



PROPOSAL FOR A NEW FIELD OF TECHNICAL ACTIVITY

PROPOSER:

SAC

DATE OF CIRCULATION:

2024-09-20

CLOSING DATE FOR VOTING:

2024-12-13

A proposal for a new field of technical activity shall be submitted to the Office of the CEO (to tmb@iso.org), which will process the proposal in accordance with [ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1, Clause 1.5](#).

Furthermore, a proposal will be considered as complete if every information field is complete and follows the guidelines for proposing and justifying a new field of activity given in the [ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1, Annex C](#).

TITLE

(Please see the [ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1, Annex C, Clause C.4.2](#))

Contact centers

SCOPE

(Please see the [ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1, Annex C, Clause C.4.3](#))

Standardization in the field of terminology, requirement, guidance, practices, evaluation for contact centres management and services provision.

Excluded: Relevant work within the scopes of the following committees:

ISO/IEC JTC 1 Information technology

ISO/IEC JTC 1/SC 40 IT service management and IT governance

ISO/TC 176 Quality management and quality assurance

ISO/TC 176/SC 3 Quality management and quality assurance —Supporting technologies

ISO/TC 290 Online reputation

ISO/TC 312 Excellence in service

ISO/PC 317 Consumer protection: privacy by design for consumer goods and services

Note: In parallel, the proposed TC works in cooperation with existing committees on subjects that may support contact centres.

PURPOSE AND JUSTIFICATION (Please use the field immediately below or attach an annex.)

(Please see the [ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1, Annex C, Clause C.4.13](#))

Contact centres are the organization that provides contact services, on behalf of a client organization to its customers. As a centralized and organized hub that manages a variety of communication channels, contact centres serve as the nucleus of responsive and efficient customer service. It is a critical interface between businesses and their customers which provides contact services, on behalf of a client organization, to their customers. The Global Customer Engagement Report indicated over 52% of customers are likely to stop interacting with clients if they experience

repeated frustration when communicating with a company or service provider. Contact centres handle a wide array of customer communications including but not limited to phone calls, emails, text or SMS messages, social media messages, online chat, and even postal mail.

Contact centres have been broadly applied in both business and public sectors where organizations interact with customers to address inquiries, provide support, and offer services. Some common areas in the business sectors where contact centres are widely used include retail, telecommunications, financial services, e-commerce, healthcare, hospitality and tourism, technology and software, education, and insurance. Building up customer awareness and expectations is the basis for the continuous success and development of all types of organizations. In countries like the Philippines, India, Mexico, Colombia, and South Africa, contact centres have become an important source of employment and revenue. According to the report by market research firm Frost & Sullivan, the global contact centres market was worth over \$220 billion in 2019 and is expected to exceed \$800 billion in 2027.

Contact centres contribute to several of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through their interactions, practices, and impact on various stakeholders. Contact centres contribute to gender equality, decent work and economic growth by creating jobs, providing training and offering fair employment practices, especially in developing countries.

In the seven years since the publication of ISO 18295-1:2017 and ISO 18295-2:2017, the standards have been widely used and have provided effective guidance for development of the contact centre. However, with the development of technology and industry practices, new features and trends have emerged in contact centres. Consequently, the existing standards are no longer able to address and guide certain practices. As contact centres continue to adapt and evolve to meet the changing needs of customers and businesses, it's necessary to establish a new TC to reflect current situations and meet the market demands.

The contact center has undergone significant changes over the past seven years (2017-2024). Here are some of the key differences compared to seven years ago:

- **Omnichannel Support:** Contact centres have evolved from primarily providing phone support to providing omnichannel communication options. Omnichannel provides better customer-centric solutions while customers also expect seamless interactions across multiple channels such as voice calls, emails, chatbots, social media, and mobile apps. These approaches ensure that customers engage with businesses through their preferred methods and resolve the issue in the shortest time frame.
- **Self-Service Options:** With the upgrade of information collection and resolution, the contact centre has expanded self-service options, allowing customers to find information and resolve issues on their own through knowledge bases, FAQs, and interactive tools.
- **Multilingual Customer Support:** Multilingual customer support is another key factor to enhance the customer experience to an unprecedented level. This creates a sense of trust in the customer service that they receive, thus fostering a positive customer-company relationship. Leveraging multilingual contact centres services also open the door to increased sales and revenue by opening up different regions and cultures while also creating a variety of growth opportunities.
- **Data Analytics:** Contact centres are increasingly harnessing the power of data analytics to gain insight into customer behavior, preferences, and pain points. Analyzing customer data helps identify trends, optimize processes, and provide proactive support to anticipate customer needs, enabling informed decisions and personalized customer interactions.
- **Remote Workforce:** The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the adoption of remote working in contact centres. Organizations or agents are using cloud-based technologies and collaboration tools to enable them to work remotely while maintaining productivity and ensuring seamless customer service. On the other hand, the availability and compliance of organization or agents is becoming an important metric to ensure the consistency of contact service.
- **Social Media Engagement:** Social media has become a critical channel for customer interaction. Contact centres actively monitor and engage with customers on various social media platforms.

- **Automation and Workforce Management:** Advanced workforce management tools, such as Interactive Voice Response (IVR) and Automatic Call Distributors (ACD), help optimize agent scheduling, workload distribution, and performance tracking, leading to improved efficiency and agent engagement.
- **Agent skillset Intelligence:** The revolution of the above new technologies leads to the upgrade of agent skillsets. For example, Alibaba's intelligent customer service robot, Xiaomi, handles 98% of the online service demands on the Taobao and Tmall platforms since 2019, which is equivalent to the workload of 100 thousand human customer service representatives. In recent years, over 200 thousand customer service representatives have transformed into AI Trainers in Alibaba. Not only in Alibaba, but more and more companies are beginning to use innovative intelligent technologies to reduce cost and improve efficiency in their contact centres area. Meanwhile, agent training has evolved to emphasize emotional intelligence and empathy, ensuring the interactions are not just efficient but also emotionally supportive for customers.
- **Diversification of clients or agents:** The expansion of contact centres bring various scales of clients or agents involved. Contact centres for different scales shall reflect differences, as different-sized clients or agents have variations in resources, needs, and strategies, leading to different designs and operations of their contact centres.

In light of the above changes, contact centres may encounter challenges such as standardizing the omnichannel, balancing efficiency and customer experience with the use of AI, ensuring compliance with data security and privacy regulations, maintaining service quality across all interactions to ensure customers receive consistent service and information regardless of the channel they use. Therefore, further standardization of contact centres operations, services, training, and management is critical to ensure a consistent and efficient communication across all channels and interactions.

The proposed TC will benefit the development of contact centres:

- provides a standard framework to ensure consistency in processes, terminology, service quality, and operational efficiency;
- builds up connections with organizations to maintain high standards and deliver consistent and reliable support;
- streamlines workflows and leads to faster issue resolution and cost savings;
- matches service providers and clients more effectively;
- promotes research and innovation in the development of contact centres industry;
- facilitates collaboration and knowledge sharing among industry experts, professionals, and stakeholders;
- provides valuable recommendations on the adoption and implementation of emerging technologies relevant to contact centres.

Overall, the proposed TC support expects to collectively manage the impact on business practice, and customer behavior towards contact centres and will play a crucial role in driving standardization, fostering collaboration, promoting innovation, and advocating for the industry. These activities ultimately contribute to the growth, efficiency, and effectiveness of contact centres, benefiting both clients and the customers they serve.

Note : SAC has held internal consultation with SABS, the secretariat of the former ISO/PC 273(Customer contact centers). On March 14th, 2024, SABS confirmed and agreed that SAC would submit a new TC proposal on the “Customer contact centers” to ISO.

Following the two rounds of internal assessment by ISO/TMB, the title of the proposed TC has been changed to “Contact centres” to reflect current industry status and practices.

PROPOSED INITIAL PROGRAMME OF WORK (Please use the field immediately below or attach an annex)

Please see the [ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1, Annex C.4.4 and C-4.5](#))

For each item, the initial work programme shall define the deliverable type and target dates. The initial work programme shall also assign priorities to the different items.

