight increase in Asia and Africa, and the potential is enormous. Meanwhile there has been a steady rise in the use of cutlery within other cultures, opening up new markets.

2.1.2 Technical dynamics

The technology involved in the field is well established, and although steady improvement takes place it is unlikely that basic techniques will change much over time.The 3D software is adopted in product design and development, and the advanced equipment is used in process.

2.1.3 Relevant stakeholders

The cutlery and other items stakeholders, including industry, government, customers, suppliers, contractors, consumers and/or other interested parties, would benefit from these international standards. The ISO member is the producer of cutlery standards, the government is to eliminate the international trade barrier, and promote the knife production level through standard implementation. The technology is the basis of standards, and the cutlery producers hope that no additional investment is needed with the adoption of the standard. Consumers hope to buy the cutlery accorded with product standards.

2.1.4 Societal dynamics

The employment status in the cutlery business is the number of labours that are demanded. Mainly in developing countries, but also in many industrialised countries. Cutlery business offers diverse livelihood opportunities for self-employment, professionals, mid-level technicians, administrative personnel, labourers, small-scale producers, material producers and workers in production and related activities such as processing plants, research, equipment and other provisions of goods and services. Regulations are in place in some countries governing the materials that can be used in food contact products.

2.2 Quantitative Indicators of the Business Environment

The following list of quantitative indicators describes the business environment in order to provide adequate information to support actions of the ISO/TC:

According to UN Comtrade Database, the total international trade value of Cutlery; spoons, forks, ladles, skimmers, cake-servers, fish-knives, butter knives, sugar tongs and similar kitchen or tableware (HS commodity codes: 8215) in 2020-2018 was $14.23 billion. Annual import and export trade values are shown as below.

2018-2020 Cutlery and other items international trade values

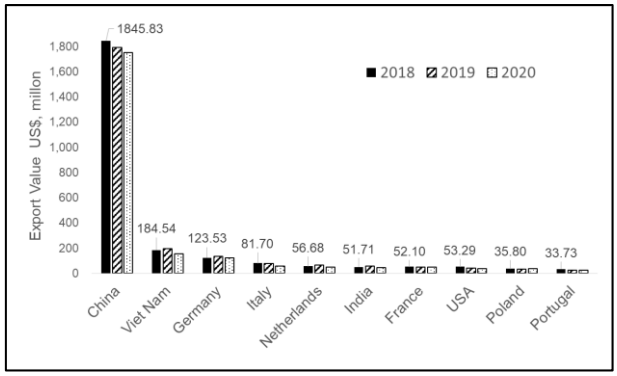
Year / Trade Flow	2018(Trade Value US$)	2019(Trade Value US$)	2020(Trade Value US$)
Export	2826126690	2757394574	2550778547
Import	2102796958	2106794536	1794346818
Re-Export	38987265	35147787	15412299

Re-Import	4186175	1341528	164734
Total	4972097088	4900678425	4360702398

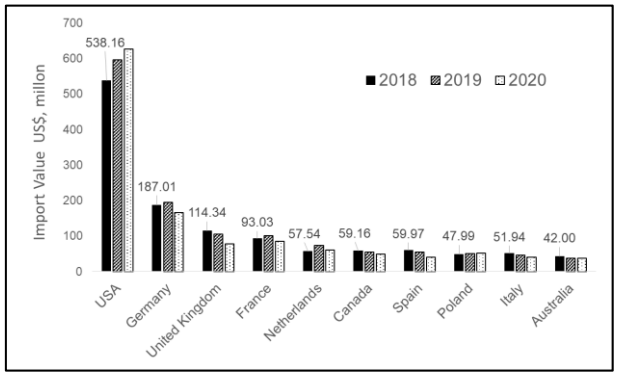
Data sources: https://comtrade.un.org/data

From the national analysis, China is the largest exporter of Cutlery and other items, with an average export value of US $1.7~1.8 billion a year between 2018 and 2020 all over the world. China's export value accounts for about 60% of the global export trade value. Except China, other TOP 10 export value countries are Viet Nam, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, India, France, USA, Poland and Portugal, as shown below.

