

REPORT ON ACTIVITIES

Communication from the International Organization for Standardization (ISO)

The following communication, received on 3 July 2012, is being circulated at the request of ISO.

1. The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) has prepared this information paper as part of ongoing updates and communication between the the SPS Committee and the ISO Central Secretariat. It provides a summary of current work undertaken by ISO that may be of interest to members of the WTO SPS Committee and is intended to support and enhance dialogue and coordination between the two organizations.

A. INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR STANDARDIZATION (ISO)

2. General information regarding ISO can be found on <http://www.iso.org/>. The ISO portfolio counts nearly 19,200 international standards which have been developed by 217 technical committees and 493 subcommittees managing some 2,399 working groups.

B. ISO'S INTERNATIONAL STATUS

3. ISO has a specific status with many UN agencies, including the WHO and FAO. It is also an observer at the WTO Committee on Trade and Environment (CTE), the Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) and the Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS).

4. ISO's observer status to the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) provides an opportunity for the coordination of issues related to a variety of ISO standards that are adopted and used by Codex in its work. ISO methods have been endorsed in the document "*Recommended methods of analysis and sampling*" (CODEX STAN 234-1999) which is updated each year during the Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling (CCMAS) meeting.

5. ISO and the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), signed a formal agreement in July 2011 regarding liaisons and cooperation in specific areas.

6. ISO organized, in cooperation with the CAC, the FAO, the OIE and the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI), a regional workshop on safe and sustainable fisheries, on 13-16 September 2011, in Bali, Indonesia. Thirteen countries (with representatives of national standards institutes, government and industry) from East and South East Asia participated in this regional workshop.

7. This workshop was an opportunity to demonstrate each organization's complementarity, and together provide a valuable service to emerging players in East and Southeast Asia.

8. ISO also organized, in cooperation with the CAC, the OIE and UNIDO, a regional workshop on standards contribution to the food sector in Africa, in Nairobi, Kenya, on 24-25 April 2012. Thirty-five African countries were invited, as well as countries from other parts of the world. The 120 participants (from national standardization bodies, governments and industry) were provided useful information about food safety in different food sectors. It allowed the participants to share their experiences, and their knowledge, thus to benchmark the different national practices. Moreover, the participants discovered the roles and tools provided by the different international organizations present.

9. This workshop reached its goal to enhance awareness of the participants in terms of food safety and the role of the different international organizations, and also to share experiences and information on this topic.

C. ISO AND DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

10. Since 1960, ISO has had a policy development committee (DEVCO) that deals specifically with the needs of developing countries in standardization. Developing countries need to focus both on acquiring world-class technological competence and on achieving a good understanding of the technical requirements underlying global trade. For 50 years, ISO has been assisting in both these areas through ISO/DEVCO. DEVCO's membership comprises 147 national standards institutes from industrialized as well as developing countries. (Find more about DEVCO on http://www.iso.org/iso/resources/developing_countries.htm.)

11. In 2011, ISO/DEVCO carried out three projects in relation to ISO 22000 technical assistance, and three events are planned in 2012 (see Annex 2). The main objective is to improve awareness of key stakeholders in developing countries of the role of such standards in economic growth, world trade and their contribution to sustainable development. Two events were organized with the further objective of building capacity by means of a regional workshop on fisheries safety, quality, productivity and sustainability in Bali, Indonesia and a regional workshop on standards contribution to the food sector in Africa in Nairobi, Kenya. In addition, three sponsorships were provided in 2011 to individuals from developing countries to attend the meeting of ISO/TC 34/SC 17 on management systems for food safety, 4-7 October 2011 in Dublin, Ireland.

D. ISO TECHNICAL WORK UPDATES

12. The priority areas of mutual interest on which ISO would like to maintain and nurture dialogue with the SPS Committee are the work of ISO/TC 34 on food products and the generic work of the ISO committee on conformity assessment (ISO/CASCO).

13. A brochure has recently been published by ISO to summarize the work done in ISO in relation to food. It can be found at http://www.iso.org/iso/iso_and_food.pdf.

E. ISO'S CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT STANDARDS AND THEIR USE IN FOOD SAFETY

14. ISO is an international standards' developer and does not itself undertake assessments of conformity of products, management systems, processes or services against the requirements of the standards it produces. ISO does, however, produce international standards and guides on how assessment of conformity should take place – this is the role of ISO/CASCO. CASCO comprises 119 members. CASCO maintains liaison with 18 international organizations in addition to the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC): International Bureau of Weights and Measures (BIPM), Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC), International Confederation of Inspection and Certification Organisations (CEOC), European Federation of Associations of Certification bodies (EFAC), European Organization for Quality (EOQ), European Federation of National Associations of

