

Guidance on new work



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Abbreviations

CSC/SP	Council Standing Committee on Strategy and Policy
IEC	International Electrotechnical Commission
ISO/CS	ISO Central Secretariat
ІТU-Т	ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector
NMC	National mirror committee
NP	New Work Item Proposal
NSB	National standards body
ОВР	Online Browsing Platform
OSD	Online Standards Development
O-member	Observer member of a committee
P-member	Participating member of a committee
PC	Project committee
sc	Subcommittee
тс	Technical committee
ТМВ	Technical Management Board
ТРМ	Technical Programme Manager
TS/P	Technical Subject Proposal

Introduction

International Standards make things work.
They provide specifications, guidelines, rules or definitions that are then used to design, manufacture, install, test and certify, maintain and repair the products and services that we use every day. Whether it's charging your phone or ensuring safer public transport, *International Standards* cover almost every aspect of our lives!

With a vast portfolio of over 25 400 standards and related documents, ISO supports a diverse range of industries through its 270 technical committees, each focused on a specific technical area. Every year, ISO approves proposals for around 600 new standards and creates a handful of new technical committees. To keep pace with evolving needs and ensure that standards remain relevant and responsive, ISO introduced an "expectations-first" approach in 2024, through the Council-approved Open Consultation.

Determining which new topics to pursue and which sectors require their own technical committees involves a thorough evaluation process. This publication outlines the various channels by which new work enters the ISO system, including who proposes it and how. Designed for ISO members and their stakeholders, it aims to guide proposers of new work through the intricacies of the ISO system, share best practices, clarify and streamline the process – and ultimately enhance the quality of proposals made.

Given the multiple pathways for introducing new work into the ISO system, this publication is organized in three parts addressing the different approaches and processes involved in making a new work proposal. By exploring these sections, readers will acquire a comprehensive understanding of how to navigate and contribute to the ISO standardization system effectively.

Guidance on new work

Part 1 – Open Consultation on emerging topics (resulting in a report with recommendations for ISO's strategic and/or technical involvement)

Potential new topics for standardization are emerging all the time as technology and industries evolve. Some of these topics might be too broad, or the subject so new and innovative, that more research on what stakeholders expect of International Standards is needed before deciding on the best approach for developing standards. Part 1 is intended to guide members through the ISO Open Consultation process for dealing with such topics.

The Open Consultation is designed to explore standardization opportunities for fields of activity with limited standards coverage, or where the pool of existing experts has considerable gaps. This could involve a brand-new field of activity where the scope of standardization needs further definition in terms of stakeholder expectations, or cross-cutting fields where the organization and interoperability of standardization work are still unclear.

Open Consultation does not result in the publication of ISO deliverables. Instead, it results in a consolidated report of global expectations for standardization, which is then submitted to Council and the Technical Management Board (TMB) for further consideration.

Part 2 – New fields of standardization work (resulting in the creation of a new technical committee or project committee with a defined scope)

Other proposals may be well defined in terms of their scope and stakeholder expectations, and include a potential programme of standardization work, but the subject matter is so new in the world of International Standards that no existing ISO committee covers them. These proposals for new fields of work lead to the creation of new technical committees or project committees. Part 2 will clarify the difference between these two types of committees, offer guidance on submitting a quality proposal, and outline the steps from submission to approval, including how coordination and coherence are maintained.

Given ISO's extensive portfolio and the principle of antecedency, the creation of new technical committees or project committees is quite rare relative to the number of new work items (Part 3). In 2023, only five proposals for new technical committees and project committees were approved.

Part 3 – New work items proposals within existing committees (resulting in the publication of new deliverables)

Most of the proposals received by ISO fall into this category – these are proposals for new projects in fields already covered by an ISO committee. In 2023, a total of 684 proposals for pure new work items (excluding amendments) were registered and approved at the ISO Central Secretariat (ISO/CS). Part 3 offers guidance on identifying the relevant committee and preparing a well-structured proposal and project plan.

