

ISO 27500:2016(E) Introduction – The Human-Centred Organization

Human well-being is now recognized by the G7 (the world's seven biggest economies) as an important economic measure to complement traditional measures of national output. Organizations are being judged not only on their return on the investment of their owners, but also on much broader issues such as how well they fulfil their responsibility to the society and the impact they have on the environment in both the short and long term. In those areas, organizations often turn to high level standards such as ISO 26000, ISO 31000, and ISO/IEC 38500.

This International Standard explains to executive board members the values and beliefs that make an organization human-centred, the significant business and operational benefits that arise, and the policies they need to put in place to achieve this. This International Standard identifies the key criteria which demonstrate that each principle has been met, the implications for the organization of failing to meet the relevant criteria and what steps can be taken to mitigate the risks of such failure.

Adding value by applying a human-centred approach to enhance total system performance and human well-being is the objective of ergonomics (also known as human factors). ISO 26800 describes the general ergonomics approach and specifies basic ergonomics principles and concepts applicable to the design and evaluation of tasks, jobs, products, tools, equipment, systems, organizations, services, facilities, and environments. There are a number of standards on ergonomics and human factors based on these principles and concepts which can be used by managers, engineers, and designers in selecting, designing, and managing systems and equipment to ensure that they are effective, efficient, and satisfying to use. These International Standards are not normally the direct concern of the executive board of an organization.

This International Standard, in contrast, draws on that extensive body of ergonomics and human factors knowledge and presents the rationale and general principles of *human-centredness* in a concise form for executive board members. It explains the seven principles which characterize a human-centred organization.

These principles are the following:

- capitalize on individual differences as an organizational strength;
- make usability and accessibility strategic business objectives;
- adopt a total system approach;
- ensure health, safety, and well-being are business priorities;
- value employees and create a meaningful work environment;
- be open and trustworthy;
- act in socially responsible ways.

In design processes, the term user-centred is often used to reflect that the design of the product, system, or service takes account of human characteristics both to minimize risks and to optimize well-being and performance. The term human-centred is used to reflect that organizations not only have an impact on their customers (the users of their products and services), but also on their employees, their families and the wider community.

This International Standard is intended to be useful to all types of organizations (whether large or small) in the private, public, and non-profit sectors. While not all parts of this International Standard will be of equal use to all types of organizations, the principles are relevant to every organization. Each organization will identify which issues are relevant and significant to address through its own considerations and through dialogue with stakeholders. Governmental organizations, like any other organization, may wish to use this International Standard. However, it is not intended to replace, alter, or in any way, change the obligations of the state. Related International Standards, including some under development on ergonomics processes, are intended to be used by managers who are responsible for implementing the human-centred approach in the organization.