

International recognition



The worldwide recognition accorded to ISO is the measure of its influence. And the growing acknowledgement of the importance of ISO's work by international partners and stakeholders, in addition to business, is a most encouraging sign that the progress being made is in the right direction.

World Trade Organization (WTO)

Since inherent in ISO's vocation is to work for a facilitation of trade between all countries, ISO's collaboration and relationship with the World Trade Organization (WTO) is increasingly close and essential. Mr. Paul-Henri Ravier, the then Deputy Director-General of the WTO, said at the ISO General Assembly that the WTO had to ensure that all its members, even the poorest, were given every assistance and opportunity to integrate the trading system. But for participation of all countries in International Standards development and conformity assessment activities,

which are essential to the correct functioning of the WTO Technical Barriers to Trade Agreement (TBT), developing countries need to be afforded the capacity – the material possibility – to do so. The WTO has cooperated closely with ISO in identifying the needs of developing countries for participation in the international standardization process. It has helped to sponsor various ground-breaking workshops on the theme of enhancing developing countries' participation in standardization, and this cooperation is on-going.

The "Earth Summit" and ISO standards

The exponential growth in the success of the ISO 14000 series for environmental management meant that ISO found its rightful place at the "Earth Summit", the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg, South Africa, in November 2002. International Standards were recognized as providing one important element in



the answer to helping support the earth's environment and ensuring sustainable development. As the Chair of ISO 207, *Environmental management*, Mr. Dan Gagnier, said: "We should challenge ourselves to identify where and how we can contribute to meeting the emerging requirements of our constituents and stakeholders by developing new manuals, guides and standards that can be useful as business and its partners grapple with the performance targets embedded in the Johannesburg Action Plan."

The ISO brochure, *Environmental Management – The ISO 14000 Family of International Standards*, 2002, which was specially produced for the WSSD, proved a much appreciated vehicle bringing the message in a clear and understandable manner to many delegates.

World Summit on the Information Society

To work for a more equitable Information Society, after a series of preparatory regional conferences, the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) is to take place in two phases, with a first in Geneva in December 2003. Under the aegis of the World Standards Corporation (WSC), the three apex organizations for international standardization – ISO, the IEC (the International Electrotechnical Commission) and the ITU-T (the

International Telecommunication Union Standardization Department), together with the UN/ECE (the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe) – are seeking to raise awareness of the con-



A spectacular moment from the opening ceremony to the World Summit for Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa.

tributions that International Standards can make to spreading the benefits of information technology to all countries and to make sure that their relevance and importance is taken into full consideration to ensure fair participation for all in the Information Society. The mounting concern globally about the growing "digital divide", that is effectively cutting out less industrialized countries from access to information technology, prompted ISO and its partners to work together to support the efforts of the World Summit on



To avoid the digital divide between ISO members, ISO provides training and remote helpdesk services.



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Information Society (WSIS). These efforts were destined to secure, as was stated in one of the preparatory conferences, that: "The development of the Information Society is based on platforms of internationally interoperable technical standards, accessible for all."

Organizations implementing quality and environmental management systems

The annual *ISO Survey of ISO 9000 and ISO 14000 Certificates*, has become a thoroughly professional information product. It has been

rethought, with particular efforts being made to provide clear explanations with an attractive look that makes it easy to consult.

ISO itself does not carry out ISO 9001 or 14001 certification, but because these are ISO's best-known standards, it is generally expected that ISO be in a position to provide information about their deployment worldwide.

The adoption of ISO 9001:2000 for businesses continues unabated. Record increases took place in 2001 in the number of certificates of conformity issued to organizations that meet the requirements of, respectively, the International Standards of the ISO 9000 or ISO 14000 series.

As of end December 2001, at least **510 616 ISO 9000 certificates** had been awarded in 161 countries and economies, **an increase of 101 985 certificates (+ 24,96 %)** over end December 2000. This is by far the highest increase recorded in all 11 cycles of the survey carried out since January 1993.

Of the ISO 9000 total, 44 388 were certificates of conformity to ISO 9001:2000, the single standard which is replacing the 1994 versions of ISO 9001, ISO 9002 and ISO 9003 (organizations have up to 15 December 2003 to migrate to the new version). The revised standard therefore accounted for 43,53 % of certificates awarded in 2001 and 8,70 % of the overall total.

For ISO 14000, as of end 2001, at least **36 765 ISO 14000 certificates** had been awarded in 112 countries or economies, **an increase of 13 868 (+ 60,57 %)** over the end of December 2000.

Helping make the global trading system more efficient

World Standards Day for 2002 focused specifically on one fast-growing area of ISO activity, that of conformity assessment.

As goods and services flow across borders, business partners or government agencies may require verification that they measure up to standards, regulations and other requirements.

This verification is known as "conformity assessment". One of the main difficulties exporters face is costly, multiple testing and/or certification of products,



services, systems, processes and materials, especially when they are being traded transnationally. These costs would be drastically reduced if a product could be tested once and the re-



sults accepted in all markets.

Standards and tests go hand in hand and are key to the development of the global market. Standards give specifications or requirements for products, services, systems, processes and materials. Tests then verify that these standards can be met reliably over time.

"A common confidence-building foundation for exchanging goods and services between buyers and sellers in the global market comes from using internationally agreed standards and tests together to verify that the requirements of these standards are being met," said the CEOs of ISO, the IEC, and the ITU.

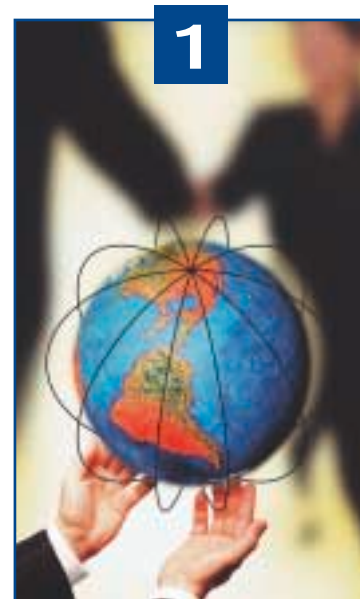
The inclusive nature of the three apex standards organizations helps to achieve the objective of truly global trade. Relevant international conformity assessment mechanisms, standards, guides and recommendations also help to underpin Mutual Recognition Agreements at different levels.

"Ultimately," said the CEOs, "an efficient market benefits everyone: manufacturers, consumers, governments, testing laboratories, and all other participants in the market." The theme of conformity assessment, and where CASCO (ISO Committee for conformity assessment) was helping to move it forward, that was given a broad airing in the *ISO Bulletin* of October 2002, roused interest and strengthened participation in the Day's activity.

Tested once, with results accepted in all markets

ISO/IEC Guide 68, *Arrangements for the recognition and acceptance of conformity assessment results*, prepares the ground for the 1-1-1 Dream: **one standard, one test, accepted everywhere.**

ISO/IEC Guide 68 provides procedures for establishing and maintaining cooperation among the bodies that carry out conformity assessments and the "accreditation bodies" that verify their competence. This cooperation is formalized in what is known as a recognition arrangement (or acceptance arrangement) which will allow the contracting parties to recognize (or accept) the results of each other's inspections, testing, certification or accreditation for goods and services traded internationally.



These arrangements are expected to improve confidence of both private and public sector purchasers, and of regulators, that requirements applicable to products, services and systems have been met. They will also serve the market by helping to lower technical barriers to trade – which results in lower manufacturing costs – and to raise the level of confidence between buyers and sellers.

