

**ISAS BC 9001 and ISAS P 9001:
UNIVERSAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT STANDARDS
FOR PRINT MEDIA, BROADCASTING AND THE INTERNET**

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Summary



The essential role of media in social development and democracy is widely recognized, but political and economic powers often hamper their most important service to society, which is to give a faithful representation of the world, to induce citizens' participation in political decisions, and to create an open space for democratic debate.

Independence and accuracy of information, quality and creativity of programmes and publications are keys to the mission of print, broadcasted and electronic media. It is not acceptable to see them reduced either to propaganda outlets or to entertainment carriers without content.

To assist broadcasters and press and magazine publishers in resisting outside pressures and serving society efficiently, a group of prominent media professionals have introduced two universal quality management standards, ISAS BC 9001: 2003, specially designed for broadcasters and internet content providers, and ISAS P 9001: 2005 for print media.

Those "tools to generate trust" – a definition coined by a television CEO– will give the public an internationally recognized guarantee that the content it watches or listens to has been produced in accordance with a world standard of good governance within the media. Media themselves, by submitting their internal quality processes to a neutral, independent, professional control, will increase their credibility for a larger audience.

All over the world, people use the same criteria to measure the quality of their media. In comparing the editorial charters of various broadcasters on five continents, the Commonwealth Broadcasting Association observed "very little difference between broadcasters, although there are big differences between the societies to which they are broadcasting". A research conducted by the World Radio and Television Council reached the same conclusion: everywhere around the globe, professionals, experts, and listeners-viewers judge radio and television from the point of view of their contribution to social development and democracy and use identical criteria, such as quality and accuracy of information, innovation and creativity, editorial independence, management transparency, promotion and respect of ethical and professional standards.

This is the basis upon which the Media and Society Foundation, a Geneva-based non-profit institution created by media professionals, has launched two international quality media management standards, ISAS BC 9001 and ISAS P 9001. They are completed by a set of guidelines, collecting the best practices used all over the world within the media industry.

ISAS BC 9001 and ISAS P 9001 are adaptations of ISO 9001, the world reference for quality management systems, which, in the last twelve years, has been adopted by 850.000 companies, both public and private, in 160 countries. ISAS BC 9001 & P 9001 measure how radios, televisions, newspapers, magazines and internet content providers meet the ISO 9001 criteria of good management, while at the same time respecting specific media quality criteria, which are universally recognized.

ISAS BC 9001 & P 9001 set clear, measurable objectives. Media companies that agree with them can request their certification through independent auditors and, if meeting the standard's criteria, obtain from the Media and Society Foundation a certificate of conformity, valid for three years, under provision of yearly checks. The certification process, conducted on a purely voluntary basis, is entrusted to private companies operating under the control and moral authority of the Media and Society Foundation.

ISAS BC 9001 & P 9001 do not certify the content of media, i.e. the quality of a given information or entertainment programme, but the production process which results in such a programme. The public thus knows that the programme it watches or listens to or the information it reads has been produced according to strict rules of independence, transparency and professional ethics.

This is a clear advantage for readers, listeners and viewers, as well as for journalists and producers, who will find professional support in the standard's implementation. Media companies themselves, both public and private, will also gain from its implementation: in order to be certified, they will review their management processes from the ISO perspective, mixing ethical requirements, audience satisfaction and economic rationality. This approach will bring them new opportunities for improved management and market development.

An ISO type quality standard allows professionals from all over the world to support each other in the defence of the professional quality they are striving for, while meeting at the same time the economic imperatives which none of them can avoid.

ISAS BC 9001 and ISAS P 9001 are concrete answers to the weakening of professional standards in the media industry. Favouring good governance and transparency within the media themselves helps them contribute more efficiently to good governance and democratic debate within the societies they are serving.

➡ Why certify the quality management of media companies?



Information is a basic human right—no less than water, food, health or free speech; it is essential to social development and democracy.

