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Guiding principles and framework for the sharing economy

Principes directeurs et cadre de travail pour l'économie du partage

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ISO copyright office
Ch. de Blandonnet 8 • CP 401
CH-1214 Vernier, Geneva, Switzerland
Tel. +41 22 749 01 11
Fax +41 22 749 09 47
copyright@iso.org
www.iso.org

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Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see www.iso.org/directives).

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights. Details of any patent rights identified during the development of the document will be in the Introduction and/or on the ISO list of patent declarations received (see www.iso.org/patents).

Any trade name used in this document is information given for the convenience of users and does not constitute an endorsement.

For an explanation on the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) see the following URL: www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html.

International Workshop Agreement IWA 27 was approved at a workshop hosted by the Standards Council of Canada (SCC), in association with the CSA Group and the federal government's Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada – Office of Consumer Affairs (OCA), held in Toronto, Canada, in March 2017.

Introduction

A combination of technological and other factors have enabled the sharing economy. The rise in global usage of mobile devices together with changing consumer behaviour are driving its growth. This document provides principles and a practical implementation framework with the intention of making participation in the sharing economy a positive experience for all interested and affected parties.

The activities associated with the sharing economy in some ways challenge traditional business models. The sharing economy includes transactions for a fee or free, matching often-underused assets and skills with customer needs, and can provide reserve capacity for managing impacts of planned and unforeseen events. Customers and providers are typically unknown to one another and trust is often initially absent. Sharing economy participants often use reviews, customized for specific products and services and usually involving mutual ratings of providers and customers in addition to other trust-building mechanisms, such as guarantees of compensation for non-conformance.

The sharing economy presents both opportunities and challenges:

- customers can find improved prices, options and social interaction, but question trustworthiness, quality, safety, reliability and validity of online reviews;
- providers can welcome flexible work arrangements and access to new income opportunities, but face challenges with respect to benefits, insurance, security and other economic and safety protections;
- platform providers can seek broader market access and economic opportunities, but can face challenges with respect to meeting legal requirements while assuring technological reliability, data integrity, securing customer privacy and safeguarding consumer rights;
- governments can welcome the broader contributions to economic growth, innovation and improved social trust networks associated with the sharing economy, but can also need to formulate public policy that is responsive to the changes associated with the sharing economy, develop new taxation mechanisms, and address collateral disruptions and transformations affecting traditional businesses; and
- other parties that are not directly involved in sharing economy activities can find the activities to be socially disruptive, but can also find new opportunities and positive environmental impacts as the sharing economy evolves.

This document is the result of an open and transparent multi-stakeholder process involving experts from different countries representing a variety of different perspectives. It is a voluntary guidance document intended for global use. This document, in its present or revised form, could also provide the basis for a future ISO standard or for future private sector, institutional or government guidelines.

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Guiding principles and framework for the sharing economy

1 Scope

This document provides guiding principles and a framework for decision making and action to address key social, environmental, and economic impacts and opportunities of the sharing economy.

2 Normative references

There are no normative references in this document.

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <https://www.iso.org/obp>
- IEC Electropedia: available at <http://www.electropedia.org/>

3.1

sharing economy

form of economic activity where *platforms* (3.2) enable *providers* (3.4) and *customers* (3.5) to exchange, often underutilized, goods and services using information technology

Note 1 to entry: It is

- a) often peer-to-peer;
- b) for a fee or for free;
- c) often sequential use; and
- d) mutually beneficial.

3.2

platform

information technology mechanisms that facilitate the ability for transactions to take place between those who have assets and services and those who want to use those assets and services

3.3

platform operator

individual or entity that administers a *sharing economy* (3.1) *platform* (3.2)

3.4

provider

individual or entity that provides assets or services to *customers* (3.5) who want access to those assets or services, using a *sharing economy* (3.1) *platform* (3.2)

3.5

customer

person or organization that uses a *sharing economy* (3.1) *provider's* (3.4) assets or services

Note 1 to entry: For the purposes of this document, the term “customer” includes potential customers.

**3.6
interested party**

person or organization that can affect, be affected by, or perceive itself to be affected by a decision or activity

4 Guiding principles — Platform operators and providers

4.1 General

In their activities associated with the sharing economy, platform operators and providers should adhere to the following guiding principles:

- a) integrity;
- b) transparency;
- c) accountability;
- d) accessibility and inclusion;
- e) responsiveness;
- f) health, safety and environment;
- g) confidentiality, privacy and security;
- h) capacity;
- i) competence; and
- j) continual improvement.

NOTE 1 Guiding principles are also applicable to the relationship between platform operators and providers.

