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Quality management — Guidance to understand, evaluate and improve organizational quality culture

*Management de la qualité — Recommandations pour comprendre,
évaluer et améliorer la culture de la qualité organisationnelle*

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Foreword

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

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

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

This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 176, *Quality management and quality assurance*, Subcommittee SC 3, *Supporting technologies*.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at www.iso.org/members.html.

Introduction

0.1 General

The purpose of this document is to assist an organization in understanding, evaluating, and improving its quality culture to enhance organizational performance and to help achieve sustained success.

This document provides guidance on how to understand, determine, analyse, evaluate, implement, embed and sustain the desired quality culture consistent with the context of the organization.

It also details:

- the role of leadership and people engagement in achieving a desired quality culture;
- the role of quality culture in the performance of the organization in satisfying its customers and other interested parties;
- the ongoing determination of risks and opportunities for improvement relevant to quality culture;
- integration of the seven quality management principles (see 0.2) in the organization's quality culture.

A representation of the framework for recommended actions is provided in [Figure 1](#).

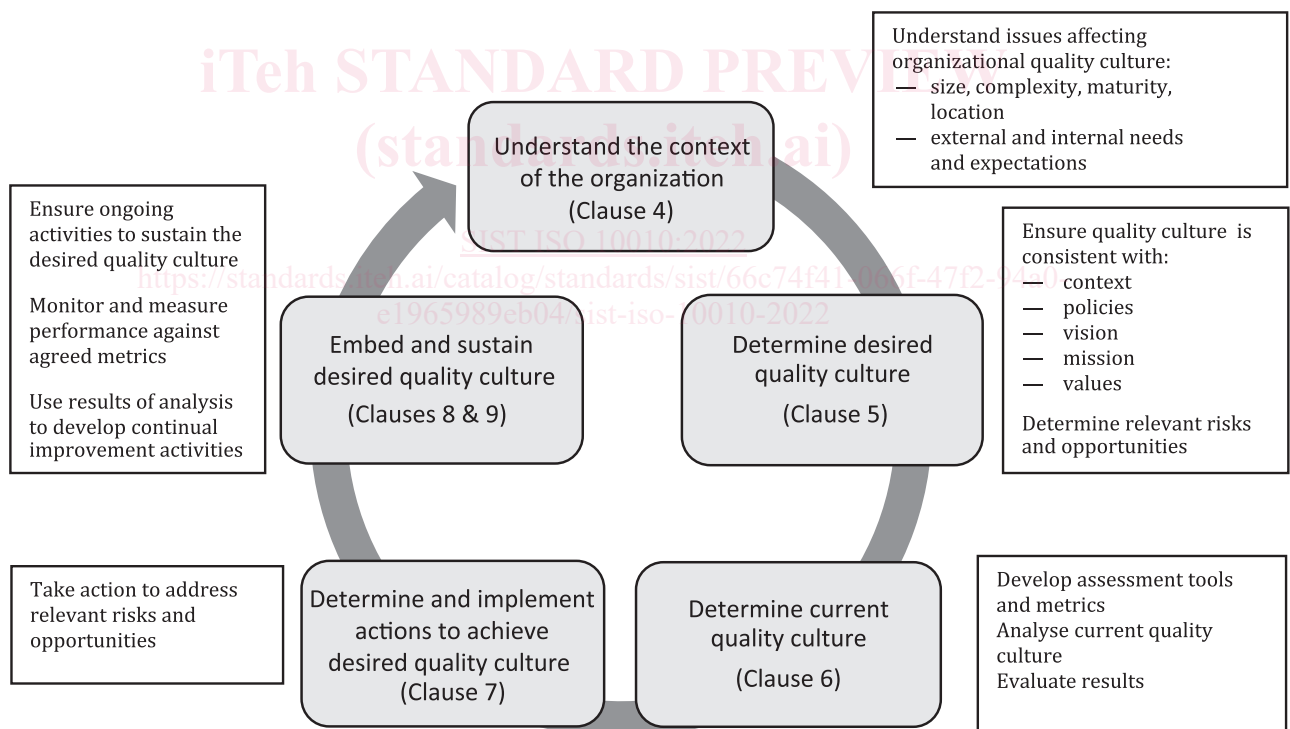


Figure 1 — Quality culture framework

0.2 Quality management principles and fundamental concepts

The quality management principles and fundamental concepts described in ISO 9000:2015 are reflected in this document as they can assist the organization in developing a quality culture that helps meet challenges that arise in today's environment of change and increasing expectations.