Key principles for the introduction of new work in ISO

Whether it involves a new Open Consultation topic, a new field of standardization work or a new work item proposal, all new initiatives in ISO adhere to three fundamental principles: market relevance, stakeholder engagement and meeting user needs. The principles align with the goals of the ISO Strategy 2030: "ISO standards used everywhere" (Goal 1), "Meeting global needs" (Goal 2), and "All voices heard" (Goal 3).

Market relevance and meeting user needs

In ISO, the choice of new subjects for standardization is never top-down. It is driven by the needs of stakeholders – the actual users of the standards – rather than being determined by ISO or its members. Each new work item is guided by the principle of market relevance, ensuring that it addresses specific problems faced by the market and meets the needs of end users.

This is why the "justification statement" is crucial for any new work proposal. It requires the proposer to explain why the market needs the standard (What's the objective?) and whose interests will be affected (Who are the stakeholders?). Detailed guidance on preparing these justifications is available in Part 2 of this publication and in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1, Annex C.

For certain topics, a systematic exploration endorsed by Council may be necessary to assess ISO's strategic positioning in the field before moving forward with standards development. This is achieved through the Open Consultation process.

Stakeholder engagement

To determine market need, proposers of new work must consult with all relevant stakeholders to gather feedback on how the proposed standards will address their needs. It is the responsibility of ISO's members, the national standards bodies (NSBs), to encourage their national stakeholders to participate in ISO work.

ISO recognizes seven broad stakeholder categories, each playing a critical role in the development and implementation of International Standards. These are: industry and commerce; government; consumers; labour; academic and research bodies; standards application; and non-governmental organizations. ISO offers its members comprehensive guidance and best practice on engaging with these stakeholders to ensure effective participation and consensus building. For more information, refer to the following publications: Guidance for ISO national standards bodies – Engaging stakeholders and building consensus, and Guidance for ISO liaison organizations – Engaging stakeholders and building consensus.

When preparing a proposal for new work in ISO, the proposer should follow these four steps to engage stakeholders and assess the market relevance of the proposal:

Identifying potential stakeholders

In addition to internal processes, advertisements and general meetings. NSBs are encouraged to seek input on potentially relevant stakeholders from trade organizations, adacemia, governmental agencies, and user/consumer groups. This can complement the NSBs' knowledge, particularly for new fields of work or a **Technical Subject Proposal** (TS/P). If approved, this proposal will lead to the establishment of a new technical committee.

Providing information

Detailed information about the project proposal must be shared with all stakeholders to ensure they have a clear understanding of its objectives and scope.

Collecting feedback

Gathering feedback from stakeholders on their expectations of standardization and the need for the proposed International Standard(s) is crucial. This can be accomplished through various channels, such as email, workshops, in-person meetings or teleconferences.

Identifying stakeholders

The last step is to identify which stakeholders would be willing to actively participate in the new ISO work on an ongoing basis.

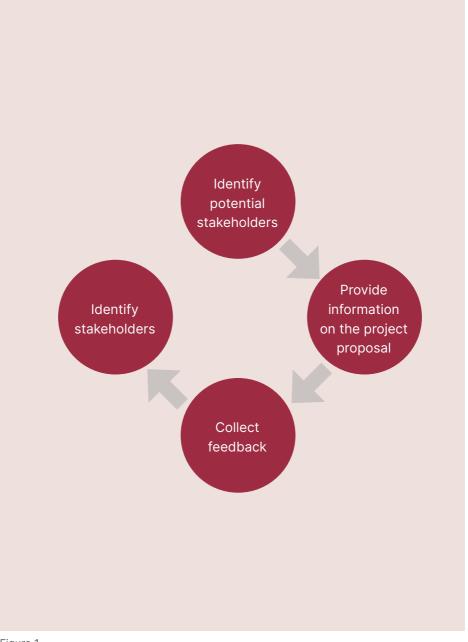


Figure 1

Part 1 – Open Consultation on emerging topics

The ISO Open Consultation is the channel used by ISO/CS to gather proposals from members for new areas of standardization. These are areas that require further investigation before the formal development of deliverables can begin. (See page 11 for an explanation of how a new standardization area differs from a new field of work in ISO.)

