

# Norway hosts GA 2010

## SN's CEO outlines programme

*ISO Focus+* interviewed Trine Tveter, Managing Director of Standards Norway (SN), which will host the 33<sup>rd</sup> ISO General Assembly in Oslo in September 2010. As part of the General Assembly, there will be one full-day open session on 16 September on the theme of applied information technologies (IT). Associated meetings of the ISO Committee for developing country matters (ISO/DEVCO), the ISO Technical Management Board and ISO Council will take place in parallel during the week.

*ISO Focus+*: Before we turn our attention to the 33<sup>rd</sup> ISO General Assembly, could you briefly describe the mission of SN?

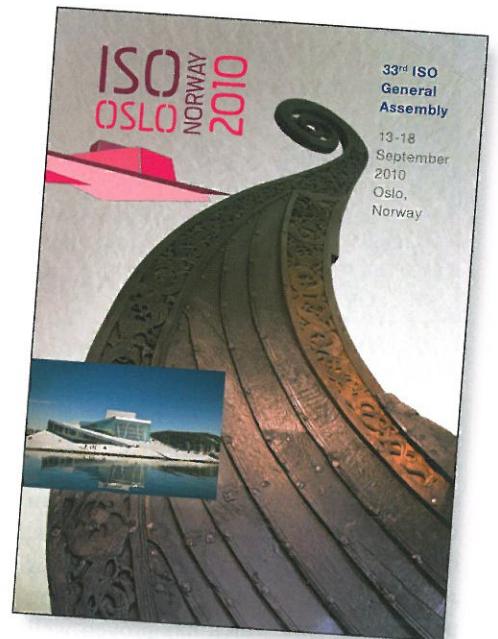
**Trine Tveter:** Standards Norway, with a staff of around 70 people, is a private and independent non-profit member organization. Its members represent companies, public authorities, research and development, non-governmental organizations, consumers, labour unions and other stakeholders.

In addition to SN's staff, approximately 2 050 Norwegian experts are engaged in national, European and international standardization. Its main tasks are to:

- Serve trade and industry, the authorities and other interested bodies
- Promote standardization as a mean for national competitiveness
- Meet society's demands for developing safe products, production processes and services.



SN develops standards for all fields (except electrotechnical and telecommunication) and adopts between 1 200-1 300 Norwegian Standards (NS) annually. More than 95% of the standards adopted in Norway today are of international (ISO) or European (CEN) origin. There are currently close to 14 500 Norwegian Standards available.



*ISO Focus+*: What motivated you to propose Norway as the venue for the ISO General Assembly in 2010?

**Trine Tveter:** It is a great privilege to invite ISO members to join us in Oslo, Norway, from 13 to 18 September 2010. The time has come for the whole ISO family to visit the northern regions of our global community. We want them all to experience both our capital, Oslo, and Norway, the land of the fjords.

Standardization has a long tradition in our country, dating back to 1923 with the creation of Standards Norway's predecessor. In addition, Norway was one of the founding member countries of ISO when the organization was established in 1947. Since then, Norway has been actively involved in ISO.

Though Norway is a relatively small country, Norwegian representatives carry a lot of weight in ISO. According to the ISO ranking based on degree of activity and GNP, Norway ranks a respectable 20<sup>th</sup> place. The country holds 53 secretariats



*Standards Norway headquarters.*

(14 ISO technical committees and sub-committees and 39 working groups) and participates actively in 85 ISO technical committees.

We want to show delegates of the ISO General Assembly and particularly of the open session, the strength of Norwegian standardization and the broad competence of our trade and industry. What's more, we want to make sure that this big event gives ISO standards and standardization more publicity in Norwegian society.

All SN employees are already more or less involved in the General Assembly preparations. We are deliberately using this big event to strengthen our organizational culture.

**ISO Focus+:** *An open session on applied IT (information technologies) will be held during the General Assembly week. What would you like to see coming out of the open session?*

**Trine Tveter:** International Standards for applied IT are useful for all kinds of sectors and in the daily work of employees all over the world. The open session, which will be held on 16 September, has been appropriately entitled, *IT@work*.

During the session, we intend to show delegates and Norwegian visitors the importance of ISO standards for applied IT. Our society uses these standards, but most people are not aware of their influence and impact. We want to use this day to get publicity on this interesting and important field in Norwegian media and society.

We are planning to focus on building smart house technologies, fields in which Norwegian experts have special competence and knowledge.

