



Snapshots of IO Practices

ISO/IEC Directives

Organisation(s): International Organization for Standardization (ISO), International Electrotechnical Committee (IEC)

The Snapshots of IO Practices present examples of specific efforts undertaken by an international organisation to work towards more effective international instruments. They aim to highlight examples of practices within the five focus areas of the Partnership of International Organisations for Effective International Rulemaking (IO Partnership), namely the variety and development of international instruments, their implementation, evaluation, ensuring stakeholder engagement, and co-ordination among IOs. The snapshots are submitted by the secretariats of the relevant international organisations implementing the relevant practice. The practices were compiled by the OECD Secretariat and focal points of the IO Partnership (UNCITRAL, OIE, WHO, ISO, WCO, BIPM, and SIECA), with a brief review to ensure consistency and comparability of the information provided within the snapshots. The inclusion of a practice in these snapshots implies no endorsement or assessment of that practice on the part of the OECD Secretariat or the focal points of the IO Partnership.

1	Overview of the Practice	Answers	Comments and intersections
1.1	Organisation(s)	International Organization for Standardization (ISO) International Electrotechnical Committee (IEC)	
1.2	Area of relevance among the IO partnership focus themes (variety of instruments, implementation, stakeholder engagement, evaluation, co-ordination)	Co-ordination (in the development of instruments)	
1.3	Name of the Practice	ISO/IEC Directives	
1.4	Name of person(s) completing the template	Belinda Cleeland	

Compendium of International Organisations' Practices

Working Towards More Effective International Instruments



2	Description of the Practice	Answers	Comments and intersections
2.1	Please describe the practice shortly, providing information on its core features.	<p>The ISO/IEC Directives define the basic procedures to be followed in the development of International Standards and other publications. They are the 'official rules' for IEC and ISO technical work.</p> <p>The ISO/IEC Directives have 2 parts.</p> <p>Part 1: Procedures for the Technical Work</p> <p>Part 2: Principles and rules for the structure and drafting of ISO and IEC documents.</p> <p>The Directives (part 1) contain information on the organisational structure and responsibilities for the technical work (roles and responsibilities of the different stakeholders in the process and rules and procedures for establishing committees), details of the stages of standards development (procedures and obligations at each stage of the process), procedures for developing other deliverables, procedures for meetings and appeals, and a series of annexes on specific topics related to standards development.</p> <p>The Directives (part 2) contain the rules for structuring and drafting international standards and other deliverables (e.g. verbal forms of expression, organisation of clauses, formatting of numbers, figures, etc.).</p>	
2.2	What are the objectives of the practice?	<p>To define common rules and procedures in IEC and ISO for the technical committees to follow in the development of International Standards and other deliverables.</p> <p>IEC and ISO each also maintain their own supplements to the ISO/IEC Directives, with procedures specific to that organisation.</p>	

Compendium of International Organisations' Practices

Working Towards More Effective International Instruments



2.3	What have been the key results of the practice?	Harmonisation of procedures for standards development between IEC and ISO, allowing for improved co-operation between the two organisations and facilitating the joint development of international standards (e.g. by joint technical committee ISO/IEC JTC 1 on Information Technology)	The joint committee ISO/IEC JTC 1 on Information Technology illustrates how international standardisation organisations can effectively work together when it is of interest to their respective memberships. Since its inception in 1987, ISO/IEC JTC 1 has developed 3246 ISO/IEC standards related to information technologies, leveraged the expertise of some 4500 registered technical experts in the field, and enabled standard-setting activities to keep pace with technological developments: https://www.iso.org/isoiec-jtc-1.html
2.4	In what year was the practice introduced?	1989 (previously, each organisation had its own directives)	
2.5	Has the practice been updated/reformed since then? If yes, when and how has it evolved over time?	Yes, the ISO/IEC Directives part 1 are reviewed on an annual basis, with Part 2 being reviewed every few years, or as necessary. Updates are made when needed, with new editions of part 1 being published on a yearly basis in recent years.	

Compendium of International Organisations' Practices

Working Towards More Effective International Instruments



2.6	What do you consider to be the primary strengths of the practice?	<p>The standards development process outlined in the Directives follows the six principles for international standards development agreed by the WTO TBT committee: transparency, openness, impartiality and consensus, effectiveness and relevance, coherence, and to address the concerns of developing countries.</p> <p>Having common directives helps to ensure the close co-operation between ISO and IEC, which in turn helps the two organisations to minimise duplication and overlaps of work, creating more clarity for standards users.</p>	
2.7	What do you consider to be the main challenges faced during the implementation of the practice?	<p>There are few problems with implementation of the joint Directives – they are well understood by the IEC and ISO technical communities and well implemented. IEC and ISO Secretariats provide support to committees each time a new edition is released, to clearly communicate and explain any new rules.</p> <p>However, the fact that IEC and ISO each maintain their own supplements to the Directives with IEC or ISO-specific procedures can sometimes cause difficulties when it comes to joint standards development by JTC 1. The two organisations continue to co-operate and work together towards increasing harmonisation of these separate procedures to address this issue.</p>	
2.8	<p>Does the practice have a formal/normative basis within the organisation or is it conducted informally? Does this basis make the practice mandatory or voluntary?</p> <p>If there is formal basis, please provide the relevant link or documentation.</p>	<p>This is a formal practice and it is mandatory for committees to follow the ISO/IEC Directives when developing standards.</p> <p>In ISO, the ISO Statutes reference the ISO/IEC Directives in articles 13 and 24. ISO Statutes: https://www.iso.org/publication/PUB100322.html</p>	