Open Consultation is a fast and focused approach for defining stakeholder expectations in emerging areas. It provides a way for NSBs to capture the expectations of standardization in new and upcoming areas before committing to the costly and time-consuming process of standards development. This helps build consensus among stakeholders in areas that present significant global challenges and understand what experts in these areas expect from International Standards. This way, NSBs can identify a genuine need for standardization without investing in long-term projects upfront.

Because an emerging area is inherently less defined, the proposal is different in both form and substance from proposals made for other types of new work outlined in Parts 2 and 3. Open Consultation proposals focus on gathering user stories and expectations rather than defining a specific standardization programme. Proposers must consider the potential stakeholders and how International Standards could offer benefits in the new area of work. ISO/CS provides a form and detailed guidance to assist members in preparing Open Consultation proposals. Members interested in proposing an Open Consultation should complete the form and return it to the Open Consultation secretariat (openconsultation@iso.org).

When receiving proposals for Open Consultation, Council will decide whether further investigation on stakeholder expectations of standardization is needed. If so, an Open Consultation is initiated. A team, led by the proposer, is formed, and all ISO members are invited to participate in the consultation. Members have eight weeks to consider whether they want to participate in the consultation. The Open Consultation will capture user stories from ISO members highlighting stakeholder expectations and the key benefits they anticipate from future standards such as quality, safety, interoperability,

testing, accreditation and certification). These expectations will be consolidated into a series of recommendations for action and follow-up by CSC/SP and TMB.



Member body = Full member

Only full members can propose new fields of technical activity (TS/P) and new work items (NP).

New topics vs new fields of standardization work

A new field of standardization work (also referred to as a new field of technical activity in the case of a proposal for a new technical committee) is a proposal where the scope of the activity can be clearly defined and distinguished from that of existing committees, the stakeholders for the subject are clearly identifiable and their expectations from standards are well defined. The field is sufficiently established that new standards can be developed immediately, and priority areas of work can be identified (i.e. a draft work programme can be envisaged for a future technical committee). This may be a new subject in the ISO environment, but it should not be entirely new to the broader world of standardization. Proposals are submitted to the ISO Central Secretariat using Form 1 (for a new technical committee) or Form 4 (for a new project committee).

A new topic is one where more investigation is required before starting the development of International Standards. This could be because the subject area is brand new and the scope of potential standardization work needs to be further defined (as in the case of emerging technologies). It might also be due to the cross-cutting nature of the topic, where the organization of new standardization work is not immediately clear (e.g. scope of work requiring the creation of more than one new committee). Additionally, more information may be needed regarding potential stakeholders and their expectations, or the challenges and opportunities for standardization in this subject area may need further consideration (definition of priorities). Proposals for new topics are submitted to the ISO Central Secretariat via the form "Proposal for an ISO Open Consultation".

Part 2 – New fields of standardization work – Proposals for new committees

A proposal for a new field of work in ISO is a proposal for the development of standards in a sector/subject area that is not covered by the scope of any existing ISO committee. Before submitting a proposal to ISO/CS for a new field of standardization work, the proposer should conduct thorough research to ensure that no existing committee – whether a technical committee (TC), subcommittee (SC) or project committee (PC) – is already covering the topic. ISO, working jointly with IEC and ITU-T maintains a landscape report that will aid this research. The proposer should also engage with stakeholders to verify the market relevance of the proposal (see stakeholder engagement on page 8) and ensure that the latest market data is incorporated.

Identifying ISO committees, or other organizations working in related fields, is essential to avoid overlap with any existing or planned work and prevent duplication of efforts. The TMB will apply the principle of precedence (anteriority) when assessing potential overlaps. For example, a new committee will not be created if the proposed work falls within the business plan, scope, work programme and publications of an existing committee.

