



GUIDE 76

Development of service standards — Recommendations for addressing consumer issues

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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.

International Standards are drafted in accordance with the rules given in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2.

Draft Guides adopted by the responsible Committee or Group are circulated to the member bodies for voting. Publication as a Guide requires approval by at least 75 % of the member bodies casting a vote.

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.

ISO/IEC Guide 76 was prepared by the ISO *Committee on consumer policy* (COPOLCO).

This corrected version of ISO/IEC Guide 76:2008 incorporates the following correction:

- correction of the term “responsibility” to “social responsibility” in the example to point 5 in Table 1 on page 10.

Introduction

0.1 Standards are increasingly being developed to cover services. This Guide has been prepared to help standards developers in these areas to take account of consumer requirements. It elaborates on the aims of service standards, set out in the ISO/IEC publication *The consumer and standards — Guidance and principles for consumer participation in standards development*^[25]. In addressing the major concerns of consumers, standards can help by representing a consensus on the best knowledge and experience available worldwide.

0.2 This Guide is intended for those involved in the preparation and revision of standards for services, whether International Standards or national standards in developed or developing countries. With its checklist and examples, it also contains information which might be useful for others, such as service providers and educators.

0.3 Service delivery can involve complex relationships and structures, frequently involving many different organizations. Additionally, consumers engage with a variety of public services, such as medical provision or education, for which formal contracts and direct payment might not be applicable.

0.4 In a global market, it is logical that consumers expect to benefit from access to a wider choice of services and service providers. There is also continuing demand for lower prices that are not contrived to disadvantage certain markets and communities. Quality, economy and efficiency are sought, whether or not the consumer pays directly for a service. There is also increasing consumer concern about the need for sustainable development.

0.5 The Internet fuels comparisons and the growth of knowledge and provision of information on which to base choices. Globally, consumers expect that the services they engage with, contract to and purchase will not only be consistent in quality, durability and ease of use, but also safe, environmentally friendly and fair for the communities affected by the services.

0.6 Although all people have a right of access to services, this will not always be relevant or feasible. However, it is advisable that service providers consider the needs of all potential users, including children and those from different cultural and ethnic heritages. This will enable the services to be available to as many people as possible. The issue of accessibility and usability of products and services has become more critical with the increasing percentage of older persons in the world's population. While not all older persons have disabilities, the prevalence of disability or limitations is highest among this demographic group.

0.7 The standardization of services can provide the following benefits:

- build consumer confidence by assuring safety, security, quality, durability and ease of use;
- supply accurate and appropriate information and take into account user requirements;
- support the development of choice and access to a wide range of users;
- provide appropriate and fair forms of redress, where necessary.

0.8 Many national and sectoral codes of practice exist in relation to parts of service delivery which can be considered when developing standards. However, these are most commonly drawn up from the viewpoint of the service provider and are thus not necessarily those of the consumer. This Guide seeks to ensure that consumer needs are addressed. It also allows a common set of criteria for services across countries in which there can be many differences in the scope and application of national consumer protection legislation.

0.9 It is recognized that when developing service standards, it is advisable to take account of applicable statutory or regulatory requirements.

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Development of service standards — Recommendations for addressing consumer issues

1 Scope

This Guide provides general guidance on the issues to be considered in standards for services. On the basis of this guidance, detailed standards can be prepared for any service. This Guide provides a checklist (see Clause 9) which can be used by consumer representatives and others participating in the process of standards development. Use of the checklist enables full consideration to be given to all matters of consumer interest, including the needs of children, older persons, persons with disabilities and those from different ethnic and cultural heritages.

This Guide is relevant to the full range of services, whether or not a formal contract is entered into or purchase price paid, but it also has relevance for public or charitable services in which there is a consumer, a user or a participant, but not necessarily a purchase, e.g. education, health and care provision.

2 Normative references

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO 9000, *Quality management systems — Fundamentals and vocabulary*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in ISO 9000 and the following apply.

3.1

service

result of at least one activity, necessarily performed at the interface between the supplier and customer, that is generally intangible

NOTE 1 Examples of possible services are given in Annex A.

NOTE 2 In ISO 9000, “product” is defined as the “result of a process” that encompasses four generic product categories [services (e.g. transport), software (e.g. computer program, dictionary), hardware (e.g. engine mechanical part) and processed materials (e.g. lubricant)] and that indicates that the product category used is based on the dominant element. A service can therefore include the delivery of software, hardware and processed materials. For the purposes of this Guide, a separate definition of “service” is given here.

3.2

goods

products excluding services

EXAMPLE Software, hardware and processed materials, e.g. domestic appliances, home care articles, food.

NOTE In ISO 9000, "product" is defined as the "result of a process" that encompasses four generic product categories [services (e.g. transport), software (e.g. computer program, dictionary), hardware (e.g. engine mechanical part) and processed materials (e.g. lubricant)] and that indicates that the product category used is based on the dominant element. A service can therefore include the delivery of software, hardware and processed materials. For the purposes of this Guide, a separate definition of "goods" is given here.

3.3

service provider

entity that offers one or more services

NOTE The entity can be an individual or an organization.

3.4

consumer

individual member of the general public purchasing or using goods, property or services, for personal, family or household purposes

NOTE Adapted from the ISO/IEC Statement on *Consumer participation in standardization work* [26].

3.5

customer

organization or person that receives a product

EXAMPLE Consumer, client, end-user, retainer, beneficiary or purchaser.

NOTE 1 For the purposes of this Guide, use of the term "customer" includes potential customers in the reference.

NOTE 2 Adapted from ISO 9000.

3.6

customer satisfaction

customer's perception of the degree to which the customer's requirements have been fulfilled

NOTE 1 Customer complaints are a common indicator of low customer satisfaction, but their absence does not necessarily imply high customer satisfaction.

NOTE 2 Even when customer requirements have been agreed to with the customer and fulfilled, this does not necessarily ensure high customer satisfaction.

NOTE 3 Adapted from ISO 9000.

3.7

user

participant

person who uses the service(s) of the service provider

3.8

impairment

problem in body function or structure such as a significant deviation or loss which can be temporary due, for example, to injury, or permanent, slight or severe and can fluctuate over time, in particular, deterioration due to ageing

[ISO/IEC Guide 71:2001, 3.4]

3.9**contract**

agreement by which one or more parties are obligated towards one or several other parties to provide a service

3.10**code of conduct**

customer promise(s) made by an organization, and related provisions

NOTE 1 The promise(s) are used by the organization for the purpose of maintaining and enhancing **customer satisfaction** (3.6) and relate to the organization's products or the interaction of the organization with its existing or potential customers.

NOTE 2 See also ISO 10001 on guidelines for codes of conduct for organizations.

3.11**customer service**

interaction of an organization with the customer throughout the phases of service provision

NOTE Adapted from ISO 10002.

3.12**delivery**

action of providing a service

3.13**usability**

extent to which a service can be used by specified users to achieve specified goals with effectiveness, efficiency and satisfaction in a specified context of use

[ISO/IEC Guide 71:2001, 3.7]

3.14**assistive technology****assistive device**

piece of equipment, product system, hardware, software or service that is used to increase, maintain or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities

NOTE This can be acquired commercially off-the-shelf, modified or customized. The term includes technical aids for persons with disabilities. Assistive devices do not eliminate an impairment but may lessen the difficulty an individual has in carrying out a task or activity in specific environments.

