



capacity building

Journey to
a sustainable future





Message from the President

Our societies need standards. With the globalization of the world economy, standards have taken a leading role in the international exchange of products and services ensuring safety, reliability and quality. Developing countries face obstacles to fully benefit from international standardization. This means that they cannot meet their industrial, public safety and regulatory needs.

During my tenure as ISO President, I will focus on International Standards as a global voice for developing countries. My intention is to enhance their participation in, and increase the use of, standards through resource mobilization.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eddy Njoroge'. The signature is stylized and fluid.

Eddy Njoroge

“*I will focus on International Standards as a global voice for developing countries.*”

Eddy Njoroge, ISO President

ISO is the world's leading developer of international standards

Standards impact everyone, everywhere. International Standards are critical to ensure that processes, products and services are fit for purpose, interchangeable, compatible and create better communication across borders. They contain world-class specifications for quality, safety and efficiency that bring trust and peace of mind. As such, International Standards support global trade, helping to drive inclusive and equitable economic growth, advance innovation, promote health and safety, and create the sustainable future we all want.

We are a global network that brings together a wide range of experts to develop International standards.

Who benefits from using ISO standards?

- **Government** – ISO standards are used by regulators to support their public policies. This helps further the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals designed to stimulate world action in areas of critical importance for humanity: the eradication of poverty, human rights, water and energy efficiency, public health, and more. ISO standards are recognized solutions that reflect the latest technical developments.
- **Industry** – The guidelines and frameworks contained in ISO standards ensure industry performance in areas such as production quality, energy consumption, resilient and eco-friendly infrastructures, and employee health and safety at work. ISO standards support participation in global value chains.
- **Consumers** – Conformity of products and services to ISO standards provides assurance about their quality, safety and reliability, giving consumers confidence that they are fit for purpose.

Facilitating trade

International standards facilitate the adoption of good regulatory practices by governments and ISO standards are consistent with the commitments of countries under the World Trade Organization (WTO) to reduce technical barriers to trade.



“Without International Standards, there would be far less international trade, far less global prosperity, far fewer markets for exporters and far less variety for consumers.”

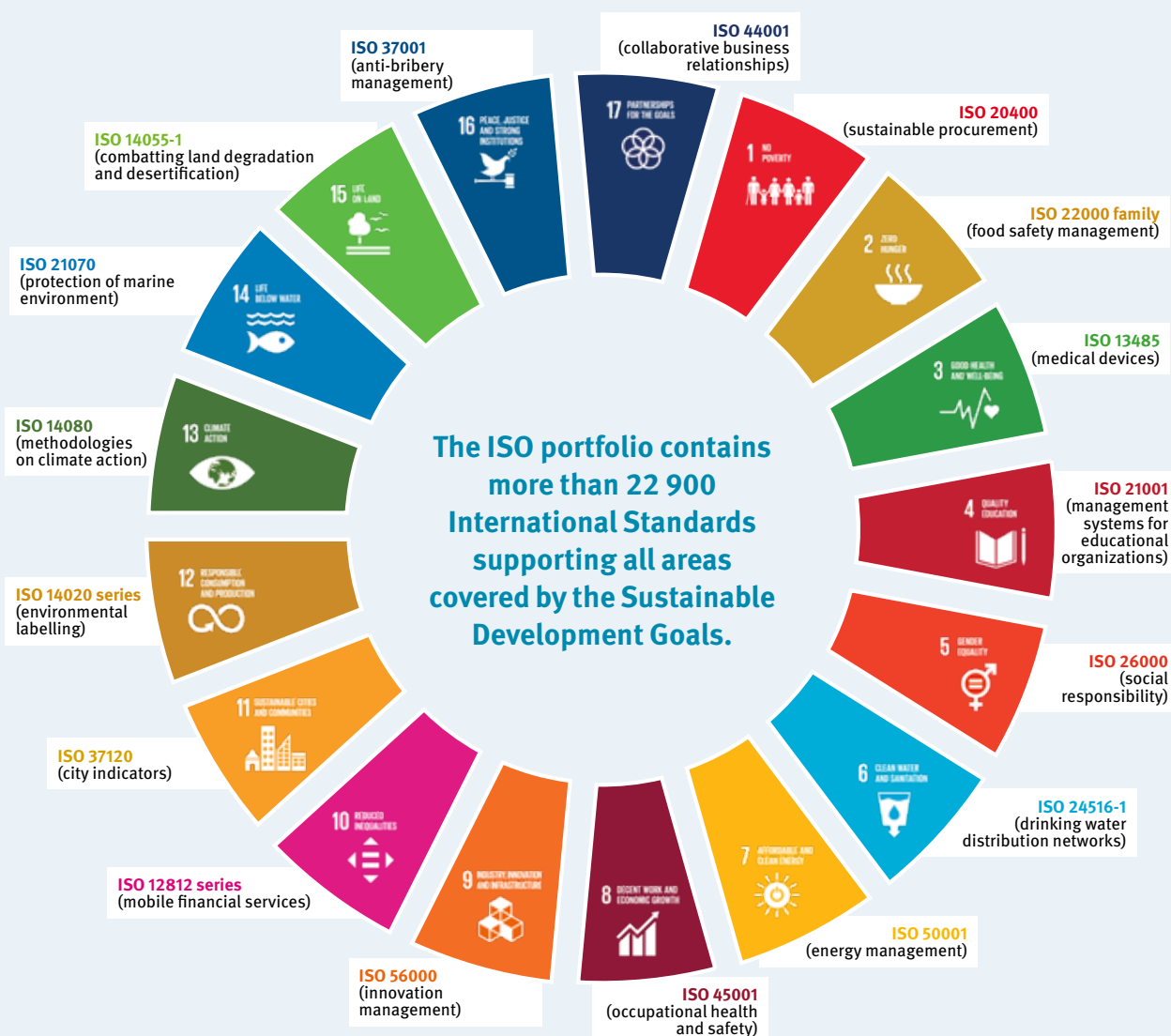
Alan Wolff, Deputy Director-General of the World Trade Organization (WTO) speaking at the ISO General Assembly in Geneva, September 2018