There are two types of proposals for new fields of work: new fields of technical activity (TS/P) and new work items (NP). Each type differs in scope and the required forms and approval processes; these are explained in the following section. Both types lead to the creation of new ISO committees, the main difference being the scope of the proposal and the work programme foreseen.

New fields of technical activity (TS/P)

A proposal for a new field of technical activity, or TS/P, is essentially a proposal for the creation of a new technical committee. A TS/P is prepared when the subject area falls outside the scope of any existing ISO committee and is expected to encompass a broad programme of work, including multiple work items to be developed.

A proposal to establish a new TC can come from various sources: an ISO member body; an existing TC, SC or PC; the TMB or a policy-level committee; the Secretary-General; a body responsible for managing a certification scheme operating under the auspices of ISO; or any other international organization with national body membership (see ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1, Clause 1.5).

To submit a TS/P to ISO, proposers must complete Form 1.

The proposal must meet the following criteria:

- The scope of activity must be clearly defined and distinguished from that of existing committees.
- The stakeholders relevant to the subject must be clearly identifiable.
- The field must be sufficiently established that new standards can be developed immediately and priority areas of work can be identified (i.e. a draft work programme can be envisaged). This may be a new subject in the ISO environment, but it should not be entirely new to the broader world of standardization.

The TMB secretariat reviews all submitted proposals and determines if any existing TC, SC, PC or policy-level committees may have an interest in the proposed field of standardization work. Proposals are also circulated to the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) and the Standardization Policy Coordination Group (SPCG) to incorporate perspectives from IEC and ITU-T. The SPCG will consider its landscape report as part of its assessment. Groups that are potentially affected are invited to identify overlaps and propose mitigations, such as forming liaisons and joint working groups. The proposer is then invited to respond to these suggestions. If consensus on coordination and cohesion is not achieved through this process, the TMB will make the final decision on the proposal's allocation in accordance with its working procedures.

Further guidelines for proposing and justifying a new field of technical activity are given in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1, Annex C.

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New work item proposal (NP) - Project committee

In cases where the proposer only wants to develop one new standard or deliverable that is not related to the work of any existing committee and is the only deliverable in that subject area the market requires, they should submit a New Work Item Proposal (NP) to ISO for the creation of a new Project Committee (PC).

A PC is similar to a TC but is designed for the creation of a single standard. It has a simpler structure, including a secretariat, a Chair and participating and observing members (P-members and O-members), but doesn't have subcommittees (SCs). Once the PC has completed and published the standard, it is disbanded (see ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1, Clause 1.10 and Annex K).

A proposal (NP) to create a new PC can be made by a member body of ISO, another TC or SC, an organization in liaison, the TMB or one of the advisory groups, or the Secretary-General. To submit a proposal for a new PC, proposers must complete Form 4 (not Form 1) and submit it to the TMB secretariat (tmb@iso.org). This form is also used for submitting new projects within existing committees. (See Part 3 for guidance on how to complete Form 4.)

Process for the preparation, submission and approval of proposals for new committees (TCs or PCs)

Whether the proposal is a TS/P (for a new TC) or an NP (for a new PC), the basic process remains the same – only the choice of form differs. Proposers should follow these four steps:

Step 1: Is there existing work in this field?

Before submitting a proposal for a new committee, check that the proposed work cannot be accommodated within the scope of an existing committee. When considering the allocation of a proposal, the TMB will apply the principle of antecedency. This means that if the proposed work aligns with the scope of an existing committee, it will be assigned to that committee rather than creating a new one.

Questions to ask:

- Does the proposed new work/field of activity overlap with an existing ISO/TC or SC (scope, activities, deliverables published or under development, etc.)?
- 2. Are there related deliverables, published or under development, in an existing ISO/TC or SC?
- 3. Is the proposed new work/field of activity already covered by an existing ISO/TC or SC?
- 4. Could the proposed new work/field of activity be managed by an existing ISO/TC or SC?

To answer these questions effectively, consider the following:

- To ensure there is no duplication or overlap with existing work, search the Online Browsing Platform, ISO Store and ISO Website using relevant keywords.
- Draft a project plan outlining key milestones and a proposed date for the first meeting.