[ISO/IEC Guide 71:2001, 3.3]

3.15**alternative format**

different presentation which can make services accessible by the use of another movement or sensory ability

NOTE Adapted from ISO/IEC Guide 71.

3.16**complaint**

expression of dissatisfaction made to an organization, related to its products, or the complaints-handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected

[ISO 10002:2004, 3.2]

3.17

complainant

person, organization or its representative, making a complaint

[ISO 10002:2004, 3.1]

3.18

feedback

opinions, comments and expressions of interest in the service or the complaints-handling process

NOTE Adapted from ISO 10002 and from ISO/IEC Guide 51.

3.19

safeguard

precaution taken to prevent or reduce the impact of a failure in some aspect of service provision

4 Key consumer principles

4.1 General

Services cover a wide range of activities (see Annex A). The common features are a service provided by a commercial, public or private organization, for which claims are made, products or assistance are delivered, an organization on whose quality of provision consumers rely, often without individual or immediate means to judge this. The key consumer principles, as described in subclauses 4.2 to 4.10, should be taken into account.

4.2 Information

Information and its communication play a crucial role in the selection, provision and effective use of services because, unlike products such as shoes and food, there are less tangible elements to assist the consumer in gauging quality, fitness for purpose, value for money, etc. Communication of information, especially prior to contract signature, and the manner of doing it (including the attitude of staff) is a fundamental consideration. The role of communication at every step in the decision-making process is illustrated in Figure 1.

4.3 Access and fairness

Access to services is a function of consumers' ability to afford the things they need or want, and of the availability of these things to all consumers regardless of location, social and economic considerations and physical or mental impairment. Thus, to be credible, the interests of the full range of consumers (from children to older persons, with different cultural and ethnic backgrounds and with all variations in abilities) should be acknowledged and included from the outset in the development of relevant standards. In maintaining the principle of fairness, standards should ensure that services do not unreasonably discriminate against any particular group of consumers.

4.4 Choice

Promoting consumer choice is fundamental to consumer policy. In standardization, this means that a standard should not favour any one particular supplier or be unnecessarily restrictive of the form of service provision. Various characteristics of a service will be balanced with the need to maintain value for money and a competitive market.

4.5 Safety and security

The safety (including hygiene and physical safety) and security (including financial security and privacy) afforded by services are key priorities, with a particular emphasis on protecting vulnerable people, e.g. children, older persons, persons with disabilities or persons disadvantaged through poverty or an inability (perhaps due to language) to access relevant information and assistance.

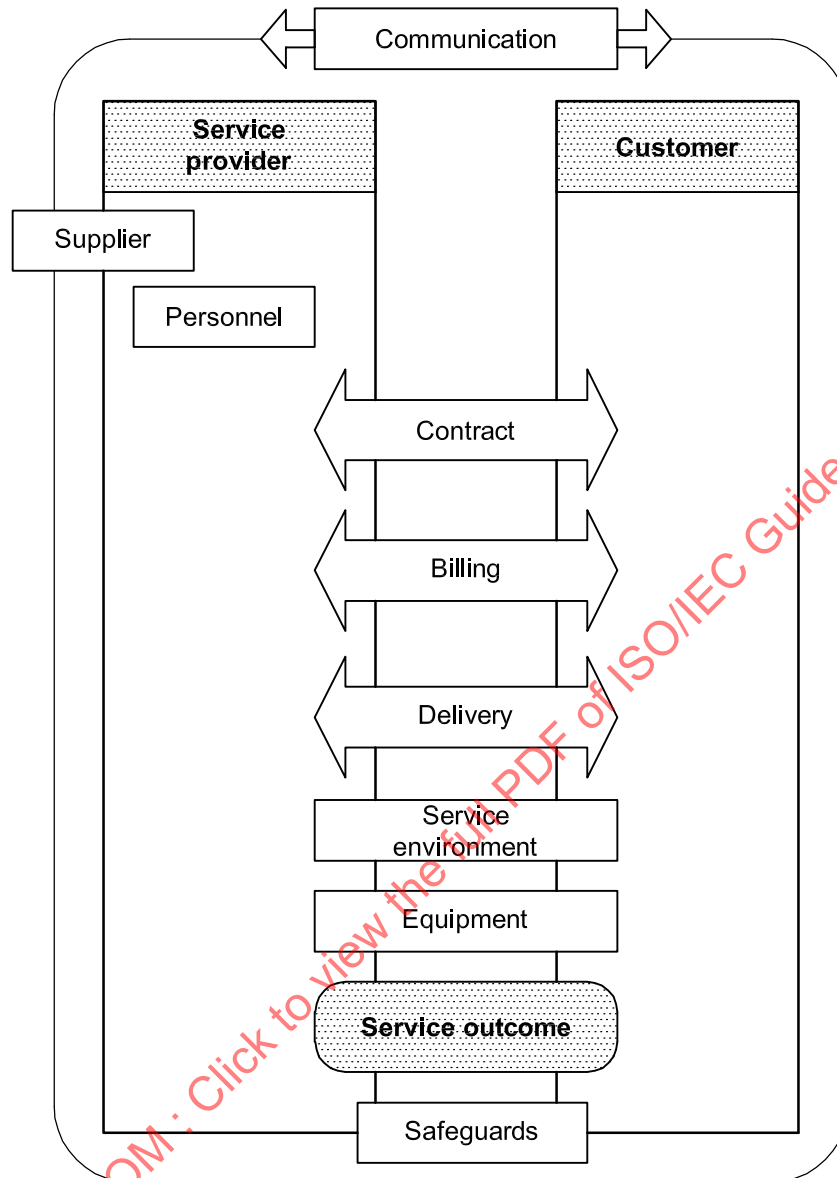


Figure 1 — Service elements and role of communication at all stages of service provision

4.6 Quality

Quality is the extent to which the characteristics of a service fulfil the requirements. Therefore, quality encompasses the many other intangible features that contribute to “good” service. These include factors already considered in subclauses 4.2 to 4.5, such as access to helpful and accurate information, good customer handling and timely provision, but also factors within a framework of environmental impact assessment and sustainable development, such as sustainable use of resources and the ability to recycle. Ease of use is a quality feature for the general populace, but also an access factor for those with some form of impairment. Quality and value for money, as well as safety, are central issues for consumers.

4.7 Redress

Consumers need to feel confident of service delivery and of the fact that, should something go wrong, there are appropriate provisions in place to handle any concerns or claims, irrespective of whether the service is provided nationally or from another country.

4.8 Environmental issues

Environmental considerations are of increasing importance to consumers and may affect their decision-making. Factors include promoting respect for the natural and human environment through reduction of waste, odours, noise and visual pollution, and conservation of the physical, cultural and human heritage.

4.9 Representation

Standards development organizations should ensure that consumers are represented in all technical committees or working groups where the subject matter has an effect on consumers. If this is not feasible, they should use other ways to ensure that consumer interests are taken into account, e.g. through consultation. Where appropriate, the standards themselves should make provision for consumer representation, e.g. through consultation when developing new services.

4.10 Compliance with laws and regulations

Service providers should ensure compliance and proper consideration of applicable statutory and regulatory requirements, from the earliest planning and design stages of the service to service delivery and redress.

