ISO Central Secretariat

our date
2001-05-14

our reference
ISO/TMB/TSP 194

TO THE ISO MEMBER BODIES

Dear Sir or Madam,

ISO/TS/P 194 ***Standardization of service activities relating to drinking water supply and sewerage – Quality criteria of the service and performance indicators***

Please find enclosed herewith a copy of a proposal for a new field of technical activity submitted by AFNOR (France).

According to subclause 1.5.6 of Part 1 of the ISO/IEC Directives, you are kindly invited to complete the enclosed ballot form and return it to the Secretariat of the ISO Technical Management Board before **17 August 2001**, or as an attachment to *tmb@iso.ch* if you wish to reply by e-mail.

Yours faithfully,

Signed by:
Michael A. Smith
Secretary of the Technical Management Board

Enclosures

cc: Vice-President (technical management)

Texte français au verso

hg/tsp194cl

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR STANDARDIZATION • МЕЖДУНАРОДНАЯ ОРГАНИЗАЦИЯ ПО СТАНДАРТИЗАЦИИ • ORGANISATION INTERNATIONALE DE NORMALISATION

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PROPOSAL FOR A NEW FIELD OF TECHNICAL ACTIVITY	
Date of proposal **17 April 2001**	Reference number (to be given by Central Secretariat) **ISO/TS/P 194**
Proposer **AFNOR**	

A proposal for a new field of technical activity shall be submitted to the Central Secretariat, which will assign it a reference number and process the proposal in accordance with the ISO/IEC Directives (part 1, subclause 1.5). The proposer may be a member body of ISO, a technical committee or subcommittee, the Technical Management Board or a General Assembly committee, the Secretary-General, a body responsible for managing a certification system operating under the auspices of ISO, or another international organization with national body membership. Guidelines for proposing and justifying a new field of technical activity are given in the ISO/IEC Directives (part 1, annex Q).

The proposal (to be completed by the proposer)

Subject (the subject shall be described unambiguously and as concisely as possible)

Title : Standardization of service activities relating to drinking water supply and sewerage – Quality criteria of the service and performance indicators.

The draft concerns the sector of services pertaining to the supply of drinking water and to wastewater sewerage, services for which local authorities are responsible vis-à-vis their populations and their environment.
The draft consists in having recourse to standardisation as an instrument of progress for improving the quality of these services.

It will contribute towards :

- facilitating the dialogue between the users and the authorities responsible for the water supply and sewerage system services so that user expectations are better taken into account and so that the management of the services by the relevant authorities is more transparent,

- specifying good practice rules for a better management both of the water resources and of the patrimony of the services,

- defining objective quality assessment criteria and performance indicators enabling to measure the results of the services delivered and to compare them with the objectives agreed upon between the interested parties,

  facilitating the monitoring of the progress accomplished within a same water supply service and a benchmarking between different water services.

Scope (the scope shall define precisely the limits of the proposed new field of activity and shall begin with "Standardization of ..." or "Standardization in the field of ...")

Standardisation of service activities relating to the supply of drinking water and to wastewater and rainwater sewerage.

This could include :

- The defining of a language common to the different players : users, local or national public authorities responsible for the water services , public or private technicians entrusted by these authorities, with the management of the water services, research departments, laboratories , etc.
- The clarification of the needs of the users, specifying the characteristics of the elements of the service as well as the manner in which to express the performances awaited by the users,
- The drawing up of guidelines for the management of a drinking water supply system including all the operations allowing to meet the needs of the users : management of the untreated water resources, production, transport, storage, distribution of drinking water, maintenance and development of the material and immaterial patrimony of the service,
- The drawing up of guidelines for the management of a wastewater or rainwater sewerage system including all the operations allowing to meet the health-related needs of the users and the protection of the environment and of the water resources : collection of wastewater and rainwater, treatment prior to discharge into the receiving medium, conditioning of the sludges and residues in view of their recovery or elimination, maintenance and development of the patrimony,
- The proposal, in each case, of measurable service quality criteria and performance indicators allowing to compare the observed results with the targeted objectives.

The planned standards would place particular emphasis on the «results» aspect of the different service activities and would give full scope to the authorities in charge and to their administrators as regards the level of the results and the means to be implemented in order to attain them.
Consequently, the standards would leave their users free to select corresponding quality criteria, performance indicators and values for objectives to be reached.

Purpose and justification (the justification shall endeavour to assess the economic and social advantages which would result from the adoption of International Standards in the proposed new field)

Justification :

The demographic, industrial and agricultural expansion observed throughout the world has induced the highest political authorities to concern themselves with the fresh water resources required for this said expansion.
It appears that these resources, in particular the portion that can be used for meeting the needs of human consumption, are becoming scarcer both quantity and quality wise, and that considerable investments will be required in order to meet the needs of the world population and more especially of the emerging countries.

Moreover, as a result of the world consumer movement, consumers who use the water services, both in the most industrialised countries and in the emerging countries, are more and more demanding concerning the quality of the water service. They are also more and more sensitive to the transparency of the management and to the quality/price ratio of these services.
They are therefore very concerned about understanding their water invoice and about obtaining as low a rate as possible.

Admittedly, in the majority of the countries, regulations in more or less abundant number exist concerning the water intended for human consumption and the wastewater intended for purification in view of being returned to the natural environment. But the purpose of these regulations is not to describe the manner in which a water supply service is to be managed : they decree quality criteria for the water guaranteeing the health protection of the populations and the preservation of the environment.

It is why the normative channel, consensus-based and associating the reflections of all the interested parties, appears the best suited for seeking to meet the needs of the users and of their environment, while complying with the regulations.

