



Climate action toolkit for ISO members





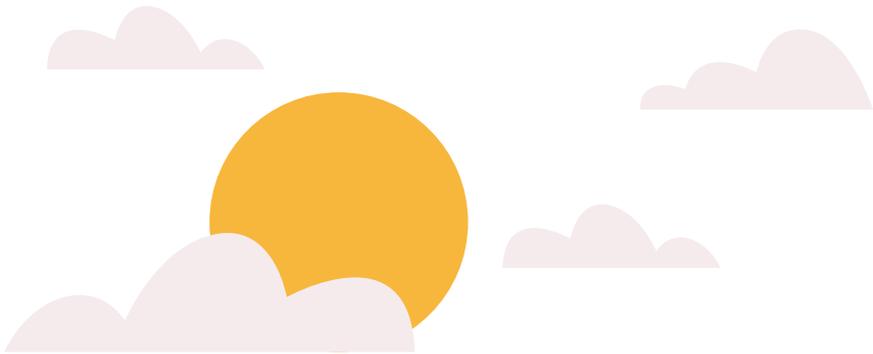
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Context

The world is indisputably at a tipping point. ***Each year, humanity's demand for ecological resources exceeds what planet Earth can regenerate in that year.*** The annual rate of increase of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere over the past 60 years is a hundred times faster than natural increases.





Adding this carbon dioxide to the atmosphere is supercharging the Earth's natural greenhouse effect, causing climate change impacts across all aspects of our society¹.

Without significant action, severe drought, heatwaves, flooding, disease spread, damage to infrastructure, increased human mortality and damage to ecosystems will become increasingly pervasive. Society's most vulnerable are the most exposed to these hazards. The Paris Agreement² and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a clear, urgent, internationally agreed action agenda to limit this global warming to 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels³.

Many of the solutions and pathways to limit climate change to 1.5°C are well known and understood⁴. ISO's Climate Commitment⁵ and climate action agenda seek to drive the transformation of climate commitments into positive and effective climate action through the use of International Standards. Collectively, ISO members and partners can contribute to international and national policymaking that prioritizes climate action and advocate for International Standards that help deliver net-zero economies.

What is advocacy?

Advocacy is the promotion of a specific message and/or course of action to influence or contribute to the development and implementation of policies and other activities that will support the use of International Standards. This includes advancing policies and actions that enable the achievement of the **SDGs**, the **Paris Agreement** and ISO's climate action agenda.



Why do we need to advocate for climate action?

International Standards are a vital tool for accelerating large-scale action by governments, businesses, organizations and individuals on both climate change mitigation and climate change adaptation.

ISO members play a vital role in advocating for policies that promote International Standards and contribute to climate action across all aspects of society. Collectively, we can provide perspectives from the real economy so that policy developments are fit for purpose.

By sharing best practice and success stories on the role of International Standards for climate action with policymakers and regulatory bodies, we can support them to move faster, with higher levels of ambition. By demonstrating the wealth of expertise and knowledge that goes into the development of International Standards that support climate action, we can demonstrate leadership at the national and international level.



Key resources

- [ISO Net Zero Guidelines](#)
- [Guide 84 – Addressing climate change in standards](#)

What does an effective advocacy strategy look like?

There are many components to an effective advocacy strategy. Key factors to consider include:



Understand the facts

While the scientific evidence behind human-induced climate change is undisputed, even today some circles remain unconvinced by the potential impacts of a warming climate on our economies and societies. Understanding the facts and impact climate change has on economic development and society will make you a more effective advocate for policies that support climate action.

ISO Guide 84, *Guidelines for addressing climate change in standards*, sets out key terms and definitions related to climate change. The *ISO Net Zero Guidelines*, sets definitions and guiding principles related to “net zero”. You can also find a short climate action glossary and list of abbreviated terms at the back of this toolkit.



Know your audience

An important feature in developing your advocacy strategy should be to identify the critical groups or policymakers who are influential in driving ambitious climate action in your country and/or region and work to develop relationships with them.



Be clear and concise

Craft your messages to be clear, concise and to the point. Avoid jargon, acronyms and technical language in your advocacy initiatives. This climate action toolkit provides key messages to get you started on your advocacy journey.



Leverage your networks

Advocacy efforts are usually more successful if there is a network of partners who share the same messages and recommendations with the recipient of your advocacy. Consider how you can engage companies, industry bodies, professional institutions, academia and civil society in your advocacy activities to increase your impact.



Amplify your reach

Consider how you can use communication channels to amplify your messages - to broaden your reach and influence public and professional opinion (website, social media, press, radio, television, events). Leverage opportunities for thought leadership, for example through speaking opportunities at conferences to demonstrate the value of International Standards in accelerating the climate action agenda. Identify effective channels to connect decision-makers with the recipients of your advocacy strategy. Influence key discussions and debates through research and by documenting the need for change.

