

Energy efficiency: International Standards must help

According to the reference scenario presented in the *World Energy Outlook 2006* by the International Energy Agency (IEA), based on current trends and on the emergence of new developing economies, the global demand for energy should grow by more than 50% over the next 25 years, with coal use rising most in absolute terms and fossil fuels still representing some 80% of the supply by 2030. This trend is clearly not compatible with the depleting and unevenly distributed level of world reserves of fossil fuels and with the imperious need to otherwise reduce the emission of greenhouse gases.

Increasing the efficiency of the use of energy is widely seen as the most immediate response, with the development of alternative and renewable sources being, at best, a medium-term alternative. But improving energy efficiency implies acting on the myriads of uses of energy and actors involved, from governments to consumers, from industry to transportation and buildings, from design of products and equipment to the design of networks and infrastructures. The necessary actions imply a mix of regulations, technology, economic incentives and the promotion of good practices.

Many national policies and programmes have been developed, but, paradoxically, it is only recently that the need for regional and, even more so, international collaboration and commitment has appeared. The most spectacular move in this direction was taken at the G8 Summit held in Gleneagles in 2005. The participating Heads of State took the solemn collective resolution to “*promote innovation, energy efficiency, conservation, improve policy, regulatory and financing frameworks, and accelerate deployment of cleaner technologies, particularly lower-emitting technologies*”.

Clearly, International Standards must help in this context. They can address many of the building blocks necessary to define, implement and monitor both macro and micro policies in this area, such as the harmonization of terms and definitions, the provision of metrics and test methods to assess, monitor and communicate energy consumption, the modeling and comparison of energy systems or the characterization of materials and products, as well as of their production processes, from the standpoint of optimizing energy use.

“International Standards can disseminate innovative technologies for alternative and renewable energy sources.”

International Standards can also be the vehicle for the dissemination of innovative technologies, particularly for alternative and renewable sources, by reducing time to market, creating truly world markets to ensure the critical size for their economic success, as well as objective tools for decisions on public incentives and regulations to encourage their judicious and widespread use.

ISO and IEC have already a significant activity related to both the production and the use of energy, as illustrated in this issue of *ISO Focus*. But more can certainly be done. The ISO Council has decided to develop a pro-active attitude and has launched an ambitious action plan to enhance ISO's contribution. An analysis of the current portfolio of International Standards will assist in identifying gaps.

A partnership has been developed with the IEA, with a view to analyse and publicize the current state of play

and the potential for new developments in international standardization to assist in promoting energy efficiency and renewable sources on a worldwide basis. This work will hopefully be brought to the attention of the G8 Summit scheduled in 2007 in Germany. ISO and its members will also be present at the World Energy Congress in November 2007, where interdependence and the imperative for energy efficiency will be high on the agenda.

As this issue closes 2006 and opens 2007, I would like to extend my best wishes for the New Year to the readers of *ISO Focus*, as well as to our members, experts and the 600 international and regional organizations which collaborate with us to produce market and globally relevant International Standards.

The turn of the year will also be the time for the ISO Central Secretariat to move to new premises in order to group, at long last, its operations in new and modern premises in Geneva, right next to our current locations. Of course, the new “ISO Home” has been designed with the latest technologies to make it a truly energy-efficient building and we will monitor this closely!



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