If the answers to all four questions is "no", you may proceed to Step 2.

Step 2: Fill in the appropriate form (Form 1 or Form 4)

Both forms require the following information:

- The proposer
- The subject proposed
- The scope of work envisaged and initial work programme
- A justification for the proposal
- If applicable, a survey of similar work undertaken in other bodies
- Any liaisons deemed necessary with other bodies

Justification statement

When preparing a justification statement, it's important to remember its primary aim: to collect information about market and stakeholder needs and evaluate the market relevance of the standardization proposal. ISO standards must always be relevant to the market, so engaging stakeholders at the national level is a fundamental part of an NSB's responsibility.

On this basis, it is recommended that the justification statement include:

- Stakeholder feedback: Present the feedback received from relevant national stakeholders. Have stakeholders indicated that the standard would be beneficial/not beneficial, and why? This information should be as specific and detailed as possible to offer valuable insights to the proposer and other ISO members.
- Impact assessment: Describe the potential benefits and challenges
 the proposal will present for the economy, society or environment, both
 nationally and internationally. For example, will a new standard help
 harmonize conflicting guidance already in existence or could it cause
 confusion in the market?
- Scope and overlap: Address any specific comments or concerns regarding the scope of the proposed standard or area of technical activity. Are there any conflicts/overlaps with the work of existing international committees or standards (not just ISO committees or standards but global standards from any source)? Consider the SPCG landscape report if the proposal has electrotechnical or telecommunications aspects.

Additionally, consider including:

- Any national experiences of using a similar standard or other deliverables
- An indication of the types of stakeholders consulted (size or composition of the relevant industry/sector within that ISO member country)

A good justification statement should answer the following questions:

- Is there a verified market need for the proposal?
- What problem does this standard solve?
- What value will the document bring to end users?

Step 3: Does the proposal need reworking?

Once the proposal has been submitted to ISO/CS, the TMB secretariat reviews it and shares it with potentially affected ISO/TCs and SCs, as well as with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) and the Standardization Programme Coordination Group (SPCG), to ensure coordination and coherence with existing technical structures. If the review indicates that more information is required or uncovers potential overlaps with existing technical work, the TMB secretariat will return the proposal to the proposer, requesting further details before the proposal can be circulated to members for voting (see ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1, Clause 1.5.5). The proposer must respond to the comments and proposed mitigation measures or provide a justification for not making the changes. If the proposer disagrees with the proposed mitigation measures, the TMB will decide on the proposal's allocation at its next meeting.

After the TMB has decided on the allocation, the TMB secretariat will post the proposal for a 12-week ballot to all members on the e-balloting portal. ISO members then have the opportunity to approve, disapprove or abstain from voting on the proposal, and are invited to make comments. The all-member ballot is used to determine the global market need for the proposal. Members must also indicate if they wish to participate as a P-member, an O-member, or if they are interested in assuming the secretariat if the proposal is approved. P-members actively participate and vote on the development of the standard, while O-members can only observe and provide comments and advice.

Optional web sessions on proposals for new work

Members have the option to organize web sessions on the proposals for new work. These sessions, which are optional, are designed to facilitate dialogue among members during the voting period and provide a platform for asking questions about the proposal. It is advisable to schedule these sessions midway through the 12-week voting period, or earlier.

The web sessions on proposals for new work should be organized directly by the member body who initiated the proposal. While ISO/CS sends out the invitations to members, the proposer is in charge of organizing and running the session. Additional guidance on how to prepare web sessions can be found on ISO Connect.

Possible outcomes:

- Vote is approved: As per ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1, Clause 1.5.7, the
 proposal is approved if it receives a 2/3 majority of national bodies
 voting and at least five member bodies in favour of it agreeing to
 actively participate in the work. If members approve the proposal,
 a four-week voting period is opened for the TMB to confirm the
 allocation of work of the new TC or PC.
- Vote is not approved: If the proposal does not receive approval, the TMB secretariat will notify the proposer, the TMB and the members through a circular letter.