Evidence-based advocacy

The following section of the toolkit provides key messages and supporting evidence that ISO members can use in developing effective climate action advocacy plans.



Audiences

The key messages in this toolkit are intended as a starting point to support ISO members in developing and formulating your own climate action agenda. These messages should be considered as an overarching narrative that can be used when engaging with governments, policymakers, regulators and other influential stakeholders. You may wish to use additional evidence from your own national or regional context to further support your climate action agenda.

Ambition

Through the collective and consistent use of these key messages with our audiences, the ambition is that International Standards will be considered fundamental building blocks by governments and policymakers in developing policies, regulation and actions that advance market-based solutions.

Key messages



We are facing a climate emergency.

The latest report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is unequivocal. The world needs urgent and collective climate action from governments, standards setters, businesses and all aspects of society to limit global warming. Failure to deliver policies and standards that decarbonize our economies will result in catastrophic impacts for society and the environment.

Supporting points

- **Failure to act** on global warming in accordance with the Paris Agreement⁶ **will wipe 18 % off global GDP.**
- Half of the world's **GDP is dependent on functioning natural systems** that will be **severely impacted** by a changing climate⁷.
- **Companies have complex supply chains** that are **exposed to both physical and transition climate change risks**, which could **impact global financial stability**. To limit losses across the global economy, an orderly transition to **a sustainable economy by means of climate change adaptation measures**⁸ **is essential.**
- Significant **macroeconomic impacts** are already being felt **in agriculture and fisheries** due to rising temperatures and changing patterns of precipitation⁹.
- Approximately **3.3 to 3.6 billion people** are living in contexts that are **highly vulnerable to climate change**¹⁰.
- Weather and **climate extremes** are **causing economic and societal impacts across national boundaries** and will significantly affect **water, energy and food sectors**¹⁰.
- A **2°C rise in global temperature would increase by 13%** the probability of **“conflict risks” due to reduced food and water security**, disrupting the lives and livelihoods of many¹⁰.



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International Standards are vital in adapting to and mitigating the impacts of climate change.

The wide-scale adoption of climate-aligned International Standards will play a vital role in helping governments and industry adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change, as well as accelerate the transition to zero-carbon economies.

Supporting points

- **ISO and its members** have committed to **align International Standards with climate action**. This means that we are **putting climate action at the heart of our standards development system** and are working actively to **ensure existing and new standards are climate-aligned**⁵.
- ISO and its members are **committed to working with those most effected by climate change** to develop International Standards that meet the world's needs⁵.
- **International Standards** are already supporting businesses and organizations **to effectively measure, manage and verify their impacts and contributions to mitigating climate change**.

International Standards help financial institutions monitor, assess and report on actions they are taking toward achieving the Paris Agreement. Research by AFNOR, ISO's member for France, shows that ISO 14097 has already helped a number of financiers establish their climate strategy and assess and manage exposure to climate-related risks and opportunities¹¹.

- **International Standards provide** organizations with **a consistent, structured and pragmatic approach** to prevent the harm caused by climate change.
- International agreements have already recognized that **climate change adaptation must go hand in hand with mitigation efforts** in order to reduce and effectively manage the risk to our societies¹².



Climate-aligned International Standards are regulation ready.

International Standards are developed in response to a market need. Informed by global expert opinion through a multi-stakeholder consensus process, they constitute essential tools to help governments, industry and consumers contribute to the Paris Agreement.

Supporting points

- **International Standards are shaped around consensus.**
The development process incorporates a double layer of consensus – amongst experts and among countries.
- **International Standards play a vital role in reducing barriers to international trade,** thus helping to disseminate innovation and technologies that support climate action.
- Using existing **climate-aligned International Standards to support policy objectives will save time, money and effort.**

In the UK, the British Standards Institute (BSI) has been coordinating a multi-stakeholder approach to guide development on new standards that support the UK government's ambition to decarbonize the transport system by 2050¹³.

- **International Standards that support climate action are already widely adopted by the business world.**

ISO 14001 on environmental management is used by 568 000 organizations across 39 sectors in 179 countries to assess, quantify, monitor, validate and reduce their climate impacts.

