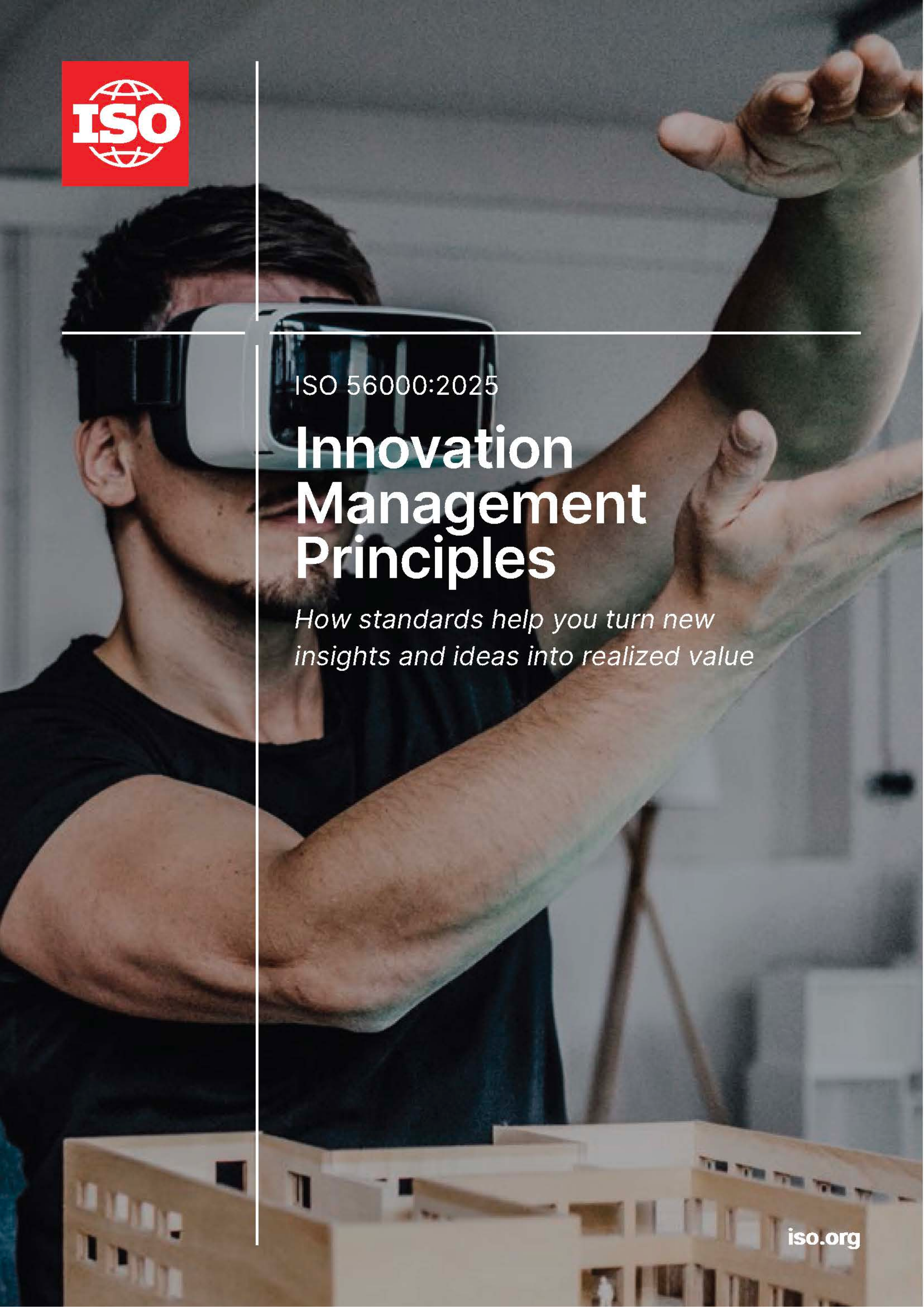

ISO 56000:2025

Innovation Management Principles

How standards help you turn new insights and ideas into realized value

Innovation doesn’t happen by accident; it happens by intent. In a world where change is constant and ambition is limitless, organizations need more than bright ideas; they need a reliable way to turn opportunities into realized value for people, business, and society.

