International Standards Supporting Businesses

Food safety management systems (ISO 22000)

UKaid
from the British people

Commonwealth Standards Network

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Challenges	Solutions
Over 90% of businesses globally are Small and Medium sized Enterprises (SMEs), they represent the majority of global employment and are an essential contributor to economic development in low and middle-income countries. However, some SMEs are not working at optimal levels of productivity, efficiency, safety, innovation, and compatibility and are therefore not gaining access to new markets and are not achieving their potential for growth and development.	International standards are primarily designed to address market needs, they are written for the benefit of users and their stakeholders and are applicable regardless of business size and location. They play an important role for SMEs by promoting productivity, efficiency, safety, supporting innovation, reducing costs, removing barriers to trade, and driving economic growth and development.
Approximately 600 million people become ill and 420,000 die because of unsafe food each year[1]. Unsafe food harms human health and damages confidence in businesses. Many food products move across national boundaries, stakeholders locally and internationally need to have confidence that food is safe.	The international standard ISO 22000 'Food safety management systems — Requirements for any organization in the food chain' helps organizations identify food safety hazards, reduce exposure to risk and improve safety.
International standards are sometimes regarded by SMEs as a burden because there is a poor understudying of the likely costs and effort as well as the benefits that can be achieved.	The Commonwealth Standards Network (CSN) works in partnership with National Standards Bodies throughout the Commonwealth to communicate the benefits that can be achieved by SMEs through the use of international standards.

[1] https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/food-safety

Standards are agreed ways of doing things

Standards

There are a huge range of subjects and activities covered by standards, such as: making a product, managing a process, delivering a service, or supplying materials. Standards are designed to make life simpler.

Like a good cookbook, standards are written by experts to help us complete processes in effective, tried and tested ways to achieve efficient, high-quality, repeatable outcomes that consistently meet expectations.

International standards

While standards are sometimes only applicable to specific countries and stakeholders, international standards (e.g. ISO and IEC) are designed to be globally applicable and widely available.

Key features of international standards:

- International standards are written as voluntary documents to assist users meet global market needs.
- They provide a vital tool for reducing barriers to trade by assisting businesses speak a common technical language, enhancing trust in supply chains and giving consumers and businesses confidence that goods and services meet their expectations.
- Although they are written as voluntary documents, they can be used to demonstrate compliance with mandatory regulations and therefore relieve regulatory burdens.
- They provide globally recognised legitimacy through being collaboratively developed by experts via an open and transparent process of global public consultation and consensus building.
- They can be supported through Quality Infrastructure*.

Trading relationships are built on trust.

International standards have become the international language of trade by providing confidence in products and processes to regulators, business partners and consumers locally and globally. They ensure everyone gets what they expect.

*Quality infrastructure

For standards to carry additional authority, they need to be correctly used in ways that give everyone involved a high level of confidence in the outcome. It is to enable that consistent rigour that the concept of National Quality Infrastructure (NQI) has emerged.

National Quality Infrastructures form a foundation for economic development and greater prosperity.

Standardization

Agreed, repeatable ways of doing something. Can be used as a voluntary tool to demonstrate compliance with mandatory regulations.

Conformity Assessment

Testing, verification, and certification processes for formal recognition that show the requirements of standards are being met.

Accreditation

Formal recognition that organisations can perform conformity assessment.

Metrology

Science of accurate measurement.

Market Surveillance

Checking and ensuring compliance of regulations.

International standards support SMEs

SMEs represent more than 90% of businesses and the majority of employment globally. They play an essential role in low and middle-income countries where they account for approximately 70% of jobs[2] and contribute up to 40% of national income[1]

Businesses are more successful with effective processes in place, regardless of size, location, or sector. International standards provide globally recognised best practice for effective processes, this brings benefits to SMEs, including:

- Enhance confidence by demonstrating to business partners, regulators, staff, and customers that your products and services consistently and measurably meet expectations.
- Access to markets is improved locally, regionally, and internationally when stakeholders all use the same international standard.
- Resilience is improved by using processes to identify, analyse, and evaluate risks.
- Profitability and competitiveness are increased through efficiency and productivity improvements.

International standards provide business development opportunities to SMEs and help them reduce risks.

[2] https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/smefinance

ISO 22000 'Food safety management systems — Requirements for any organization in the food chain'

- The World Health Organisation estimates that one in ten people fall ill and 420,000 die[3] because of contaminated food every year.
- Supplying unsafe food not only harms human health, it also potentially damages businesses throughout the supply chain.
- Food products often travel across national boundaries. Customers and regulators nationally and internationally need to be provided with trusted information to have confidence in the safety of the food.
- Food safety hazards can occur at any stage in the food chain, so adequate risk control is required throughout.
- ISO 22000 is one of the most globally used international standards, it provides requirements for a food safety management system to help provide food that's safe to eat.