5 Using this Guide

5.1 This Guide provides an overview on how consumer interests should be identified and taken into account in the development of standards for services. Standards include international, regional and national standards, as well as sectoral and organizational or company standards. This Guide indicates the areas in which detailed requirements may be drawn up for particular sector-specific standards.

5.2 The documents listed below should all form part of the toolkit for the standards developer.

- a) The ISO/IEC Policy Statement, *Addressing the needs of older persons and people with disabilities in standardization work*^[24], and the complementary guide, ISO/IEC Guide 71, provide standards developers and others with a systematic approach to addressing ageing and disability issues in the writing and revision of International Standards. These documents also help Technical Committees to evaluate how they are addressing such issues in their Work Programmes.
- b) ISO/IEC Guide 51 provides guidance on general safety considerations. ISO/IEC Guide 50 provides more specific guidelines for child safety.
- c) Detailed guidance on specific aspects of service delivery, such as the internationally agreed criteria for customer satisfaction given in ISO 10001, ISO 10002 and ISO 10003, constitutes useful guidance on global customer care.

NOTE ISO 10001 provides guidelines on codes of conduct; ISO 10002 provides guidelines on complaints handling; ISO 10003 provides guidelines on external customer dispute resolution.

5.3 Clause 6 outlines a process which standards developers may use to address the key areas of consumer interest, including the needs of older persons and persons with disabilities.

5.4 Clause 7 identifies the key consumer questions that may be asked when selecting, purchasing or engaging with a service, and indicates the link with the various "service elements" listed in Table 1.

5.5 The service elements, identified from the key consumer questions, may be considered when developing organizational or company standards, or sector-specific standards. Within each service element, there are a number of "topic areas". Clause 8 describes the various topic areas for each service element. Taking all topic areas into account should ensure that consumers' needs are addressed when developing a standard. In the delivery of any service, there may be a sequence of phases in the provision of the service, all involving interaction between the service provider and customer.

NOTE See Figure 2 for an example related to a sporting event; this figure also shows that there can be associated support activities.

5.6 In Clause 9, Tables 2 to 6 provide checklists of the topic areas identified in Clause 8 as a quick way of enabling standards developers to ensure that all relevant aspects are covered.

5.7 Annex B illustrates how different service elements may assume greater or lesser significance when this systematic checklist approach is used to develop standards in very different service sectors (i.e. hair care providers, hotels and life insurance).

NOTE Annex B gives examples rather than exhaustive lists of all necessary requirements for each of these services.

5.8 The Bibliography provides a list of sources that standards developers can use to investigate more detailed and specific guidance materials.¹⁾

5.9 In developing a new service standard, the expectation should be to identify the criteria required to ensure best practice, regardless of the size or location of the service provider. However, the more complex the service, the more optional features there may be to consider. To facilitate the use of standards by even the smallest organization, it is recommended that issues of overriding importance for the particular service being standardized should be identified by means of checklists, from which should be formulated a set of the key criteria with which a small organization should comply. This may be included as an annex (e.g. Annex A of ISO 10002:2004).

Figure 2 illustrates the provision of services by a professional soccer club, where the spectator is the customer ²⁾. Several services may be offered during each phase of the experience. For example, during half-time, music may be played, spectators may buy a drink or snack, or go to the toilet. Support activities include other provision for the same customers, but not directly related to the match, e.g. selling club articles or issuing a magazine. All of these activities need to be planned for and done well if the resulting service is to provide customer satisfaction.

1) The Bibliography is not exhaustive. Users are encouraged to check for current updates and future publications and investigate websites for further material.

2) Based on "ISO 9000 scores in professional soccer – but who is the customer?"^[27].

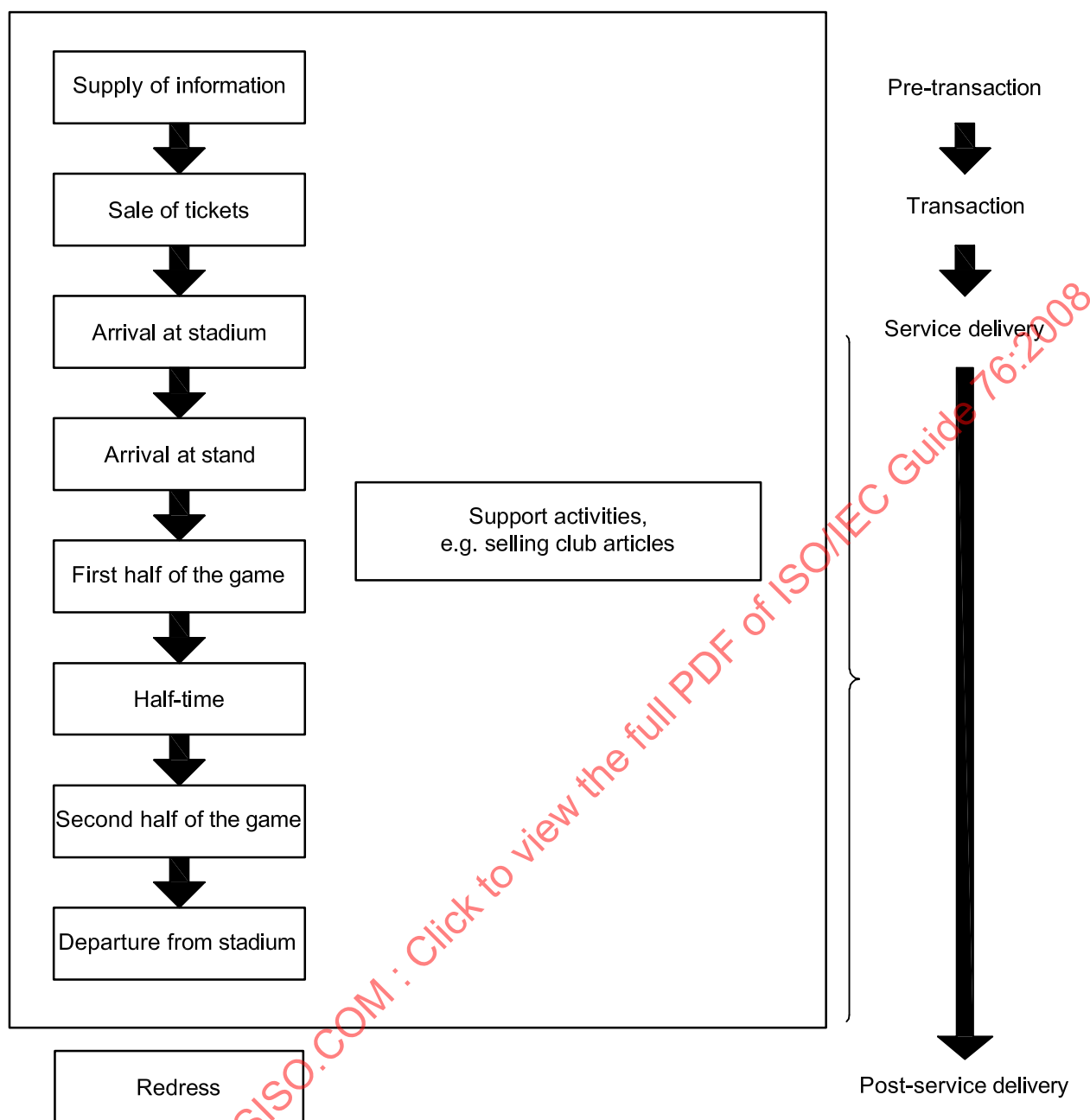


Figure 2 — Example of phases in provision of service (professional soccer)

6 Taking account of consumer issues when developing standards

Committees may find the process ³⁾ outlined in Figure 3 helpful in ensuring that key consumer issues are identified and addressed when developing a new service standard or at each revision of an existing one. The process reads from left to right, with guidance on achieving each objective provided in the columns underneath.