Measurement , Testing and Analytical Laboratories (EUROLAB), International Accreditation Forum, Inc. (IAF), International Federation of Standards Users (IFAN), International Federation of Inspection Agencies (IFIA), Independent International Organization for Certification (IIOC), International Laboratory Accreditation Co-operation (ILAC), Latin American Institute for Quality Assurance (INLAC), International Personnel Certification Association (IPC), International Certification Network Association (IQNet), Telecommunication Standardization Sector (ITU-T), International Organization of Legal Metrology (OIML), International Union of Independent Laboratories (UILI) and United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

15. CASCO is currently developing the following documents:

- ISO/IEC TS 17021-2, *Conformity assessment - Competence requirements for certification auditing of environmental management systems*
- ISO/IEC TS 17021-3, *Conformity assessment - Requirements for third party certification auditing of quality management systems — Competence requirements*
- ISO/IEC 17024, *Conformity assessment - General requirements for bodies operating certification of persons*
- ISO/IEC 17065, *Conformity assessment - General requirements for bodies operating product certification systems*
- ISO/IEC 17067, *Conformity assessment - Fundamentals of product certification*

16. CASCO established a joint working group with ISO/TC 34/SC 17 for the revision of ISO 22003:2007, *Food safety management systems - Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of food safety management systems*. This will address in more detail the competence criteria for food safety management system auditors.

17. ISO/IEC 17020:2012, *Conformity assessment - Requirements for the operation of various types of bodies performing inspection* and ISO/IEC TS 17022:2012, *Conformity assessment - Requirements and recommendations for the content of a third-party audit report on management systems* were both published in March 2012.

F. CODEX AND ISO/TC 34 COOPERATION

18. There is a long history of collaboration between the Codex Committees and ISO/TC 34, *Food products*. ISO/TC 34 supports the establishment of an ongoing and sustainable framework for collaboration between Codex and ISO, in order to enhance the mutual coordination of work and the elimination of duplication and contradictions. This also includes interest to support any joint or collaborative communication on each others' work.

19. Codex and ISO activities are complementary. Codex, as a governmental organization, prepares documents to assist governments in their statutory and regulatory work to protect their citizens from health hazards caused by food consumption. ISO, as a non-governmental organization, prepares standards in particular on test methods to assist stakeholders along the whole food chain to fulfil both the statutory and regulatory requirements, as well as the requirements of consumers of these products. ISO/TC 34 also works on how to involve more developing countries in the works.

20. Since its creation in 1947, ISO/TC 34 has published more than 780 ISO deliverables (International Standards, Technical Specifications and Technical Reports). 65 % of these documents are test methods. See Annex 1 for the structure of ISO/TC 34 and a list of projects/publications of interest to Codex.

21. ISO/TC 34 held its plenary meeting in April 2012 in Nairobi, Kenya in order to foster involvement of African developing countries. A regional workshop on standards contribution to the food sector in Africa was organized during the meeting. There were representatives from Codex and OIE present during this workshop.

22. ISO/TC 34/SC 17 developed its strategic plan for 2011-2015; this document is available at http://www.iso.org/iso/iso-tc34-sc17_n0177_strategy_plan_2011-21.pdf.

23. ISO/TC 34 will continue to offer its full support and cooperation to the CAC with a view to avoiding duplication of work and will adopt, for its own documents, the conclusions of the CAC on all matters concerning food hygiene requirements.

G. CONCLUSION

24. It is recognized that the SPS Committee Members, as governments, have the authority to regulate at the national level and that ISO, as a producer of voluntary international standards, does not. In the framework of good regulatory practice, as promoted at international and regional levels, international standards and guides may be considered useful by regulators as effective and efficient tools to achieve important regulatory mandates, manage risk and address market confidence.

