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Guiding principles and framework for the sharing economy

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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 on 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 the following URL: www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html.

International Workshop Agreement IWA 27 was approved at a workshop hosted by the Standards Council of Canada (SCC), in association with the CSA Group and the federal government's Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada – Office of Consumer Affairs (OCA), held in Toronto, Canada, in March 2017.

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Introduction

A combination of technological and other factors have enabled the sharing economy. The rise in global usage of mobile devices together with changing consumer behaviour are driving its growth. This document provides principles and a practical implementation framework with the intention of making participation in the sharing economy a positive experience for all interested and affected parties.

The activities associated with the sharing economy in some ways challenge traditional business models. The sharing economy includes transactions for a fee or free, matching often-underused assets and skills with customer needs, and can provide reserve capacity for managing impacts of planned and unforeseen events. Customers and providers are typically unknown to one another and trust is often initially absent. Sharing economy participants often use reviews, customized for specific products and services and usually involving mutual ratings of providers and customers in addition to other trust-building mechanisms, such as guarantees of compensation for non-conformance.

The sharing economy presents both opportunities and challenges:

— customers can find improved prices, options and social interaction, but question trustworthiness, quality, safety, reliability and validity of online reviews;

— providers can welcome flexible work arrangements and access to new income opportunities, but face challenges with respect to benefits, insurance, security and other economic and safety protections;

— platform providers can seek broader market access and economic opportunities, but can face challenges with respect to meeting legal requirements while assuring technological reliability, data integrity, securing customer privacy and safeguarding consumer rights;

— governments can welcome the broader contributions to economic growth, innovation and improved social trust networks associated with the sharing economy, but can also need to formulate public policy that is responsive to the changes associated with the sharing economy, develop new taxation mechanisms, and address collateral disruptions and transformations affecting traditional businesses; and

— other parties that are not directly involved in sharing economy activities can find the activities to be socially disruptive, but can also find new opportunities and positive environmental impacts as the sharing economy evolves.

This document is the result of an open and transparent multi-stakeholder process involving experts from different countries representing a variety of different perspectives. It is a voluntary guidance document intended for global use. This document, in its present or revised form, could also provide the basis for a future ISO standard or for future private sector, institutional or government guidelines.

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Guiding principles and framework for the sharing economy

1 Scope

This document provides guiding principles and a framework for decision making and action to address key social, environmental, and economic impacts and opportunities of the sharing economy.

2 Normative references

There are no normative references in this document.

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

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/

3.1
sharing economy
form of economic activity where *platforms* (3.2) enable *providers* (3.4) and *customers* (3.5) to exchange, often underutilized, goods and services using information technology

Note 1 to entry: It is

a) often peer-to-peer;

b) for a fee or for free;

c) often sequential use; and

d) mutually beneficial.

3.2
platform
information technology mechanisms that facilitate the ability for transactions to take place between those who have assets and services and those who want to use those assets and services

3.3
platform operator
individual or entity that administers a *sharing economy* (3.1) *platform* (3.2)

3.4
provider
individual or entity that provides assets or services to *customers* (3.5) who want access to those assets or services, using a *sharing economy* (3.1) *platform* (3.2)

3.5
customer
person or organization that uses a *sharing economy* (3.1) *provider's* (3.4) assets or services

Note 1 to entry: For the purposes of this document, the term "customer" includes potential customers.

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3.6
interested party
person or organization that can affect, be affected by, or perceive itself to be affected by a decision or activity

4 Guiding principles — Platform operators and providers

4.1 General

In their activities associated with the sharing economy, platform operators and providers should adhere to the following guiding principles:

a) integrity;

b) transparency;

c) accountability;

d) accessibility and inclusion;

e) responsiveness;

f) health, safety and environment;

g) confidentiality, privacy and security;

h) capacity;

i) competence; and

j) continual improvement.

NOTE 1 Guiding principles are also applicable to the relationship between platform operators and providers.

NOTE 2 See Annex A for guidance on operationalizing the principles.

4.2 Integrity

Decisions and activities are conducted in an honest, respectful and courteous manner, taking into account the interests of customers, and are communicated accurately.

4.3 Transparency

Decisions and activities affecting customers and others are findable, usable, relevant, timely and accurate to allow customers and others to make informed decisions.

4.4 Accountability

Decisions and activities and their impacts and opportunities with respect to customers and others are open to scrutiny by governing bodies, legal authorities, and other interested parties.

4.5 Accessibility and inclusion

The products and services are available to the widest possible range of customers and others, fairly and without discrimination contrary to human rights obligations.

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