

International Organization for Standardization (ISO)

Key features

Type of organisation: Private standard-setting organisation

Charter/Constitution: ISO Statutes, www.iso.org/iso/statutes.pdf

Membership:

- Nature: National standard bodies (private and public)
- Number: 120 Full Members, 39 Correspondent Members, 3 subscriber members

Year of establishment: 1947

Headquarters: Geneva, Switzerland

Country offices: ISO/CS Office in Singapore (Asia-Pacific Regional Engagement Initiative)

Secretariat staff: 144 (2016)

Total budget: EUR 34.8 million (2016)

Type of activity: Technical standard-setting

Sectors of activity: ISO covers almost every industry, from technology, to food safety, to agriculture and healthcare

Webpage: www.iso.org

Members

ISO has 120 Full Members: Afghanistan, Algeria, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China (People's Republic of), Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, France, Gabon, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Korea, Kuwait, Latvia, Lebanon, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Russia, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Syria, Tanzania, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

ISO has currently also 39 Correspondent Members: Albania, Angola, Bahamas, Bhutan, Bolivia, Brunei Darussalam, Burundi, Cambodia, Dominica, Eritrea, Gambia, Georgia, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hong Kong, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Macau, Madagascar, Mauritania, Moldova, Montenegro, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Niger, State of Palestine, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Swaziland, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Zambia. Correspondent members observe the development of ISO standards and strategy by attending ISO technical and policy meetings as observers. Correspondent members can sell and adopt ISO International Standards nationally.

ISO has also three subscriber members: Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Subscriber members keep up to date on ISO's work but cannot participate in it. They do not sell or adopt ISO International Standards nationally.

Mandate

The mission of ISO is the development of voluntary international standards. A standard is a document that provides information that can be used consistently to ensure that materials, products, processes and services are fit for their purpose.

"The object of the Organization shall be to promote the development of standardisation and related activities in the world with a view to facilitating international exchange of goods and services and to developing co-operation in the spheres of intellectual, scientific, technological and economic activity". (ISO Statute, Article 2).

IRC processes taking place within the International Organization for Standardization



Categories of legal and policy instruments

	Is it taking place within the IO?	Approximate number
Treaties for ratification by States (excluding the funding one)		
Legally binding decisions		
Recommendations		
Political declarations		
Model treaties or law		
Production of technical standards	√	21 839 (September 2017)
Non-binding guidance/best practices document	√	

Interactions with other international organisations active in the field

Mechanisms of interaction	Approximate number of IOs involved	Examples
Develop joint instruments	√	
MoU or other agreements	√	68 agreements or MoUs with IOs
Participate in co-ordinating institution	√	Many IOs including CEN (European Committee for Standardization), IEC, ILO, UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development). ISO is part of the World Standards Cooperation, a high-level collaboration with IEC and ITU
Joint meetings that provide forum for co-ordination	√	ISO meets with IEC and ITU to co-ordinate on Smart Cities and Internet of Things
Observe relevant actions of other bodies	√	ISO has observer status to WTO/OMC bodies
Exchange information	√	Several IOs, www.iso.org/iso/home/about/organizations_in_liaison.htm

ISO history

The ISO story began in 1946 when delegates from 25 countries met at the Institute of Civil Engineers in London and decided to create a new international organisation "to facilitate the international co-ordination and unification of industrial standards". In February 1947 the new organisation, ISO, officially began operations. Since then, ISO has published over 19 500 International Standards covering almost all aspects of technology and manufacturing.

Source: Updated from OECD (2016), *International Regulatory Co-operation: The Role of International Organisations in Fostering Better Rules of Globalisation*, OECD Publishing, Paris. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264244047-en>