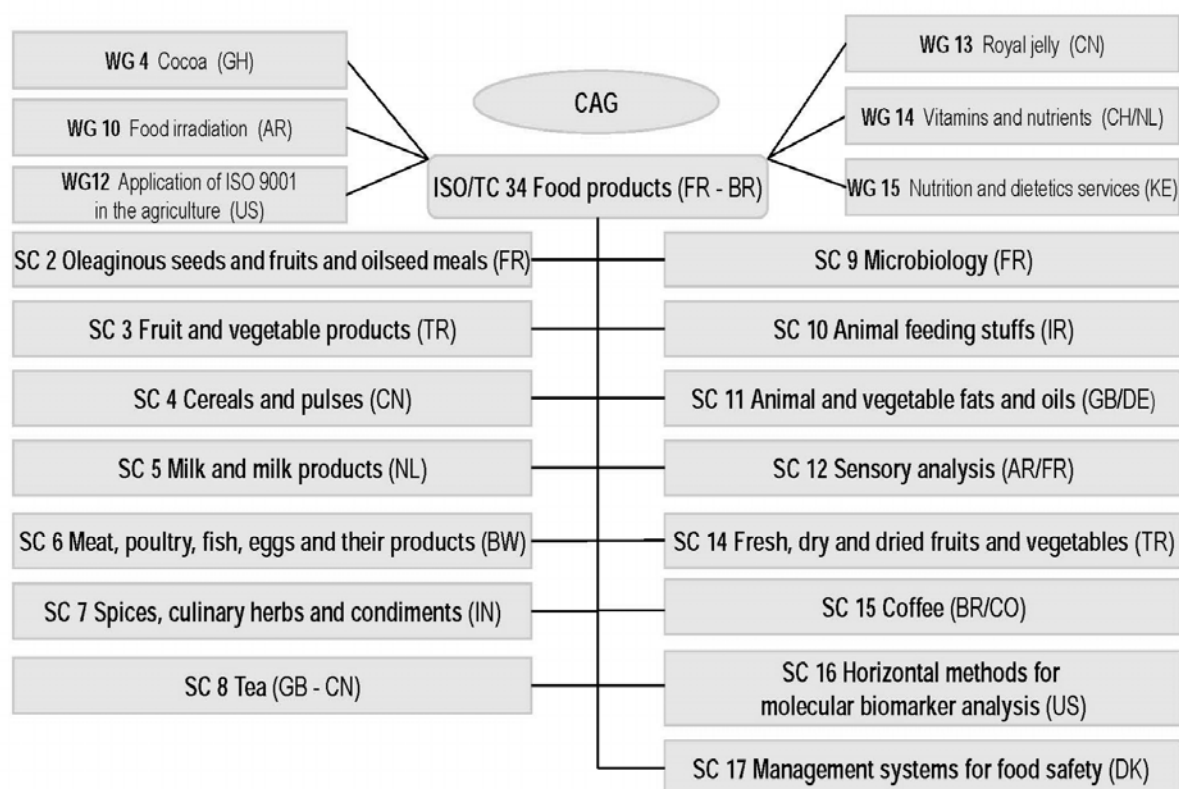
25. ISO considers that by using its international standards, regulatory authorities will achieve their aims in public health and safety at less cost to manufacturers and consumers. Using international standards also assists countries to meet their WTO TBT and SPS Agreement obligations.

26. For any further information on technical developments within ISO that have been reported in this paper, please do not hesitate to contact Mrs. Marie-Noëlle Bourquin at ISO Central Secretariat (bourquin@iso.org).

ANNEX 1

Structure of ISO/TC 34, Food products

ISO/TC 34 comprises 51 Participating countries and 58 Observing countries. ISO/TC 34 secretariat is held jointly by France and Brazil (twinning arrangement). ISO/TC 34 has established several substructures [active structures are: 15 subcommittees (SC) and 5 working groups (WG)]; the development of important horizontal standards being under the responsibility of working groups directly reporting to ISO/TC 34. These substructures are the following:



It can be noted that out of these 15 subcommittees, only four are horizontal in scope (ISO/TC 34/SC 9, ISO/TC 34/SC 12, ISO/TC 34/SC 16 and ISO/TC 34/SC 17).

ANNEX 2

Overview of ISO 22000 technical assistance projects carried out in 2011 and those planned for 2012**Objective 1: Improve awareness of key stakeholders in developing countries of the role of standardization in economic growth, world trade and sustainable development**

Title	Venue/Host	Dates	Total participants	Sponsored participants	Beneficiary countries
National seminar on ISO 22000 - Food safety management systems	Sarajevo, Bosnia & Herzegovina	30 May-1 June 2011	61	0	Bosnia & Herzegovina
National seminar on ISO 22000 - Food safety management systems	Harare, Zimbabwe	1-3 June 2011	60	0	Zimbabwe
National seminar on ISO 22000 - Food safety management systems	Belgrade, Serbia	October 2012 (tbc)	40	0	Serbia
National seminar on ISO 22000 - Food safety management systems	Karthoum, Sudan	November 2012 (tbc)	40	0	Sudan

Objective 2: Build capacity of ISO members and stakeholders involved in developing the standardization infrastructure and participating in international standardization work

Title	Venue/Host	Dates	Total participants	Sponsored participants	Beneficiary countries
Regional workshop on fisheries safety, quality, productivity and sustainability	Bali, Indonesia	13-16 September 2011	46	37	Brunei Darussalam (self-sponsored), Cambodia, Fiji, Indonesia, Dem. P. Rep of Korea, Lao People's Democratic Rep., Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Singapore (self-sponsored), Thailand, and Viet Nam
Regional workshop Standards contribution to the food sector in Africa – ISO/TC 34- Food products	Nairobi, Kenya	24-25 April 2012	120	48	Argentina, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Lesotho, Cameroon, Central African Rep., Colombia, Congo, the Rep. of, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Indonesia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Thailand, Togo, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe