
**Innovation management — Tools and
methods for innovation partnership
— Guidance**

*Management de l'innovation — Outils et méthodes pour les
partenariats en innovation — Lignes directrices*

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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).

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. Details of any patent rights identified during the development of the document will be in the Introduction and/or on the ISO list of patent declarations received (see www.iso.org/patents).

Any trade name used in this document is information given for the convenience of users and does not constitute an endorsement.

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 279, *Innovation management*.

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.

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Introduction

Innovation partnerships are developed to create value for each partner working together.

Benefits of an innovation partnership include

- access to knowledge, skills, technology and other intellectual assets that are not available within the organization, and
- access to infrastructure resources, such as experimental laboratories and equipment to develop new or improved product and services.

This document provides recommendations for engaging in external partnerships to realize innovation. The corresponding tools and methods are detailed in [Annex A](#) to [Annex E](#).

This document relates to the ISO 56000 family of standards, developed by TC 279, as follows:

- a) ISO 56000, *Innovation management system — Fundamentals and vocabulary* provides the essential background for the understanding and implementation of this document.
- b) ISO 56002, *Innovation management system — Guidance* provides guidance for the development, implementation and maintenance of an innovation management system, to which all subsequent standards of the family, are complementary to.
- c) ISO 56005, *Innovation management — intellectual property management — Guidance* provides guidance on how to use intellectual property to achieve business objectives.

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Innovation management — Tools and methods for innovation partnership — Guidance

1 Scope

This document provides a guidance for innovation partnerships. It describes the innovation partnership framework (see [Clause 4](#) to [Clause 8](#)) and the sample corresponding tools (see [Annex A](#) to [Annex E](#)) to

- decide whether to enter an innovation partnership,
- identify, evaluate and select partners,
- align the perceptions of value and challenges of the partnership,
- manage the partner interactions.

The guidance provided by this document is relevant for any type of partnerships and collaborations and it is intended to be applicable to any organizations, regardless of its type, size, product/service provided, such as:

- a) start-ups collaborating with larger organizations;
- b) SMEs or larger organizations;
- c) private sector entities with public or academic entities;
- d) public, academic or not-for-profit organizations.

Innovation partnerships start with a gap analysis, followed by the identification, and engagement, of potential innovation partners and the governance of their interaction.

NOTE The essence of an innovation partnership is for all parties to mutually benefit from working together in the context of an opportunity for innovation.

This document is not applicable to organizations seeking innovation by merger or acquisition.

2 Normative references

There are no normative references in this document.

3 Terms and definitions

No terms and definitions are listed in this document.

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

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

4 Innovation partnership framework

4.1 Framework

As described in [Figure 1](#), this document proposes a structured approach and the corresponding tools in [Annex A](#) to [Annex E](#). It can be used at any stage of its innovation process by a single organization to

- decide whether or not to enter an innovation partnership (see [Clause 5](#)),
- identify and select partners (see [Clause 6](#)),
- align partners and agree on a common understanding (see [Clause 7](#)),
- assign roles, responsibilities and govern the interaction (see [Clause 8](#)).

Throughout the process, a continuous review should be carried out and actions adapted according to the performance evaluation criteria drawn from ISO 56002:—¹⁾, 9.1.1.1 and 9.1.1.2 and presented in [Annex E](#).

