



## REPORT FOR THE WORLD TOURISM ORGANIZATION: OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION IN THE INTERNATIONAL STANDARDIZATION OF TOURISM SERVICES

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### Executive summary

This paper provides a description of the organization, role, and added value of the International Organization for Standardization (hereinafter "ISO"), and outlines some of its current and potential activities for standardization of tourism services of potential interest to the World Tourism Organization. It is intended to inform, and to foster dialogue, and provide a basis to explore possible areas of cooperation between the two organizations. The document is divided into a general description of ISO, its added value, activities undertaken in standardization of tourism services up to the present, and potential future developments. In addition, three annexes provide, respectively, a summary of how standards are developed, ISO's added value, and examples of national standards on tourism services currently implemented by various ISO members.

### What is ISO?

1. ISO (International Organization for Standardization - [www.iso.org](http://www.iso.org)) is the world's largest developer of voluntary technical standards. ISO is a non-governmental organization established in 1947 with members consisting of the national standards organizations of 146 countries, on the basis of one member per country. These national standards organizations are in some cases national associations made up of industry and consumer interests; in other cases they are specific government ministries or departments that have a national mandate for the development of standards. All, however, have some form of official recognition of their national role and international involvement in this area.

2. ISO has a Central Secretariat, based in Geneva, Switzerland, that employs approximately 150 staff. The work in developing and maintaining the portfolio of some 14,000 technical International Standards is shared amongst the membership, with individual national members providing and financing the Chairmanships and Secretariats for one or more of the 188 technical committees and 550 subcommittees managing 2,200 working groups and the Central Secretariat providing the general coordination of procedures, electronic tools and final production and dissemination. Further information on the ISO standards development process is attached at **Annex 1**.

3. ISO develops standards to meet market requirements. The work is carried out by experts on loan from the industrial, technical and business sectors which have asked for the standards, and which subsequently put them to use. These experts may be joined by others with relevant knowledge, such as representatives of government agencies, consumer organizations, educational establishments and testing laboratories. Collaboration with relevant international organizations is provided through liaison arrangements

4. While one of the best-known standards in the ISO portfolio is ISO 9001:2000, *Quality management systems — Requirements*, the great majority of ISO standards do not relate to management system requirements. Rather they include terminology, sampling, test and analytical methods, as well as specifications and performance requirements for industrial and agricultural products, equipment, processes and, to a growing extent, services.

## What can ISO offer?

5. ISO is able to act as a bridging organization in which a consensus can be reached on solutions that meet both the requirements of business and the broader needs of society, such as the needs of stakeholder groups like consumers and users. ISO's work programme includes something to offer for the entire range of business and technology, from standards for traditional activities, such as agriculture and construction, through mechanical engineering, to medical devices, banking cards and toys, to the latest information technology developments. Its extensive national memberships enables taking into account the implications and concerns of developing countries.

6. The ISO system provides added benefit for **all stakeholders** participating in, and affected by, the development of International Standards and other normative documents. Suppliers benefit through easier access to markets and facilitation of trade. Consumers benefit through enhanced choice and improved safety, fitness for purpose, and other criteria. International Standards also provide a valid basis for legislation and for trade agreements by Governments. The international consensus on the state of the art provides Developing Countries with an important source of technical knowledge and therefore access to the world's markets. This knowledge includes both product and manufacturing standards and also the good management practices provided by the ISO 9000 and ISO 14000 series of quality and environmental management standards. More relevant information appears at **Annex 2**.

7. ISO – together with IEC (International Electro technical Commission) and ITU (International Telecommunication Union) – has built a strategic partnership with the World Trade Organization (WTO) with the common aim of promoting a free and fair global trading system. The political agreements reached within the framework of the WTO require underpinning by technical agreements.

8. ISO cooperates with three committees of the World Trade Organization: the Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), the Committee on Sanitary and Phyto sanitary Measures (SPS) and the Committee on Trade and the Environment (CTE). Several provisions within the text of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), particularly Article VI:5 and VII:5, recognize the value of International Standards to facilitate trade in services.