- All SMEs throughout the food chain can benefit from using ISO 22000:

ISO 22000 can be used by SMEs to reduce exposure to risk and enhance confidence with business partners, customers, and regulators.

[3] https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/smefinance

- ISO 22000 outlines the processes to create a Food Safety Management System (FSMS) by:
  - Developing a Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) plan
  - Setting objectives to comply with the policy.
- The international standard helps SMEs to:
  - Consider and manage risks and improve safety
  - Prioritize objectives
  - Understand how processes are interdependent
  - Make effective use of resources
  - Improve ability to meet new requirements of customers.
- HACCP is a risk management tool that allows you to identify hazards and put controls in place to manage them. HACCP can stand alone as a management tool or be integrated to support ISO 22000.
- The ISO 22000 Plan-Do Check-Act cycle along with risk-based thinking helps to identify, prevent and control food safety hazards:

ISO 22000 supports organizations in demonstrating their commitment to building and maintaining a mature culture of food safety.

By combining the Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle to manage business risk with HACCP to identify, prevent and control food safety hazards, ISO 22000 helps organizations at any stage in the supply chain to reduce risk and improve food safety.

The Codex Alimentarius ('Food Code) is an international series of standards and recommendations published by the World Health Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization or the United Nations, most governments use it to ensure food safety. ISO 22000 is based on the food safety principles of the Codex Alimentarius, SMEs can therefore use ISO 22000 to help them demonstrate to governments where relevant Codex Alimentarius food safety requirements have been met.

Food safety culture is now a principle adopted by Codex Alimentarius (September 2020, General Principles of Food Hygiene (CXC 1-1969), mandated by the largest Global Food Safety Initiative (GSFI) recognised schemes, and adopted in EU legislation (Regulation (EC) No 852/2004) - it's anticipated that other regions and countries will follow suit.

ISO 22000 and the resulting Food Safety Management System can be combined with other ISO management systems such as ISO 9001 'Quality Management Systems' and ISO 45001 'Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems' to create an Integrated Management System, this enables SMEs to efficiently manage all relevant Management Systems in one integrated process.

Evidence that you conform with the standard:

- ISO 22000 is written as a tool to support businesses and their stakeholders. Its use is voluntary, though on occasion organizations may require their suppliers to adopt it and demonstrate conformity to it. This can be via self-declaration of conformity, or via external conformity assessment, either by an individual client, or by an independent conformity assessment (or "certification") body. Independent assessment provides stakeholders with enhanced confidence and can lead to:
  - Improved risk management
  - Improved compliance with requirements set out by customers and regulators
  - Enhanced trust.
- ISO 22000 is the stepping stone to Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) certification. GFSI certification is increasingly expected of organizations that supply into major retailers or manufacturers, so it a key for SMEs looking to open business opportunities
- SMEs should check that the organisation carrying out the conformity assessment is accredited by a reputable organisation[4], this will help ensure the quality of the assessment and reduce the risk of the assessment not being recognised by stakeholders.

Your ISO 22000 Journey

1. **Prepare:** Contact your National Standards Body (NSB), ISO, or the CSN for more information on ISO 22000.
2. **Understand** the standard and review your organisation's activities and processes against it. Training programmes and gap assessments can usually be carried out by your NSB.
3. **Review** performance via the ISO 22000 Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle.
4. **Gain** certification via an accredited organisation, this can usually be arranged through your NSB.

[4] https://iaf.nu/en/home/

Get involved:

- For international standards to be globally applicable and widely used it is important that the views of a diverse set of stakeholders (e.g. SMEs, consumers, academics) are represented in their drafting and revision processes.
- ISO 22000 is developed and maintained by an ISO Committee with working groups consisting of experts from across the globe that are nominated by their NSB.
- Stakeholders that are interested in contributing to the development of international standards should contact their NSB, they generally manage National committees that 'mirror' the international committee to provide comments/ and formulate voting positions on the development of international standards.

About the Commonwealth Standards Network (CSN)

The CSN is a collaborative network that supports trade, economic growth and prosperity throughout the Commonwealth by promoting increased awareness, development and use of international standards.

To find out more about the network please see **www.commonwealthstandards.net** or contact the CSN Senior Programme Manager, Ben Hedley **ben.hedley@bsigroup.com**

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