

Involving consumers

Why and how



**practical guidance for standards
development bodies**

ISO in brief

ISO is the International Organization for Standardization. ISO has a membership of 163* national standards bodies from countries large and small, industrialized, developing and in transition, in all regions of the world. ISO's portfolio of over 18 500* standards provides business, government and society with practical tools for all three dimensions of sustainable development : economic, environmental and social.

ISO standards make a positive contribution to the world we live in. They facilitate trade, spread knowledge, disseminate innovative advances in technology, and share good management and conformity assessment practices.

ISO standards provide solutions and achieve benefits for almost all sectors of activity, including agriculture, construction, mechanical engineering, manufacturing, distribution, transport, medical devices, information and communication technologies, the environment, energy, quality management, conformity assessment and services.

ISO only develops standards for which there is a clear market requirement. The work is carried out by experts in the subject drawn directly from the industrial, technical and business sectors that have identified the need for the standard, and which subsequently put the standard to use. These experts may be joined by others with relevant knowledge, such as representatives of government agencies, testing laboratories, consumer associations and academia, and by international governmental and nongovernmental organizations.

An ISO International Standard represents a global consensus on the state of the art in the subject of that standard.

* In March 2011

Contents

ISO in brief	2
Executive summary	3
Why – and when – to involve consumers	4
What are the benefits of involving consumers, and where have they made a difference?	7
How is effective consumer participation organized?	10
Who is a consumer representative?	17
Interface with ISO/COPOLCO	20
Funding of consumer representatives	23
Training of consumer representatives	26
ISO resources	31
Links to organizations named in this brochure	32



Why – and when – to involve consumers



The work of an NSB (or SDO) is more than defining technical parameters for industrial applications or codifying test methods. It may also involve establishing safety and performance standards for consumer products such as leisure equipment, household appliances, furniture and children's toys, just to name a few examples. Food safety, and goods and services for the elderly and people with disabilities are examples of more general areas where many standards of critical importance to consumers have been developed. Involving consumer interests in such standards activities is essential. Standards that are based on a consensus of all affected interests – including end-user



consumers – and that address basic consumer needs will be more market-relevant. This will enhance consumer confidence in the resulting products and enable them to be more easily disseminated into the marketplace.

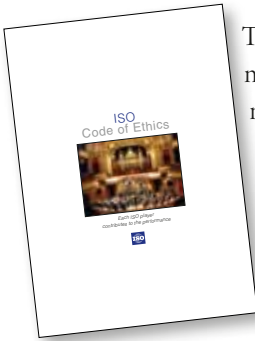
Both ISO and IEC have recognized the importance of consumer engagement by jointly issuing the ISO/IEC Statement on *Consumer Participation in Standardization Work*.¹⁾ This policy statement calls upon the members of the two organizations to encourage and support consumer participation in the development of standards for goods and services used by consumers or that otherwise affect their interests. It provides guidance on how to involve consumers at every stage of standards development work. It notes that the degree of consumer participation should reflect the relative importance to consumer interests of a particular standards project. It cites the need to engage consumers in the planning of



standards work programmes, both national and international, and in policy matters relevant to the consumer. It states that consumers should participate in identifying priority areas of work where consumer participation is deemed essential, as well as areas where consumer involvement is considered less critical. The ISO Committee on consumer policy (ISO COPOLCO) has identified and continually reviews priority areas from the consumer's point of view²⁾, which includes some activities handled in IEC.

1) www.iso.org/iso/copolcoparticipation_2001.pdf

2) www.iso.org/iso/resources/resources_consumers/areas_of_focus_for_consumers_within_standards.htm



The *ISO Code of Ethics* reinforces these concepts by committing ISO members to take into account the views of all relevant interests at the national level and to take appropriate measures to facilitate the participation of consumers and other affected parties from civil society, SMEs and public authorities.³⁾ Likewise, the *IEC Masterplan 2006* states that “to ensure the widest possible acceptance of IEC work and to reflect developments in society, the National Committees of the IEC will encourage the participation of end-users and consumers both at national level and as members of their delegations to the IEC.”

In relation to participation in technical committees (TCs) and subcommittees, the ISO/IEC Directives Part 1 provide that “national bodies have the responsibility to organize their national input in an efficient and timely manner, taking account of all relevant interests at their national level.”

The due process procedures of some NSBs and SDOs specify that representative user views shall be actively sought and fully considered in standards activities. This includes consumer views when the scope of the standards activity impacts consumer protection, health and safety, environmental matters, and related issues. They may also specify that a committee developing a standard, or developing national input on an international standard, have a reasonable balance of interests and not be dominated by any single interest.

Here are some more reasons why NSBs and SDOs should involve consumer interests in their standards work programmes.