### **Standardization of tourism services and related issues – ISO's activities to date**

9. Commercial services occupy an increasingly important share of the world's trade. The contribution of the service sector to the world gross domestic product was 64% in the year 2000, compared to 57% in 1990, with tourism the largest single category in the area. In 2001, tourism accounted for 37.8% of all services traded in developing countries, and 29.3% of all services traded in developed countries.<sup>1</sup> Services are a particularly crucial area for developing countries. According to the World Trade Organization, 25 developing countries depend on the export of commercial services for more than half of their total export revenues<sup>2</sup>.

10. Realizing this trend, the ISO Committee on consumer policy (ISO/COPOLCO), which is a policy development structure reporting directly to the ISO Council and which includes delegated representatives from most of the participating members of ISO, held an international workshop on standardization of services in 1995. This event, as well as a decision by the ISO Technical Management Board, led ISO to organize a series of regional workshops jointly with the GATS Committee of the World Trade Organization in 1998. These were held in Argentina, France, Singapore and the USA.

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<sup>1</sup> The World Bank "World Development Indicators" 2001

<sup>2</sup> World Trade Organization, Press release, *Services negotiations offer real opportunities for all WTO members and more so for developing countries*, 2002

11. While the conclusions of these workshops suggested that there was good support for developing International Standards on tourism services, few ISO International Standards have since been developed on this subject. At this point in time, the only existing ISO International Standard is the recently-published ISO 18513, *Tourism services – Hotel and other types of tourism accommodation – Terminology*, directly adopted from a European (CEN) standard.

12. As a result of a subsequent ISO/COPOLCO workshop on services standardization in 2001, ISO/COPOLCO resolved to develop generic guidelines for standardization of services, and to identify consumer priorities in the standardization of two specific areas: financial services and tourism. Particularly in the area of tourism, preliminary investigations revealed a strong interest in standardization of tourism services and an abundance of existing national standards. The summarized results of this survey to the members of COPOLCO showing existing national standards, appears at **Annex 3**.

13. COPOLCO agreed that input from industry operators was necessary in developing feasible proposals for standardization of tourism services. Further research by COPOLCO specialists led them to contact representatives from other tourism-related organizations (e.g. Rainforest Alliance, Swiss Tourism Association, World Tourism Organization, International Hotel and Restaurant Association).

14. Exchange of information between ISO/COPOLCO consumer representatives and representatives from the hospitality industry has been fruitful. Input from representatives of the hospitality industry, notably by a representative of the International Hotel and Restaurant Association (IH&RA), has helped COPOLCO focus on priority areas of tourism standardization. In September 2003, COPOLCO identified the following subjects as both important for consumers and conducive to standardization: hygiene, sustainable tourism, safety (particularly concerning child and fire safety) and accessibility (including "design for all" concepts).

15. On the basis of continued work to refine these subjects, ISO/COPOLCO will consider a more in-depth proposal at its forthcoming plenary meeting on 18-19 May. This proposal will form the basis for a formal request to ISO to initiate standards initiatives in tourism security and safety, accessibility, and hygiene.

16. The ISO 9000 and ISO 14000 series of standards<sup>3</sup> have been successfully used in a variety of different service areas, including financial and tourism services, to improve the overall quality of service delivery. Notably, ISO has also published International Workshop Agreements (a precursor to an International Standard, with a shorter development process) on implementation of ISO 9001 in the areas of *health* care and education. Actual case examples of hospitality industry providers benefiting from ISO 9000 and ISO 14000 certification include German tour operators and fair organizers, hotel and catering associations and hotels in France, hotels in Singapore and Malaysia, and an airline catering service in Singapore. The Italian ISO member has published handbooks providing guidance on implementation of ISO 9000, and later ISO 14000, in the hotel and tourism sector. Other examples include parks in Italy and Ecuador, and the administration of island tourist destinations in Italy and South Korea<sup>4</sup>. Of the 561'747 organizations certified to ISO 9000 worldwide at the end of 2002, 123'128 were providers of services. Hotels and restaurants accounted for 1840 of these certifications<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> ISO 9000 covers to quality management systems; ISO 14000 refers to environmental management systems.

<sup>4</sup> ISO publications: *ISO Management Systems, ISO 9000 & ISO 14000 News, 1998-2003*.