3) Based on a process described in ISO/IEC Guide 71.

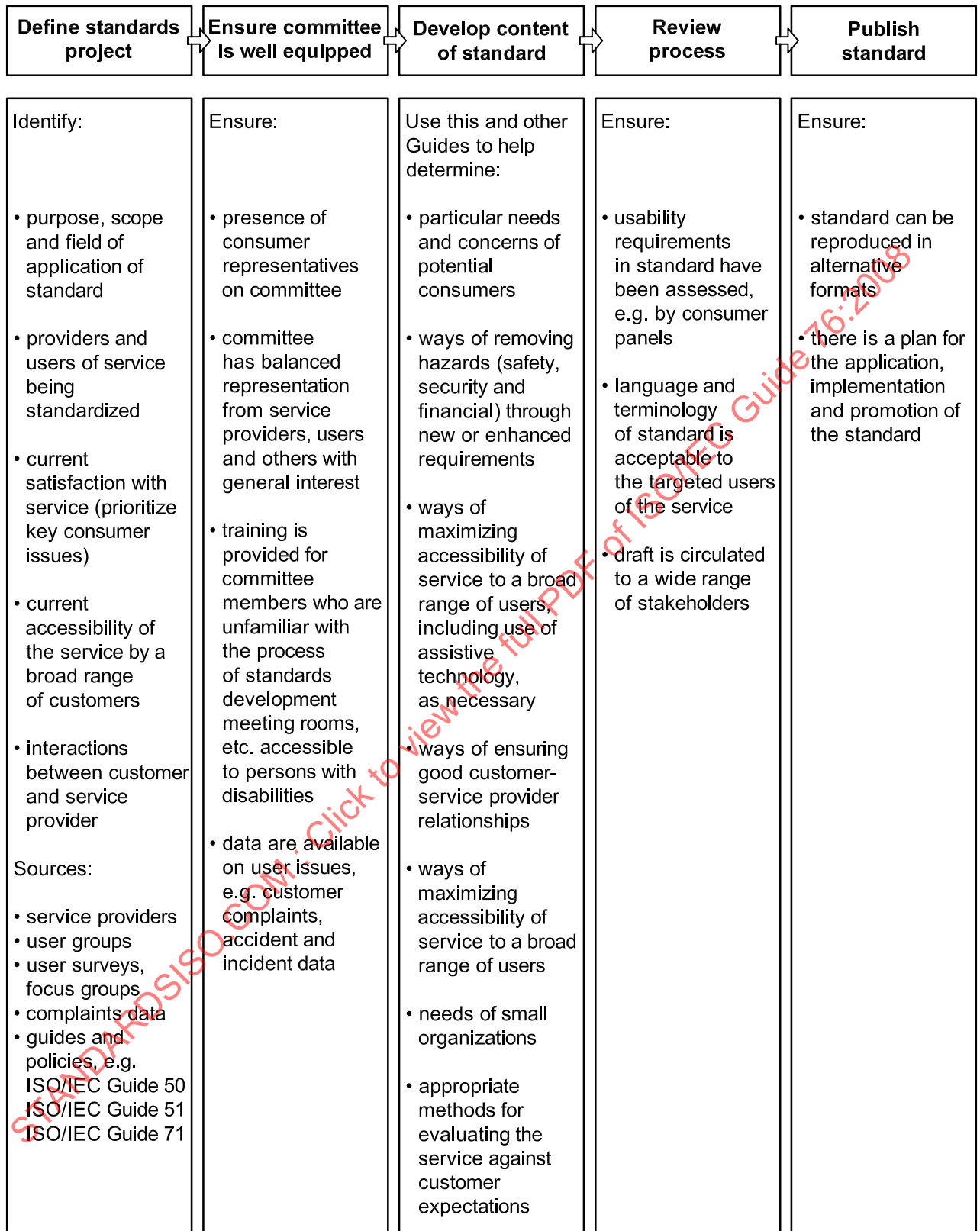


Figure 3 — Identification of consumer issues at each stage of developing standards for services

7 Key consumer questions to address

7.1. When selecting, purchasing or engaging with a service, consumers may ask a variety of questions at each of the stages of service provision. The development of standards that address such questions is likely to increase consumer confidence. Customer complaints and survey data should also be examined to ensure that the requirements in a standard for a service adequately address those areas of dissatisfaction that are of particular importance to consumers.

7.2 Table 1 illustrates the sorts of questions consumers may ask and maps them onto service elements that should be considered when developing any standard for a consumer service. The questions relate to the service provider or service prior to purchase or engagement, during the contract phase, at the time of service delivery and after sales or engagement, which may be after the contract term has ended, or when it is terminated prematurely. The list of questions is not exhaustive; further questions may arise in relation to particular service sectors, which can be mapped across to service elements in the same way.

7.3 The service could be a single event (e.g. attending a music concert, staying at a resort hotel or having an operation in hospital) or continuous (e.g. telephone service provision). It may be made up of a single activity or include several activities, as illustrated in Figure 2. Examples of possible services are given in Annex A.

Table 1 — Key questions consumers may ask and the service element to which they relate

Consumer questions	Service element
Pre-engagement questions about the service provider and service	
1. Do I trust the service provider? Need for up-front information about the honesty, integrity, reputation, solvency, reliability, good quality service, etc. <i>Information may come direct from the service provider, including through association of brand names and/or use of codes pertaining to customer service. It may also come from third parties, such as consumers and other organizations, which rate services, and certification bodies, which do conformity assessments.</i>	Service provider Communication Supplier
2. Am I eligible for the service? <i>Some services are open to all. Others require qualification, e.g. age or skills.</i>	Customer Communication
3. Do I have enough information from the service provider about the service to allow me to make the right decision, in terms of price, value for money, options available, etc.?	Communication
4. Can I understand the information, use it easily, and is there enough but not too much?	Communication
5. Are there any aspects about the service provider or the service that may affect my decision? <i>e.g. environmental, health and safety, social aspects/impacts of the organization or the service, social responsibility.</i>	Service provider Communication
6. Are the organization and its personnel courteous and helpful to me?	Personnel Communication
7. Is it easy for me to contact the organization? <i>e.g. office opening hours, website, freephone helpline number, e-mail access, etc.</i>	Service environment Equipment Communication
8. Does the organization take into account my specific needs and limitations? <i>e.g. older persons, persons with disabilities, youths, different cultures and languages.</i>	Service environment Equipment

Table 1 (continued)