Advancing sustainable development: people, planet, prosperity

The implementation of ISO standards goes beyond solving technical problems to delivering positive results in the economic, environmental and societal dimensions of sustainable development. Organizations looking to contribute to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals will find in International Standards the tools they need to help them rise to the challenge.

“As an independent, non-governmental organization, ISO plays a key role in defining standards that will help support innovation. This is fundamental in accelerating results.”

Michael Møller, Former Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG)





“ *With the Action Plan for Developing Countries, ISO offers an up-to-date comprehensive package for national standards body capacity building in developing countries along their core functions in standard development.* ”

*Independent external evaluation
of ISO Capacity Building*
SAANA Consulting, 22 October 2019

Building capacity in developing countries

There has never been a more pressing need for globally relevant International Standards. This requires the active participation of the global standards community through ISO's 164 national standards bodies and their experts. Recognizing the constraints on developing countries to take part effectively in standardization, ISO delivers capacity building support through an overall framework of development assistance – the ISO Action Plan for developing countries.

The capacity building programme under the ISO Action Plan supports our members to fully benefit from International Standards by applying internationally recognized standardization practices, developing standardization plans that address national priorities, and participating more effectively in the standards-setting process. Through our programme, members gain in-depth knowledge of specific ISO standards that are relevant to their national priorities and needs and learn how these standards can support sustainable development and facilitate trade. ISO's programme also reaches out to governments, the private sector and other stakeholders that derive benefits from the use of our standards.

How do we deliver Capacity Building?



Delivering results and focusing on impact

The participation of ISO members in the development of the ISO Action Plan for developing countries ensures the relevance of the capacity building programme. Through the ISO Committee on developing country matters (DEVCO), members guide ISO in establishing strategic priorities for the delivery of technical assistance. DEVCO also monitors the Action Plan and measures progress on a regular basis against established performance indicators. The capacity building programme for developing countries is driven by quality management principles that support continual improvement and the careful monitoring of results. Reflecting on the changes brought by the programme is critical to maintaining an effective monitoring system and demonstrating that standardization truly contributes to sustainable development and poverty alleviation.

“ISO standards contribute to sustainable and equitable socio-economic development, and we need the active participation of developing countries to ensure the global relevance of ISO standards.”

Mojdeh R. Tabari, Former DEVCO Chair



A long-standing commitment to developing countries

ISO is deeply committed to supporting members in developing countries. A team of full-time professionals within the ISO Central Secretariat, supported by a network of highly skilled and vetted experts, is responsible for the design, delivery and monitoring of a demand-driven and results-oriented capacity building programme. ISO uses the “theory of change” approach to define long-term goals and demonstrate how standardization supports sustainable development objectives. Our programme embeds an end-to-end approach to ensure that our needs assessment, planning and activities are aligned with our desired strategic goals and geared towards achieving them.

ISO’s capacity building programme is funded by the organization’s core budget and voluntary payments by its members to the ISO Funds-in-Trust. ISO also relies on financial support granted by national development agencies and government ministries. Over the years, we have benefited from agreements signed with Finland (Ministry for Foreign Affairs), Germany (BMZ), Norway (Norad), Sweden (Sida) and Switzerland (SECO). Fostering existing donor relations and developing new ones is part of ISO’s fundraising strategy.

Working with partners

ISO collaborates with many international and regional organizations to build synergies and avoid duplication of effort. For example, we work with the WTO to ensure that governments and businesses benefit from the application of the WTO agreement on technical barriers to trade and with the ITC on enhancing the link between NSBs and trade promotion organizations for export success. ISO partners with UNIDO to strengthen national quality infrastructures in developing countries. Collaboration with UNCTAD seeks to support the participation of the fisheries sector in LDCs in global value chains. Together with the Clean Cooking Alliance and WHO we contribute to health and safety outcomes using international standards. To promote gender equality in standardization, ISO collaborates with the UNECE and UN Women.

“ISO cooperates with over 700 international actors relying on the ISO system to develop international standards and recognizing ISO as an international forum to develop technical solutions to global challenges.”

OECD/ISO (2016), “International Regulatory Co-operation and International Organizations: The Case of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO)”, OECD and ISO

Glossary

- ITC** – International Trade Centre
- UNCTAD** – United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
- UNECE** – United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
- UNIDO** – United National Industrial Development Organization
- WHO** – World Health Organization
- WTO** – World Trade Organization



About ISO

ISO (International Organization for Standardization) is an independent, non-governmental international organization with a membership of 165* 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 23 850* 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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