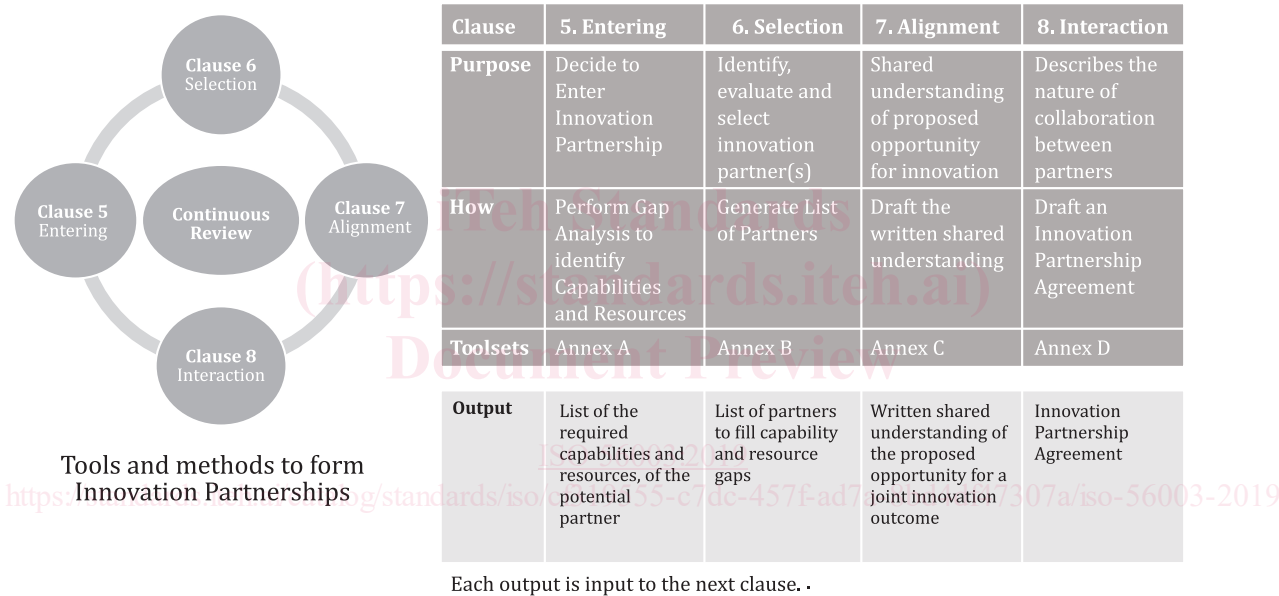


Figure 1 — The framework to develop and manage innovation partnerships.

4.2 Entry points to innovation partnership

Entering into an innovation partnership is not a linear process. Organizations may enter the innovation partnership process at any point, depending on their circumstances. For instance:

- if an organization has already decided the reason to enter an innovation partnership, it can skip [Clause 5](#) and start from [Clause 6](#);
- if an organization has already identified or been identified by potential partners, it can skip [Clauses 5](#) and [6](#) and start from [Clause 7](#);
- if an organization is already aligned with partners, it can start from [Clause 8](#).

1) Under preparation. Stage at the time of publication ISO/DIS 56002:2019.

5 Entering an innovation partnership

5.1 General

Once an opportunity for innovation has been identified, the organization should conduct a gap analysis to evaluate the difference between the organization's existing competencies, capabilities and assets and those it needs.

Based on the gap analysis, the organization can decide if the project can be handled internally or through training, new hires and/or acquisition. For instance, when the opportunity cannot satisfactorily be handled within the organization, the organization should consider partner selection.

In most cases a gap analysis produces an inventory of missing technological and organizational knowledge, competencies, capabilities and assets, which then is used to identify and select the most appropriate partner(s).

It may also happen that based on the relevant internal and external issues, needs and expectations, an organization can join forces without any defined opportunity for innovation. It may have the competencies, capabilities and assets to handle the innovation initiative alone, but still prefers partnering.

Other reasons for partnering may include

- sharing risks (including financial risks) and addressing them more effectively,
- gaining a clearer insight into an ecosystem, as part of the context of the organization (e.g. new market, sector, etc.),
- motivating people (e.g. internal teams) and building unity, as part of the leadership and innovation culture that aims to enable the coexistence of creativity and actions needed to identify and deliver new solutions that realize value,
- learning from benchmarking and from any other means for monitoring and evaluating the innovation capacity and performance of the organization,
- reducing time to market, by enhancing planning and operational processes of the organization,
- reducing costs and/or optimizing resources and assets of the organization,
- establishing best practices to identify and deliver value driven new solutions,
- enhancing image or reputation, and
- reducing own investments.

Reasons for not partnering may include

- a) loss of independence,
- b) prefer to develop capabilities internally,
- c) reluctance to share proprietary knowledge, and
- d) prefer to retain ownership of intellectual property.

The result of the analysis allows the organization to decide whether to enter an innovation partnership (see [5.2](#) and [Annex A](#)).

5.2 Deciding whether or not to enter an innovation partnership

The determination whether to enter into a strategic relationship involves the following steps.

- a) Identify the gaps (see [A.1](#), using [Table A.1](#) to guide this analysis);
- b) Determine the best approach to fill the gap - internally or fill gaps by partnering (see [A.2](#), using [Table A.2](#) and [Table A.3](#) to guide this analysis).

The decision is determining the best approach.

NOTE 1 [Annex A](#) provides the tools to guide the gap analysis to assist in determining the best partnership approach.

NOTE 2 Evaluation criteria to determining the best approach that may be relevant to your organization, can be sourced from throughout this international standard (see [5.1](#), [6.3](#), [Annex C](#) and [Annex D](#)).

6 Partner selection

6.1 General

Partner selection provides guidance on how an organization can identify, evaluate and select the appropriate partner(s). This clause addresses the suitability of each potential partner by evaluating the way in which two or more organizations can work together for mutual benefit.

6.2 Generating a long-list of potential partners

An internal multi-disciplinary team may be formed to assist in the partner identification process.

Potential partners can originate from the analysis of the context of the organization i.e. its interested parties and existing relationships and its internal and external sources, as follows:

a) Internal:

- organization's own documentation;
- strategic intelligence, such as forecasting, foresight exercises, scenario planning, road maps, market plan, market analysis, customer needs;
- supply chains;
- procurement chains;
- project teams;
- innovation department;
- sales and marketing;
- product development;
- manufacturing;
- finance;
- intellectual property;
- R & D departments;
- ethics and compliance committees.