The Innovation Management Principles provide that compass. They invite leaders to look ahead with purpose, teams to create and execute with confidence, and systems to learn and adapt at speed

What are “principles” and why do they matter?

Principles are shared beliefs and rules of thumb that shape how an organization manages innovation.

When applied consistently, they provide a stable compass in uncertain environments, align people and resources, and accelerate the path from insights and ideas to realized value.

About this publication

This publication presents the 8 Innovation Management Principles (IMPs).

The principles form the basis for effective innovation management and the foundation of an innovation management system.

The principles are *not listed in priority order* and should be applied in a way that fits your organization’s context.

The 8 Innovation Management Principles (IMP)

IMP1: Realization of value

IMP2: Future-focused leaders

IMP3: Strategic direction

IMP4: Culture

IMP5: Exploiting insights

IMP6: Managing uncertainty

IMP7: Adaptability

IMP8: Systems approach

IMP1: Realization of value

Value, financial or non-financial, is realized from the deployment, adoption and impact of new or changed solutions for interested parties.

Rationale

The purpose of innovation management is to realize value. Value is realized by the process of identifying, understanding and satisfying needs of interested parties. Realizing value, both financial and non-financial, is vital to the sustainability of organizations.

Key benefits

- contribution to competitive advantages, sustainable growth and long-term relevance of the organization;
- clear focus for setting scope, objectives and performance evaluation criteria within the innovation management system;
- a higher value output from innovation activities;
- improved reputation as an innovative organization;
- the realization of value legitimizes innovation activities;
- enables the culture to support innovation activities.

Actions you can take

- invest in activities for understanding the context to identify opportunities and challenges;
- establish objectives, processes, systems and performance indicators for value capture and realization;
- evaluate innovation initiatives based on a broad understanding of value including, but not limited to, learning, social, economic, environmental value and competence building;
- empower people to undertake innovation initiatives to generate new opportunities for value realization;
- recognize and celebrate realization of value to build a culture supporting innovation activities;
- adapt organizational structures and innovation processes to maximize value realization;
- assess how interested parties perceive value from current innovation activities and identify opportunities for improvement.

IMP2: Future-focused leaders

Leaders at all levels, driven by curiosity and courage, challenge the status quo by building an inspiring vision and purpose, and by continuously engaging people to achieve those aims.

Rationale

Conscious efforts to challenge the status quo enable the organization to balance the current focus and short-term performance with attention to innovation opportunities in order to anticipate and create the future. Leaders across the organization inspire and engage employees and other interested parties to innovate.

Key benefits

- openness to change, alternative ways of doing things and the pursuit of new opportunities;
- clear and shared longer-term vision and purpose across the organization;
- concurrent focus on both current and future innovation opportunities;
- inspired and engaged people that can focus their creativity and execution efforts towards a shared vision.

Actions you can take

- encourage and support leaders to explore with curiosity and to execute with courage, while considering ethical, legal and sustainability issues;
- recognize and reward leaders that challenge the status quo;
- encourage leaders to share stories of successes and failures to inspire others;
- align and communicate a longer-term vision and purpose throughout the organization;
- encourage and recognize people that are contributing to the vision and purpose;
- foster a culture supporting innovation activities;
- provide people with the necessary support, including resources.

IMP3: Strategic direction

The direction for innovation activities is based on aligned and shared objectives and a relevant ambition level, supported by the necessary people and other resources.

Rationale

Commonly shared and understood innovation objectives and strategy, that are aligned with the overall objectives and strategic direction of the organization, provide the basis for allocating people and resources. The strategic direction is used for prioritizing innovation activities, as well as for setting the scope for monitoring and evaluating innovation performance and impact

Key benefits

- improved compatibility with the overall objectives and strategic direction of the organization;
- increased return on investment resulting from innovation initiatives;
- explicit and transparent expression of the ambition level of the organization and shared expectations in terms of innovation activities;
- framework for adapting the organizational structure, assigning roles, responsibilities and authorities, guiding investments and collaboration efforts, etc.;
- assigned people and allocated resources for the execution of innovation initiatives;
- clear criteria for monitoring and evaluation of innovation initiatives and portfolios.

