

3. Performance in the standards development system and new time frames

The use of modern project management techniques and tools has been a high-priority strategic issue for ISO for several years and the TMB had called upon all ISO committees to establish realistic target dates for the principle standards development stages as required by the ISO/IEC Directives. It has also announced in the past that its aim is to measure the performance of committees by the extent to which they respect the target dates they have fixed.

Recent analyses of the Central Secretariat database indicate that visible reductions in the standards development times have occurred over the last few years. The average time needed for the standards which were published in the year 2002 stands at 3,6 years. One of the main reasons for this improvement is that the development process started with more mature documents. It must, however, also be recognized that in some cases, projects had been cancelled because they exceeded the maximum time frames and were then re-introduced at later process stages.

As already reported in the last TMB Communiqué, the TMB has decided to introduce three different standards development tracks. The first, the "accelerated" track, aims to produce a standard within **two years**. The second, "default" track aims to produce a standard in **three years**. The last track recognizes that some standards projects may be complex and for these cases a **four year** timeframe is foreseen. As from **1 September 2003** all new work approved by committees shall be assigned to one of these development tracks and target dates fixed accordingly.

Also as from **1 September 2003**, the time periods after which a project will be automatically cancelled will be modified such that

- **projects which have not moved for the last two years will be automatically cancelled (instead of the current three years),**
- **projects which have not reached the publication stage after five years will be automatically cancelled (instead of the current 7 years).**

In both cases, the Central Secretariat has been asked to give **12 months advance notice** of the possibility of cancellation.

Please note that the Central Secretariat has decided that the calculation of the maximum project time resulting from the choice of one of the three development tracks will also be applied to projects which are registered at stage 10.99 *New project approved*.

It should be noted that the TMB is not trying to impose these time frames on the ISO committees, but is following the requests expressed by the stakeholders of ISO and especially of industry for a further shortening of the standards development times. It is evident that, in order to implement these time frames, project management techniques need to be applied throughout the development process.