NOTE 2 See [Annex A](#) for guidance on operationalizing the principles.

4.2 Integrity

Decisions and activities are conducted in an honest, respectful and courteous manner, taking into account the interests of customers, and are communicated accurately.

4.3 Transparency

Decisions and activities affecting customers and others are findable, usable, relevant, timely and accurate to allow customers and others to make informed decisions.

4.4 Accountability

Decisions and activities and their impacts and opportunities with respect to customers and others are open to scrutiny by governing bodies, legal authorities, and other interested parties.

4.5 Accessibility and inclusion

The products and services are available to the widest possible range of customers and others, fairly and without discrimination contrary to human rights obligations.

4.6 Responsiveness

Decisions and activities are made in a culturally sensitive manner and reflect the evolving needs and expectations of customers and others.

4.7 Health, safety and environment

The health and safety of customers and others and their environmental expectations are given priority at the operational level.

4.8 Confidentiality, privacy and security

Personal information is treated in a confidential manner, respecting the privacy of the customer, disclosing information to others only where the consent of the customer is provided, and that information is stored in a secure manner.

4.9 Capacity

Resources provided are sufficient to carry out all their decisions and activities in an effective, efficient, consistent, courteous and responsible manner.

4.10 Competence

Knowledge, skills and attributes and education training and experience permit decisions and activities to be carried out in a responsible and effective manner reflecting the needs and interests of customers and others.

4.11 Continual improvement

Decisions and activities lead to continual improvement in meeting the needs and interests of customers and others.

5 Sharing economy decision-making and action framework

5.1 General

Platform operators and providers should structure and implement their activities in accordance with a decision-making and action framework. The framework should include

- a) commitments or codes of conduct to be communicated to customers and others affected by their activities,
- b) policies and processes for fair, effective and efficient operation and continuous evaluation of same,
- c) mechanisms for ensuring compliance with commitments, policies and processes and related laws and regulations,
- d) approaches for selection and deployment of appropriate people, and adequate training, resourcing for people and other activities,
- e) approaches for obtaining feedback, and
- f) complaints handling and dispute resolution.

NOTE 1 There could be a single decision-making and action framework that applies to both the platform operator and its providers.

NOTE 2 See [Annex B](#) for guidance on handling comments and complaints.

The framework and its implementation should operate in accordance with the guiding principles and address the following:

- a) customers;
- b) labour;
- c) government;
- d) environment;
- e) broader economic, societal, and community impacts and opportunities.

5.2 Customers

Consideration should be given to the rights, protections, interests and expectations of customers, taking into account applicable laws and regulations and international standards including those pertaining to:

- a) consumer protection;
- b) false and misleading advertising;
- c) guarantees;
- d) provision of insurance;
- e) information disclosure expectations and requirements;
- f) identity-related authentication;
- g) pricing, taxation, charges and fees;
- h) customer responsibilities;
- i) personal information protections and financial information security;
- j) health, safety, and environmental expectations and requirements;
- k) non-discriminatory access and other anti-discrimination protections;
- l) reputational information provision processes; and
- m) complaints handling and dispute resolution, refunds, recalls.

NOTE With respect to these elements of the framework, a number of ISO standards can provide useful guidance, including those in the ISO 9000 quality management series pertaining to customer satisfaction codes of conduct (ISO 10001), complaints handling (ISO 10002), external dispute resolution (ISO 10003), business to consumer electronic commerce (ISO 10008), and other ISO standards such as pertaining to online consumer reviews (ISO 20488¹), environmental management (ISO 14000), and ISO 26000 (social responsibility). See [Annex G](#) for information on the scope of some of the ISO standards.

5.3 Labour

Consideration should be given to the rights, protections, interests and expectations of those providing sharing economy activities (including employer-employee relationships, independent contractors, or other), taking into account applicable laws and regulations and international norms concerning:

- a) remuneration;
- b) collective bargaining;
- c) occupational health and safety protections;

1) To be published.

- d) benefits and other protections;
- e) anti-discrimination protections;
- f) recruitment and termination practices.

NOTE With respect to these elements of the framework, a number of international labour standards referenced in ISO 26000 can provide useful guidance.

5.4 Government

Consideration should be given to the public policy objectives, obligations, and requirements of government, including those specifically pertaining to sharing economy activities and those of more general application:

- a) social security requirements;
- b) tax requirements;
- c) information disclosure requirements;
- d) other requirements as set out in law.

Opportunities for data exchange between platform operators, providers, and government should be considered as authorized by law or agreement.

5.5 Environment

Consideration should be given to the environmental aspects, impacts, and opportunities of sharing economy activities, taking into account applicable laws and regulations and international norms.

