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**What Impact does the International Standards Organisation have?**

To many people ISO is just a set of initial before a standard - often the ISO9001:2000 standard, but what sort of contribution to the world do they make?

The UN Secretary General Mr Kofi Annan obviously feels that the ISO has a wider role in the international community. He sent a message to the ISO General Assembly that met recently in Geneva. He stated in his message, that “ISO makes a unique contribution in a range of vital areas - health, safety, security, the environment, transport and information technology. ISO standards are crucial to sustainable development, as they are a key source of technology know-how, especially for developing countries and economies in transition. They are invaluable in helping countries develop their economies and build capacities to compete on global markets. Producers and consumers everywhere benefit from these efforts.” He concluded with “The United Nations family looks forward to working ever more closely with the International Organisation for Standardisation for many years to come”.

One of the main items on the agenda was a report by the ISO Security Advisory Group on the organisation’s involvement in standards for international security against threats such as criminal activity, terrorism and natural disaster.

The analysis of the standards portfolio shows that there are hundreds of standards with security related applications. These include standards on biometric identification, on the monitoring of illicit trafficking or radioactive materials, and for securing freight containers in

International trade. Given the current state of worldwide terrorism this shows that the ISO standards have more to contribute than just the commonly used quality and environmental standards.

The Assembly also approved the ISO Strategic Plan 2005-2010. The key objectives are:

1. Developing a consistent and multi-sector collection of globally relevant International Standards
2. Ensuring the involvement of stakeholders
3. Raising the awareness and capacity of developing countries
4. Being open to partnerships for the efficient development of International Standards
5. Promoting the use of voluntary standards as an alternative or as a support to technical regulations
6. Being a recognised provider of International Standards and guides relating to conformity assessment
7. Providing efficient procedures and tools for the development of a complete range of deliverables

Other issues covered included an action plan for developing countries that will make it easier for developing countries to participate in and benefit from international standardisation, and the promotion of ISO Code of Ethics. For further information see [www.iso.ch](http://www.iso.ch)

**ISO Survey**

One of the biggest impacts that ISO has across the world is the use of two very popular standards and this was highlighted recently when they released their survey results on ISO9000 and ISO14001 for 2003. The principle results included:

### ISO9001:2000

- Up to the end of December 2003, at least 500,125 certificates to the ISO9001:2000 quality management system standard had been issued in 149 countries and economies
- The 2003 total represents an increase of 332, 915 over 2002 when the total was 167,210 in 134 countries and economies
- The 2003 total represents an increase of 4455 (more than ten times higher) over 2001, the first year for which the survey recorded ISO9001:2000 certifications, when the total was 44,388 in 98 countries and economies

### ISO14001

- The increase in the number of certificates in 2003 to the ISO14001 environmental management system standard is the largest so far recorded in the nine surveys in which ISO14001 has been included.
- Up to the end of December 2003, at least 66,070 certificates to ISO14001 had been issued in 113 countries and economies
- The 2003 total represents an increase of 16,621 over 2002, when the total was 49,449 in 117 countries and economies.

The ISO Surveys are available from the ISO's national member institutes. For further information see [www.iso.ch](http://www.iso.ch)

### Vaccine licence suspended

An Oxford based company has had its manufacturing licence for flu vaccine suspended by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulation Agency. The suspension is for three months and will take effect immediately. The suspension was due to the way the vaccine is manufactured and some contamination had been found. Subsequent test and safety checks had shown that the company now meets the highest standards. However, the company will be discussing what further actions are required to meet UK safety standards.

Incidents like this bring home the need for full records of manufacture, testing and identification so that contaminated batches or faulty goods can be identified and if necessary recalled. These news stories can help the quality manager demonstrate the need for all the tedious record keeping and other tasks that

so many people see as bureaucratic! For further news on this story see BBC News

### Anti-Spam Software

The major net players are now taking the fight against Spam more seriously and wish to impose conditions on bulk mail senders. From October 2004, AOL, Yahoo, Hotmail, Earthlink and Comcast would like these bulk users to comply with new mail standards. These technical standards are called the Sender Policy Framework (SPF) and Sender-ID. They will help to reveal whether a message came from the net address it claims to have come from. Dave Anderson, chief executive of Sendmail has said that "By the end of this year we expect that half of the e-mail sent in the US will have SPF records or some sort of identification on it". He thinks that with the greater use of authentication systems and lists of reputable e-mail senders the amount of Spam seen by users will be reduced significantly. For further information see BBC News.