Societal issues have influenced consumers' purchasing decisions and standards work programmes.

Consumers are increasingly concerned with sustainable production and ethical trade practices. They are likely to make purchasing decisions based on how a product or service is produced, in addition to weighing traditional concerns such as price, safety and health, quality, performance, and product information. Consumers were among the first to call for the development



of standards for environmental management and the resulting ISO 14000 series of standards published in 1996. Consumers also were at the forefront of ISO's decision in 2004 to produce an international standard on social responsibility (ISO 26000) which led to an unprecedented effort to involve consumers and other stakeholders. Consumers have also called for standards and meaningful conformity assessment programmes related to environmental labeling and other “ethical purchasing” labels on products. Today, standards are being developed and published in areas such as greenhouse gas accounting and verification, carbon footprint

3) www.iso.org/iso/codeethics_2004.pdf



quantification, energy performance of buildings, biotechnology, management of water resources, and nanotechnologies. Consumers have an important stake in defining standards and best practices for all of these areas which have a direct impact on them.

The Internet and other media have vastly increased the amount of information that is available to consumers and the choices of products and services available to them.

Accordingly, consumer advocates have called for consumer protection standards for products and services traded in the global marketplace. For example, at the urging of consumers, three “customer satisfaction” standards projects were initiated detailing how organizations can manage relationships with their customers: ISO 10001, *Quality management – Customer satisfaction – Guidelines for codes of conduct for organizations*; ISO 10002, *Quality management – Customer satisfaction – Guidelines for complaints handling in organizations* and ISO 10003, *Quality management – Customer satisfaction – Guidelines for dispute resolution external to organizations*. Consumers also have called for

standards relating to business-to-consumer ecommerce transactions, product recalls and the cross-border trading of second hand goods, and such standards are being developed.

Standards increasingly are relied upon to support trade and regulatory frameworks.

Trade pacts such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the European Union call for the harmonization of domestic regulations to international and/or regional standards in the area of health and safety. Under the WTO’s Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade, without a showing of good cause the national standards of one country may not exceed the requirements of any existing international standards. Domestic laws are also a factor. In the United States, for example, federal government agencies are required to rely on voluntary consensus standards for regulatory and procurement purposes except where inconsistent with applicable law or otherwise impractical. These agreements underscore the importance of consumer involvement in developing broad consensus on standards for products and services used by consumers.



Given standards' wider scope and impact and their increasing importance for international trade, NSBs and SDOs have an obligation to seek out the consumer perspective.

You may well ask, “But ... where can this ‘perspective’ be found?”

This often comes through a consumer representative who represents a wider group such as a consumer organization or association and who has expertise in one or several consumer

issues. However, the number and profile of consumer organizations, and the degree to which they have resources to track standards issues of consumer interest, varies greatly from country to country.

What are the benefits of involving consumers, and where have they made a difference?

The participation of consumer representatives adds credibility to the standards-setting process. Consumer representatives provide valuable input to an NSB or SDO by giving feedback from the point of view of the end-user.

There are several ways that a consumer representative can influence the outcome of discussions, resulting in better, more relevant standards, and therefore more desirable end products. For example, they :

- help ensure that the standards produced are market-relevant, by identifying which standards or standards programmes are of priority interest to consumers,
- provide data on acceptable levels of risks for products defined by standards,
- give examples of how goods and services are actually used (or predictably misused) in practice,
- give advice on communication issues including labeling, product instructions and warnings,
- suggest features that are needed by consumers with special needs such as children, older persons and people with disabilities,
- propose solutions to address consumer requirements such as safety, performance, quality, interoperability or enhanced consumer protection.

Some case studies illustrating how consumers have added value are shown here. The next section gives more ideas on making contact and structuring the input of consumers' views.

Case Study – BSI (British Standards Institution)

A 2008 survey showed that when customer service falls below expectations, over 70 per cent of consumers move to a competitor. BSI's Consumer and Public Interest Unit was instrumental in the publication of BS 8477, Code of Practice for customer service, which was developed through a collaboration of consumers and industry representatives. It identifies the essential features that organizations need to address to meet the expectations of their customers and thereby increase customer loyalty and retention.



Case Study – CSA (Canadian Standards Association)

A consumer representative at the CSA serves on the committee for Safety of Cells, Tissues & Organs for Transplantation & Assisted Reproduction. The individual was heavily involved in voluntary organizations with a focus on organ donation, kidneys in particular. After receiving two kidney transplants, this consumer representative felt that he should “give something back.” As a consumer representative on this committee, he provides a very valuable consumer perspective which combines extensive subject area knowledge with unique personal experience, ensuring that consumers are represented.