<sup>5</sup> *The ISO Survey of ISO 900 and ISO 14001 certificates*

## Standardization of tourism services – Potential new initiatives, related issues

17. The European Commission (DG Enterprise) has mandated the Comité Européen de Normalisation (CEN) to develop a framework for standardization of services (Mandate 340). CEN is to research and write a list of possible areas of standardization of services by December 2004. CEN is currently conducting an enquiry to list areas of service standardization at the national level and has created a working group, led by the ISO member for Spain, AENOR. Criteria for inclusion in the listing are 1) Sectorial interest in the project, and 2) Feasibility of standardization within a reasonable length of time. As was demonstrated by ISO 18513 on terminology, standards emanating from this mandate have the potential to be adopted as International Standards.

18. In related initiatives, the DG-Internal Markets is developing a European Directive on cross-border trade in services and the DG-SANCO is performing research on possible Directives concerning safety of services in the area of sports and leisure, including adventure tours.

19. The ISO Committee on conformity assessment (CASCO) has produced a "tool box" or set of International Standards which set out requirements for how conformity to International Standards should be assessed. Areas covered include certification of products, services, persons, management and systems. The tool box also includes International Standards on how to self-declare conformity, be peer-assessed or accredited.

20. Since the beginning of 2004, three separate ISO members from different points of the globe have contacted the ISO Secretary-General expressing interest in developing International Standards for tourism services. The areas for work that each has proposed under a new Technical Committee structure are Eco-tourism, Exhibition terminology and audit procedures, and Tourism as a whole.

21. The ISO Central Secretariat is currently considering the most optimal Technical Committee and Subcommittee structure for these different proposals on tourism standardization, for deliberation by the Technical Management Board at its next meeting. Other issues being considered include the feasibility of a cooperative, or "twinning" arrangement with another ISO member, and fast-tracking an already-existing national standard on Exhibition terminology as the basis of an International Standard. Depending on the outcome of discussion, a full enquiry on launching a new area of technical work on standardization of tourism services will likely go out to the entire membership of ISO.

22. It is worth noting that the World Tourism Organization already acts in a formal liaison organization to ISO/TC 145/SC 1 - *Public information symbols* and TC 154 *Processes, data elements and documents in commerce, industry and administration*. In addition, other related standards may be of interest to the World Tourism Organization; one example is ISO/IEC 7501 *Identification cards -- Machine readable travel documents*. ISO has a number of Technical Committees with work programmes impacting on tourism (ISO/TC 42 *Photography*, TC 68 *Financial services*, ISO/TC 204 *Intelligent transport systems*, TC 177 *Caravans*, TC 83 *Sports and recreational equipment*, TC 188 *Small craft*).

23. **Conclusion:** ISO has a great deal of experience in consensus-based development of standards in many fields, especially in relevant areas such as management system and conformity assessment standards. A number of formal proposals for international standardization of tourism services are under way among the ISO membership and within COPOLCO.

*ISO would therefore like to present its skills and experience to the World Tourism Organization – to discuss shared priorities, opportunities for synergy and expanded modes of cooperation, both at the strategic and technical levels.*

## Annex 1

### Simplified explanation of stages in the development of ISO International Standards

*(more general information on the standards development process may be found on ISO's website at [www.iso.org/iso/en/stdsdevelopment/whowhenhow/proc/proc.html](http://www.iso.org/iso/en/stdsdevelopment/whowhenhow/proc/proc.html))*

An International Standard is the result of an agreement between the member bodies of ISO. It may be used as such, or may be implemented through incorporation in national standards of different countries.

International Standards are developed by ISO technical committees (TC) and subcommittees (SC) by a six step process:

Stage 1: Proposal stage

Stage 2: Preparatory stage

Stage 3: Committee stage

Stage 4: Enquiry stage

Stage 5: Approval stage

Stage 6: Publication stage

If a document with a certain degree of maturity is available at the start of a standardization project, for example a standard developed by another organization, it is possible to omit certain stages. In the so-called "Fast-track procedure", a document is submitted directly for approval as a draft International Standard (DIS) to the ISO member bodies (stage 4) or, if the document has been developed by an international standardizing body recognized by the ISO Council, as a final draft International Standard (FDIS, stage 5), without passing through the previous stages.

The following is a summary of each of the six stages:

For greater detail on how an International Standard is developed, refer to the publication ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1: *Procedures for the technical work* (available on ISO's Standards Developers' Information Site SDIS at [www.iso.org/sdis](http://www.iso.org/sdis)).