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The seven quality management principles are:

- customer focus;
- leadership;
- engagement of people;
- process approach;
- improvement;
- evidence-based decision-making;
- relationship management.

NOTE Full descriptions of the quality management principles are provided in ISO 9000:2015, 2.3.

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Quality management — Guidance to understand, evaluate and improve organizational quality culture

1 Scope

This document gives guidance on the evaluation, development and improvement of organizational quality culture to help an organization to achieve sustained success. This document takes into account the fundamental concepts and quality management principles, with specific focus on people engagement and leadership.

The recommendations in this document are generic and are intended to be applicable to any organization, regardless of its size, industry, location, maturity or the products and services it provides.

NOTE This document provides example tools for the evaluation of organizational quality culture by self-assessment to determine quality culture maturity and potential for improvement.

2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements 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 9000:2015, *Quality management systems — Fundamentals and vocabulary*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in ISO 9000:2015 and the following apply.

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

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

3.1 culture

integrated shared values, beliefs, history, ethics, attitudes and observed behaviours

Note 1 to entry: In this document, “culture” refers to organizational culture.

3.2 quality culture

culture (3.1) supporting the achievement of a quality policy and objectives, and the delivery of products and services that meet the needs and expectations of customers and other relevant interested parties

3.3 process owner

person (or team) responsible for defining and maintaining a process

Note 1 to entry: At the organizational level, the process owner is the person (or team) responsible for the description of a standard process; at the project level, the process owner is the person (or team) responsible for the description of the defined process. A process can therefore have multiple owners at different levels of responsibility.

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[SOURCE: ISO/IEC/IEEE 24765:2017, 3.3068]

3.4

benchmarking

comparative evaluation and/or analysis of similar operational practices

[SOURCE: ISO 14644-16:2019, 3.3.1]

4 Context of the organization

4.1 Relationship between quality culture and organizational culture

To understand the relationship between quality culture and organizational culture, the organization should consider the guidance provided in ISO 9000:2015, 2.2.1: “An organization focused on quality promotes a culture that results in behaviour, attitudes, activities and processes that deliver value through fulfilling the needs and expectations of customers and other relevant interested parties.”

