Health Tourism
Quick Guide to International Quality Standards
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The Quick Guide is intended to provide an overview of international standards in the health tourism industry for entrepreneurs and quality managers. It recommends the sources readers can probe for further consideration.

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Why International Standard?

Complying with international standard and being certified might seem irrelevant to SMEs. However, if you are looking to expand your business you may want to consider it. International standards could benefit small business, in terms of productivity and marketing, and help them compete with larger firms in the global market. This is true to both health and wellness service providers and those in related industries such as hospitality, transportation and more.

Build customer confidence
Customers want assurance that the products and services they are looking to purchase or obtain will meet their requirements for quality. International standards help bring confidence to potential customers.

Meet regulation requirements
International standards help business comply with regulations, both local and international regulations, existing and future ones. This is due to the systematic practice of international standard that is foundation of regulations.

Reduce cost
Most standards help business reduce waste and operate efficiently. This reduces costs of the business.

Gain market access
When entering new markets, especially overseas markets, international standards help make it easier for business. Well recognized standards make customers open up as they are ensured of product quality.

Source: International Organization of Standardization

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Medical Tourism

There are a number of standards adopted in healthcare. Some also cover wellness industry.

External peer review is also important in this field. the International Society for Quality in Health Care (ISQua), an internationally recognized, not-for-profit community and organization, has accredited health and social care external evaluation organizations and standards developing bodies in many countries. Among many ISQua accredited bodies worldwide are Joint Commission International (JCI) from the US, Accreditation Canada from Canada, Temos from Germany, National Accreditation Board for Hospitals & Healthcare Providers (NABH) from India. These hospital accreditation bodies do not accredit only facilities in their home country but also internationally.

Accreditation Canada

Accreditation Canada’s programs assess organizations against standards developed by our affiliate, Health Standards Organization (HSO).

Accreditation Canada accredits various services across different sectors, including hospital, primary care, dental care, EMS and Independent Medical/Surgical Facilities (IMSF), using standards such as Ambulatory Care Services, Cancer Care Services, Dental Services, Governance, Medication Management, Public Health Services etc. The Accreditation Canada Seal is awarded in Gold, Platinum or Diamond level.

As of 2019, Accreditation Canada has satellite offices in Belgium, Ecuador and UAE to handle international accreditation.

ISO 9001

International Organization for Standardization (ISO) is an international organization with a membership of national standards bodies. ISO develops and publishes a wide range of international standards, including the ISO 9000 family for quality management standards. ISO 9001 is the only standard in the series that can be certified.

Though ISO 9001 is not developed specifically for health care and social care, it aims to improve the overall performance and provide a foundation for development and continual improvement. It has at its core well lead, risk based, customer-centered provision of high quality services, which are the core principles of all health and social care provision. The standard is adopted in many healthcare facilities.
ISO certification and conformity assessment is done by external certification bodies. ISO’s Committee on Conformity Assessment (CASCO) however develops standard of assessment. CASCO accredits certification bodies that comply with the standard. Contact the national accreditation body to find accredited certification bodies.

**Joint Commission International (JCI)**
The major accreditors in the US, is the longest established international hospital assurance standard and is the world’s largest healthcare accreditor. Its Gold Seal of Approval is one of the most familiar marks for international patients.

JCI accredits the following health care programs: Hospitals, academic medical center hospitals, ambulatory care facilities, laboratory, home care facilities, long term care facilities, medical transport organizations and primary care centers.

JCI-accredited organizations can further obtain Clinical Care Program Certification (CCPC) in a specific area of expertise such as Cancer, Heart Failure and Traumatic Brain Injury.

Average time to achieve accreditation is 18 - 24 months for hospitals and academic medical centers.

**NABH International**
NABH International is a unit of the National Accreditation Board for Hospitals and Healthcare Providers (NABH), India’s national health care quality assurance body. Both NABH and its standards are accredited by ISQua. The standard is relatively new but provides extensive sets of standard across various sectors of the health care industry, including hospital, small healthcare organization (up to 50 beds), blood bank and transfusion services, medical imaging services, dental facilities, allopathic services and wellness center

NABH International boasts competitive costs of accreditation as a result of its primary objective to support health care delivery in developing world.
**Temos**