Actions you can take

- ensure and demonstrate that the innovation objectives are contributing to the overall objectives and strategic direction of the organization;
- communicate the strategic direction by providing examples of opportunity areas and types of innovations to focus on;
- plan, develop and implement innovation initiatives, processes and portfolios;
- demonstrate how people are assigned and what resources are allocated to implement the innovation strategy;
- establish innovation indicators to monitor, evaluate and recognize performance;
- review and update the strategic direction to ensure effectiveness and impact;
- communicate, as appropriate, the strategic direction externally to shape expectations and attract relevant interested parties.

IMP4: Culture

Shared values, beliefs and behaviours, supporting openness to change, risk-taking and collaboration, enable the coexistence of creativity and effective execution.

Rationale

Traditional management practices focus on efficient execution. For innovation management, it is also necessary to develop values, beliefs and behaviours supportive of the creation and execution of new ideas. To achieve innovation, the culture should enable the coexistence of the behaviours of creativity and execution.

Key benefits

- a creative working environment that promotes new insights and ideas through imagination and unconventional approaches;
- collective knowledge achieved through exploration, collaboration and experimentation
- an execution working environment that increases focus, has adaptable processes and delivers with speed;
- a working environment that encourages and enables experimentation, risk-taking and allows for failures as opportunities for learning;
- people inspired to move out of their comfort zone, explore new opportunities and challenges;
- people able to change between contrasting behaviours and approaches.

Actions you can take

- promote diversity to encourage different perspectives, to develop innovative behaviours and to maximize collective knowledge;
- reduce hierarchy in organizational structures and use, for example, innovation hubs, spin-offs, campus structure or self-managed teams to promote creativity;
- encourage open networks for finding opportunities and solutions;
- encourage closed networks for a high level of trust and collaboration;
- implement an innovation management system complementing existing formal or informal management systems;
- support leaders so they are able to foster and continuously develop a culture supporting innovation activities;
- define, recognize and demonstrate the different behaviours and personalities needed in the different stages of innovation processes;
- allow for and learn from failures;
- use storytelling to promote desired behaviours.

IMP5: Exploiting insights

A diverse range of internal and external sources are used to systematically build insightful knowledge, and to exploit stated and unstated needs.

Rationale

The development of innovative solutions depends on the identification of stated and unstated needs. Identifying insights that can be exploited to realize value requires a systematic approach, drawing on diverse sources of knowledge. Effective insights go beyond the obvious and incorporate strategic foresight about future needs and conditions.

Key benefits

- improved understanding of the internal and external context in which the organization operates, including relevant driving forces and trends;
- improved understanding that innovation activities can cause change and create new needs;
- increased innovation effectiveness as ideation is guided by identified needs, issues and challenges; d) increased satisfaction of users' needs, speed to realization, return on investment and life cycle of solutions;
- reduced levels of uncertainty;
- better prioritization of which insights, ideas and ultimately innovations to invest in.

Actions you can take

- identify relevant cross-disciplinary internal and external sources of knowledge to develop a broad range of insights;
- identify and engage with users, customers and other interested parties to develop unique and insightful knowledge;
- make accumulated knowledge and insights readily available to all relevant people and interested parties;
- ensure that information, knowledge and documented insights are relevant, reliable and secure;
- develop, implement, maintain and improve suitable processes for the identification of exploitable insights;
- develop competence for analysing information and making meaningful connections between types of knowledge;
- balance the development of insights with available resources for exploitation;
- ensure that insights are leveraged for ideation, concepting and other innovation activities.

IMP6: Managing uncertainty

Uncertainties and risks are evaluated, leveraged and then managed, by learning from systematic experimentation and iterative processes, within a portfolio of opportunities.

Rationale

Balancing the exploitation of opportunities and management of risks increases the potential for value realization. The application of a portfolio approach, combining experimentation and exploitation, generates confidence and builds resilience to manage uncertainties.

Key benefits

- enhanced confidence in the capability of the organization to address unfavourable circumstances;
- increased capability to reduce uncertainty through systematic experimentation and learning;
- optimized portfolio of opportunities and value realization, while mitigating the impact of related uncertainties;
- room to adjust risk-taking in accordance with strategic considerations;
- increased and improved organizational knowledge and related management based on lessons learned and failures.