Case Study – DIN (Deutsches Institut für Normung)



The requirements for financial planning process quality, personnel qualification and ethics, which had been discussed and agreed upon within the German consumer community, were given as input to the work of ISO/TC 222, *Personal financial planning*. Most of the proposed requirements were

taken into account and are now in the certifiable standard ISO 22222, *Personal financial planning – Requirements for personal financial planners*. The consumer input was fundamental to the committee and the standard more directly addresses the needs of consumers.

Case Study – KATS (Korean Agency for Technology and Standards)

The need for a standard adaptor for notebook computers was noted among many countries including Korea. Consumers were eager regarding the benefits that standardization would bring including convenience and cost savings as a result of interoperability, reducing waste of electronic devices and protecting the environment. KATS carried out research in this area and has developed a proposal for an international standard for notebook adaptors.



How is effective consumer participation organized ?

Many countries have a well established infrastructure of non governmental organizations that serve as watchdogs of government and business activities. These include independent, non profit consumer organizations that address a broad range of consumer protection issues such as consumer product safety, injury and accident prevention, as well as prevention of deceptive advertising and unfair trade practices. Representatives of such organizations may be ideally qualified to serve as consumer representatives because of their expertise and independence from commercial interests. NSBs and SDOs should consider reaching out to and involving such advocacy groups.

Some countries do not have a recognized or organized consumer movement. The NSB can then assist by bringing together consumer-minded individuals and groups to discuss how consumer participation may be ensured. For example, those involved in public service, quality initiatives, academia and professional associations have a background from which consumer expertise can quickly be developed. There may also be individuals or groups dealing with local issues that may be interested in widening their interests. It is also possible to form an organization within the NSB focused directly on standards work. Alternatively, the consumer representatives may prefer to develop their own independent organization to feed their views into the NSB.

There are also countries with many consumer organizations, but which fail to coordinate their efforts. This can be a real challenge for the NSB to develop cooperation and a coherent consumer voice, especially if the consumer groups have opposing views on certain issues. However, the benefits derived from providing leadership and developing cooperation outweigh the cost of time involved.



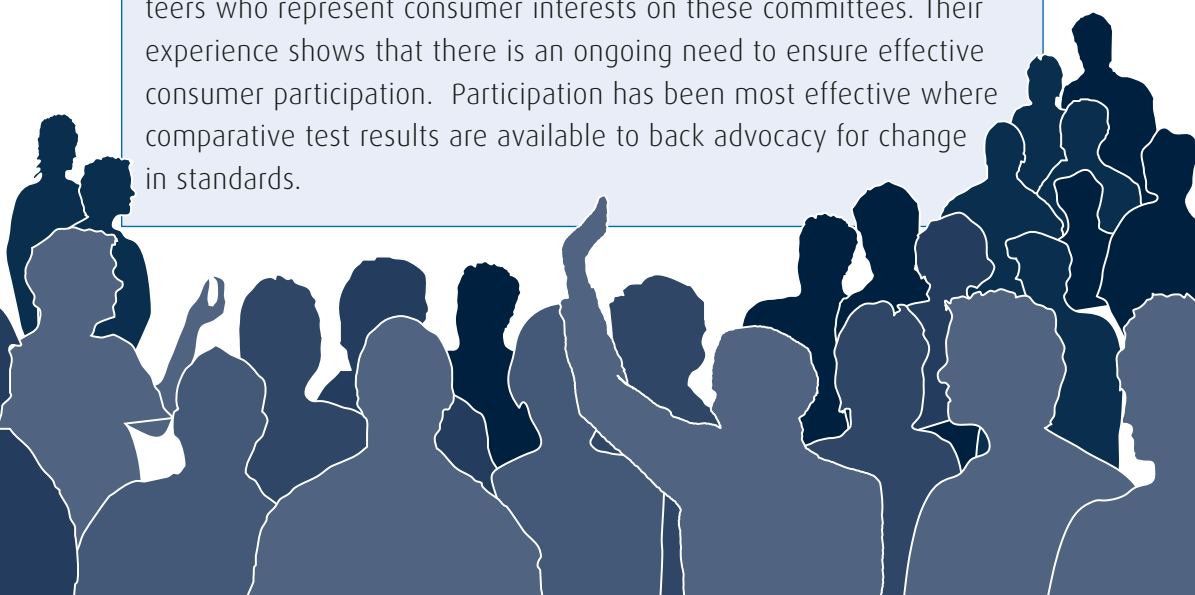
The NSB's proper role is to coordinate consumer participation in standards work at the national, regional and international levels. In some cases, coordination may involve both the NSB and other SDOs that develop standards for consumer products and services. This varies depending upon how the national standards system is organized. For example, some NSBs develop standards (e.g., BSI – United Kingdom, DIN - Germany) while others (e.g., ANSI – USA, and SCC – Canada) do not. Those that do not may accredit SDOs to develop standards at the national level. They may also work with SDOs and other stakeholders to organize national mirror committees for ISO and IEC TCs.