Objectives :

The objectives of the proposed standardisation are therefore to aid the relevant public or private authorities and their administrators :

- to better ensure the dialogue with the users and their representative associations,
- to better preserve the environment – and in particular the fresh water resources,
- to better manage the patrimony of the water supply services, to valorise it better and to rationalise the investments which are always very heavy within this sector,
- to participate in promoting ongoing development by protecting and economising on the water resources.

The use, as recommended, of performance indicators concerning the results of the delivered services will allow the authorities in charge of a given water supply service and their public or private administrators to observe the progress accomplished over the course of time.
It will also allow them to compare themselves, by benchmarking, with other water supply services insofar as the parameters characteristic of their respective situations will be similar and comparable, and thus to progress even more by exchanging ideas and management methods.

Furthermore, periodic customer satisfaction surveys conducted among the users will allow to ascertain that the quality of the service they perceive corresponds to the quality awaited by them.

The rationalisation of the management methods resulting from the application of the standards
(rationalisation which relies on organisational provisions such as those recommended by the standards of the ISO 9000 or ISO 14 000 series) as well as the general raising of the service quality, will result in a better training of the personnel, a better realisation of the stakes and a better control of the cost prices and of the final price of the water.

Standards are essentially of voluntary application.
They do not act as a substitute for regulations.
It would be possible to use them irrespective of the management method (direct or delegated management).
On the other hand, they may very naturally be implemented in support of administrative instructions or of commercial contracts concluded between the authorities in charge of the water supply services and the administrators (public or private) to whom they will decide to entrust the management of the said services.

Programme of work (list of principal questions which the proposer wishes to be included within the limits given in the proposed scope, indicating what aspects of the subject should be dealt with, e.g. terminology, test methods, dimensions and tolerances, performance requirements, technical specifications, etc.)

The **principle subjects** to be dealt with in the service standards should be as follows :

- **A terminology** able to be used in the relations between the different interested parties, in particular : the users, the relevant authorities, their administrators, the relevant administrations, the research departments, the laboratories,
- **The good practice rules** for a rational and economic management of the drinking water supply services and of the drinking water or wastewater sewerage services, in compliance with the regulations,
- Proposals for **service quality criteria** and **for associated performance indicators**, in order to objectively measure the results of the services offered to the users and to be able to compare them with the values of objectives agreed upon either with these same users or internally between the relevant authority and its administrator,
- Proposals for **activity indicators** (or for implemented means) which allow to realise the efficacy of the efforts deployed in order to attain the results measured by the performance indicators, the assessment of the influence of the local conditions on the observed results could be taken into account.

Survey of similar work undertaken in other bodies (relevant documents to be considered: national standards or other normative documents)

France :

- NF P 15 900-1
- NF P 15 900-2
- PR P 15 900-3
- PR P 15 900-4

Other countries:

- No standard of this type
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Liaison organizations (list of organizations or external or internal bodies with which cooperation and liaison should be established)

IWA (International Water Association)

EUREAU (European Union of National Associations of Water Suppliers and Waste Water Services)

Other comments (if any)

- A recent survey conducted by EUREAU (Water Suppliers Union) showed that the majority of European countries have since a few years been showing concern about the monitoring and assessment of the performances of water supply and sewerage services. In the United Kingdom, Italy, and Belgium in particular, the water suppliers commit themselves in a precise manner towards the user regarding service elements such as : intervention times, continuity of water supply, limitation in the interruption times, quality of water distributed…

- Some initiatives have to date been launched by different countries or associations on these water topics :

- ***6 Scandinavian cities*** defined by mutual agreement Performance Indicators (PI) and subsequently compared their results in 7 elements pertaining to the activity of water supply service ,
- A Trade Association regrouping 18 Dutch companies defined comparison elements in order to assess the performances of water suppliers, to define good practices and to improve their efficiency ,
- A study was published by the ***IWA*** in July 2000 concerning performance indicators in water supply services and the experimentation of this study in several Southern European countries is continuing through to 2003.
- ***Brazil*** recently introduced a system of performance indicators similar to that of the already mentioned European countries, managed by a governmental body and implemented by different agents.
- In ***South Africa,*** next publication of a document in favour of practise of benchmarking between water services of this country,
- In ***Malaysia*****,** the Public Work Minister established a system of performance indicators which applies to Water services of the 13 federal countries.

- However, to date, none of the countries has published any standards or good practice guides on the subject.

It therefore appears, through this information, that an international standardisation, relying on the ISO 9000 (2000) standard, would unquestionably be an enormous source of progress,

in defining services which satisfy the wishes expressed by the users,

in selecting the performance indicators,

in distinguishing the results observed by the user,

in introducing the activities and means,

in striving towards a better quality/price ratio for the user.

The experience acquired by the French water suppliers from the foreign organising authorities of such services, allows one to believe that the French standards are able to be easily transposed at international level.

A distinction between developed countries and emerging countries will perhaps impose itself, and could well result in the fixing of different priorities and notably the taking into account of social acceptability of the price of the service.

However, the fact of introducing, through voluntary application standards, a dialogue between the different interested parties (end-user, organising authority, administrator), can only but be beneficial for everyone.

The finality of these service standards is the quest for a dynamic current of continuous quality improvement through the promotion of good practices stemming from experience, leaving each manager free for the choice of his methods and means.

The French Standards Association (AFNOR) proposes its services in order to hold the Secretariat of the Technical Committee forming the subject of the request .

Signature of the proposer *Etienne DUPONT*

Comments of the Secretary-General (to be completed by the Central Secretariat)

Signature *Michael A. SMITH*