Actions you can take

- develop frameworks and processes to manage uncertainty, including the management of the ratio of investment to potential value;
- develop and support a culture that enables experimentation and risk-taking to embrace change and uncertainty;
- systematically manage uncertainties and risks across the innovation management system;
- establish a portfolio approach to innovation initiatives, balancing risk and value potential;
- manage insights and knowledge to capture and disseminate lessons learned;
- use indicators to monitor, evaluate, and reduce uncertainties and risks;
- ensure that people know how to identify and handle uncertainties and risks.

IMP7: Adaptability

Changes in the context of the organization are addressed by the timely adaptation of structures, processes, competences and value realization models to maximize innovation capabilities.

Rationale

New ideas and solutions often require changes in structures, processes, competences, models and the capacity to respond accordingly. The ability to systematically anticipate and understand the need for change and respond to changes is an essential innovation capability.

Key benefits

- insight and the ability to provide timely response to changes;
- shorter learning cycles;
- increased potential for realization of value by early response to change;
- improved identification, understanding, management, and leverage of uncertainties and risks;
- effective use of resources and improved return on investments;
- timely scaling and implementation of changes with proper speed.

Actions you can take

- determine the ability of the organization to pursue new opportunities or detect, analyse and respond to disruptions;
- create and analyse future scenarios and determine the transformations they imply, setting appropriate objectives;
- determine the resources needed to act on changes in context, objectives or focus;
- enable people to anticipate and adapt to change;
- implement and manage change across multiple time horizons in parallel activities;
- monitor and make timely decisions on the implementation of changes to ensure its effectiveness and fitness for purpose.

IMP8: Systems approach

Innovation management is based on a systems approach with interrelated and interacting elements and regular performance evaluation and improvements of the system.

Rationale

The innovation performance of an organization is dependent on processes that operate towards a common purpose. Measuring the interaction between elements develops the understanding of their interrelation. Managing these elements as a system improves organizational learning, effectiveness and efficiency.

Key benefits

- enhanced ability to link the external to the internal context of the organization;
- a framework and language for implementing, evaluating, comparing and improving the management of innovation activities;
- increased ability to solve complex problems, take advantage of opportunities and address challenges;
- improved ability to link the system elements, ensuring the alignment of strategy and objectives;
- improved understanding of how the different elements are contributing to performance and how capability gaps can be addressed;
- improved ability for organizational change and learning through collaboration and interdependencies in the system.

Actions you can take

- embrace and promote the understanding of innovation management as a system;
- explain the scope, purpose and objectives of the system, including relationships with interested parties;
- ensure that all relevant functions are represented to enable the organization to operate an effective management system;
- select innovation indicators that capture critical aspects of the system;
- map system elements and their relationships and monitor the effectiveness of system linkages;
- implement systematic innovation processes and the necessary support;
- monitor, measure, analyse, and evaluate elements and relationships for improvement and learning.

What you should see as you apply the principles.

As you apply the Innovation Management Principles, the effects become visible across the innovation management system. Value is pursued and realized with clearer logic, from the identification of opportunities through to the development and deployment of solutions. Leadership becomes more future-focused and purposeful, providing direction and commitment. Over time, the innovation portfolio becomes more coherent and better aligned with strategy and interested parties. A stronger innovation culture emerges, where creativity and disciplined execution reinforce one another. Insights from internal and external sources inform better decisions, helping to unlock promising opportunities. Uncertainty is managed deliberately, through structured exploration and risk-informed choices. Structures, processes, and business models become more adaptable as the context changes, and a systems approach supports continual improvement to ensure the organization's ability to innovate consistently.

In short, the Innovation Management Principles help turn innovation efforts from a set of separate activities into a systematic, repeatable, and value-oriented management capability.

Go deeper with innovation management standards

ISO 56000
Innovation management — Fundamentals and vocabulary

ISO 56001
Innovation management system — Requirements

ISO 56002
Innovation management system — Guidance

Find more information on all ISO 56000 Family documents on the ISO TC 279 Website. Use the ISO Online Browsing Platform to explore more freely available terms and definitions related to innovation management.

About ISO

ISO (International Organization for Standardization) is an independent, non-governmental international organization with a membership of 175* national standards bodies. Through its members, it brings together experts to share knowledge and develop voluntary, consensus-based, market-relevant International Standards that support innovation and provide solutions to global challenges.