A number of NSBs and some SDOs maintain a consumer committee, council, network, or forum that serves as a focal point for coordinating standards participation by consumers. The establishment of such consumer committees is encouraged in the ISO/IEC Statement on *Consumer Participation in Standardization Work*. These groups often include representatives from consumer and public interest organizations, relevant government agencies, and individual consumer advocates as members. They may also include other involved stakeholders such as testing organizations, academia, SDOs, professional societies, retailers, manufacturers, industry trade associations, and others. In some NSBs, this type of coordination mechanism is a more recent development; in others, a consumer interest committee has been in existence for many years. Some examples of both are given in the adjacent case studies.

Case Study –

BIS (Bureau of Indian Standards) and Consumer Voice (India)

Consumer Voice has been represented on a number of BIS committees for over a decade. Consumer Voice has about a dozen volunteers who represent consumer interests on these committees. Their experience shows that there is an ongoing need to ensure effective consumer participation. Participation has been most effective where comparative test results are available to back advocacy for change in standards.





Case Study – BSI (British Standards Institution) Consumer & Public Interest (CPI) Network

The BSI Consumer & Public Interest (CPI) Network includes both organizations focused on consumer and public interests, and around 50 individual CPI representatives. CPI representatives collectively sit on hundreds of committees for a huge range of products and services both nationally and internationally but they also contribute at many other stages of the standards development process. For example there is a process for developing new ideas for standards from within the Network (and beyond) and prioritizing these from a CPI perspective and from their likelihood of resulting in a standard which would be used by other stakeholders. The long list of ideas is shared with other members of BSI and also assists the BSI contribution to COPOLCO. The Network typically has two ‘all-member’ meetings a year when other organizations may be invited to hear about or discuss standards topics of importance. Other meetings may be focused on particular groups or issues to inform consumer organizations and regulators of the range of standards for services that are available. The CPI Unit within BSI supports the Network. CPI Coordinators exist for each of the sectors in which BSI develops standards and for purposes of liaison with European and international consumer committees like COPOLCO.

Case Study –

DIN (Deutsches Institut für Normung) Consumer Council

DIN Consumer Council is a committee of the DIN Board. The five members of Consumer Council are honorary members and independent of DIN interests. They set the strategic and political guidelines for its executive body, the Consumer Council's office. The DIN Consumer Council's office is part of the DIN organizational structure. Nine staff members are employed by DIN and represent the consumer interests within DIN and its TCs as well as in European and International committees. The Consumer Council's permanent staff is supported by about 70 voluntary consumer representatives, who are nominated by the Consumer Council for specific standards projects. These voluntary



representatives come from consumer organizations, consumer centres, the comparative testing institute, special consumer related interest groups (e.g. automobile



associations, sports clubs), child protection associations, independent test institutes, universities, etc. In addition to voluntary representatives, Consumer Council's permanent staff participate actively in the work of national, European and international TCs and working groups. They are also involved in the work of ANEC, which is the European consumer voice in standardization, as well as in ISO COPOLCO.

Case Study – ICONTEC (Instituto Colombiano de Normas Técnicas y Certificación)

ICONTEC designed the strategy of integrating consumer interests into the development of standards by participating in COPOLCO, having a national mirror committee, and disseminating relevant documents. A committee intended to fulfil this purpose was established in 2005. This committee contributes to and adopts the guides that ISO/COPOLCO develops; in particular, it worked on ISO/IEC Guide 76, *Development of standards for services – Recommendations for addressing consumer issues*. Also, if ICONTEC has an issue requiring the opinion of consumers, the Colombian COPOLCO committee works on this. This committee's members include consumer associations, government, and delegates from different industries. The committee provides a focal point for consumer input which helps to strengthen the voice of consumer interests in Colombia.

Case Study – IRAM (Instituto Argentino de Normalización y Certificación) Consumer Committee (CICON)

With support from a Consumers International regional project to strengthen the participation of consumer organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean, a meeting was convened with the NSB IRAM in 2004. Consumer organizations were also sponsored and thus able to participate in a meeting of ISO COPOLCO in 2005. Initial efforts were focused on understanding how standards are important and impact on daily life, and on standards procedures. The experience showed that many consumer organizations were not aware of standards and the work of IRAM. IRAM agreed to form a consumer committee and began holding regular meetings and workshops to discuss the standards related to consumers that were being developed. It also created a monthly e-bulletin to help introduce consumer organizations to the standards process. A solid foundation has been laid for consumer involvement and the goal is to increase consumer participation in the future.