Consumer questions	Service element
Questions about the purchase or engagement stage of service	
9. Do I understand the contract (or implied contract)?	Contract Communication
10. Does the contract give me enough information to make an informed decision? <i>e.g. rights and obligations of buyer, seller and any third party clearly spelled out, standardized format, cancellation right.</i>	Contract Communication
11. Can I see clearly what the service will give me?	Delivery Communication
12. Am I able to trial the service?	Service environment Equipment Communication
13. Do I have a choice of different types or levels of service and, if so, is this made clear?	Delivery Service environment Equipment Communication
14. Are there different ways I can pay and is this made clear? <i>e.g. payments through Internet, deductions from bank account.</i>	Billing Service environment Equipment Communication
Questions about service delivery	
15. Am I getting what I expected, when I expected it, in the way I expected it, and of the quality expected?	Delivery Service outcomes Communication
16. Is the service being provided safely, respecting my privacy, taking account of environmental issues, and without detriment to health or the environment? If not, how do I get assistance? <i>e.g. helplines.</i>	Delivery Service outcomes Equipment Service environment Safeguards Communication
17. Is the service being provided in a courteous, knowledgeable, friendly manner and with an appropriate attitude?	Personnel Communication
Questions about after-sales/post-engagement service	
18. How do I complain and is there a choice of ways of doing so?	Safeguards Communication
19. Is my complaint handled promptly, courteously and knowledgeably, whether the service is provided nationally or from another country?	Personnel Communication
20. Can I get someone independent to consider my complaint if the organization doesn't sort things out?	Personnel Safeguards Communication
21. Are emergency services available if needed?	Safeguards

8 Detailed consideration of service elements and related topic areas

8.1 General

The service elements identified in Clause 7 relate to the parties involved in service delivery (provider, supplier, personnel and customer), the stages of provision (contract, billing and delivery) and related aspects, which may be of equal importance (service environment, equipment, outcome and safeguards). The communication of information is a key aspect of service provision from the consumer's perspective, at all stages of service delivery. Communication is also of great importance within the organization providing a service and between the service provider and its suppliers. Figure 1 illustrates the importance of communication at all stages of service engagement and delivery. Within each service element, there are a number of topic areas to consider, which are detailed in subclauses 8.2 to 8.14. The importance of the various topic areas will depend on the sector for which the standard is being developed. Clause 9 presents the information from subclauses 8.2 to 8.14 in the form of checklists, with prompts for ease of use by standards developers.

8.2 Service provider

8.2.1 General

The service provider may provide one or more of a range of services. These may include

- expert advice or support (e.g. legal advice or financial services),
- the selling of intangible products (e.g. insurance),
- training or education (e.g. language schools or instruction in sports, or other physical activities),
- accommodation and entertainment (e.g. hotel, restaurant or theatre),
- organized and guided activities (particularly connected with tourism),
- hire of equipment (e.g. tools, premises, such as letting agencies, or intangible products, such as Internet service providers), and
- care or treatment (e.g. hairdressers or alternative therapists).

8.2.2 Quality management

Quality encompasses many factors that contribute to ensuring consistently good service provision. Sector-specific service standards could require adherence to, for example, ISO 9001 (which specifies requirements for a quality management system that can be used for internal application by organizations, or for certification, or for contractual purposes) and/or identify key quality requirements for that sector.

8.2.3 Environmental management

Services may have environmental impacts in numerous direct and indirect ways, e.g. in the destruction of forests to provide amenities for tourists in previously undeveloped areas, through increased energy use related to the transportation of people or products and in the disposal of waste materials. ISO Guide 64 has some relevance to the provision of services, many of which include the provision of goods. Sectoral standards could require adherence to ISO 14001 or instead identify key environmental requirements for that sector.

NOTE A number of International Standards for environmental management exist, including Standards for environmental declarations and life-cycle assessments. A non-exhaustive list appears in the Bibliography.

8.2.4 Occupational health and safety management

Most countries have national requirements and agreements governing some aspects of occupational health and safety management; those applicable will depend on the service for which a standard is being developed. There will often be differences between the legislation prevailing in the country in which a service is contracted and that in which the activity is undertaken (e.g. when purchasing holidays). This may directly impact on the consumer (e.g. the length of shift permitted for a coach driver may have potential safety consequences) or be of concern (e.g. an “ethical” purchaser of services).

8.2.5 Solvency and other financial aspects

Solvency of the supplier is a concern for the purchaser of any service, but particularly where there is reliance on a long-term investment, e.g. a private personal pension. Many countries have national requirements and agreements governing some aspects of financial trading which should be taken into account in setting requirements in standards, particularly as financial services are an increasing part of the global market. Liability insurance is one aspect that may be considered.

8.2.6 Integrity

The integrity of the provider may be governed by professional and organizational codes related particularly to that sector. They can include issues such as responsible advertising, selling methods or compliance with national requirements and agreements. In addition, service providers are required to comply with all laws and regulations that apply to their organization.

NOTE 1 Reference can be made to other standards, sector-specific or organizational codes, such as responsible advertising.

NOTE 2 See also ISO 10001.

8.2.7 Capacity

The size or resources of an organization may impact on safeguards available for customers. Consequently, minimum requirements may need to be considered, either at the organizational level or through agreements with other service providers, e.g. networks of small bed and breakfast establishments operating to ensure that customers may be passed on if circumstances require it.

8.2.8 Social responsibility

Social responsibility is a wide area, itself open to interpretation, for which international agreements, national requirements and agreements and organizational or sector requirements may exist, e.g. related to the care of workers or the environment or child labour.

NOTE A future International Standard giving guidance on social responsibility is currently under development.

8.2.9 Human resources

The number, skill and competence of personnel may impact on safety, security or safeguards. Consequently, standards may need to specify the staffing arrangements required of the service provider, e.g. the minimum number of staff (including where this is determined by the type of service provided), their competence and the minimum number of managers per number of employees.

8.3 Suppliers

Organizations supplying the service provider may themselves have a positive or negative impact on the quality of service ultimately provided to the customer. There may be a need to specify minimum requirements for the supplier in the same way as for the direct service provider, e.g. adherence to quality standards. Account may be taken of international agreements, national requirements and agreements, sector-specific codes and any relevant sector-specific standards (e.g. a tour operator uses airlines which comply with national aircraft safety standards, and a kitchen design firm installs equipment which complies with product safety and performance standards).

8.4 Personnel

8.4.1 General

Sectoral standards need to deal principally with personnel, whether employees or volunteers, in direct contact with customers.

8.4.2 Knowledge

Standards could specify minimum requirements in necessary areas, e.g. a need for personnel in direct contact with customers to be fluent in the language of the target user, or to fully understand and be able to explain the organization's complaints procedure.

8.4.3 Skills and competencies

The skills required include the minimum qualifications and experience necessary to carry out the primary service task under the personnel's responsibility as well as ancillary competencies, such as communication skills (particularly where personal care is being delivered), the flexibility to deal with different types of ability and understanding amongst customers, or physical fitness, where appropriate.

8.4.4 Attitude

Professionalism is a requirement of personnel in all phases of delivery, including accountability for actions and decisions, courtesy and attention to the needs of the customer and adherence to sector-specific or organizational ethical codes, such as the customer's confidentiality. Poor attitude is a major source of complaints and is therefore highlighted separately.