Media -particularly radio and television, being the main source of information of most people around the globe - have a special responsibility to ensure that this right is fully enjoyed in the 21st century. Specifically, mass media must:

- Disseminate accurate information and knowledge as widely as possible
- Offer a lively social and political debate at the local, national and global levels

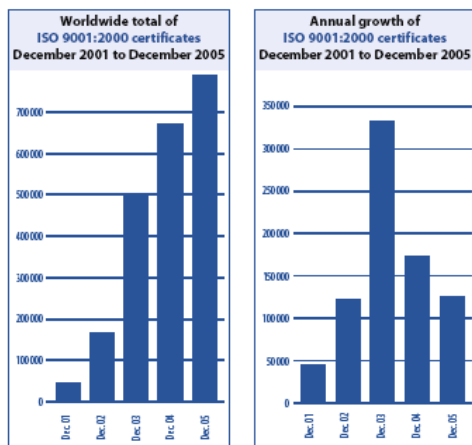
The World Electronic Media Forum (www.wemfmedia.org), which gathered radio and television executives from 122 countries in Geneva in December 2003, during the World Summit on the Information Society, highlighted both this central task and the many obstacles, political as well as economical, which makes it increasingly difficult to fulfil. It is thus essential for media professionals to establish and promote universal quality standards of their trade.

To meet this challenge, the independent, Swiss-based Media and Society Foundation has created a voluntary certification process. Through this process, broadcasters and print media publishers who

want to improve their quality and image while demonstrating a commitment to social development and democracy will be able to submit their efforts to an independent, neutral audit.

The Media and Society Foundation cooperated with two other organizations to develop this new international standard for broadcasting: the Canadian-based, not-for-profit World Radio and Television Council (www.wrtvc.org), and ISAS (www.isasgroup.com), a private standardization and accreditation body. The results are ISAS BC 9001, dedicated to radio, television and Internet broadcasting (issued in 2003) and ISAS P 9001 for print media (issued in 2005).

ISAS BC 9001 & P 9001 were adapted from the well-known ISO 9001 standard, which in less than twelve years has succeeded in certifying 850,000 companies, both public and private, in 160 countries, and which is now recognized as the world reference for management systems.



In addition of being ISO 9001 compliant, ISAS BC 9001 & P 9001 will focus on media companies, measuring the degree to which they meet the following criteria:

- Satisfaction of viewers-listeners-readers
- Quality and accuracy of information
- Quality and diversity of other types of programming
- Innovation and creativity
- Independence and transparency of management
- Promotion and respect for ethical rules
- Representation of national minorities
- Universal access
- Social relevance

Figure 1: Evolution of ISO 9000 Certification scheme
Source: *The ISO Survey 2005*, ISO Organization Geneva.

For each of these criteria ISAS BC 9001 and ISAS P 9001 set specific objectives. Any media organization that aims to meet these standards may apply to be audited by independent, accredited professionals. Following a successful audit, Media & Society Foundation will deliver a Conformity Certificate valid for three years, with an annual conformity check.

➡ The origins of ISAS BC 9001 and ISAS P 9001 standards

The decision to create the standard ISAS BC 9001 was a consequence of the World Radio and Television Council strategic plan of November 2001. Taken over in 2002 by the Media & Society Foundation in Geneva and with the financial support of the Hosono Bunka Foundation in Tokyo, Unesco, the Swiss Office Fédéral de la Communication (OFCOM) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), ISAS BC 9001 relies on the best practices in the world broadcasting industry.



ISAS BC 9001 is the outcome of a survey conducted in five countries (Canada, Columbia, India, South Africa and Switzerland); three working groups (respectively representatives for Radio and TV operators and professionals, users, media experts) in each country answered the following question: "What should be the evaluation criteria of the electronic media (Radio, TV and the Internet) in terms of contents, structure and infrastructure in their contribution to social development and democracy".

The development of the ISAS P 9001 standard followed the successful launch of ISAS BC 9001. Under the umbrella of the Media & Society Foundation in Geneva and with the financial support of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), ISAS P 9001 was designed by press specialists and renowned journalists from all over the world (Russia, France, USA, Belgium, Thailand, Malaysia, China, South Africa, Switzerland, etc.), sitting in a Technical Committee. Most of them are now members of the ISAS BC 9001 & P 9001 Standardization Committee, which is in charge of the standards up date.

Specifics of the media industry

In order to satisfy the needs and expectations of all concerned stakeholders, a lot of requirements specific to the broadcasting industry and the press, found relevant during the surveys and completed by the Technical Committee, have been introduced in the standards, such as: Independence & Transparency, Ethics & Policies, Proximity to Cultural Identities, Audience and Readers Satisfaction, Innovation and Creation, Quality of Information and Contents, Diversity of Contents, Citizen Empowerment, Pluralism, etc.