Case Study – SA (Standards Australia) and CFA (Consumers’ Federation of Australia)

Representatives of the CFA have participated in the development of Australian Standards for more than 20 years. CFA manages the Standards Australia Project which supports 24 volunteer consumer representatives on 60 SA TCs, three ISO Committees and ISO COPOLCO. The Committees with CFA representation cover a wide range of product, process and testing standards aimed at promoting product safety, child and infant safety, public health, disability access, environmental sustainability and better business practices. The CFA liaises regularly with senior SA staff and consumer policy representatives through SA’s Consumer Standing Forum. In 2008, the CFA Standards Coordinator gave a short presentation to SDOs attending a National Standards Office forum. This provided a good opportunity to explain the expectations of consumer representatives, the processes for engaging them and benefits of their inclusion in standards development.

Case Study – SCC (Standards Council of Canada) and CSA (Canadian Standards Association)

SCC, which is the NSB, maintains a Consumer and Public Interest Committee (CPIC) which looks at issues related to consumers and the public interest, including items such as health, safety and the environment. The mandate includes providing policy advice and making recommendations to SCC's governing Council and its committees for the purpose of advancing consumer and public interests on matters related to standardization. CPIC is also responsible for representing Canadian interests in ISO COPOLCO. The committee has many consumer representatives as members.

CSA, one of four Canadian SDOs accredited by SCC, has close to 100 very active consumer representatives on over 274 TCs, strategic steering committees and international TCs and strategic advisory groups (SAGs). CSA staff and representatives participate in ISO COPOLCO alongside SCC staff and representatives.





Who is a consumer representative?

ISO COPOLCO has defined the term "consumer" to mean an individual member of the general public, purchasing or using goods, property or services, for private purposes.⁴⁾ However, there is no definition for "consumer representative" at the international level.

In the case of the ISO working group on social responsibility (SR), stakeholder groups were defined because of the unique procedures applied to that work.⁵⁾ The SR working group defined a representative in the consumer stakeholder category as a representative of a "consumer organization" which is either :

- 1) an independent not-for-profit organization advocating the interests of consumers before other organizations or governments, not involved in the advancement of commercial interests (although it may engage in trading activities related to the provision of consumer information and to promoting its own work), and not affiliated with any political party; or
- 2) an organization or agency that is active in consumer affairs (for example, specializing in one particular consumer issue such as standards, law or consumer protection).

The SR definition specified that in terms of international participation, priority should be given to representatives of consumer organizations that meet definition **1)**. However, if there is no

4) ISO/IEC Statement on Consumer Participation in Standardization Work
www.iso.org/iso/copolc participation_2001.pdf
 and definition reconfirmed via COPOLCO resolution 3/2009.

5) www.iso.org/sites/ConsumersStandards/en/pdf/N048_rev1.pdf

organization that meets that definition, or if none of the consumer organizations decide to engage in the process, then a representative of an organization or agency which meets definition 2) may participate. An example of this is a government department or agency handling consumer affairs and recognized by the public as such, or an independent body within an NSB representing consumer interests.



Definitions of who may serve as a consumer representative vary among NSBs and SDOs. However, the SR definition is a useful benchmark with the potential for application in other standardization contexts. All consumer organizations should be notified, and invited to participate, when a standardization activity relates to a consumer product or service.

A consumer representative should be free from any commercial interest in the subject matter under discussion; for example s/he should not be a producer or distributor of goods or services that the underlying standard relates to.

A relevant technical background is certainly helpful, but the ability to evaluate and clearly articulate the needs of the end-user consumer is far more important than in depth expertise. This is critical to credibility in the eyes of other standards committee members. The ability to read, write and speak English is important at the international level. Consumer representatives should also be able to transfer knowledge gained from their standards experiences to other consumer representatives.

Members of the academic community may make good consumer representatives, particularly those involved in associations, and in disciplines such as engineering, family and consumer sciences (i.e., home economics) and consumer economics at the university-level.

A common feature among NSBs and SDOs that have an active programme of consumer engagement is that they strive to manage their network of consumer representatives. So, for example, they will work to ensure that individuals who are not directly affiliated with a not-for-profit consumer organization are equipped to speak as consumers. This may happen through training and information-sharing via linkage with representatives and/or research from consumer organizations.