- **International Standards help businesses understand the importance of assessing their dependencies on nature (ISO 14007)¹⁴.**
- **International Standards help organizations implement practices for reporting climate risks in line with internationally accepted best practice (ISO 14097).**

International Standards and World Trade Organization Technical Barriers to Trade Agreement

The World Trade Organization (WTO) Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Agreement ensures that technical regulations, standards and conformity assessment procedures are non-discriminatory and do not create unnecessary obstacles to trade. The TBT Committee's *Principles for the Development of International Standards, Guides and Recommendations* (i.e. transparency, openness, impartiality and consensus, effectiveness, coherence, and development dimension) remain highly relevant in the context of climate adaptation, climate mitigation and the transition to zero-carbon economies. International Standards developed in accordance with the requirements of the TBT Agreement are an essential component for demonstrating the sustainability of goods, services and processes. Wherever possible, climate-aligned International Standards should be adopted by national standards bodies to overcome technical barriers to trade. See ISO/IEC Guide 59, *ISO and IEC recommended practice for standardization by national bodies*, for further guidance on the WTO TBT Agreement¹⁵.

Leading by example

As an ISO member, there are actions you can take to embed climate initiatives into your organization and support ISO's Climate Commitment.

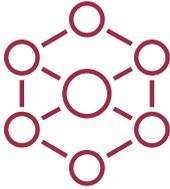
Achieving ISO's Climate Commitment will require concerted and coordinated action by all ISO members⁵. ISO members can show leadership by advocating for and providing International Standards that support both developed and developing economies in mitigating, and adapting to, the effects of a changing climate. You can also demonstrate your leadership by embedding climate action throughout your organizations and operations. This will reinforce credibility with key stakeholders, acting as a catalyst for others to follow suit.

The **recommendations for climate actions are structured around four elements** that will help **embed climate initiatives** into everyday **decision making at your NSB**.

The elements are:

- **Governance** – how the organization is structured and who has accountability
- **Strategy** – how the organization operates to achieve its mission
- **Targets and metrics** – how the organization measures progress towards its strategic objectives
- **Disclosure** – how the organization presents itself to the outside world

These actions, which **serve as conversation starters**, are drawn from existing ISO publications and other market-accepted approaches that **support organizations in integrating climate action into decision-making processes**.



Governance

Good governance builds trust and improves organizational performance¹⁶. Ultimately, the governing authority of the national standards body is accountable for its actions. In the context of climate action, the governing body comes under increased scrutiny to ensure that the purpose of their organization is conducive to a sustainable future.

Here are **some aspects to consider** in your governance approach:

Review **the governing body's role and oversight** of climate action and how climate change is incorporated into its guiding strategy and plans of action.

- ✓ Consider **how the organization assigns climate-related responsibilities** to management and how management is informed about climate-related risk and opportunities.
- ✓ Evaluate how the **organization's purpose, mission and vision** aligns with ISO's Climate Commitment.

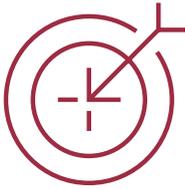


Strategy

The physical risks of climate change (e.g. heatwaves, drought, extreme precipitation), **and associated transition risks** (e.g. legal actions, technology changes, market response, reputational considerations), **will affect all organizations over the short, medium and long term** – including ISO members. The development of organization and national standards strategies that **align with a 1.5 °C climate change scenario** should be a chief concern for all ISO members.

Here are some aspects to consider in your strategic approach:

- ✓ Assess **how** the organization's overall **strategy** and the country's national standards strategy **contribute to the climate action agenda**, and whether they are **aligned with goals to limit global temperature rise to 1.5 °C**.
- ✓ Explore **how specific climate-related issues**, that potentially occur **across varying time horizons** (short, medium and long term), could have a **financial impact on the organization**.
- ✓ Discuss the organization's **resilience to physical and transition risks** associated with limiting global temperature rise to 1.5°C.



Targets and metrics

Thousands of **organizations are taking action** to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) by **setting targets to reach net zero by 2050**. ISO **standards support** these organizations in **assessing, measuring and managing their GHG emissions**. The same standards can also be applied by ISO members to demonstrate their own progress.

Here are some **aspects to consider when assessing your targets and metrics**:

- ✓ **Evaluate the actions** your organization can take **to assess, measure, monitor and verify GHGs** using the ISO 14000 series.
- ✓ **Identify additional key metrics** (e.g. water use, energy, waste management) **that can be used to measure and manage** climate-related **risks and opportunities**.
- ✓ Consider setting **targets for reducing the organization's emissions (GHG) in line with initiatives** such as the Science Based Targets initiative².
- ✓ Establish **credible implementation plans to support any targets** that are set.



Disclosure

Information on an organization's contribution to reducing GHG emissions is increasingly being sought by stakeholders across all aspects of society. Public communications channels such as websites and social media (especially LinkedIn and Twitter) are being used to evaluate how organizations are “walking the walk” on climate action.

Here are some **aspects to consider in your disclosure approach:**

- ✓ **Review publicly available materials** on your website to **ensure** they are **aligned with** and reference **ISO's climate commitment**.
- ✓ **Articulate how your organization's strategy, vision, mission** and value creation **contributes to the climate action agenda** in a **tangible, verifiable** way.
- ✓ **Provide examples of how International Standards contribute** to ISO's climate commitment through your communications.

