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**Principles for successful collaborative  
business relationship management**

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## Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see [www.iso.org/directives](http://www.iso.org/directives)).

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights. Details of any patent rights identified during the development of the document will be in the Introduction and/or on the ISO list of patent declarations received (see [www.iso.org/patents](http://www.iso.org/patents)).

Any trade name used in this document is information given for the convenience of users and does not constitute an endorsement.

For an explanation of the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) see [www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html](http://www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html).

This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 286, *Collaborative business relationship management*.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at [www.iso.org/members.html](http://www.iso.org/members.html).

## Introduction

Regardless of industry or other factors, a well-conceived collaborative relationship will follow a set of common principles. Any collaborative relationship lacking in these principles will most likely experience challenges and reduce the likelihood of success.

The essence of collaborative working enables organizations to achieve greater results than working independently. Continual focus on adding value will open up the awareness and ability to make use of value-enhancing opportunities within existing and through new collaborative relationships.

A collaborative relationship underpinned by aligned visions and values, business objectives and commitment to mutual benefits can achieve synergy in areas such as reduced risk, improved performance and efficiency, extended product or service capability, product development and innovation or even improved performance through behavioural change.

The collaborative relationship management principles can be used as a lens through which to interpret and understand the requirements and guidelines for collaborative working. They were developed and updated by international experts of ISO/TC 286, which is responsible for developing and maintaining ISO's collaborative business relationship management standards.

The following document addresses those principles that underpin the implementation and operation of organizations committing to work together across organizational boundaries for mutual benefit and added value. This document provides for each principle:

- **Statement:** a description of the principle;
- **Rationale:** an explanation of why the principle is important for the organization(s);
- **Key benefits:** examples of the benefits associated with adequately addressing the principle.

The creation of effective collaborations is an iterative process where these principles will evolve through the life cycle of a relationship.



# Principles for successful collaborative business relationship management

## 1 Scope

This document introduces twelve collaborative relationship management principles. ISO 44001 and related ISO collaborative management standards are based on the understanding and acknowledgement of these principles.

## 2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO 44001, *Collaborative business relationship management systems — Requirements and framework*

## 3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in ISO 44001 apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <https://www.iso.org/obp>
- IEC Electropedia: available at <http://www.electropedia.org/>

## 4 Relationship management

**Statement:** A formalized process to manage and sustain collaborative relationships underpins their success.

**Rationale:** To be sustainable over time, a collaborative relationship needs to be based on systems and processes, whether internal or jointly developed, together with a continued focus on monitoring and developing competence and behaviours.

**Key benefits:** Collaborative relationships that are based solely on personal relationships, although important, are vulnerable where personnel may change over time. Documenting the process as agreed with partners ensures that leadership changes do not weaken the relationship. Furthermore, those joining the operation over time have a clear perspective on the way the relationship is to be managed, and the expectations of the parties involved.

## 5 Visions and values

**Statement:** The visions and values of organizations wanting to work together will have an impact on the effectiveness of the collaboration.

**Rationale:** Operating a collaborative business relationship will inevitably involve the reputation, ethics and culture of partner organizations. As each party considers the value of a collaborative relationship, the profile of the organization and potential compatibility with partners will be a key factor in establishing and aligning their capabilities and joint performance.