NOTE With respect to these elements of the framework, the standards in the ISO 14000 environmental series can provide useful guidance.

5.6 Broader economic, societal and community impacts and opportunities

Consideration should be given to the broader economic, societal and community impacts and opportunities of sharing economy activities, which can have impacts and opportunities beyond those of customers, workers, government and the environment.

NOTE With respect to these elements of the framework ISO 26000 can provide useful guidance.

6 Feedback, review and continual improvement

As part of platform operators' or providers' continual improvement, they should conduct regular reviews of their decision-making and action framework, including consideration of:

- a) feedback from interested parties;
- b) evolving laws and standards;
- c) needs and expectations of customers and others.

NOTE The guidance to stakeholders in [Annexes C, D and E](#) can be used to gather some of the feedback from interested parties.

Annex A (informative)

Operationalizing the principles

A.1 General

Implementing the principles offered in this document can be enabled using a systems approach. Formalizing this approach can drive gains in productivity, increases in profitability, and enhancements in prosperity. The following material outlines the elements to facilitate better management control of this opportunity.

NOTE The content of this annex is based on guidance provided in ISO 19600.

A.2 Aligning performance with purpose

Top management should

- appoint a person responsible for overseeing the operationalization of the principles, which may be a part-time or full-time activity, depending on the size, culture and nature of the organization.
- identify relevant obligations that embed the principles into the organization's operations
- in larger organizations, identify and allocate responsibility for obligations throughout the organization including identifying responsible managers.
- allocate sufficient resources to support the operationalization, including sourcing of external resources, as needed.
- consider putting in place a policy to align commitment with the principles of this document and the purpose of the organization.
- consider the development of an operational plan that sets out when important activities need to be undertaken and by whom
- keep documented information where and when needed to ensure desired results are achieved.

A.3 Operating day-to-day

A.3.1 Develop and implement processes as needed to provide confidence that the system is meeting the organization's purpose, policy and the principles of this document.

A.3.2 Educate those tasked with responsibility to meet the principles so that they are confident and are competent in the activities needed.

A.3.3 Communicate on the processes with internal and external interested parties on operational activities as needed to meet the principles.

A.4 Keeping the system in good working order

A.4.1 Monitor the process(es) involved in meeting the principles periodically to ensure that the organization meets its purpose, and when and where necessary, revise processes to optimize the organization's performance.

A.4.2 Develop feedback mechanisms as needed to provide the organization with qualitative and quantitative data upon which changes to drive improvements to its process(es) are made.

A.5 Enhancing the system to improve its value

Implement the necessary changes in (the) process(es) to improve performance to meet the organization's purpose, policy and the principles of this document.

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Annex B (informative)

Guidance on handling comments and complaints

This annex highlights key areas where an organization can focus its attention to achieve maximum effectiveness and efficiency in the management of customer feedback, either as comments or as complaints. Comments and complaints are useful to determine opportunities for improvement.

NOTE The content of this annex is based on guidance provided in ISO 10002:

- Be open and prepared to receive comments and complaints—have a simple sign or icon on the website, or a paragraph on letters, notices or invoices.
- Design a clear process for managing any comments or complaints received; including a clear understanding of its importance for those within the organization who are responsible for dealing with comments and complaints. A phone call or email can be sufficient; automated emails can acknowledge receipt instantly.
- Ensure staff is aware of the organization's comment and complaint process and the steps they need to take when a comment or a complaint is received. Staff training on (the) process(es) is recommended.
- Facilitate a prompt response to a comment; in some cases, a simple 'thank you' is sufficient, and demonstrates appreciation.
- Allow for resolution of a complaint in a timely manner and advise the complainant of how and when your organization will be able to address their concern, with staff empowered to either respond to a complaint or refer it to the most appropriate person within the organization.
- Share the outcome with the complainant when appropriate action has been taken to address the complaint. If the complaint is still not resolved to the complainant's satisfaction, explain the decision. Listen to their remaining concerns, and then offer possible alternative actions.
- Keep a record of the comments and complaints received, the action taken, the decisions made and the outcome. Data could include trends in the frequency as well as the content of the comments or complaints received.
- Review the data on comments and complaints periodically to establish if there are any trends or obvious changes that the organization could make to reduce or eliminate complaints from occurring, improve the provided, and increase customer satisfaction. Positive comments and statistics showing improvement can be useful in marketing, if the necessary approvals for using testimonials are received.
- Consider a more intensive annual review, including a scan of other similar organizations to see how they deal with comments and complaints. Valuable tips and techniques can be identified that can improve the organization's performance.

Annex C (informative)

Guidance for platform operators

The following list of questions is provided to assist platform operators in identifying and addressing possible issues discussed in this document.