The proposed TC prioritizes the following items to be standardized:

1. Maintenance of ISO 18295 series

Maintenance of ISO 18295-1 : 2017 Customer contact centres — Part1 : Requirements for customer contact centres

Maintenance of ISO 18295-2 : 2017 Customer contact centres — Part2 : Requirements for clients using the services of customer contact centres

2. General and basic standards

Contact centres — Vocabulary (Deliverable type: IS)

Contact centres — Indicators for contact centres (Deliverable type: IS)

3. Standards related to operation management

Contact centres — Guidelines for performance evaluation of contact centres (Deliverable type: IS or TS)

Contact centres — Guidelines for lean services for contact centres (Deliverable type: TS)

4. Illustrative examples/use cases of Contact Centres for industries

Contact centres —Illustrative examples for retailing industry (Deliverable type: TR)

Contact centres —Illustrative examples for banking industry (Deliverable type: TR)

Contact centres —Illustrative examples for aviation industry (Deliverable type: TR)

Contact centres —Illustrative examples for public sector (Deliverable type: TR)

RELATION OF THE PROPOSAL TO EXISTING INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS AND ON-GOING STANDARDIZATION WORK

- The proposer has checked whether the proposed scope of the new committee overlaps with the scope of any existing ISO or IEC committee or JTC1 sub-committee
- If an overlap or the potential for overlap is identified, the affected committee has been informed and an agreement has been reached between proposer and committee on
 - i. modification/restriction of the scope of the proposal to avoid overlapping,
 - ii. potential modification/restriction of the scope of the existing committee to avoid overlapping.
- If agreement with the existing committee has not been reached, please explain why the proposal should be approved.
- Have proposals on this subject been submitted into an existing committee and rejected? If so, what were the reasons for rejection?

LISTING OF RELEVANT DOCUMENTS (SUCH AS STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS) AT INTERNATIONAL, REGIONAL AND NATIONAL LEVEL

(Please see the [ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1, Annex C, Clause C.4.6](#))

ISO standards:

ISO 18295-1 : 2017 Customer contact centres — Part1 : Requirements for customer contact centres
ISO 18295-2 : 2017 Customer contact centres — Part2 : Requirements for clients using the services of customer contact centres

European Standards:

CWA 14087:2000 European Call Centre Standards for Training and Qualification - Customer Contact Representative Competences

National and sectoral standards:

GB/T 32315-2015 Basic requirements for bank industry customer service center
GB/T 32312-2015 Service evaluation index specification for customer service center of bank industry
SB/T 11221-2018 Technical requirements for customer service professional
KS S 1006-1:2022 Customer contact center services
KS S 1006-2:2021 Call center services-Part 2: Infrastructure
KS S 1006-3:2021 Call center service-Part 3: Requirements for the training and development of agents and staffs

Referring books:

Contact Center Management on Fast Forward – Succeeding in the New Era of Customer Experience, Brad Cleveland, Fourth Edition, ICMI, division of Informa PLC (United State)
Your Call is Important to Us, Laura Penny, Crown Publishers (United State)

LISTING OF RELEVANT COUNTRIES WHERE THE SUBJECT OF THE PROPOSAL IS IMPORTANT TO THEIR NATIONAL COMMERCIAL INTERESTS

(Please see the [ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1, Annex C, Clause C.4.8](#))

Argentina, Australia, Austria, Brazil, Canada, China, Colombia, Czech Republic, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, Norway, Pakistan, Philippines, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, USA and other countries related to contact centres

LISTING OF RELEVANT EXTERNAL INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS OR INTERNAL PARTIES (OTHER THAN ISO AND/OR IEC COMMITTEES) TO BE ENGAGED AS LIASONS IN THIS WORK (Please see the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1, Clause C.4.9)

External International Organizations:

ICSA (International Customer Service Association)
CXPA (Customer Experience Professionals Association)
Contact Center World
ICMI (International Association of Customer Management)
COPC (Customer Operations Performance Center)

IDENTIFICATION AND DESCRIPTION OF RELEVANT AFFECTED STAKEHOLDER CATEGORIES

(Please see [ISO Connect](#))