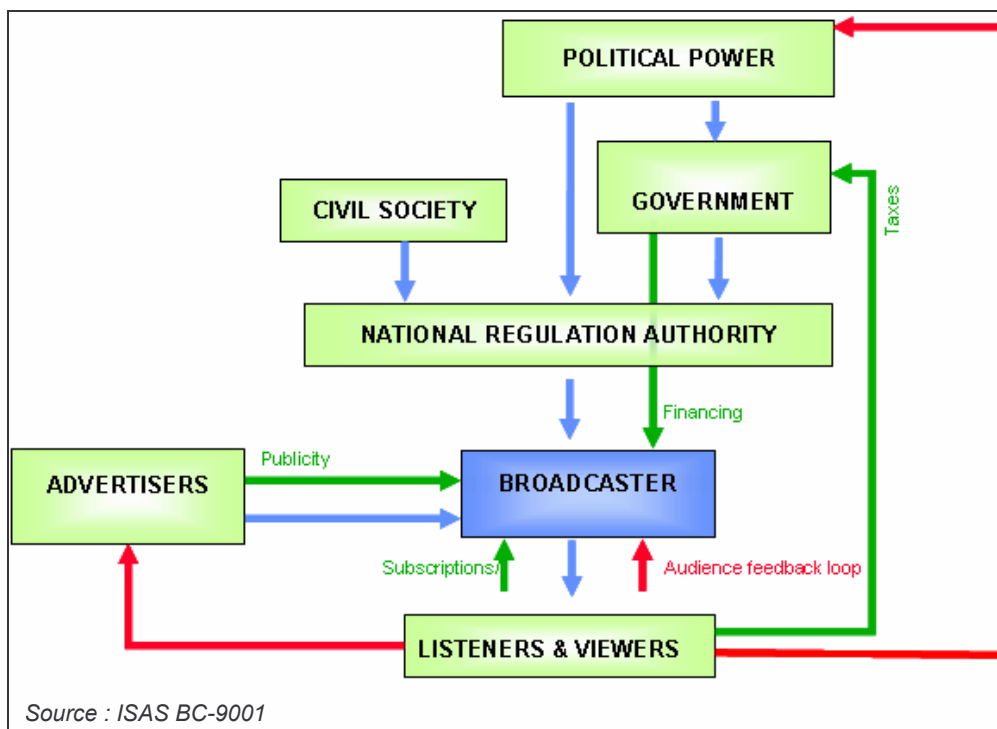
Mise en forme : Puces et numéros

ISAS BC 9001 & P 9001 had to tackle with both the specifics of media industry (separation between editorial and administrative affairs) and the particular relationships it has with its environment (interaction with social, economical and political stakeholders).

Figure 2 below shows the complexity of the broadcasting industry.

It shows an ideal representation of the main stakeholders involved in the broadcasting industry with their interactions sorted in three categories:

- 1- Financial flows (in green)
- 2- Power flows (in blue)
- 3- Feed-back loops (in red)



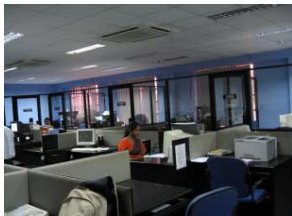
The reality in many countries often differs from this ideal representation. The main divergences with this ideal model are:

- 1- A strong dependency of the broadcasters from government, which represents a significant, often dominant source of financing and can exert pressure through legal and political measures, as well as through direct intervention .
- 2- A strong dependency of the broadcasters from the advertisers, which represent the other major source of financing, dominant in the private broadcasting industry.
- 3- A weak consideration for audience satisfaction which is at the moment essentially measured in terms of quantity according to the rule: "a good program is a program watched or listened by the biggest audience". From a general point of view, the feed-back loops coming from the audience and citizens have a weak influence on the strategy of the broadcasters.
- 4- On the contrary, other non-official feed-back loops not shown on the diagram, such as the one from the advertisers and/or media owners to the Government are strongly influential.

ISAS BC 9001 standard has the ambition to help broadcasters and all associated stakeholders to comply with this balanced representation of the business.

