

Code of good practice for standardization



1 Introductory commentary

1.1 Standards play an important role in trade and commerce within and between all countries of the world. These standards are developed by many bodies, at sub-national, national, regional and international levels, a significant number of which prepare their documents by consensus processes. Alongside the growth of international trade and technological cooperation, standardizing bodies have developed procedures and modes of cooperation which are commonly considered to constitute good practices for standards development at all levels. These practices are set out here in the form of a code, applicable to governmental and non-governmental consensus bodies.

1.2 At international level, the voluntary standardization process is essentially coordinated under the auspices of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC), and the International Telecommunications Union (ITU). These bodies are apex organizations for an extensive infrastructure which has its foundations at national level, and extends into regional activities whenever necessary. This global system (i.e. standardization at national, regional and international level) is linked together via collaboration agreements between ISO, IEC and ITU at international level; by similar agreements between standardization organizations at regional level, such as CEN, CENELEC and ETSI in Europe; and at the base, through an extensive array of collaboration agreements between the national members of the three apex organizations.

1.3 Within the global standardization system, the national members of the three apex organizations assume the major responsibility for ensuring coherency and coordination. For this reason a distinction is made, in the definitions and under clauses 6 and 7 of this code, between a **standardizing body** (of which there may be many in the same country) and a national **standards body** which in addition is the national member of one or more of the international apex bodies, and of the corresponding regional organizations where relevant.

1.4 Adoption of this code is voluntary and intended to ensure openness and transparency, together with an optimum degree of order, coherence and effectiveness in worldwide standardization processes. Provisions which should be of a binding nature are given in the form of requirements, using the modal auxiliary "shall".

2 Definitions

For the purposes of this code, the definitions of ISO/IEC

dards using procedures based on the principles of consensus. Such bodies form a subset of the bodies covered by Annex 3 of the GATT 1991 Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade, as explained in annex A to this code.

3 General provisions

3.1 This code is intended for use by any standardizing body, whether governmental or non-governmental, at international, regional, national or sub-national level. Standardizing bodies that have adopted this code may notify this fact to the ISO or IEC member in their country, which will forward the notification to the ISO/IEC Information Centre in Geneva. The notifications should include the name and address of the body concerned and the scope of its current and expected standardization activities. Regional or international standardizing bodies, and standardizing bodies in countries without ISO or IEC members, may notify their adoption of this code directly to the ISO/IEC Information Centre.

3.2 Members of ISO shall make every effort to become members of ISONET or to appoint another body to become a member, as well as to acquire the most advanced membership type possible for the ISONET member. Other standardizing bodies shall make every effort to associate themselves with ISONET (see annex B for description of the ISONET system).

3.3 The standardizing body shall afford sympathetic consideration to, and adequate opportunity for, consultation regarding representations made, with respect to the operation of this code, by other standardizing bodies that have accepted it. The standardizing body shall make an objective effort to resolve any complaints.

4 Procedures for the development of standards

4.1 Written procedures based on the consensus principle should govern the methods used for standards development. Copies of the procedures of the standardizing body shall be available to interested parties in a reasonable and timely manner upon request.

4.2 Such written procedures should contain an identifiable, realistic and readily available appeals mechanism for the impartial handling of any substantive and procedural complaints.

4.3 Notification of standardization activity shall be made in suitable media as appropriate to afford interested persons or organizations an opportunity for meaningful con-

media of new, current and completed standards development activities, and reporting on status changes as appropriate.

4.4 On the request of any interested party, the standardizing body shall promptly provide, or arrange to provide, a copy of a draft standard which it has submitted for comments. Any fees charged for this service shall, apart from the real cost of delivery, be the same for domestic and foreign parties. Interested parties, wherever located, shall be provided with reasonable opportunity to review and comment on draft standards. Prompt consideration and response, if so requested, shall be given to all views and comments received, including, for instance, explanation why a deviation from relevant international standards is necessary.

4.5 Formal approval of standards should be based on evidence of consensus.

4.6 All standards should be reviewed on a periodic basis and revised in a timely manner. Proposals for the development of new or revised standards, when submitted according to appropriate procedures by any materially and directly interested person or organization, wherever located, should be given prompt consideration.

4.7 All approved standards shall be published promptly. Copies shall be made available under reasonable terms and conditions to any person, wherever located.

4.8 Proper records of standards development activity shall be prepared and maintained.

5 Advancement of international trade

5.1 Standards should be written to meet the needs of the market-place and should contribute to advancing free trade in the broadest possible geographic and economic contexts. Standards shall not be written so as to impede or inhibit international trade.

5.2 Standards shall not be written as a means to fix prices, nor to exclude competition or otherwise inhibit commerce beyond that necessary to meet requirements of relevant technical regulations or other legitimate sectorial or local requirements for compatibility, environmental protection, health and safety.

5.3 When international standards exist or their completion is imminent, they, or their relevant parts, shall be used as the basis for corresponding national or regional standards, except where such international standards or relevant parts would be ineffective or inappropriate, for instance because of an insufficient level of protection or fundamental climatic or geographical factors or fundamental technological problems.

5.4 Standards should not be written so as to allow them to be used to mislead consumers and other users of a product, process or service addressed by the standard.

5.5 Standards shall neither be written nor adopted so as to discriminate among products on the basis of the place

5.6 Whenever possible, in order to leave maximum freedom for technical development, the requirements of standards shall be expressed in terms of performance rather than design or descriptive characteristics.

5.7 Administrative requirements relating to conformity assessment and marks of conformity or other, non-technical issues should be presented separately from technical and/or performance requirements.

5.8 Standards should not be drafted in terms that include the use of a patented item unless the use of such an item is justifiable for technical reasons, and the rights holder agrees to negotiate licences with interested applicants, wherever located, on reasonable terms and conditions.

6 Participation in the standards development process

6.1 Participation in standardization processes at all levels shall be accessible to materially and directly interested persons and organizations within a coherent process as described in this clause.

6.2 With a view to harmonizing standards on as wide a basis as possible, the standardizing body shall, in an appropriate way, give priority to playing a full part within the limits of its resources in the preparation by relevant international standardizing bodies of international standards regarding subject matter for which it either has developed or adopted, or expects to develop or adopt standards.

6.3 At international level, national participation in the standardization process is organized under the auspices of the appropriate national standards body which is the member of the relevant international standards organization. National members shall ensure that their participation reflects a balance of national interests in the subject matter to which the international standardization activity relates.

6.4 At regional level, participation in the consensus standardization process, which is organized to suit the particular needs of the technology and the region, should always reflect a balance of national and regional interests in regional standardizing work. Opportunities for effective and meaningful contributions from countries not within the region should be organized under the auspices of the national standards bodies of those countries and should be done in cooperation with the international standards organizations in which membership is common.

6.5 At national level, participation should be organized by standardizing bodies and national standards bodies according to their respective consensus-building procedures which should provide for balanced representation of interest categories such as producers, buyers, consumers, etc. Opportunities for effective and meaningful contributions from other countries should be organized under the auspices of the national standards bodies of those countries and should be done in cooperation with the international and regional standards organizations in