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Governance of information technology — Guidance for principles- based standards in the governance of information technology

*Gouvernance des technologies de l'information — Lignes directrices
pour des normes fondées sur des principes relatives à la gouvernance
des technologies de l'information*



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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 information technology, ISO and IEC have established a joint technical committee, ISO/IEC JTC 1.

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 document 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).

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For an explanation on 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 the following URL: www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html.

The committee responsible for this document is ISO/IEC JTC 1, *Information technology, SC 40, IT service management and IT governance*.

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Introduction

This document has been developed to give guidance on the information required to support principles-based standards in the area of governance and management of information technology.

A principles-based approach to standardization is aimed at providing non-prescriptive guidance that is applicable to all organizations, including public and private companies, government entities and not-for-profit organizations of all sizes from the smallest to the largest, regardless of the extent of their use of IT.

The benefit of a principles-based standard is that it can identify the outcomes of applying the principles without specifying explicit methodologies, structures, processes and techniques needed to achieve the outcomes.

Within the International Standards arena, the definition of guidance in the area of governance of information technology falls within the scope of ISO/IEC JTC 1/SC 40. The existing International Standards in this area are ISO/IEC 38500, ISO/IEC TS 38501 and ISO/IEC TR 38502.

Experience with principles-based standards in the area of governance of IT has indicated that there is a need to establish a common understanding of proposed principles and the expected outcomes of applying the recommended principles as a basis for consensus. This requires a clear statement of the rationale for the principles, the expected governance behaviours associated with the principle together with the expected outcomes from their adoption.

In order for future standards and revisions of current standards to select the appropriate forms of principle description and apply them in a consistent fashion, it is desired to develop a common characterization of all of these forms of principle description. This document presents guidelines for the general recommendations of principles-based governance standards and the description of principles in terms of their format, content and level of prescription.

The intended audience for this document are the editors, working group members, reviewers and other participants in the development of principles-based standards and technical reports as well as governance of IT practitioners. An additional audience may be experts developing organizational policies and standards. It is intended that they will select the elements suitable for their project from those described in this document. It is further intended that, having selected the appropriate elements, users of this document will apply them in a manner consistent with the guidance provided by this document.