Platform operators	Strongly agree	Do not know	Agree
Are honest, accurate and courteous services provided?			
Is information communicated accurately to customers?			
Has an official method been used to respond to customer needs and the needs of other interested parties?			
Has internal documentation been provided that is well organized, with information that is easy to find			
Has relevant and timely information been provided?			
Is information accessible and inclusive to users?			
Is/are Information site(s) easy to navigate, with documented user feedback?			
Are inquiries answered promptly?			
Are health and safety expectations met?			
Are environmental expectations met?			
Is personal information treated by an organization in a confidential manner and kept secured?			
Are sufficient resources deployed meet all commitments?			
Are people well trained for the responsibilities given?			
Is the organization efficient in meeting expectations and responsibilities?			
Is continuous improvement undertaken, and is it documented?			

Annex D (informative)

Guidance for providers

The following list of questions is provided to assist providers in identifying and addressing possible issues outlined in this document.

Providers	Strongly agree	Agree	Do not know
Are honest, accurate and courteous services provided?			
Is information communicated accurately to customers?			
Is an official method used to capture customer needs and the needs of other interested parties?			
Is internal documentation well organized and is information easy to find?			
Is relevant and timely information provided to users?			
Is information accessible and inclusive to users?			
Are information site(s) easy to navigate with user feedback provided?			
Are inquiries answered promptly?			
Are health and safety expectations met?			
Are environmental expectations met?			
Is personal information treated in a confidential manner and kept secure?			
Are sufficient resources deployed to all commitments?			
Are people well trained for the responsibilities given?			
Is the organization efficient in meeting expectations?			
Is continuous improvement undertaken with supporting documentation?			

Annex E (informative)

Guidance from the customer's perspective

The following list of questions is provided to assist customers identifying possible issues discussed in this document.

Customer's perspective	Strongly agree	Agree	Do not know
Did you receive honest, accurate and courteous services?			
Did the information provided seem accurate?			
Was the information relevant and timely?			
Was the information accessible?			
Was the electronic site(s) easy to navigate?			
Were provider responses rapid?			
Was personal information treated in a confidential manner?			
Were people well trained?			
Was the organization efficient in meeting expectations?			
Did the organization appeared to be committed to continual improvement?			

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Annex F (informative)

Guidance for interested parties

The following list of questions is provided to assist interested parties in identifying and addressing possible issues discussed in this document.

Interested parties	Strongly agree	Agree	Do not know
Is the document complete and clear?			
Is it easy for platform operators and providers to implement the principles and framework in their organization?			

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Annex G (informative)

International guidelines

G.1 General

The International Standards described in this annex should be helpful in implementing the guiding principles and framework. If you need additional information there is a hyperlink to the ISO site with additional hyperlink sending with additional information and access to other languages by using the "Available in" field.

G.2 ISO 10001, *Quality management — Customer satisfaction — Guidelines for codes of conduct for organizations*

It provides guidance to an organization in determining that its customer satisfaction provisions meet customer needs and expectations. Its use can enhance customer confidence in an organization and improve customer understanding of what to expect from an organization, thereby reducing the likelihood of misunderstandings and complaints.

<https://www.iso.org/obp/ui#iso:std:iso:10001:ed-1:v1:en>

G.3 ISO 10002, *Quality management — Customer satisfaction — Guidelines for complaints handling in organizations*

It provides guidance on the process of handling complaints by recognizing and addressing the needs and expectations of complainants and resolving any complaints received. ISO 10002 provides an open, effective and easy-to-use complaints process, including training of people. It also provides guidance for small businesses.

<https://www.iso.org/obp/ui#iso:std:iso:10002:ed-2:v1:en>

G.4 ISO 10003, *Quality management — Customer satisfaction — Guidelines for dispute resolution external to organizations*

It provides guidance for effective and efficient external dispute resolution for product-related complaints. Dispute resolution gives an avenue of redress when organizations do not remedy a complaint internally. Most complaints can be resolved successfully within the organization, without adversarial procedures.

<https://www.iso.org/obp/ui#iso:std:iso:10003:ed-1:v1:en>

G.5 ISO 10008, *Quality management — Customer satisfaction — Guidelines for business-to-consumer electronic commerce transactions*

It provides guidance on how organizations can implement an effective and efficient business-to-consumer electronic commerce transaction (B2C ECT) system, including providing guidance concerning privacy, security and clarity of information. It thereby provide a basis for consumers to have increased confidence in B2C ECTs, enhance the ability of organizations to satisfy consumers and help reduce complaints and disputes. It also has a guide for small businesses as well as an annex for applicable laws to consider.