Further reading and resources

- United Nations, 2023, [What is Climate Change](#) [website]
- United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), 2022, [Emissions Gap Report](#) [report]
- United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), 2022, [Adaptation Gap Report](#) [report]
- Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), 2022, [Sixth Assessment Report – Synthesis](#) [website + report]
- Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), 2022, [Frequently Asked Questions – The Physical Science Basis](#) [FAQ – website]
- United Nations, 2023, [UNCC e:learn](#) [e-learning platform]

Climate action glossary

The following glossary provides an overview of common climate action advocacy terms.

Sustainability

state of the global system, including environmental, social and economic aspects, in which the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs¹⁷

Sustainable development

development that meets the environmental, social and economic needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs¹⁷

Climate

statistical description of weather in terms of the mean and variability of relevant quantities over a period of time ranging from months to thousands or millions of years¹⁸

Climate change adaptation

process of adjustment to actual or expected climate and its effects¹⁸

Climate change mitigation

human intervention to reduce GHG emissions or enhance GHG removals¹⁸

Climate change risk

risk of negative climate change impacts that reflects the interaction among vulnerability, exposure and hazard¹⁸

Net zero / net zero GHG

condition in which human-caused residual GHG emissions are balanced by human-led removals over a specified period and within specified boundaries¹⁹

Biodiversity / biological diversity

variability among living organisms on the Earth, including the variability within and between species, and within and between ecosystems¹⁹

Renewable energy

energy collected from resources that are naturally replenished at a rate equal to or faster than extracted or used¹⁹

Greenhouse gas / GHG

gaseous constituent of the atmosphere, natural or anthropogenic, that absorbs and emits radiation at specific wavelengths within the spectrum of infrared radiation emitted by the Earth's surface, the atmosphere and clouds¹⁹

GHG emission

release of a greenhouse gas into the atmosphere¹⁹

Scope 1 emission: direct GHG emission

greenhouse gas emission from sources owned or directly controlled by the organization¹⁹

Scope 2 emission: indirect GHG emission from purchased energy

greenhouse gas emission from the generation of purchased electricity, heat, cooling or steam consumed by the organization¹⁹

Scope 3 emission: indirect GHG emission

greenhouse gas emission that is a consequence of the organization's activities but arises from sources that are not owned or directly controlled by the organization¹⁹

Source / GHG source

human-caused activity or process that releases a greenhouse gas into the atmosphere¹⁹

Greenhouse gas inventory / GHG inventory

list of GHG sources and GHG sinks, and their quantified greenhouse gas emissions and removals over a specified period of time and within specified boundaries¹⁹

Residual emission / residual GHG emission

greenhouse gas emission that remains after taking all possible actions to implement emissions reductions¹⁹

Emissions reduction / GHG emissions reduction

quantified decrease in greenhouse gas emissions specifically related to or arising from an activity between two points in time or relative to a baseline¹⁹

Removal / GHG removal

withdrawal of a greenhouse gas from the atmosphere as a result of deliberate human activities¹⁹

Offset

emissions reduction or removal resulting from an action outside the organization's boundaries used to counterbalance the organization's residual emissions¹⁹

Sink / GHG sink

process that removes a greenhouse gas from the atmosphere¹⁹

Baseline / GHG baseline

quantified greenhouse gas emissions and removals of an organization at a specified time against which assessment of progress to net zero can be performed¹⁹

Credit / GHG credit

tradeable certificate representing the mitigation of a specified amount of greenhouse gas emissions¹⁹

Abbreviated terms

ACC	Adaptation to climate change
CC	Climate change
CCM	Climate change mitigation
CCS	Carbon dioxide capture and storage
CCU	Carbon dioxide capture and utilization
CFP	Carbon footprint of a product
CO2	Carbon dioxide
GHG	Greenhouse gas
GHGP	Greenhouse gas protocol
GWP	Global warming potential
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
MSS	Management systems standard
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
SBTi	Science Based Targets Initiative
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TAP	Technology, activity or product
UN	United Nations
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
VCMI	Voluntary Carbon Markets Initiative

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About ISO

ISO (International Organization for Standardization) is an independent, non-governmental international organization with a membership of 169* national standards bodies. Through its members, it brings together experts to share knowledge and develop voluntary, consensus-based, market-relevant International Standards that support innovation and provide solutions to global challenges.

ISO has published more than 24 700* International Standards and related documents covering almost every industry, from technology to food safety, to agriculture and healthcare.

For more information, please visit www.iso.org.

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**International Organization
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ISO Central Secretariat
Chemin de Blandonnet 8
1214 Geneva, Switzerland

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