Stage 1: Proposal stage

The first step in the development of an International Standard is to confirm that a particular International Standard is needed. A new work item proposal (NP) is submitted for vote by the members of the relevant TC/SC to determine the inclusion of the work item in the programme of work. The proposal is accepted if a majority of the P-members of the TC/SC votes in favour and at least five P-members declare their commitment to participate actively in the project. At this stage a project leader responsible for the work item is normally appointed.

Stage 2: Preparatory stage

Usually, a working group of experts, the chairman (convener) of which is the project leader, is set up by the TC/SC for the preparation of a working draft. Successive working drafts may be considered until the working group is satisfied that it has developed the best technical solution to the problem being addressed. At this stage, the draft is forwarded to the working group's parent committee for the consensus-building phase.

Stage 3: Committee stage

As soon as a first committee draft is available, it is registered by the ISO Central Secretariat. It is distributed for comments and, if required, voting, by the P-members of the TC/SC. Successive committee drafts may be considered until consensus is reached on the technical content. Once consensus has been attained, the text is finalized for submission as a draft International Standard (DIS).

#### Stage 4: Enquiry stage

The draft International Standard (DIS) is circulated to all ISO member bodies by the ISO Central Secretariat for voting and comment within a period of five months. It is approved for submission as a final draft International Standard (FDIS) if a two-thirds majority of the P-members of the TC/SC are in favour and not more than one-quarter of the total number of votes cast are negative. If the approval criteria are not met, the text is returned to the originating TC/SC for further study and a revised document will again be circulated for voting and comment as a draft International Standard.

#### Stage 5: Approval stage

The final draft International Standard (FDIS) is circulated to all ISO member bodies by the ISO Central Secretariat for a final Yes/No vote within a period of two months. If technical comments are received during this period, they are no longer considered at this stage, but registered for consideration during a future revision of the International Standard. The text is approved as an International Standard if a two-thirds majority of the P-members of the TC/SC are in favour and not more than one-quarter of the total number of votes cast are negative. If these approval criteria are not met, the standard is referred back to the originating TC/SC for reconsideration in the light of the technical reasons submitted in support of the negative votes received.

#### Stage 6: Publication stage

Once a final draft International Standard has been approved, only minor editorial changes, if and where necessary, are introduced into the final text. The final text is sent to the ISO Central Secretariat which publishes the International Standard.

#### Review of International Standards (Confirmation, Revision, Withdrawal).

All International Standards are reviewed at least once every five years by the responsible TCs/SCs. A majority of the P-members of the TC/SC decides whether an International Standard should be confirmed, revised or withdrawn.

## **Annex 2**

### **"ISO's added value" – What ISO contributes**

1. Recognized experience in international consensus building
2. Brand name and wide recognition
3. Diversified scope, broad range of deliverables and cross-sector consistency
4. Strong national membership base, ensuring adequate consensus, dissemination of deliverables and market feedback for their maintenance and development
5. Extensive networking, at both the international and regional levels
6. Ability to provide International Standards to assist in the implementation and harmonization of regulations
7. Leadership for the production of standards and guides for conformity assessment
8. Leadership in the use of IT tools for the production and dissemination of standards

**Annex 3 – Examples of national standards for tourism services**

Country	Tourism sector standards as a whole	Specific standards
Botswana	Standards address physical facility requirements for grading of hotels, lodges, bed and breakfast, and guesthouses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) BOS 50-1:2001 Hotels and related establishments - Grading requirements - Part 1:Fully serviced hotels.</li> <li>b) BOS 50-2:2001 Hotels and related establishments - Grading requirements - Part 2:Selected service hotels.</li> <li>c) BOS 50-3:2001 Hotels and related establishments - Grading requirements - Part 3:Game lodges and camps.</li> <li>d) BOS 50-4:2001 Hotels and related establishments - Grading requirements - Part 4: Domestic guesthouses.</li> <li>e) BOS 50-5:2001 Hotels and related establishments - Grading requirements - Part 5:Commercial guesthouses</li> <li>f) BOS 50-6:2001 Hotels and related establishments - Grading requirements - Part 6:Self-catering establishments</li> </ul>
Canada	Standards on hotels, campgrounds, vacation centers, bed and breakfasts, youth hostels, residences in teaching establishments	<p>Published standards - in French only</p> <p>NQ 1014-010/2001 <i>Bus Transportation Services.</i></p> <p>NQ 9700-010/2001 <i>Tourism — Customer Service — Guidelines for Standards.</i></p> <p>NQ 9700-050/2001 <i>Tourism — Customer Service — Travel Agencies.</i></p> <p>P 9700-065 <i>Tourism — Customer Service — Adventure and Ecotourism.</i></p> <p>NQ 9700-075/2002 <i>Tourism — Customer Service — Cruise Ships and Ferries.</i></p> <p>NQ 9700-085/2002 <i>Tourism — Customer Service — Attractions and Events.</i></p> <p>P 9700-100 <i>Tourism — Customer Service — Vacation Centers.</i></p> <p>NQ 9700-110/2002 <i>Tourism — Customer Service — Hotels.</i></p> <p>NQ 9700-120/2002 <i>Tourism — Customer Service — Campgrounds</i></p> <p><u>Standards in Development (in French only)</u></p> <p>P 9700-060 <i>Tourism — Ecotourism Products.</i></p> <p>P 9700-130 <i>Tourism — Customer Service — Outfitters.</i></p>