8.4.5 Training

The policies and procedures of an organization or a company should include methods for monitoring performance and providing continuing professional development of staff. Training for all sectors should include communication with customers (attitudes and knowledge of the complaints process), safety and health requirements, special needs awareness, etc. Specific training will relate to the role of personnel and the service being delivered.

8.5 Customer

The customer may be someone who is considering engaging with a service, the person who purchases the service or the user of the service. There may be criteria that the customer needs to fulfil to be permitted to contract or receive the service to ensure the safety or security of the service user (either the individual concerned or the group of those engaging). These may include minimum requirements for age, knowledge or skills, attitude (e.g. the customer's respect for facilities, personnel and other customers) or fitness (e.g. a person with a heart condition who wishes to ride a roller coaster). There may need to be specific provision for those who, through age, health or mental ability, are vulnerable users. Where limitations are necessary (e.g. for reasonable reasons of safety), this should be clearly stated.

8.6 Contract

8.6.1 Clarity and transparency

Not all contracts are written: where reliance is placed on an oral contract, it is even more important that other communications, including pre-purchase literature, are clear (see 8.12). Written contracts should use simple, easy-to-follow language and include an explanation of key terms. A sector-specific standard could specify which terms require explanation. Basic print should be of adequate size and alternative formats (e.g. extra large print, other languages) should be available as required. Sectoral standards could provide detail on appropriate formats to suit the service being delivered.

8.6.2 Objectivity and fairness

Reference may be made to national requirements and agreements regarding fair contract terms, cancellation rights, complete costings, data protection, etc. Where the service is one in which a new contract is issued each year, but where the consumer may perceive the service as continuing (e.g. car insurance), the contract should be required to be explicit on whether and what entitlement to continuing service exists. Consideration should be given to whether some entitlement to continuing service is owed to the consumer in that sector and whether detailed specification is necessary.

8.6.3 Format

The layout of the contract has an impact on how easy it is to follow. The location of key information and the manner in which it is presented should take account of international, national or sector-specific agreements.

8.7 Billing

8.7.1 Information related to payment

Invoices or statements should be clear on aspects such as whether service charges, taxes, delivery charges, etc. are included. Where appropriate (e.g. in the context of telephone service, electricity or gas supply), unit pricing information should also be given.

8.7.2 Mode of payment

Modes of payment may include cash, vouchers, debit or credit card and electronic funds transfer. The mode of payment should include those appropriate for the service being delivered, with clear indications of where an expected method of payment is not available and any surcharges related to particular methods of payment. Consumers may prefer to have a choice of modes of payment.

8.7.3 Conditions

Information should be clear on the time period for part or full payment for the service, provision for independent holding of large sums (e.g. a deposit on house purchase) and information on whether taxes/gratuities are to be added. There should be provision for on-the-spot sorting of complaints, and clear reference to the organization's complaints procedure and the provision made for external dispute resolution.

NOTE See also ISO 10002 and ISO 10003.

8.8 Delivery

8.8.1 Specification of activities

Sectoral standards should outline the various activities that may be considered to be part of the service and any that are required items.

8.8.2 Trustworthiness

Sectoral standards should describe the delivery agreements that may be expected. Reference may be made to adherence to sector-specific rating schemes, such as hotel grading schemes.

8.8.3 Privacy

Adherence to national privacy and data protection requirements should be included.

8.8.4 Safety

A variety of other standards or applicable statutory or regulatory requirements may be relevant to the issue of safety, e.g. in relation to the service environment, the equipment used or the goods supplied as part of the particular service being delivered.

8.8.5 Health and hygiene

A variety of other standards or applicable statutory or regulatory requirements may be relevant to the issues of health and hygiene, e.g. in relation to the service environment or the goods supplied as part of the particular service being delivered.

8.8.6 Environmental aspects

The conservation of the environmental, cultural and human heritage should be considered, which may include waste handling (reduction, recovery or recycling), reduction of odours and noise and visual pollution. There may be reference to increasing customer and personnel awareness of respect for the environment.

8.8.7 Code of conduct

ISO 10001 may provide reference on codes of conduct. Consideration should also be given to the organizational mission, values and commitment to quality and any sector-specific codes.

8.8.8 Security

Security encompasses the person (e.g. adult/child and leader/group supervision arrangements), belongings (e.g. facilities for secure storage of valuables), investments, financial information and customer's identity (e.g. restrictions on access to personal data, Internet codes, etc.). The relative importance of each of these will vary depending on the service being delivered.

8.9 Service outcome

8.9.1 Satisfaction

There should be reference to methods used to establish customer satisfaction, including regular analysis of complaints data and customer surveys.

8.9.2 Continual improvement

Service providers should foresee some type of continual improvement. Quality management standards (e.g. ISO 9004) provide for continual improvement. Ways of achieving this include analysing complaints, claims and incident (or accident) data, as appropriate, and other feedback through surveys of customer satisfaction being carried out at regular intervals, along with ongoing investigation of customer needs and requirements in order to continually improve service provision.

8.10 Service environment

8.10.1 General

The environment for service delivery may be a location (e.g. a salesroom, a workroom, the countryside or the customer's own home), or it may be part of a network of locations (e.g. a railway network, an airline terminal or a passenger vehicle).

8.10.2 Health and safety requirements

Compliance with international agreements, standards and national requirements and agreements (e.g. daylight access in offices, temperature, air quality, provision of lavatories) should be clearly stated. Some specific requirements may be necessary for particular service sectors.

8.10.3 Accessibility

Compliance with relevant statutory and regulatory requirements and agreements (e.g. the Americans with Disabilities Act, or the European Mandate M283) and with standards (e.g. ISO/IEC Guide 71) should be specified. Particular requirements may be necessary for specific service sectors.

8.11 Equipment

8.11.1 Quality and safety requirements

Articles and facilities used in service delivery should be safe and fit for purpose and, where appropriate, comply with relevant standards and any national technical requirements (e.g. trains in public transport services, drills used when fitting kitchens). Requirements may include, for example, manual handling requirements, safety guards, etc.

Goods supplied as part of a service should also conform with relevant standards and applicable statutory and regulatory requirements and agreements, e.g. food hygiene standards.

8.11.2 Accessibility

The size and shape of furniture, fixtures and fittings should be suitable for target users, including those who have special needs, e.g. due to mobility, visual or hearing impairment or age (children or older persons).

8.11.3 Other relevant requirements

Requirements may need to be specified for areas in which risk management is necessary. A maintenance specification may also be needed, e.g. if the service provided includes equipment which should be checked regularly, such as playground equipment.

8.12 Safeguards

8.12.1 Interruption or alteration to service

8.12.1.1 Emergency measures

In the event of an interruption in service or emergency affecting the service or the safety of users, users expect timely information on the nature of the incident, risks involved, contact details, clear instructions and the time before normal service is resumed and temporary solutions available. A policy, procedures, appropriate equipment and access to emergency services for various relevant scenarios should be specified. A sector-specific standard may identify appropriate scenarios and applicable statutory or regulatory requirements may exist for particular circumstances.

8.12.1.2 Company restructure/merger/relocation

In the event of a company takeover, merger, relocation or equivalent event which may have an impact on the consumer (e.g. in relation to access to the service or potential changes to terms of conditions), there should be appropriate measures to advise consumers and to provide for some reasonable continuation of service and appropriate time delays before new conditions come into effect.