➡ The benefits for media companies

The main benefits of any ISO certification is a stronger, better managed organization: more responsive to customers, more capable of delivering quality, more reactive to change and in the long run more likely to prosper. The benefits specific to broadcasting include:



- Greater credibility with viewers, listeners, readers, thus advertisers
- Higher efficiency of investments in content
- Cost saving in production process
- Better access to sources of information
- The ability to attract and motivate high-quality journalists
- Independent recognition of the contribution to social development and democracy

➡ How to proceed?

The process leading to the certification of a media company according to ISAS BC 9001 and ISAS P 9001 is part of a global approach on quality management applied to media industry based on:

- A voluntary approach sustained by self-assessment and continuous improvement to get international recognition & certification
- A methodology and tools to improve managerial efficiency and professionalism in the media industry
- Two international standards, ISAS P 9001 for print media, ISAS BC 9001 for broadcasting (television, radio & Internet)
- Media best practices inspired from ISO 9001 and built from media professionals' experience
- Strengthening editorial independence to enable citizens to make well-informed decisions

The first step towards ISAS BC 9001 & P 9001 certification is the evaluation of present management systems, viewed from three separate and complementary angles:

- Efficiency and performance, focussing on the costs of quality
- Perceptions of the management system by personnel, customers, suppliers and other stakeholders
- The specific criteria of the ISAS BC 9001 & P 9001 standard mentioned above

On the basis of this evaluation, companies will be given detailed recommendations for improvement that should be implemented to meet the requirements of ISAS BC 9001.

We are available to help you undertake an evaluation in the most efficient and economical manner possible. Please contact us:

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► Success stories and testimonies

Canal 11 (Mexico) successfully began a quality management oriented process in 2002. Today Canal 11 is the Mexican only public service to have all its department being ISO 9001 certified. The commitment of Canal 11 top management and the involvement of all the collaborators into the quality system are one of the success keys, according to Julio di-Bella, Canal 11 General Manager.

Two years ago Canal 11 staff decided to go further and deeper and conforme its management systems to ISAS BC-9001 requirements. In 2007, it should be a reality.



"Today Canal Once is viewing Quality management with enthusiasm. Our experience is an incentive to go further. What is important is not so much getting the conformity certificate, but implementing a system that works and matures. Therefore we have to steadily test and challenge it – including through internal audits that might be stricter than the external ones taking place twice a year. Enthusiasm should not decrease once the certificate is granted. There are always new challenges to address and objectives to reach."

At Canal Once, the implementation and design of our Quality management system have been totally empirical, but deeply thought. The results speak for themselves: Canal Once is the only Mexican federal institution with no external debt. Its budget is not overloaded by wages, what permits technical investments. Two years after the implementation of its Quality management system, Canal Once could see the benefits in terms of gained market share as well as increased prestige and credibility.

The successful implementation of Quality management at Canal Once results from a conjunction of elements: 1) a strong commitment of the employees to their channel, 2) the possibility for them to participate in the change, 3) the involvement of the top management as a team. A good cooperation between the top management and the employees is crucial."

Julio Di Bella, General Manager Canal Once, Mexico.
Mexico City, October 2, 2006

Teleantioquia, Columbia

"ISO 9001-2000 certification is the start of a permanent process of internal organizational self-evaluation. To become certified is to join the culture through a process and to strengthen our teamwork. It is a tool to generate trust, a letter of introduction and a way to say to our clients that we are part of a nation that seeks efficiency and wants to offer the best of public television to our television audience, our sponsors, and our contractors. It is the challenge of continuous improvement".

Ana Cristina Navarro , Manager of Teleantioquia,
the first regional television channel that obtained the ISO certificate
(Source Media & Society Foundation, Geneva).

Prasar Bharati, India



"Reconciling self financing and public service mandate is the new challenge facing Prasar Bharati Corporation (PBC) today. The mission of the Marketing Division in Bangalore is to contribute to meet this challenge. Access of media professionals to the fantastic resources, network and know-how offered by PBC is the first priority. In order to differentiate PBC from its competitors in a widely opened environment, we decided to go for ISO 9001 and ISAS BC 9001 certification which should be achieved in June 2007"

K. Gunashekara, Director Marketing, Bangalore
Prasar Bharati, India