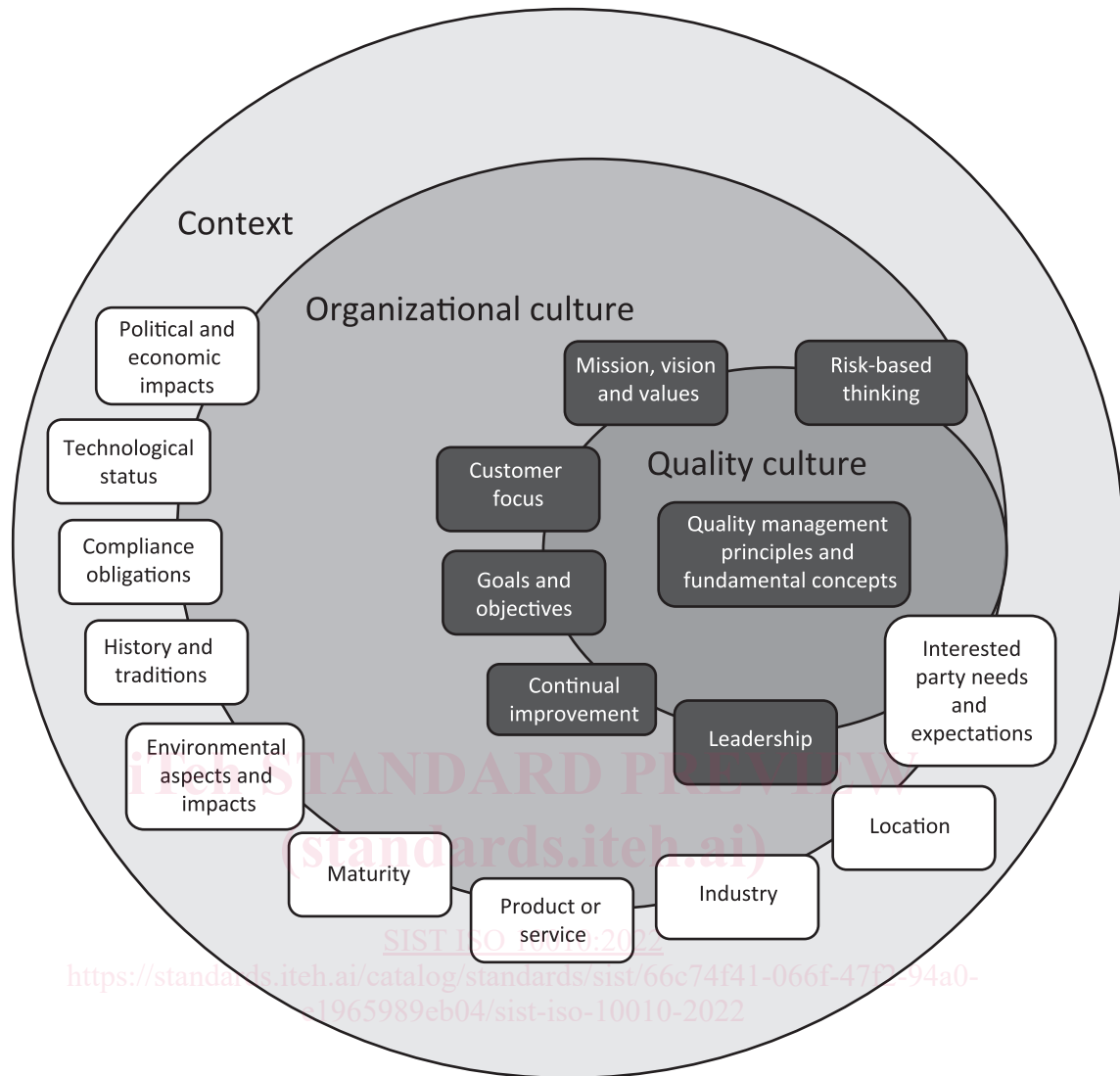
The organization should consider quality culture as an integral part of the wider organizational culture, whether or not a defined quality management system has been implemented, and take into account:

- behaviours that support the provision of product or service quality;
- customer focus;
- risks and opportunities;
- performance evaluation;
- continual improvement.

To determine the maturity of its quality culture, the organization should determine the level to which the integration of quality management principles and fundamental concepts has been embedded into organizational culture and consider its impact on the establishment, operation and maintenance of organizational systems, processes and procedures.

To establish a quality culture, the organization should ensure that its vision, mission and values are aligned to its objectives. The objectives should take into account the context of the organization and the needs and expectations of relevant interested parties. [Figure 2](#) demonstrates this.

NOTE Different cultures can exist within the same organization depending on departments, geographic locations, etc.



NOTE [Figure 2](#) is for illustration only. It includes examples of fundamental concepts, management principles and internal and external issues that contribute to quality culture. For more information on the fundamental concepts and quality management principles, see ISO 9000.

Figure 2 — Example of a relationship between quality culture and organizational culture

4.2 Understand the context of the organization

4.2.1 External and internal issues

4.2.1.1 General

The organization should consider the external and internal issues relevant to the organization's quality culture during the development of the organization's vision, mission, values and objectives.

EXAMPLE 1 An organization that prides itself on independence and being entrepreneurial as a core basis of its culture, can run different sites independently. However, the business requires coordination and standard processes, which are identified as an internal issue.

EXAMPLE 2 A start-up organization has no documented processes before entering a new, highly regulated market which requires defined levels of documentation and records. This requirement to meet compliance obligations is identified as an external issue that will impact the desired quality culture.