France		NF237 – Service d'accueil et d'information des offices de tourisme et syndicats d'initiative PR NF EN 14804 – Séjours linguistiques - Organismes de séjours linguistiques NF X 50-055 – Service organisateurs de séjours linguistiques NF EN ISO 18513 – Services touristiques - Hôtels et autres types d'hébergements touristiques - Terminologie NF S52-104 – Pistes de ski - Information sur les risques d'avalanche - Drapeaux d'avalanche
Germany	Hotel Classification System by German Hotel Assn (DEHOGA)	DIN 77001, Publication date:1999-09 Tourism services - Symbols used in travel brochures DIN EN 13809, Publication date:2003-06 Tourism services - Travel agencies and tour operators - Terminology DIN EN ISO 18513, Publication date:2003-12 Tourism services - Hotels and other types of tourism accommodation - Terminology SN EN 13809, Publication date:2003-03 Tourism services - Travel agencies and tour operators - Terminology
Ireland	Compulsory registration system for Hotels and Guesthouses (but not Bed & Breakfasts and Self-catering businesses)  Voluntary, widely-use classification system for Hotels and Guesthouses	
Korea, Rep.	Standards on outbound travel services	
Lebanon	Standards on Hotels and Furnished Apartments Rating system for Hotels only	
Lithuania	Law on tourism requires all hotels, motels and camps to be classified.	
Netherlands		NEN-EN-ISO 18513:2003 – Tourism services - Hotels and other types of tourism accommodation - Terminology NEN-EN 13809:2003 – Tourism services - Travel agencies and tour operators - Terminology
Singapore	Standards, Productivity and Innovation Board (Spring Singapore) is working on NSRS skills standards in	

	the hotel, travel agent and tourism retail sectors. Eventually, NSRS will be extended to all tourism sectors.	
Spain		<p>UNE 150101:2001 EX Sistemas de gestión medioambiental. Guía para la implantación de un sistema de gestión medioambiental conforme a UNE-EN ISO 14001 en hoteles y otros alojamientos turísticos</p> <p>UNE-EN 13809:2003 Servicios turísticos. Agencias de viajes y turoperadores. Terminología</p> <p>UNE 41512:2001 Accesibilidad en las playas y su entorno</p> <p>PNE 150104 Sistemas de gestión ambiental. Guía para la implantación de sistemas de gestión ambiental conforme a la Norma UNE-EN ISO 14001 en playas</p>
South Africa	Standards for Hotels, Guest Houses, Self-catering, Game and Nature Reserves, Caravan Parks, Restaurants, Info. Offices, etc.	
Turkey	Standard on general rules on tourism services	
UK		<p>BS EN ISO 18513:2003 – Tourism services. Hotels and other types of tourism accommodation. Terminology</p> <p>BS EN 13809:2003 – Tourism services. Travel agencies and tour operators. Terminology</p>
USA		<p>ISO 18513:2003 – Tourism services -- Hotels and other types of tourism accommodation -- Terminology</p> <p>BSR/NSF 166-200x – Hotels: Public Health Protection</p> <p>PREN 13809 – Tourism Services - Travel Agencies and Tour Operators Terminology</p> <p>NFPA 1194: Standard for Recreational Vehicle Parks and Campgrounds, 2002 Edition</p>