Step 4: Creation of a new committee

If the all-member vote on the proposal (TS/P or NP) is approved, a four-week ballot is initiated for the TMB to confirm the allocation of the proposal based on the coordination and cohesion assessment. The allocation decision will either involve the creation of a new TC or PC, or assigning the work to an existing TC or SC. Only in exceptional circumstances does the TMB reject a proposal after a positive decision on the all-member ballot.

Once the new committee is established and participating NSBs have been identified, the committee's secretariat should promptly:

- Nominate a Chair, if this has not already been done during the proposal stage
- Schedule the first plenary meeting
- Draft an initial strategic business plan
- Prepare new work items

The TMB will closely monitor the performance of newly established committees to ensure they are delivering on their commitments and meeting market needs.

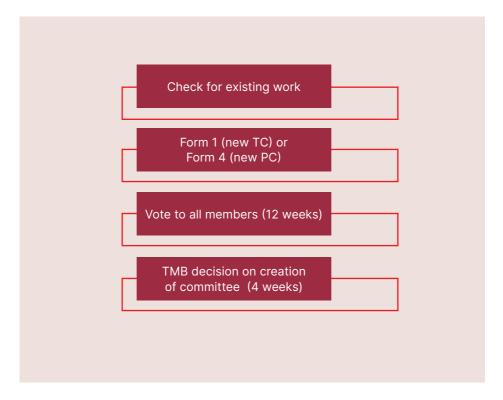


Figure 2

International Workshop Agreements

In certain situations, there may be a need to reach international agreement on a specific or niche topic that falls outside of the usual structures of an NSB or technical committee. In such cases, an International Workshop Agreement (IWA) can offer a solution for addressing urgent market requirements with a flexible, interim measure. IWAs are particularly useful for responding swiftly to market demands, providing informative and normative guidance that can later be converted into more formal ISO deliverables.

Opting for an IWA instead of creating a new committee allows for quicker development of normative and informative content with fewer resources and overheads. This approach also facilitates broader stakeholder engagement by permitting the self-nomination of workshop participants, making it easier for stakeholders from developing countries to contribute – especially those whose NSBs may not be P-members in many topics. However, it's important to note that the IWA process does not offer the same level of consensus building and transparency as a technical committee.

An IWA also differs from Open Consultation in its focus on **reaching agreement** on a specific topic, while the Open Consultation aims **to consolidate standardization expectations at a high level**. Additionally, the Open Consultation leverages ISO member networks spanning government, industry, academia and civil society, whereas an IWA enables the self-nomination of international experts who operate outside of NSB and TC structures.

A list of published IWAs is available on iso.org, as an example.

What are the steps for proposing an IWA?

When considering an IWA, the proposer should follow a process similar to that for a new technical committee or project committee (e.g. IWA proposal form, aspects related to justifications, etc.). This includes a thorough review to identify any existing documents or ongoing work, and to assess whether the proposed work could be accommodated within the scope of an existing committee.

This review is particularly important for IWAs for several reasons:

- There are multiple avenues for developing normative documents quickly within existing committees that may address the identified market need.
- Conflicting content between the proposed IWA with an ISO or IEC document (existing or in development) is not normally permitted.
- **3.** Anticipating coordination with existing committees is crucial for the successful development of an IWA.
- **4.** If an existing ISO committee's scope covers the topic, the published IWA will automatically be allocated to that committee for maintenance.

Refer to ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1, Annex SI for full details on the proposal and development of an IWA.

Part 3 – New work item proposals within existing committees

Whenever possible, proposals should be submitted to existing committees rather than creating new structures such as technical, project or subcommittees. Proposals for a new TC with a very narrow or limited field of activity should be carefully examined to determine if the work can be integrated into an existing TC – by expanding its scope, if necessary.

Before submitting a proposal to an existing committee, proposers should carefully consider the committee's Strategic Business Plan (SBP), available on iso.org/bp. They should also consider the full portfolio of ISO deliverables and their differing contents (e.g. normative vs informative), processes and levels of consensus.