In the run-up to the open session, we established in December 2009, a national programme committee under my leadership to plan the programme. The committee is charged with making suggestions to ISO.

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**ISO Focus+:** *SN was one of the main proponents for the creation of ISO/TC 234 on fisheries and aquaculture, for which it holds the secretariat. What do you see as key challenges in fisheries and agriculture, and how can standards help address these challenges?*

**Trine Tveter:** The industries, businesses and trades connected to fisheries and aquaculture are fundamentally international in nature. This is true both of trade in fish and fish products, and of the production of equipment used in aquaculture and fisheries. Many of the processes involved have potentially far-reaching environmental impacts and major consumer interests need to be taken into account.

Given its broadly international character, sustainability in the seafood sector

depends quite heavily on transnational agreements and practices. This is where ISO can play an important role with International Standards.

Norwegian companies have fish farms in many countries around the world, and we have had national standards on fisheries and aquaculture for several years.

Because of the industry's impact in Norway, it is of great importance for us to take a leading role in developing International Standards for this field.

In assessing the requirements for standardization in the field of fisheries and aquaculture, ISO/TC 234 has proposed that initial priorities should include:

- Terminology
- Technical specifications for equipment and its operation
- Characterization of aquaculture sites and maintenance of appropriate physical, chemical and biological conditions
- Environmental monitoring
- Data reporting
- Traceability
- Waste disposal.

Favourable environmental conditions for farmed fish promote optimum health and growth. It is also important to avoid unnecessary environmental impact from marine finfish farms and aquaculture.

For example, when farmed fish escape, they can inflict economic losses on aquaculture business and represent a potential environmental problem.

**ISO Focus+:** *This year's World Standards Day will be devoted to the theme of accessibility. How has Norway addressed issues related to accessibility? What events/activities are being planned by SN to commemorate WSD 2010?*

**Trine Tveter:** How to make society accessible for all and remove barriers against the societal participation of disabled people are fairly new notions for some countries. In Norway, accessibility has been a significant issue for the last 10 years and is only growing in importance. Accessibility is referred to in the country's existing and new laws and regulations, actions plans, county and municipality planning documents, and standards.

In January 2009, Norway introduced the Discrimination and Accessibility Act. This Act underlines that products, means of communication, buildings and surroundings have to be accessible for as many people as possible. Standards are important tools to make this happen.

In 2008, we developed a Norwegian Standard for accessible tourist destinations and this year we launched a standard for accessibility in houses and office buildings. At a press conference, I handed the standard to the Minister of Local Government. Good news for us – the standard received a lot of attention in the Norwegian media.

In addition, we have written chronicles and articles on accessibility and have given different presentations on the theme in

Norway and abroad. Our committees on accessibility are popular and their members represent the interests of all stakeholder groups – authorities, companies, and special interest organizations.

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*It is a great privilege to invite ISO members.*

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Currently, we are working on a standard for accessible outdoor areas, which will be ready by the end of the year.

For this year's World Standards Day, celebrated on 14 October, we are planning a seminar on accessibility, as well as press releases and other public relations activities.

**ISO Focus+:** *2010 is the International Year of Biodiversity. With a strong record in environmental conservation, how could other countries benefit from Norway's approach? Are there areas for which International Standards are needed?*

**Trine Tveter:** Indeed, we have started a national project provisionally entitled, "Influencing factors on the environment". Our main objective is a hierarchical system of factors influencing the environment, positively or negatively.

The system will be used by local and national authorities dealing with natural resource management, for the production

of environmental statistics and other information as well as a tool for environmental management systems. It should also be used to support national legislation, European directives (like the habitat directive, the birds directive and the water framework directive) and international agreements like the Bern Convention and the Bonn Agreement.

We hope to publish the first edition of the system, as a Norwegian Standard, in December 2010. The project could serve as a very good basis for international standardization in order to preserve natural biological diversity.

**ISO Focus:** *How do you see SN in the next five years? What new directions do you see the organization undertaking?*

**Trine Tveter:** In the future, standards will be developed as part of bigger knowledge systems. We will probably see more standards on applied IT, including Web services such as online shopping. This, at least, is one of our main targets. More attention will also be given to climate, sustainability and services.

More generally, an increasing number of standards will be developed in cooperation with relevant key partners, and a greater share of our income will come from other sources – beyond the sales of standards.

We, here in SN, are constantly developing our organization, and this will make us an even more innovative organization. ■

