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The human-centred organization — Rationale and general principles

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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).

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).

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

For an explanation on the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the WTO principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) see the following URL: Foreword - Supplementary information

The committee responsible for this document is ISO/TC 159, *Ergonomics*, Subcommittee SC 1, *General ergonomics principles*.

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Introduction

NOTE This introduction serves as an executive summary of this International Standard.

Human well-being is now recognized by the G7 (the world's seven biggest economies) as an important economic measure to complement traditional measures of national output. Organizations are being judged not only on their return on the investment of their owners, but also on much broader issues such as how well they fulfil their responsibility to the society and the impact they have on the environment in both the short and long term. In those areas, organizations often turn to high level standards such as ISO 26000, ISO 31000, and ISO/IEC 38500.

This International Standard explains to executive board members the values and beliefs that make an organization human-centred, the significant business and operational benefits that arise, and the policies they need to put in place to achieve this. This International Standard identifies the key criteria which demonstrate that each principle has been met, the implications for the organization of failing to meet the relevant criteria and what steps can be taken to mitigate the risks of such failure.

Adding value by applying a human-centred approach to enhance total system performance and human well-being is the objective of ergonomics (also known as human factors). ISO 26800 describes the general ergonomics approach and specifies basic ergonomics principles and concepts applicable to the design and evaluation of tasks, jobs, products, tools, equipment, systems, organizations, services, facilities, and environments. There are a number of standards on ergonomics and human factors based on these principles and concepts which can be used by managers, engineers, and designers in selecting, designing, and managing systems and equipment to ensure that they are effective, efficient, and satisfying to use. These International Standards are not normally the direct concern of the executive board of an organization.

This International Standard, in contrast, draws on that extensive body of ergonomics and human factors knowledge and presents the rationale and general principles of *human-centredness* in a concise form for executive board members. It explains the seven principles which characterize a human-centred organization. These principles are the following:

— capitalize on individual differences as an organizational strength;

— make usability and accessibility strategic business objectives;

— adopt a total system approach;

— ensure health, safety, and well-being are business priorities;

— value employees and create a meaningful work environment;

— be open and trustworthy;

— act in socially responsible ways.

In design processes, the term user-centred is often used to reflect that the design of the product, system, or service takes account of human characteristics both to minimize risks and to optimize well-being and performance. The term *human-centred* is used to reflect that organizations not only have an impact on their customers (the users of their products and services), but also on their employees, their families and the wider community.

This International Standard is intended to be useful to all types of organizations (whether large or small) in the private, public, and non-profit sectors. While not all parts of this International Standard will be of equal use to all types of organizations, the principles are relevant to every organization. Each organization will identify which issues are relevant and significant to address through its own considerations and through dialogue with stakeholders. Governmental organizations, like any other organization, may wish to use this International Standard. However, it is not intended to replace, alter, or in any way, change the obligations of the state.

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Related International Standards, including some under development on ergonomics processes, are intended to be used by managers who are responsible for implementing the human-centred approach in the organization. They will contain both recommendations and requirements.

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The human-centred organization — Rationale and general principles

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1 Scope

This International Standard is intended for executive board members and policy makers of all types of organizations (whether large or small) in the private, public and non-profit sectors.

It describes the values and beliefs that make an organization human-centred, the significant business benefits that can be achieved, and explains the risks for the organization of not being human-centred. It provides recommendations for the policies that executive board members need to implement to achieve this. It sets out high-level human-centred principles for executive board members to endorse in order to optimize performance, minimize risks to organizations and individuals, maximize well-being in their organization, and enhance their relationships with the customers. The importance of organizational policy to address human-centredness is emphasized.

This International Standard is not a management system standard. It is not intended or appropriate for certification purposes or regulatory or contractual use.

This International Standard is not intended to prevent the development of national standards that are more specific or demanding.

2 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

2.1
consumer
individual member of the general public purchasing or using property, products, or services for personal use

2.2
customer
organization or individual purchasing property, products, or services for commercial, private, or public purposes

2.3
accessibility
extent to which products, systems, services, *environments* (2.5), and facilities can be used by people from a population with the widest range of characteristics and capabilities to achieve a specified goal in a specified context of use

Note 1 to entry: Context of use includes direct use or use supported by assistive technologies.

Note 2 to entry: When evaluating accessibility, the three measures of usability (*effectiveness* (2.9), *efficiency* (2.10), and *satisfaction* (2.11)) can be important.

[SOURCE: ISO 26800:2011, 2.1, modified]

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