USA is the largest importer of Cutlery and other items, with an average import value of US $0.5~0.6 billion a year between 2018 and 2020 all over the world. TOP 10 import value countries are mainly Western Europe and North America, as shown below.



2018-2020 Cutlery and other items export value TOP 10



2018-2020 Cutlery and other items import value TOP 10

10 standards have been published by ISO /TC 186 and play an important role in facilitating international trade. Almost all standards were adopted by many nations, e.g. EU members, Britain, Korea, Russia and China.

3 Benefits expected from the work of the ISO/TC

Developing of International Standards in the field of cutlery, flat-ware and table and decorative metal hollow- ware eliminate or reduce technical barriers to trade and provide access the global market.

The market has already benefited from standards produced by this committee and it is hoped that completion of the ISO 8442 suite of standards will provide a comprehensive set of performance requirements for cutlery and table hollowware. Manufacturers can (and do) use these as ready-

made contractual elements when subcontracting work to other factories. When used in this way they also contribute towards a general improvement of standards and aid the free passage of goods.

4 Representation and participation in the ISO/TC

4.1 Membership

Countries/ISO member bodies that are P and O members of the ISO/TC 186

4.2 Analysis of the participation

Europe, China, Russian Federation and Algeria are well represented in ISO/TC 186. 80% of the P members in ISO/TC 186 are European countries. Cuba is the only O member in North America. South America and Oceania are missing. ISO/TC 186 works to encourage participation from these missing countries.

ISO/TC 186 has liaisons with ISO/TC 107/SC 3 "Electrodeposited coatings and related finishes".

5 Objectives of the ISO/TC and strategies for their achievement

5.1 Defined objectives of the ISO/TC

ISO/TC186 is the committee responsible for the development of standardization in the field of cutlery, flat-ware and table and decorative metal hollow- ware, including terminology, requirements specifications and test methods. 1 terminology standard, 1 test specification standard and 8 product standards have been formulated.

At present, the main objectives and priorities in the work of the committee are:
− provide maintenance on these 10 standards and revise regularly.
− create new standards according to the development of new technology and new materials to keep pace with industry requirements.
− ensure that the standards fulfill societal requirements with respect to health, material and product safety and quality.
− ensure that the ISO/TC 186 standards are well known, readily available and widely used.

5.2 Identified strategies to achieve the ISO/TC's defined objectives

To achieve the objectives listed in 5.1, the strategies include:
− continuous identification of trade and industry needs.
− use the five-year systematic review effectively and identify opportunities for quality improvements.
− increase the efficiency of standard development by working through ISO's remote communication tools.
− Encourage the participation of countries not yet active in ISO/TC 186.

6 Factors affecting completion and implementation of the ISO/TC work programme

Common factors identified to influence the completion and implementation of ISO/TC 186 work programme include:

− the enthusiasm of members, both participating and observing, needs to be improved and no new standard proposal has been put forward in the past 3 years.
− expert resources are not sufficiently available and constructive comments are lack during balloting period.
− a new test method needs a long time to validation and compare with the laboratory, which will result in the agreed target dates of project cannot be met.
− force majeure can influence progress, e.g. global COVID-19.

7 Structure, current projects and publications of the ISO/TC

Information on ISO online

The link below is to the TC's page on ISO's website:
ISO/TC 186 on ISO Online

Click on the tabs and links on this page to find the following information:

- About (Secretariat, Committee Manager, Chair, Date of creation, Scope, etc.)
- Contact details
- Structure (Subcommittees and working groups)
- Liaisons
- Meetings
- Tools
- Work programme (published standards and standards under development)

Reference information

Glossary of terms and abbreviations used in ISO/TC Business Plans

General information on the principles of ISO's technical work