The German-based Temos International Healthcare Accreditation is an accreditation body that not only assess clinical and operation standards, but also takes into account the perspectives of medical travelers and international patients. This includes areas such as international medicine and international patient management. Temos certifies organizations in these areas: international patient care, medical tourism, international dental care, international rehabilitation care, international reproductive care, international eye care and international medical travel coordination.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDUSTRY SPECIFIC</th>
<th>ACCREDITATION CANADA</th>
<th>ISO 9001:2015</th>
<th>JCI INTERNATIONAL</th>
<th>NABHI INTERNATIONAL</th>
<th>TEMOS</th>
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<tr>
<th>SUPPORT REACH</th>
<th>Canada (HQ), Belgium, Ecuador</th>
<th>Worlwide</th>
<th>USA (HQ), China, UAE, Singapore</th>
<th>India (HQ), Philippines</th>
<th>Germany (HQ) 16 offices in America, Europe Middle East and Asia Pacific</th>
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<tr>
<th>MAIN MARKET ADOPTED</th>
<th>Canada, South America, Middle East</th>
<th>Worlwide</th>
<th>USA, Europe, Middle East, India, China, Japan, Southeast Asia</th>
<th>India, Philippines</th>
<th>Europe, China, Southeast Asia</th>
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<tr>
<th>CERTIFICATION PROCESS*</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>3 - 6 months</th>
<th>18 - 24 months</th>
<th>N/A</th>
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<tr>
<th>ACCREDITATION CYCLE</th>
<th>3 years</th>
<th>3 years</th>
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<th>3 years</th>
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<tr>
<th>CERTIFICATION AREAS**</th>
<th>hospital, primary care, dental care, EMS and Independent Medical/Surgical Facilities (IMSF)</th>
<th>Quality management</th>
<th>Hospital, academic medical center hospital, ambulatory care, laboratory, home care, long term care, medical transport and primary care</th>
<th>Hospital, small healthcare organization, blood bank, medical imaging, dental, allopathic, wellness</th>
<th>Hospital, clinic, primary care, dental/ rehab/ reproductive/ eye facilities and medical travel providers (international patient focused)</th>
</tr>
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</table>

*Duration of process can vary. Contact certification bodies for more details.

**Each accreditation body categorizes health service areas differently. Check the full list in their websites.

Health Tourism: Quick Guide to International Quality Standards
International standard in major countries of health tourism

Number of organizations adopting major international standards in some medical tourism destinations

- **Canada**
  - 97% of hospitals accredited with Accreditation Canada

- **United Kingdom**
  - 1 JCI

- **Germany**
  - 2 JCI
  - 2 Temos

- **The Philippines**
  - 5 JCI
  - 7 Accreditation Canada
  - 5 NABH

- **Brazil**
  - 62 JCI
  - 43 Accreditation Canada

- **Italy**
  - 23 JCI
  - 26 Accreditation Canada

- **Israel**
  - 29 JCI

- **United Arab Emirates**
  - 203 JCI
  - 14 Accreditation Canada
  - 3 Temos

- **India**
  - 38 JCI
  - 619 NABH

- **Singapore**
  - 21 JCI

- **Malaysia**
  - 13 JCI
  - 1 Temos

- **Thailand**
  - 66 JCI
  - 3 Temos
Wellness Tourism

Unlike the healthcare industry, international standards in the wellness industry are not widely adopted. This could be an opportunity to differentiate for wellness establishments that choose to adopt one.

EuropeSpa

EuropeSpa is the official quality system of the European Spas Association (ESPA). It provides thorough internationally uniform quality management standards that are based on international laws and standards. EuropeSpa claims its standards are demanding and make business appealing to international clients. Business can be certified in the following categories: medical wellness, wellness hotel, hotel spa, day spa and thermal spa.

ISO

The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) is an international organization that develops and publishes standards for various industry. ISO also publishes standards related to wellness tourism. These standards are sometimes adopted or used as foundation of national standard in ISO member country.

- The ISO 17679:2016 aims at wellness spas of all types and sizes with a focus on the improvement of supporting processes and the quality of service provided to clients.
- The ISO 17680:2015 Thalassotherapy
- The ISO 21426:2018 Medical spas

To ask about certification contact national standards body in your country.
ASEAN Spa Services Standard

Due to the rise of wellness tourism and ASEAN as a global leader, especially in the spa industry, ASEAN member states developed this spa standard since 2011 and the standard was published in 2016 to uplift the quality of ASEAN spa industry while maintaining cultural authenticity.

ASEAN Spa Services Standard measures spa operator against 7 criteria: Place, Service, People, Products, Equipment, Management and Environmental Practices. If you wish to be certified contact your country's national tourism organization.

*Duration of process can vary. Contact certification bodies for more details.*