Compendium of International Organisations' Practices

Working Towards More Effective International Instruments



		The IEC Statutes and Rules of Procedure reference the ISO/IEC Directives in Article 11 and Clause 11, respectively. IEC Statutes and Rules of Procedure: https://www.iec.ch/members_experts/refdocs/iec/stat_2001-2018e.pdf	
2.9	At what frequency is the practice applied? i.e. is it conducted once or on an iterative basis?	The Directives are applied on a continuous basis by the committees developing standards.	
2.10	Is this practice applied systematically, (e.g. with respect to every normative instrument, according to specific criteria or on an ad hoc basis)?	Yes	
2.11	Please provide specific details or examples to illustrate the practice (including supporting links and documents).	This practice (use of the ISO/IEC Directives) is applied to all of the documents that ISO and IEC publish, hence any published standard is an example. https://www.iso.org/standards-catalogue/browse-by-ics.html https://webstore.iec.ch/	
3	Design of the Practice	Answers	Comments and intersections
3.1	Who designed the practice (e.g. Was it developed internally, in collaboration with other organisations, etc?)	Developed internally by the IEC and ISO, based on existing documents (e.g. the first edition of the joint Directives part 1 was based on the ISO Directives for the technical work (1985) and the IEC General Directives for the work of the IEC (1982)).	
3.2	Which stakeholders were engaged with in the design of the practice?	Information not available	

Compendium of International Organisations' Practices

Working Towards More Effective International Instruments



3.3	How long did it take to design the practice?	Information not available	
3.4	What resources were needed to design the practice initially (i.e., staff, budget etc.)?	Information not available	
3.5	What challenges were encountered during the design of the practice and how were they overcome?	Information not available	
3.6	Has the practice been tested before implementation (i.e. pilot phase)? If yes, please describe.	Information not available	
4	Implementation of the Practice		Comments and intersections
4.1	Which units are responsible for implementing the practice within your IO?	In ISO: the Standardization and Technical Policy units. In IEC: the Standardization Management Board Secretariat and Technical Department.	Intersection with area of IO Partnership on 'Strengthening the Implementation of International Instruments'
4.2	Are IO members involved in implementing the practice? If so, how?	Indirectly, yes. The secretariats of technical committees are held by members and the committee leadership (which may include staff from the member) are responsible for making sure the Directives are followed (though they are supported by staff from the central office/central secretariat of IEC and ISO).	The collaborative external implementation of the ISO/IEC Directives by the central office and secretariat of the respective organisations, in parallel to their members, highlights the co-ordination of rule-making activities (WG5). In particular, this co-ordination (across IOs and between IOs and their members) is mobilised in order to facilitate and increase compliance with the Directives.

Compendium of International Organisations' Practices

Working Towards More Effective International Instruments



4.3	Are external actors beyond the organisation or its membership involved in implementing the practice? If so, how?	Yes, the delegates and experts in the technical committees that develop the standards – these experts and delegates are nominated by the members of ISO and IEC.	
4.4	Which resources are needed to implement the practice (e.g., staff and budget)?	No special resources, this is done under the normal operating budget of the organisations - this is the core business.	
5	Outputs and Evaluation of the Practice	Answers	Comments and intersections
5.1	Has the practice been evaluated or reviewed?	Yes. The relevant groups in ISO and IEC meet once a year (in November) to review the Directives and to recommend and agree on any changes and the publication of a new edition.	
5.2	If yes, who carried out the evaluation (please specify whether it was done internally or externally)	<p>The ISO Directives Maintenance Team and the IEC Directives Maintenance Team. These groups are composed of representatives nominated by the ISO Technical Management Board and the IEC Standardization Management Board (in ISO they are people from the national standards bodies, in IEC they come from national committees and industry).</p> <p>The Joint Directives Maintenance Team = the ISO DMT + IEC DMT</p>	

Compendium of International Organisations' Practices

Working Towards More Effective International Instruments



5.3	If yes, please describe the evaluation methodology? (e.g. were any quantitative or qualitative indicators/criteria used to measure/assess the outcomes of the practice?).	The review is based on quantitative and qualitative feedback. For example, quantitative statistics on standards development (average development times, number of late projects, member voting records, etc.) and qualitative feedback from committee leadership, members or staff of the central office/secretariat suggesting changes in the Directives.	
5.4	If yes, what were the conclusions of the evaluation, and has the practice evolved subsequently? If possible, please attach related documents or provide a link.	This information is evaluated in the context of the organisational strategies and the JDMT decides what to change in the Directives based on where the organisations want to go (e.g. one priority is improving timeliness in standards development, so rules in the Directives have been amended to be more flexible and offer options to go faster).	
6	Additional comments and information	Answers	Comments and intersections
6.1	Is there any more information or documentation that would be valuable to share in relation to the practice (e.g. links, reports, meeting minutes, supporting documents)?	ISO/IEC Directives Part 1: https://www.iso.org/sites/directives/current/part1/index.xhtml ISO/IEC Directives Part 2: https://www.iso.org/sites/directives/current/part2/index.xhtml	
	Sources		