8.12.2 Liability provision

The organization should carry appropriate insurance of an adequate level, depending on the resources of the organization. Sectoral standards should identify the particular areas for which insurance may be needed and minimum levels.

8.12.3 Guarantees

There should be guarantees of reasonable performance provided to the customer, which will be dependent on the service being delivered (e.g. the time within which a train should arrive, or the hour until which a hotel room should be kept). Sectoral standards should identify which aspects should be covered and whether minimum requirements are necessary.

8.12.4 Redress

Provision should be made for where there is a failure to deliver the agreed service (e.g. automatic compensation from an electricity company in the case of an interrupted power supply, or from an airline operator if a plane is delayed longer than a specified period). Such commitments may be made in a code of conduct (see 8.13.7). There should also be clear reference to the organization's complaints procedure and the provision made for external dispute resolution. Reference should be made to ISO 10002.

NOTE See also ISO 10001 and ISO 10003.

8.13 Communication between service provider and customer

8.13.1 General

Communication between the customer and service provider occurs before, during and after providing the service. The information contained in advertising and other pre-engagement literature can be of great importance, along with details related to agreeing the contract, providing and paying the bill and any follow-up related to guarantees, maintenance and complaints.

8.13.2 Method

Sectoral standards should set out the information and communication technology which may be used (e.g. face-to-face, Internet, telephone, fax, letter, e-mail) and any specific requirements. Alternative formats and the opportunity for person-to-person contact should always be available.

8.13.3 Content

A detailed description of the service to be delivered should be provided, together with any specific requirements, especially with respect to children. The price, including any taxes or service charges, method of payment and bill should be outlined. Guarantees available and forms of redress, including the claims and complaints-handling policy, activity-cancellation policy (e.g. permitted cancellation period) should be clear. There should also be a requirement for clear contact details for the service provider and information on availability of, and access to, third-party references.

The standard should consider layout for forms, terminology, and syntax rules for electronic messages. Language should be clear, transparent and truthful, taking into account potential special needs of customers. There may also be sector-specific national or international requirements, agreements and standards to consider.

NOTE ISO/IEC Guide 14 provides guidance on the provision of information.

8.13.4 Frequency of interaction

Failures in communication can lead to problems for customers and complaints to the service provider. Sectoral standards should indicate the key stages at which communication is appropriate or necessary, related to the phases of service delivery, along with any minimum frequency/interval criteria. Consideration should be given to appropriate speed of response, especially where "real-time" communications are possible (e.g. telephone calls or use of the Internet).

8.13.5 Approachability

Inability to make contact with an organization is a potential source of frustration to customers. Clear information should be given on the availability of the organization and appropriate personnel for all users (including location, hours available, average waiting time, cost per calls, media, alternative formats, etc.) and these should be appropriate to the service being delivered.

8.13.6 Attitude policy

Organizations should have a policy and procedures in relation to customer service, including requirements for courtesy and attention (see also 8.4).

8.13.7 Code of conduct

Information should be supplied on whether the organization's code of conduct is publicly available and, if so, how to access it. It may be possible to identify particular commitments which should be made in sector-specific standards.

8.13.8 Customer satisfaction measurement

Methods for obtaining feedback appropriate to the service being delivered should be outlined. These should ensure provision for obtaining responses from a wide section of users, including those with special needs.

NOTE Work is being considered on guidance on methods for measuring and monitoring customer satisfaction, as part of the series of standards prepared by ISO/TC 176.

8.14 Communication within service organization

8.14.1 General

There should be good communication within the service provider organization and between this organization and any suppliers.

8.14.2 Method

Sectoral standards should set out the information and communication technology which may be used (e.g. face-to-face, telephone, fax, letter, e-mail) and any specific requirements. Alternative formats should always be available.

8.14.3 Frequency of interaction

Failures in communication can lead to problems for customers and complaints to the service provider. Sectoral standards should indicate the key stages at which communication within an organization or between the organization and its suppliers is appropriate or necessary, related to the phases of service delivery, along with any minimum frequency/interval criteria.

8.14.4 Shared information

Policies and procedures should cover the amount and quality of the information to be shared between the service provider and its suppliers or within different departments of the service organization, particularly in relation to customer confidentiality. This should include controls on the use of personal data, particularly for advertising, sale to other organizations, etc.

9 Checklist

Tables 2 to 6 identify the topic areas for each service element, as described in Clause 8. The numbering in the second column of the tables corresponds to the subclauses in Clause 8, which provide more detail on the individual topic areas. The third column of each table provides prompts for the information that may be incorporated or sought when developing the standard, rather than a detailed description of all possible relevant information. Illustration of the relevance of the checklist to three different kinds of service (hair care, hotels and insurance) is given in Annex B.

Table 2 — Checklist of topics to consider, related to the service provider

Service element	Topic area	Prompts to be considered in standard development
Service provider <i>providing one or more of the following:</i> — <i>expert advice/support (e.g. legal/financial)</i> — <i>intangible products (e.g. insurance)</i> — <i>training and education (e.g. sports instruction)</i> — <i>accommodation/entertainment (e.g. hotel, theatre)</i> — <i>organized & guided activities (e.g. tourism)</i> — <i>equipment/premises hire (e.g. letting agencies, tools hire, Internet service provider)</i> — <i>care or treatment (e.g. hairdressers, alternative therapies)</i>	8.2.2 Quality management	other standards, e.g. ISO 9001 and ISO 9004; sector-specific requirements
	8.2.3 Environmental management	other standards, e.g. ISO 14001
	8.2.4 Occupational health and safety management	international agreements; standards; national requirements and agreements
	8.2.5 Solvency and other financial aspects	financial stability, including liability insurance international agreements; standards; national requirements and agreements
	8.2.6 Integrity	e.g. responsible advertising professional and organizational codes; access to third-party references
	8.2.7 Capacity	size/resources may impact on safeguards available
	8.2.8 Social responsibility	international agreements, standards; national requirements and agreements (e.g. child labour); organizational or sector-specific requirements
	8.2.9 Human resources	e.g. minimum number of staff and their skill and competence may impact on safety, security or safeguards

Table 3 — Checklist of topics related to the service provider supplier, personnel and customer

Service element	Topic area	Prompts to be considered in standard development
Supplier <i>may provide:</i> — <i>goods supplied as part of the service</i> — <i>personnel involved in carrying out the service</i>	8.3	international agreements; standards; national requirements and agreements; sector-specific or organizational codes e.g. tour operator uses airlines that comply with national aircraft safety standards; kitchen design firm installs equipment that complies with product safety and performance standards
Personnel <i>principally those with direct contact with customer</i>	8.4.2 Knowledge	in required areas, e.g. language of target customer, organization's complaints procedure
	8.4.3 Skills and competencies	minimum qualifications and experience necessary; physical fitness, where appropriate
	8.4.4 Attitude	professionalism in all phases of delivery, including accountability for actions and decisions, courtesy and attention, confidentiality
	8.4.5 Training	organization or company policies and procedures, including monitoring performance e.g. attitudes, safety, knowledge of complaints process, special needs awareness
Customer <i>potential or actual customer</i>	8.5	criteria to be fulfilled in order to be permitted to contract or receive the service, e.g. age, knowledge or skills, attitude (respect of facilities, personnel and other customers), fitness (e.g. allergies) may relate to safety or security of service user (individual and group); consider vulnerable users (age, mental ability)