	Benefits/Impacts/Examples
--	----------------------------------

<p>Industry and commerce – large industry</p>	<p>Efficient operations: large enterprises can ensure alignment between different teams and departments, reduce confusion and duplication, and improve overall efficiency.</p> <p>Consistent quality of service: help ensure that contact centres provide consistent, high-quality service.</p> <p>Improve customer satisfaction: By establishing standardized processes, large enterprises are better able to identify and meet customer needs, providing fast and accurate solutions that enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty.</p> <p>Examples: Sykes TeleTech Concentrix (formerly Convergys) Conduent</p>
<p>Industry and commerce – SMEs</p>	<p>Data and Analytics: better understand customer needs, behaviors, and trends and use that data to make more informed business decisions.</p> <p>Technology integration and innovation: enterprises can more easily integrate different technologies and systems, improving business efficiency and customer experience.</p> <p>Customer trust and reputation: When SMEs follow industry standards and best practices, customers are more confident in delegating their needs to companies and trusting them to deliver reliable service.</p> <p>Examples: Small and medium-sized contact centers</p>
<p>Government</p>	<p>Improved regulatory effectiveness: provide a clear frame of reference and guidelines for government departments to regulate contact centres industry.</p> <p>Optimize resource allocation: more effectively collect and analyze the relevant data of contact centres industry, understand the development of the industry, and provide a basis for policy formulation and resource allocation.</p> <p>Examples: National and local governments</p>

<p>Consumers</p>	<p>Uniform quality of service: establish consistent service standards and processes to ensure that every consumer can enjoy the same level of service quality.</p> <p>Improve service efficiency: optimize the operation and management of contact centres and improve service efficiency.</p> <p>Provide complaint and resolution channels: submit complaints or feedback through standardized channels, get fair handling and timely response, and enhance consumers' trust and satisfaction with contact centres.</p> <p>Example: All consumers related to contact services</p>
<p>Labour</p>	<p>Clear job requirements: clearly understand their job responsibilities, tasks and goals, reducing uncertainty and confusion at work.</p> <p>Unified training and development: receive standardized training courses, learn job-related skills and knowledge, and obtain corresponding career development opportunities through standardized assessment and certification.</p> <p>Improve productivity: more efficient in dealing with customer issues, providing support and resolving queries.</p> <p>Example: contact center practitioners</p>
<p>Academic and research bodies</p>	<p>Consistency of research data: obtain consistency of data related to the contact centres industry.</p> <p>Reproducibility research: conduct similar studies at different times and places to verify and confirm the results of previous studies.</p> <p>Policy and regulatory support: provide data and insights about the contact centres industry, help governments and regulators better understand the needs and challenges of the industry, and formulate corresponding policies and regulations to promote the healthy development of the industry.</p> <p>Example: Research bodies engaged in contact centres</p>

Standards application businesses	<p>Reduce training costs and risks: New employees can get started quickly by learning standardized applied business processes, reducing reliance on experienced employees and training time.</p> <p>Support technology innovation and automation: better integrated and interworking, sharing information and automating processes.</p> <p>Regulate industry competition and cooperation: All enterprises and institutions can operate according to the same standards, follow the principle of fair competition, and provide a consistent quality of service.</p>
Non-governmental organizations	<p>Harmonization of processes and operations: help establish uniform processes and practices to ensure that different teams or regions work in the same way.</p> <p>Providing reference and guidance: provide reference and guidance to ngos to help them assess their business performance and develop improvement plans.</p> <p>Example: NGOs providing contact centre service</p>
Other (please specify)	None

EXPRESSION OF LEADERSHIP COMMITMENT FROM THE PROPOSER

(Please see the [ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1, Annex C, Clause C.4.12](#))

SAC has committed to managing the secretariat of the proposed TC.

- The proposer confirms that this proposal has been drafted in compliance with iso/iec directives, part 1, annex c

SIGNATURE OF THE PROPOSER

SAC

COMMENTS OF THE ISO CENTRAL OFFICE (IF ANY)