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## GUIDE 60

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### Conformity assessment — Code of good practice

Second edition 2004

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Published in Switzerland

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## Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) and IEC (the International Electrotechnical Commission) form the specialized system for worldwide standardization. National bodies that are members of ISO or IEC participate in the development of International Standards through technical committees established by the respective organization to deal with particular fields of technical activity. ISO and IEC technical committees collaborate in fields of mutual interest. Other international organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO and IEC, also take part in the work. In the field of conformity assessment, the ISO Committee on conformity assessment (CASCO) is responsible for the development of International Standards and Guides.

International Standards are drafted in accordance with the rules given in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2.

Draft Guides adopted by the responsible Committee or Group are circulated to the member bodies for voting. Publication as a Guide requires approval by at least 75 % of the member bodies casting a vote.

ISO/IEC Guide 60 was prepared by the ISO *Committee on conformity assessment* (CASCO).

This second edition cancels and replaces the first edition (ISO/IEC Guide 60:1994), which has been technically revised.

## Introduction

Conformity assessment involves activities to demonstrate the fulfilment of specified requirements by products, processes, systems, persons or bodies. Conformity assessment includes activities that provide various types of assurance that products, processes, systems, persons or bodies fulfil requirements set out in specifications such as international, regional, or national standards, guides or other normative documents.

Rapid technological development, integration of economic and production systems, and increased levels of international trade have emphasized the need for commonality among conformity assessment procedures and systems. Harmonized international standards are increasingly accepted as one effective vehicle to improve competition and eliminate technical barriers to trade. However, the use of harmonized international practices is less advanced in the area of conformity assessment, where different practices and approaches continue to persist. This environment may result in additional costs for manufacturers, exporters and consumers, and poses challenges for regulatory authorities and industry in all countries including developing countries.

The evolution of international, regional and private-sector conformity assessment systems and schemes is also noteworthy. These systems continue to expand, building confidence for the users of conformity assessment services (including industry, regulators and consumers) and promoting global acceptance through a variety of methods. In addition, the use of declarations of conformity (DoCs) has continued to increase in many product areas.

Different conformity assessment procedures and requirements, and the lack of recognition of conformity assessment results, can constrain the exchange of goods and services. Efforts are required to ensure that all conformity assessment systems and procedures attempt to involve all interested parties, are non-discriminatory, transparent and avoid unnecessary obstacles to trade. Members of the conformity assessment community are encouraged to participate in the development of international standards and guides, to utilize them as the basis for their respective conformity assessment activities and systems, and to engage in information exchange and confidence building to increase knowledge and acceptance of other systems and approaches.

This Guide is presented in a form suitable for use by conformity assessment bodies, accreditation bodies and other interested parties, whether governmental or non-governmental, at international, regional, national or sub-national levels. This Guide is intended to be used in conjunction with, or when preparing, ISO/IEC International Standards or Guides relating to conformity assessment, and may also be used in conjunction with the World Trade Organization's (WTO's) Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Agreement.

Adoption of this Guide is voluntary and is intended to promote conformity assessment practices that are characterized by openness, transparency, impartiality, confidentiality, coherence and effectiveness.