



ISO Research Grant 2022

Call for research proposals

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1. About the ISO Research Grant

The ISO Research Grant is awarded annually to one postgraduate student (Masters, PhD or post-doc) to conduct a research study related to a theme proposed by ISO. The grant amount is 25,000 CHF. A different theme is proposed each year, but the broad focus is on evaluating the impacts of international standards.

Applicants submit a research proposal related to the year's theme. This proposal can be for a research project related to the researcher's academic work. However, it shall be for an original piece of work and shall not have been previously published. ISO recognizes the right of the researcher to later produce a publication on the basis of the scientific results of the research submitted to ISO, provided that this does not interfere with the right of ISO to use the final output of the research for its own purposes, including for marketing and promotional activities (in any media).

In particular, ISO will be granted with a worldwide, royalty-free, perpetual, non-exclusive right and license to use, copy, publish, modify, create derivative works therefrom, distribute or make available the final output or translations of it, for any of its own purposes, provided that appropriate credits to the author are given. For example, the final output of the research would be used by the ISO/CS Research and Innovation unit to create materials for dissemination to the attention of ISO members (the format of these materials will depend on the nature of the study). The

researcher will also provide ISO with all data used in the project. Access provisions will be negotiated depending on data sources and applicable law, but ISO must have access to all data included in the final report, including data collected by the researcher directly.

The awarding of the grant does not create any employer-employee relationship with ISO. The researcher or their employing institution will be responsible for paying all the taxes applicable to the fees they will receive. Further details may be defined in a separate contractual arrangement, which will govern the relationship with the selected researcher.

2. Theme 2022

The 2022 theme for the ISO Research Grant is “**International Standards and Climate Action.**” From its participation at [COP26](#) to signing the [London Declaration](#) in September 2021, ISO reiterated its commitment to achieve the climate agenda 2050. To celebrate this meaningful step, and to start implementing the London Declaration Action Plan, ISO would like to further investigate how the use of International Standards can contribute to the achievement of the climate agenda, and more specifically, **how ISO standards can support adaptation strategies and actions across the globe.**

The UNFCCC defines adaptation as the “changes in processes, practices, and structures to moderate potential damages or to benefit from opportunities associated with climate change.”¹ Adaptation is necessary for an effective response to existing and future impacts of climate change and it involves adjustments at every level of society, from government policies to business operations and community resilience initiatives. The research proposal should therefore aim to connect ISO’s International Standards to adaptation responses at any of these levels.

From demonstrating how standards can support government climate policies, to exploring how industry sectors make use of standards to respond to climate needs (e.g., by improving risk assessment tools or supporting emergency responses to natural disasters), and how standards can help a multitude of stakeholders to take meaningful action (e.g., by setting clear definitions, defining targets, limiting greenwashing or assessing conformity) there are many possible angles to tackle this theme. [Appendix 1](#) offers a list of examples relevant to the theme. You may choose to develop one of them or to propose a different topic of your own. This list is by no means exhaustive and is simply provided for inspiration. What is critical, however, is that the topic of this year’s Research Grant shows originality and adds to the existing body of available research. [Appendix 2](#) includes a series of relevant materials and webpages that can be of benefit to connect the theme with pre-existing work.

3. Eligibility criteria

To be eligible for the research grant, the applicant(s)* must be:

- Currently enrolled in postgraduate studies or a post-doc at an institution of higher education or public research organization;
- Able to demonstrate the relevance of standardization to their field of study;
- Proficient in English (the study shall be written in English).

*a joint proposal can be made by more than one person, as long as all applicants fit the above criteria. In the case of joint proposals, only one grant will be awarded.

¹ [UNFCCC website](#)

4. Timeline

Milestone/steps	Date
Call for research proposals launched	1 March 2022
Deadline to submit research proposals	30 June 2022 23:59 (UTC)
Expected evaluation of proposals (including references)	June-July 2022
Announcement of winning proposal	31 August 2022 (at the latest)
Deadline for submission of the final research to ISO	31 August 2023

5. Proposal elements and structure

Your proposal for the ISO Research Grant must contain three elements:

1. Letter of motivation – Include, for example, your reasons for applying, your inspiration for the proposed study, why you are qualified to carry out this study and how you expect to benefit from it.
2. CV with referees
3. Research proposal – Following the structure outlined in the table below. Please note: the proposal must not exceed 2500 words, excluding references.

Section	Guidance on content
Title	Provide a short, concise title that conveys what your research is about.
Abstract	Describe the topic and aims of the study. Provide a summary of who will be involved in the research, the methods, the timeframe and a statement explaining relevance of the research.
Introduction	Explain why you chose this topic, how your proposed research is relevant to the theme and how it contributes to the body of knowledge on impact of standards (significance to the research field).
Research question(s)	What is the question you are trying to answer? The purpose of this research; why it needs to be done.
Literature review /state of knowledge	Give a brief summary of relevant existing research related to the topic (including potential gaps or limitations) and indication of potential sources. Demonstrate your understanding of the topic and its wider context.
Methodology	What is the systematic approach you will use to solve your research problem?

Research design and methods	Provide detail about research participants, sources of data and methods of data collection, methods for data analysis and synthesis, limitations of the study.
Ethics	Are there any ethical concerns associated with your research proposal?
Communication of results	How will your research findings be shared? What is / are the foreseen research products?
Timeline	Estimate how long each task will take and show how you will complete your study in the given timeframe.
Budget	Indicate how the funds from the research grant will be allocated.
References	List of references used when writing the proposal.

6. How to apply

To apply for the ISO Research Grant, send your letter of motivation, CV and research proposal by email to research@iso.org before the deadline of 23:59 (UTC) on 30 June 2022.