Case Study – CSA (Canadian Standards Association)

CSA defines a consumer representative as an individual who participates as a member of a standards-developing committee to represent the interests of consumers in the development of CSA standards. Consumer representatives do not reflect a vested interest of any stakeholder group. CSA specifies that a committee matrix “shall comprise interest categories appropriate for the committee’s scope” and for most committees the following are suitable: producer interest, regulatory authority, user interest and general interest. CSA specifies that the user interest category includes “those who predominately represent consumer interests or end users of the subject product(s), material(s), or service(s) and who are not involved in any way in production and or distribution of the subject product(s), material(s) or service(s).” It also specifies that the general interest category includes “those who are not associated with production, distribution, direct use or regulation of the subject product(s), material(s) or service(s) but who have demonstrated relevant expertise or credentials. This category may include representatives of academic, scientific interest or consumers.

Case Study – UL (Underwriters Laboratories, Inc.)

UL, an ANSI-accredited SDO, defines the consumer interest category for its standards technical panels (STPs) as encompassing consumer organizations, consumer departments at universities, home economic departments at universities, professional consumers, and individuals who use the product as part of their livelihood and are not eligible for STP membership under another interest category.

Interface with ISO/COPOLCO

Established in 1978, ISO COPOLCO's membership comprises over 100 NSBs from countries around the world. Delegates include representatives from the NSBs, SDOs, consumer organizations and other groups in the various countries. The IEC is also represented.

COPOLCO provides a forum for the exchange of information and experience on standards and conformity assessment issues of interest to consumers. It identifies standardization areas of priority interest to consumers and works to promote and coordinate consumer participation in those areas. It also influences ISO's work programme by proposing new areas for standardization where there is a perceived need for enhanced consumer protection. In addition, COPOLCO convenes workshops and produces standards-related guides, policy statements and informational publications on issues of importance to consumers. COPOLCO has made numerous invaluable contributions to the welfare of consumers internationally through various initiatives, including an extensive training programme. NSBs that are not currently members are strongly encouraged to become involved. For more information about COPOLCO, visit ISO's website at www.iso.org/consumers.



At the national level, an NSB's consumer committee (where one exists) is typically the direct interface with ISO COPOLCO. Members of the consumer committee often participate in delegations to the annual meetings of COPOLCO and its working groups. Some NSBs will convene a special meeting of their

consumer committee prior to the COPOLCO meeting in order to review and discuss the COPOLCO working documents and to prepare their delegation's comments and positions for the meeting.

NSBs working to improve consumer participation, even those without a fully formed consumer committee, are still encouraged to participate in COPOLCO. In such cases, they may wish to conduct surveys to obtain the views of consumers in their country. They also may wish to consider opportunities for collaborating with consumers and NSBs regionally or internationally through other available channels.

Coordination mechanisms at the regional level range from ANEC, an established, formally structured and fully staffed organization, to newer, more informally structured networks like ANCO and CT 153 PAN-COPOLCO.

Mechanisms also exist that are focused on ensuring that the needs of consumers in developing countries are reflected in COPOLCO's work and in international standardization. These include

participation in COPOLCO by the umbrella organization, Consumers International, as well as a forum within COPOLCO focused on the specific needs of consumers in developing countries. The Consumer Policy Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) also maintains liaison status with COPOLCO. From a coordination standpoint, this may be of particular interest to NSBs within OECD economies.

Case Study –

ANCO (Asian Network for Consumer Participation in Standardization)

ANCO originally was founded by the Japanese Standards Association (JSA) to complement ISO COPOLCO activities by promoting the participation of Asian consumers in national and international standardization activities and to strengthen regional linkages among the participating countries in standardization related to consumers. The ANCO secretariat is based in Malaysia and currently chaired by the President of the Malaysian Association of Standards Users (Standards Users). The group has met in conjunction with the annual COPOLCO meeting and held workshops on topics such as product safety and accessible design.

Case Study –

ANEC (the European Consumer Voice in Standardization)

ANEC represents the European consumer interest in the creation of technical standards, especially those developed to support the implementation of European laws and public policies. ANEC is governed by a General Assembly which is comprised of one individual from each of the 30 countries of the European Union (EU) and European Free Trade Association (EFTA). Strategic decisions of the General Assembly are implemented by an executive board known as the ANEC Steering Committee. Each field of priority in which ANEC operates, determined by the General Assembly and Steering Committee, has a Working Group as its focus. The Secretariat headed by the ANEC Secretary-General acts as the hub of the association. Funding is provided by the EU and EFTA. ANEC cooperates with ISO COPOLCO and provides a report at the annual COPOLCO meeting.

Case Study – CI (Consumers International)

CI is a worldwide federation of consumer organizations with some 220 member organisations in 115 countries. CI's scope is horizontal and it places particular emphasis on improving the welfare of consumers in developing countries. CI has established liaison with COPOLCO and is an active participant in its work and in international standardization. CI convenes meetings of its members in conjunction with the COPOLCO plenary meeting and provides an annual report to COPOLCO.