ISO has published more than 26 000* International Standards and related documents covering almost every industry, from technology to food safety, to agriculture and healthcare.

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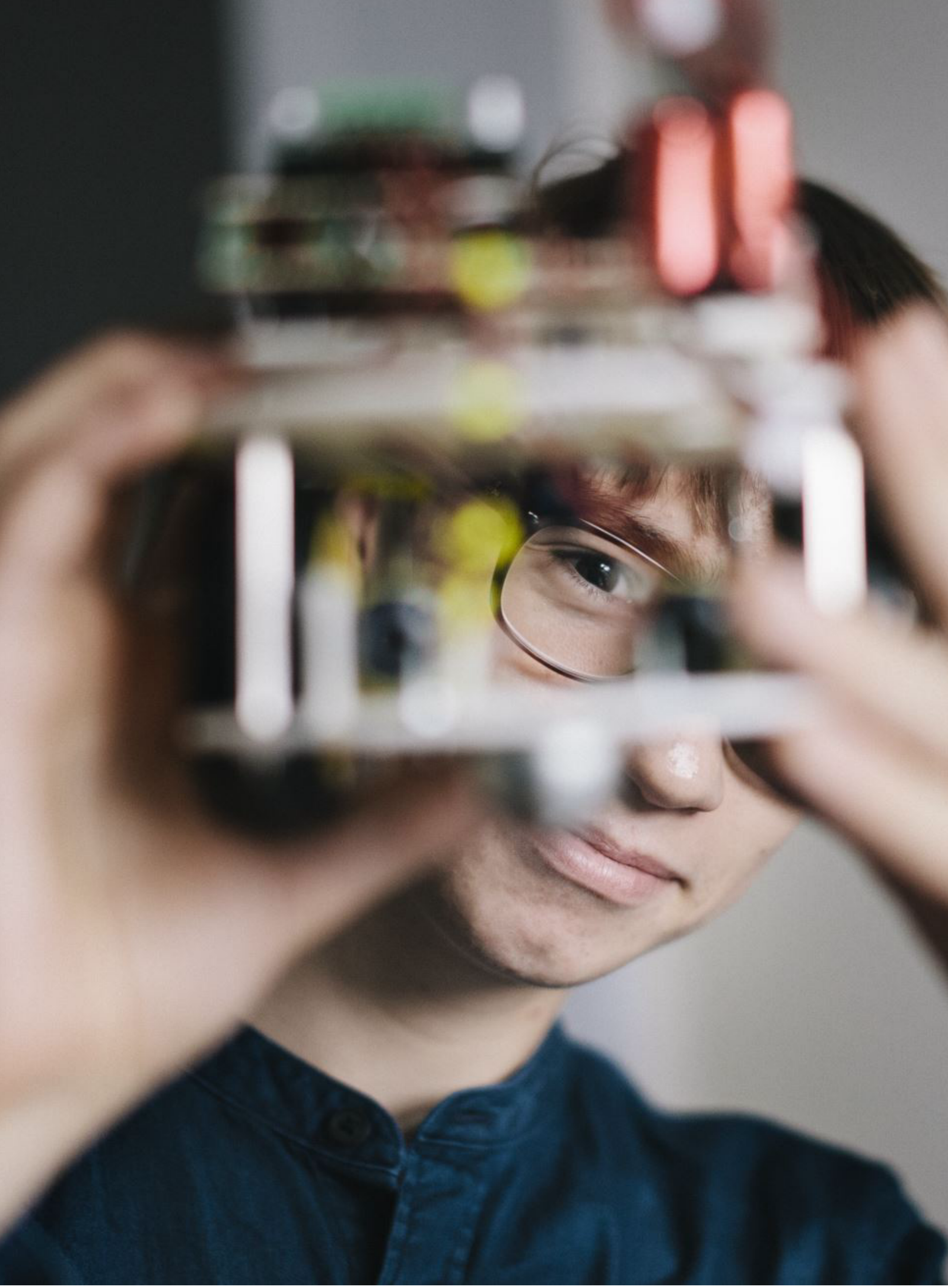

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ISO Central Secretariat
Chemin de Blandonnet 8
1214 Geneva, Switzerland

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