Table 4 — Checklist of topics to consider related to the contract, billing and service delivery

Service element	Topic area	Prompts to be considered in standard development
Contract	8.6.1 Clarity and transparency	e.g. legibility, alternative formats
	8.6.2 Objectivity and fairness	fair contract terms; cancellation procedure; detailed costings
	8.6.3 Format	layout; location of key information and manner in which presented take account of national requirements and agreements
Billing	8.7.1 Information related to payment	whether service charges, taxes, etc. are included
	8.7.2 Mode of payment	payment method, penalties, security issues
	8.7.3 Conditions	time period for part or full payment; provision for independent holding of large sums (e.g. deposit on house purchase); information on whether taxes/gratuities are to be added
Delivery <i>requirements for activities</i>	8.8.1 Specification of activities	e.g. description of activities to be undertaken, required items, level of detail
	8.8.2 Trustworthiness	delivery agreements
	8.8.3 Privacy	data protection requirements; international agreements; standards; national requirements and agreements; sector-specific or organizational codes
	8.8.4 Safety	other standards
	8.8.5 Health and hygiene	other standards
	8.8.6 Environmental aspects	conservation of environmental, cultural and human heritage; waste handling (reduction, recovery or recycling); reduction of odours, noise and visual pollution; increasing customer and personnel awareness of respect for environment
	8.8.7 Code of conduct	other standards, e.g. ISO 10001; organizational mission; values; commitment to quality
	8.8.8 Security	of person (e.g. adult-child/leader-group supervision arrangements); of belongings (facilities for secure storage of valuables); of financial information and customer's identity (restrictions on access to personal data, Internet codes)

Table 5 — Checklist of topics to consider related to service outcomes and other aspects

Service element	Topic area	Prompts to be considered in standard development
Service outcome	8.9.1 Satisfaction	analysis of complaints data, customer surveys
	8.9.2 Continual improvement	other standards, e.g. ISO 9004; analysing complaints, claims and incident (or accident) data, as appropriate; survey of customer satisfaction
Service environment <i>e.g. workroom, home, railway network</i>	8.10.2 Health and safety requirements	international agreements; standards; national requirements and agreements, e.g. requirements for daylight access in offices, temperature, air quality, provision of lavatories
	8.10.3 Accessibility	compliance with national requirements, agreements and standards, e.g. national disability legislation consider needs of people with various kinds of disability, including visual, hearing, mobility and learning e.g. tactile markings, hearing aid loops, avoidance of stairs, clear and simple signage
Equipment <i>supporting service delivery</i>	8.11.1 Quality and safety requirements	articles and facilities used in service delivery comply with relevant standards and national technical requirements (e.g. trains in public transport services, drills used when fitting kitchens) e.g. requirements for manual handling of equipment, safety guards goods, supplied as part of service, conform to relevant standards, national requirements and agreements, food safety and hygiene standards.
	8.11.2 Accessibility	size and shape of furniture, fixtures and fittings suitable for target users, including special needs
	8.11.3 Other relevant requirements	maintenance specification; risk management
Safeguards	8.12.1 Interruption or alteration to service	policy, procedures, equipment for various emergency scenarios, including risk management; access to emergency services appropriate measures to advise consumers, provide continuation of service, etc. in the event of a company takeover, merger, relocation or equivalent
	8.12.2 Liability provision	appropriate insurance of adequate level
	8.12.3 Guarantees	reasonable performance, e.g. time within which train should arrive, hour until which hotel room should be kept
	8.12.4 Redress	complaints handling and external dispute resolution other standards, e.g. ISO 10002

Table 6 — Checklist of topics to consider related to communication at all stages

Service element	Topic area	Prompts to be considered in standard development
Communication <i>between customer and service provider (before, during and after providing the service), includes:</i> — advertising — pre-engagement literature — contract — billing	8.13.2 Method	information and communication technology to be used (face-to-face, telephone, fax, letter, e-mail); alternative formats; forms layout, syntax rules for electronic messages; international agreements; standards (e.g. ISO/IEC Guide 14); national requirements and agreements
	8.13.3 Content	detailed description of service to be delivered; any specific requirements, especially with respect to children; cost, including any taxes or service charges; method of payment; bill; guarantees; claims and complaints-handling policy; activity cancellation policy; contact details for service provider terminology; clear, transparent, truthful language, taking into account potential special needs of customers international agreements; standards (e.g. ISO/IEC Guide 14); national requirements and agreements
	8.13.4 Frequency of interaction	specification of minimum frequency/interval related to phases of service delivery
	8.13.5 Approachability	to organization and appropriate staff for all users, e.g. location, hours available, average waiting time; cost per calls; mode of contact
	8.13.6 Attitude policy	courtesy and attention
	8.13.7 Code of conduct	whether it exists and is publicly available
	8.13.8 Customer satisfaction measurement	methods for obtaining feedback guidance related to the standards under consideration prepared by ISO/TC 176
Communication <i>within the service organization or between this organization and its suppliers</i>	8.14.2 Method	information and communication technology to be used (face-to-face, telephone, fax, letter, e-mail); alternative formats
	8.14.3 Frequency of interaction	specification of minimum frequency/interval related to phases of service delivery
	8.14.4 Shared information	amount/quality, particularly in relation to customer

Annex A (informative)

Examples of possible services

For the purposes of this Guide, services include, but are not limited to, the following:

- activity performed on a customer-supplied tangible product (e.g. automobile service or repair);
- provision of expert advice or support to customers (e.g. legal or financial advice);
- provision of intangible products (e.g. insurance);
- training and education for users (e.g. instruction in languages, sports, crafts);
- accommodation or entertainment (e.g. hotel, theatre);
- organized and guided activities for participants (e.g. tourism, activity holidays);
- rental of equipment/premises (e.g. letting agencies, tools hire, telephone service, Internet service provider);
- care or treatment of customers (e.g. hairdressers, dentists);
- health care;
- network services (e.g. telecommunications, cable, Internet, electricity and fuel delivery services);
- transport services (e.g. buses, trains, ferries and airlines).

Annex B

(informative)

Illustration of the relevance of the checklist to different kinds of services

B.1 Table B.1 indicates how different service elements assume greater or lesser importance when the checklist is applied to different types of service. The examples are illustrative and thus incomplete. It would be expected that an actual standard developed for any of these service areas would be much more detailed.

B.2 The hairdresser represents a small organization, which may be a sole self-employed person or single outlet operation.

B.3 The hotel is an example of a complex service provider, where the main service is providing accommodation but the service package includes a reception (for booking, guidance when entering and leaving, advice throughout the stay), a room (with equipment such as a bed, shower, other furniture, trouser press, and less tangible aspects, e.g. the view or decor), breakfast and room service, facilities (e.g. a bar and swimming pool) and other services (e.g. providing excursions). The hotel may itself be one of many owned or franchised under a particular brand name, with linked reservation systems and Internet booking.

B.4 Life insurance is an example of an intangible product, in which consumer concerns may relate to the difficulty of working out which insurance to choose, due to lack of transparency of information (as different companies may present information in different ways) and reliable indicators of trustworthiness (e.g. whether the supplier will be able to pay when it is necessary).