
Guidelines for addressing sustainability in standards

*Lignes directrices pour la prise en compte du développement durable
dans les normes*



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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

ISO Guide 82 was prepared by the ISO Technical Management Board Sustainability Guidance Drafting Group.

Introduction

Sustainability is the goal of sustainable development. It refers to any state of the global system in which the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The concept of sustainability is continually evolving. Understanding and achieving a balance between environmental, social and economic systems, ideally in mutually supporting ways, is considered essential for making progress towards achieving sustainability. The achievement of sustainability is now recognized as one of the most important considerations in all human activities.

The term “sustainable development” is often used to describe development that leads to sustainability, and the term “social responsibility” is often used to describe how an individual organization (e.g. a company) can contribute to sustainable development.

ISO standards can contribute to the achievement of sustainability, either directly (where they specifically address sustainability issues) or indirectly (e.g. where they relate to testing, products, procedures, services, terminology, management systems or auditing). However, since sustainable developments and progress towards sustainability are heavily dependent on a multitude of variables, including social, environmental, economic, geographic and technical conditions, it is important that standards writers do not reach overall conclusions that particular activities (including processes) or products (including services) are “sustainable.”

NOTE In this Guide, the term “activities and products” includes “processes and services”.

This Guide is intended for use by anyone involved in the development of ISO standards and similar deliverables, and aims to:

- a) raise awareness of sustainability issues arising from the application of ISO standards;
- b) provide standards writers with a systematic approach to addressing sustainability issues in a coherent and consistent manner, with regard to both new and revised standards, and in a manner related to the objective and scope of the standard being developed;
- c) promote consistency, where appropriate, among standards that address sustainability.

This Guide makes reference to related ISO deliverables, as appropriate, e.g. ISO Guide 64 (which addresses environmental issues in product standards) and ISO 26000 (which provides guidance on social responsibility).

Standards writers are encouraged to consider sustainability issues in their work at all stages in the standards development process. If sustainability issues have not been considered, this can be a valid reason to start the revision of a standard. In addition, the significance or relevance of specific issues might have changed since the previous edition of a standard was drafted or reviewed. Whenever a new standard is drafted or an existing standard is revised, all standards writers (including project leaders, convenors, committee chairs and secretaries) are encouraged to actively promote the application of this Guide, and thereby involve experts knowledgeable in the subject.

Guidelines for addressing sustainability in standards

1 Scope

This Guide provides guidance to standards writers on how to take account of sustainability in the drafting, revision and updating of ISO standards and similar deliverables.

It outlines a methodology that ISO standards writers can use to develop their own approach to addressing sustainability on a subject-specific basis.

2 Normative references

The following documents, in whole or in part, are normatively referenced in this document and are indispensable for its application. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO/IEC Guide 2, *Standardization and related activities — General vocabulary*

ISO 14050, *Environmental management — Vocabulary*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in ISO/IEC Guide 2, ISO 14050 and the following apply.

3.1 sustainability

state of the global system, including environmental, social and economic aspects, in which the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs

Note 1 to entry: The environmental, social and economic aspects interact, are interdependent and are often referred to as the three dimensions of sustainability.

Note 2 to entry: Sustainability is the goal of *sustainable development* (3.2).

3.2 sustainable development

development that meets the environmental, social and economic needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs

Note 1 to entry: Derived from the Brundtland Report^[17].

3.3 stakeholder

individual or group that has an interest in any decision or activity of an organization

[SOURCE: ISO 26000:2010, definition 2.20]

3.4 social responsibility

responsibility of an organization for the impacts of its decisions and activities on society and the environment, through transparent and ethical behaviour that:

- contributes to *sustainable development* (3.2), including the health and the welfare of society;
- takes into account the expectations of *stakeholders* (3.3);