7. Selection criteria

The following selection criteria will be taken into account in selecting the grant winner.

Threshold criteria – proposals not meeting these criteria will not be given further consideration:

Domain	Criteria
Topic and project planning	Project topic is clearly relevant to the theme – topic clearly identifies a link between International Standards and adaptation.
	Project budget is clear
Applicant background and support	Applicant's academic/professional background is relevant to the topic and proposed methodology
	Applicant has the support of supervisors/relevant referees

Evaluation criteria – proposals meeting the threshold criteria will be assessed as follows:

Domain	Criteria	Weight
Quality of the project proposal	Soundness of the proposed methodology (including sufficient planning for access to data, outline of intended analytic approach, etc).	30%
	Originality/novelty of the topic and importance of the results to the existing body of research	15%
	Utility of intended project outputs (eg. Full report, summaries, briefing points, etc).	5%
	Written communication skills: clarity of message, structure and logical flow of proposal	20%
	Budget outline: proposed budget represents effective planning and expenditure. Budget	10%

	should be transparent, detailed and demonstrate value for money.	
Experience and expertise	Breadth and depth of experience and expertise in the proposed subject area: quality and relevance of previous publications and academic background	12%
Motivation	Motivation expressed by the researcher: stated reasons for applying, inspiration for the proposed study, expected benefits for the student	8%

ISO will not, except at its own discretion, provide information about the evaluation process, or feedback on individual submissions.

8. ISO Central Secretariat (ISO/CS) involvement

The ISO/CS Research and Innovation unit is responsible for all aspects related to management and administration of the award. The researcher will be expected to keep the ISO/CS Research and Innovation unit informed about the progress of the study (for example, by providing regular progress updates. A schedule of updates will be agreed on with the researcher as appropriate for the project plan).

The ISO/CS R&I unit will provide guidance and support to the researcher in completion of the study as far as possible (for example, by commenting on outlines/drafts, providing contacts within ISO members or ISO-related data).

9. Legal Disclaimer

By responding to this ISO research grant proposal, applicants agree that ISO reserves the right to withdraw it for any reason and, shall not in any way be responsible for any costs incurred in the preparation and presentation of the application.

10. Contact

Please contact research@iso.org if you have any questions or require further information about the ISO Research Grant.

11. Appendix 1: Research Examples

The following table contains possible topics for you to explore or take inspiration from. The list is by no means exhaustive and any original contributions that address the theme (adaptation) and respect the established criteria will be considered equally.

CATEGORIES	FOCUS	EXAMPLES
IMPACT STUDIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Specific standard/group of standards - Theme: SDG targets, geographic focus... 	<p>Evaluate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the impacts of ISO XXXXX on Y • the contribution of standard(s) XXXXX to the achievement of SDG13 target 13.1: strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related disasters • how much/whether standards help promote climate action in (X sector; X geographic region...) <p>Note: impact studies could be quantitative, qualitative, or both</p>
USE OF STANDARDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Specific standard/group of standards - Theme: SDG targets, geographic focus... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose one or more ISO standards and investigate who is using them, how and why (or why not) • Explore the standards landscape in a sector, or a geographic region to see where ISO standards fit in - what other standards/guidelines are being used and where the gaps are
STANDARDS RELATIONSHIP DYNAMICS	Standards and regulations	<p>Explore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the connection between ISO standards and regulations in a chosen sector or geographic region. Are ISO standards referenced? What other standards/ guidelines are being used and where are the gaps? • the role of ISO standards in helping states meet their Paris Agreement pledges. What standards are being used and at which level (for example terminology, evaluation, reporting...)? • the relationship between regulation compliance and international standards
	Involvement of civil society and vulnerable people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the involvement of civil society and vulnerable people in the standardization process • Evaluate the contribution of standards to the achievement of SDG13 target 13.B: Promote mechanisms to raise capacity for planning and management in least developed countries (resilient communities) • Investigate the awareness about/ access to/ use of standards in vulnerable countries or to protect vulnerable groups. Are relevant standards used by those who need them most (how and why, or why not)?

12. Appendix 2: Resources

Web pages

[Climate Action Kit](#) – Provides access to a series of case studies where standards and other initiatives have provided solutions to issues related to climate change.

[ClimateADAPT](#) – Provides access to European data and information related to climate change adaptation.

[ISO Online Browsing Platform](#) - The OBP lets you partially access standards, providing key information such as introductions, scope, normative references, and bibliographies. You may find this useful if choosing to focus your proposal on a specific standard.

[ISO Research Library](#) – The library offers a collection of research publications on standards and standardization.

[London Declaration](#) – More information on the London Declaration, signed by ISO in 2021.

[Our 2050 world](#) – A collaboration initiative to support non-state actors to accelerate their Race to Zero using standards.

[United Nations Climate Change secretariat](#) – Information related to adaptation and resilience.

Brochures and news articles

Climate Change adaptation (ISO), <https://www.iso.org/publication/PUB100449.html>

Impact washing: what is it and how to spot it (ISO), <https://www.iso.org/news/ref2752.html>

Investing wisely in the fight against climate change (ISO), <https://www.iso.org/news/ref2716.html>

ISO 14000 Family: Environmental Management (ISO) <https://www.iso.org/iso-14001-environmental-management.html>

ISO and climate change (ISO), <https://www.iso.org/publication/PUB100067.html>

Managing the impact of climate change: first international standard for adaptation published (ISO), <https://www.iso.org/protecting-our-planet.html>

Putting sustainability at the heart of the standards agenda (ISO), <https://www.iso.org/news/ref2538.html>

Standards in action: Protecting our planet (ISO), <https://www.iso.org/protecting-our-planet.html>