Case Study – CT 153 PAN-COPOLCO

CT 153 PAN-COPOLCO comprises 18 NSBs that are members of COPANT (The Pan American Standards Commission) who are working cooperatively to provide input into COPOLCO from this region and to help each other strengthen their own strategies for consumer participation.

Case Study – DCCG (Developing Countries COPOLCO Group)

The DCCG is a forum within COPOLCO whose aim is to encourage greater participation of consumer representatives and associations from developing countries in COPOLCO's activities and to ensure that developing countries' issues are addressed within COPOLCO. While membership is open to any COPOLCO member, the convenor must be from a developing country. The group meets in conjunction with the annual COPOLCO meeting and maintains a membership list and listserv to communicate between meetings. The DCCG is not to be confused with ISO's Committee on Developing Country Matters (DEVCO), an ISO policy development committee which addresses the needs and requirements of developing countries in standardization and related activities.

Funding of consumer representatives



Limited human and financial resources often pose constraints on the ability of consumer representatives to participate in voluntary standards-setting. Consumers often need funding assistance in order to participate, especially at the international level. NSBs and SDOs should consider setting up a mechanism to help support the involvement of consumers in standards development and policy activities financially. This is an important way to recognize the value of the consumer perspective.

Some NSBs and SDOs already have models in place for providing financial incentives and other support for consumer representatives to participate in standards policy and technical meetings. Support may be provided for participation at the national, regional or international level. It may include reimbursement of travel, lodging and living expenses for consumer representatives to attend meetings, and in some cases a small honorarium. Some NSBs and SDOs also make provision for consumer representatives to have a laptop computer, associated software, internet access, IT training and help support, teleconferencing capability, and recovery of document printing costs. See examples in the *ISO Directory of consumer interest participation* (www.iso.org/isoconsumerdirectory), under each member listing.

Existing models for funding consumer participation in standardization vary depending upon the structure and role of an NSB or SDO: whether it is government or private-sector supported; and whether it develops standards, or recognizes and coordinates the work of other SDOs. Funding of consumer participation also depends upon the ability of the NSB or SDO to secure revenue and commit annual expenditures toward such a programme. Contributions may come from the government, the NSB or SDO itself; other

private sources, or some combination of these. A decision to invest in support to consumer stakeholders' participation will require a commitment by the NSB's or SDO's senior management. If there is no consumer programme in place, funding may first need to be allocated to support full or part-time staff to assume responsibility for managing the consumer programme.

When establishing a funding programme for consumer participation, an NSB or SDO may wish to invite consumer organizations to help them identify the highest priority areas for consumer participation at the national or international level, for example on the basis of the priority areas identified by COPOLCO. Based on that analysis, the NSB or SDO could then select one or two (or more) of these areas for its funding programme. For example, funding could be provided for one consumer representative to attend and participate in an ISO or IEC technical committee (or national mirror committee) for a period of one or two years. A second consumer representative could be funded to participate in COPOLCO for a similar length of time.

An NSB or SDO may wish to establish criteria for consumer representatives to participate in its consumer network, especially in order to be eligible to receive funding. Examples could be that the consumer representative :

- is independent of commercial interests;
- is committed to participating for a specific length of time;
- goes through an application, interview and screening process, and provides references;
- participates in training programmes; and
- requires funding to participate (if funding is sought).



The criteria may also stipulate that a consumer representative's performance will be evaluated over time in order to receive funding on an ongoing basis and to ensure effective participation.

For its part, COPOLCO is exploring how it can build upon past successes in order to go forward. In the case of the ISO SR working group, a trust fund was set up on an exceptional basis by the ISO Council and operated under the responsibility of the SR working group until the publication of the standard. This was helpful in assisting consumer representatives and experts from other under-represented stakeholders and regions to participate in the work. In addition,

with support from donor grants and ISO's technical assistance programme for developing countries, COPOLCO has been able to engage more consumer representatives from developing countries in COPOLCO workshops and plenary meetings by linking training initiatives with these events.

Case Study – BSI (British Standards Institution)

The cost of supporting the CPI Network is shared roughly in the ratio 2:1 between BSI and the relevant UK government department. The fund originally set up to cover the travel and subsistence costs of consumer representatives attending national or international meetings is also now available for some other costs related to supporting representatives, including training, some computer materials, venue costs for external meetings and small research projects. Decisions on what to fund are based on whether work is in one of the priority areas, and then whether it is a priority within that sector (decision taken by CPI coordinators collectively and individually).



