

International Organization for Standardization



The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) is an international standard-setting body composed of representatives from various national standards organizations.

Founded on 23 February 1947, the organization promotes worldwide proprietary, industrial and commercial standards. It is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, and works in 164 countries.

It was one of the first organizations granted general consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

Overview

The International Organization for Standardization is an independent, non-governmental organization, the members of which are the standards organizations of the 164 member countries. It is the world's largest developer of voluntary international standards and facilitates world trade by providing common standards between nations. Over twenty thousand standards have been set covering everything from manufactured products and technology to food safety, agriculture and healthcare.

Use of the standards aids in the creation of products and services that are safe, reliable and of good quality. The standards help businesses increase productivity while minimizing errors and waste. By enabling products from different markets to be directly compared, they facilitate companies in entering new markets and assist in the development of global trade on a fair basis. The standards also serve to safeguard consumers and the end-users of products and services, ensuring that certified products conform to the minimum standards set internationally.

Language usage

The three official languages of the ISO are English (with Oxford spelling), French, and Russian.

Name and abbreviations

The name of the organization in French is Organisation internationale de normalisation. ISO is not an acronym. ISO gives this explanation of the name: "Because 'International Organization for Standardization' would have different acronyms in different languages (IOS in English, OIN in French), our founders decided to give it the short form ISO. ISO is derived from the Greek isos, meaning equal. Whatever the country, whatever the language, the short form of our name is always ISO."

Both the name ISO and the ISO logo are registered trademarks, and their use is restricted.

Structure

ISO is a voluntary organization whose members are recognized authorities on standards, each one representing one country. Members meet annually at a General Assembly to discuss ISO's strategic objectives. The organization is coordinated by a Central Secretariat based in Geneva.

A Council with a rotating membership of 20 member bodies provides guidance and governance, including setting the Central Secretariat's annual budget.

The Technical Management Board is responsible for over 250 technical committees, who develop the ISO standards.

IEC joint committees

ISO has formed two joint committees with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) to develop standards and terminology in the areas of electrical and electronic related technologies.

ISO/IEC JTC 1

Main article: ISO/IEC JTC 1

ISO/IEC Joint Technical Committee 1 (JTC 1) was created in 1987 to "[d]evelop, maintain, promote and facilitate IT standards",^[15] where IT refers to information technology.

ISO/IEC JTC 2

ISO/IEC Joint Technical Committee 2 (JTC 2) was created in 2009 for the purpose of "[s]tandardization in the field of energy efficiency and renewable energy sources".

Membership

Further information: Countries in the International Organization for Standardization

ISO member countries with a national standards body and ISO voting rights.

Correspondent members (countries without a national standards body).

Subscriber members (countries with small economies).

ISO has 163 national members.

ISO has three membership categories:

- Member bodies are national bodies considered the most representative standards body in each country. These are the only members of ISO that have voting rights.
- Correspondent members are countries that do not have their own standards organization. These members are informed about ISO's work, but do not participate in standards promulgation.
- Subscriber members are countries with small economies. They pay reduced membership fees, but can follow the development of standards.

Participating members are called "P" members, as opposed to observing members, who are called "O" members.