New Work Item Proposal (NP)

Form 4 is typically used for New Work Item Proposals within existing committees. As discussed in Part 2, this form can also be used to propose the creation of a new project committee aimed at developing a single deliverable (i.e. one project), after which the committee is disbanded. Part 3 will focus solely on proposals within existing committees.

Who can submit a proposal?

A new work item proposal can be submitted by a member body of ISO, the secretariat itself, another TC or SC, an organization in liaison, the TMB or one of the advisory groups, or the Secretary-General.

What is the process for submitting new work?

Preparation of the proposal within an existing committee

Preparing a proposal is the first step in developing an International Standard or other ISO deliverable. The need for a proposal may arise from market demand for a new project or from the need to revise an existing standard.

The purpose of the proposal (Form 4) is to:

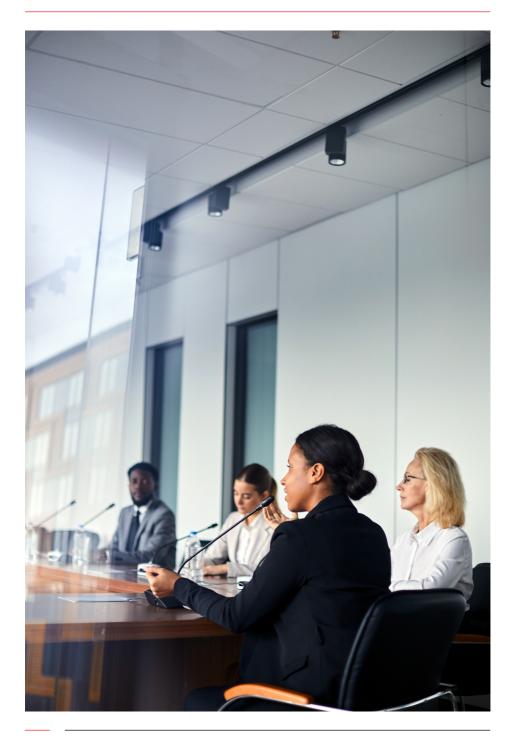
- Provide an overview of the project
- Link the project to the committee's strategic objectives, including the Strategic Business Plan (SBP) (see iso.org/bp)
- Identify the project leader
- Identify the stakeholders
- Document the business needs
- Reach consensus within the committee on:
 - The project's scope and expected deliverables
 - The estimated budget, including expected number of meetings (if any), availability of experts, consultation needs, etc.
 - The expected publication date based on market requirements

Role of the Committee Manager

When a proposal for new work is submitted to an existing committee, it is important that the Committee Manager carefully review the proposal before launching it. This review is essential to ensure there are no overlaps or possible conflicts with the scope of other existing committees and that the timeline is realistic.

Project plan

Developing a project plan with clear milestones, roles and responsibilities from the outset is vital for ensuring that the project is developed within the agreed time frame. ISO has produced resource materials designed to support effective project management. For guidance on developing a project plan, visit ISO Connect and explore the available resources.



Resources and links

Forms

The forms for new work proposals can be found on www.iso.org/forms.

Directives

 ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1, Annex C provides advice on how to develop proposals for new work.

ISO online

- · List of ISO technical committees
- · Online Browsing Platform
- ISO online resource area

Other guidance documents

- ISO in brief
- Project Management Methodology Roles, responsibilities and capability requirements
- Project Management Methodology in the ISO environment

Questions?

For any questions, please contact the TMB secretariat (tmb@iso.org) or the Technical Programme Manager of the relevant committee for advice.

About ISO

ISO (International Organization for Standardization) is an independent, non-governmental international organization with a membership of 172* national standards bodies. Through its members, it brings together experts to share knowledge and develop voluntary, consensus-based, market-relevant International Standards that support innovation and provide solutions to global challenges.

ISO has published more than 25 400* International Standards and related documents covering almost every industry, from technology to food safety, to agriculture and healthcare.

For more information, please visit www.iso.org.

*July 2024



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