### Child Healthcare Goals

The government have released standards for the healthcare of children and adolescents in England. The national service framework is a 10 year plan for improving community health and social care for children and say that children should receive health and social care appropriate for their age - they need to be seen as different from "mini-adults". The standards were triggered by the recent reports on the Bristol babies heart scandal and the Victoria Climbié case which highlighted failings in how services for children are managed. For further information see BBC News

### New Operations Director for BSI

Shirley Bailey-Wood has been appointed Operations Director of British Standards for the BSI Group. She has a background in chemistry and was previously senior vice-president Pharmaceuticals and Chemistry of Thompson Scientific and Healthcare. Mike Low, director of BSI says: "Standards play a major role in the British and international economy and can deliver substantial benefits in increased competitiveness and creating added value and new markets. British Standards contributes significantly to this process by producing the

standards that stimulate innovation and improve efficiency. This new post will be pivotal to ensuring we reach our goals and we believe Shirley is more than well-qualified to fulfil these demands..." For more information see [www.bsi-global.com](http://www.bsi-global.com)

### **Is your personal healthcare information safe?**

ISO have published a common and internationally accepted set of guidelines that can be used by all health related organisations worldwide. Using these guidelines will mean that personal health information remains confidential when it is transferred across national borders. ISO22857:2004. *Health informatics - Guidelines on data protection to facilitate trans-border flows of personal health information*, covers data protection principles that should apply to international transfer of patients' personal health information as well as the security policy which an organisation should adapt to ensure compliance with those principles. For further information visit [www.iso.ch](http://www.iso.ch)

### **Crackdown on Fake Goods**

Trading standards, customs, police, brand owners and the Patent Office are working together under a national strategy to crackdown on counterfeiting and piracy. It is estimated that fake goods cost the UK economy billions of pounds and that many counterfeiters are also involved in serious crimes, such as drug dealing and money laundering. Further the goods are very often poor quality and can be harmful to the consumer. The national strategy is intended to better co-ordinate the agencies involved in intellectual property crime and improve training for those working at the front-line. For further information visit BBC News.

### **Health and Safety qualifications via Distance Learning**

The NEBOSH National General Certificate is recognised as the standard qualification in health and safety for the non-safety specialists. It is designed to help those with health and safety responsibilities (e.g. managers, supervisors and representatives of health and safety) to carry out their duties and functions more effectively. This course is now available

as a Distance Learning Package and is a collaborative effort between QM&T and ZBS.

The aims of the NEBOSH National General Certificate are to:

- provide students with an understanding of health and safety concepts
- develop an appreciation of the need for health and safety and its control
- enhance students' awareness and help make the workplace safer
- improve productivity and reduce costs

On successful completion of this module students will be able to:

- Identify common hazards and risks in the workplace and advice on suitable corrective actions
- Identify sources of guidance and advice on health and safety
- Assist in the preparation and regular review of an organisations health and safety policy
- Recommend suitable action to minimise risks
- Investigate accidents, prepare reports, make cost effective proposals to prevent recurrence
- Identify the main requirements of legislation and codes of practice
- Maintain records and information to advise management

For information about this course visit [www.qmt.co.uk](http://www.qmt.co.uk)

### **Employment Opportunity**

A very successful leading British independent IT consultancy organisation (based in the South East of England) and involved in work for the Government, Finance, Telecomms, Utilities, Media and Technology sectors is looking for individuals in the capacity of **System Improvement Specialists** to support their committed expansion. The organisation is certified to ISO9001 with TickIT and BS7799. The aim of the ongoing improvement activities is to put in systems to meet the SEI CMMi and BS15000 standards. For further details on this job opportunity visit [www.qmt.co.uk/vacancies/quality\\_improvement.htm](http://www.qmt.co.uk/vacancies/quality_improvement.htm)