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Second edition
2019-11

Guidelines for addressing sustainability in standards

*Lignes directrices pour la prise en compte de la durabilité dans les
normes*



Reference number
ISO GUIDE 82:2019(E)

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Published in Switzerland

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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 of the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) see www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html.

This document was prepared by the ISO Technical Management Board Sustainability Guidance Drafting Group.

This second edition cancels and replaces the first edition (ISO Guide 82:2014), which has been technically revised. The main changes compared to the previous edition are as follows:

- addition of reference to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals ([Annex C](#));
- addition of the relevant sections of the guidance on partnership developed by TMB Task Force 16.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at www.iso.org/members.html.

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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 impact on 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 development 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 developers do not reach overall conclusions that particular activities (including processes) or products (including services) are “sustainable.”

NOTE 1 In this document, the term “activities and products” includes “processes and services”.

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

- a) raise awareness of sustainability issues arising from the application of ISO standards;
- b) provide standards developers 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 and compatibility, as far as is practical, among standards that directly or indirectly address sustainability.

This document 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).

This document also makes references to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, which is known as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs)^[23].

NOTE 2 [Annex C](#) contains an overview of the UN SDGs.

Standards developers are strongly 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 can 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 developers (including project proposers, project leaders, convenors, committee chairs and managers) are encouraged to actively promote the application of this document, and thereby involve experts knowledgeable in the subject.