Case Study – DIN (Deutsches Institut für Normung)

DIN Consumer Council is responsible for representing consumers in standardization. Its work is funded mainly (about 70 %) by the Federal Ministry of food, agriculture and consumer protection. The rest of its budget (about 30 %) is financed by DIN. DIN Consumer Council representatives in national, European or international committees participate on a voluntary basis and are paid travel expenses, hotel and a daily allowance. In order to be accepted as a voluntary consumer representative, the person should first of all have the necessary expertise in the area. There should be no pecuniary interest in relation to the standards project. The volunteer should have an understanding of consumer interests and problems. They should also be able to read and speak English to follow European and international work. Many of DIN Consumer Council's volunteers come from consumer organizations but they also have people from universities as well as test institutes. The DIN Consumer Council decides case by case whether they accept somebody as a voluntary consumer representative or not.

Training of consumer representatives



The NSB or SDO can achieve consumer education on the importance of standards and standards participation through proactive outreach. Outreach and awareness-raising programmes are often an integral part of both initial and ongoing efforts to organize consumer participation at the national level.

Beyond their more general outreach efforts, NSBs and SDOs may also offer formal training in both standards procedures and effective participation,

or training on specific topics of consumer interest, via workshops and seminars. In addition, they may offer hardcopy publications or web-based training and educational resources to guide consumer representatives in their committee work. At least one SDO offers a mentoring programme where a new consumer representative will have a pre-meeting with the chair of the standards committee and a designated engineer or other expert who will be assigned as a “shadow” to answer any questions that the consumer representative has at his or her first committee meeting.



COPOLCO also maintains a training group which has worked cooperatively with DEVCO and ISO's Development and Training Services unit (ISO/DEVT), using donor grants, to hold several regional training seminars either in conjunction with or separate from COPOLCO meetings. This initiative is aimed at increasing consumer participation in standards-setting and has included the development of a distance learning module for consumer representatives available online and in CD Rom entitled, *Consumers and standards: partnership for a better world*. Besides supporting training seminars and workshops, this distance learning module can also be used as a “stand alone” learning tool. The training programme also has evolved to include train-the-trainer events where a COPOLCO expert facilitates instruction among a small group of individuals on how to conduct their own training events in their countries or regions (also see ISO resources).

Case Study – ANSI (American National Standards Institute)

In recent years, ANSI’s outreach efforts have focused on speaking at annual conferences of consumer organizations and related academic associations in an effort to promote consumer participation



in standards-setting. Topics have included safer homes through consumer involvement in standardization, and incorporating standards into university curricula. ANSI staff has partnered with members of the ANSI Consumer Interest Forum and with COPOLCO colleagues for such presentations and to raise awareness of COPOLCO initiatives. One workshop format used was an interactive exercise on how to evaluate injury data and devise a safety standard for a consumer product. Virtual workshops conducted by conference call and internet link also have been held on ways that consumers can become involved in standards policy committees.

Case Study – CSA (Canadian Standards Association)

New consumer representatives receive a ‘welcome package’ that includes the consumer programme brochure, position description, consumer representative training workbook, materials relevant to their particular committee such as committee member lists and past meeting minutes, travel claims and guidelines, committee reporting forms, the most updated consumer representative directory, and the most recent consumer programme year-in review. These are all intended to give an overall picture as to how the programme works.



New consumer representatives are also invited to attend new member training sessions that are held in various locations throughout the year. In addition, CSA’s Committee & Consumer Services group holds a consumer seminar and training event each year at CSA’s annual general meeting for consumer

representatives who are attending committee meetings as well as invited guests. Consumer representatives are also set up with access to the ‘Members Only Area’ where members can communicate on various issues, view draft standards, meeting reports, and articles of interest. Consumer representatives are also regularly surveyed for the purposes of obtaining valuable feedback for various consumer based research projects.

Case Study – DSM (Department of Standards Malaysia) and Standards Users (Malaysian Association of Standards Users)

DSM, which is the NSB, appointed Standards Users, an NGO, to assist with standards promotion and awareness activities for consumers. Since then, Standards Users has embarked on a number of initiatives targeting students, teachers, and the general public in both rural and urban areas. Among the activities are an essay and photography competition, outreach programmes in schools, and public seminars. In addition, Standards Users has developed various educational materials including a magazine, standards workbook series and teachers' guide, position papers, and other publications. Standards Users also published the only magazine on regional standardization activities titled *Standards Asia* in 2009. The magazine was launched in conjunction with the World Standards Day 2009 celebration in Malaysia.



Case Study – JISC (Japanese Industrial Standards Committee)

JISC offers three types of training and education courses for consumer representatives. An elementary course to explain what standardization is and its role and importance for consumers is offered in conjunction with events organized by consumer organizations. A basic course introduces how standardization can be an effective tool to solve consumer problems and enables students to propose a theme to be standardized from a consumer perspective. For those who will soon participate or who have just participated in a committee for drafting a national standard, an advanced course will introduce the effective way of participating by consumer representatives in the committee. In addition to these courses, training on standardization is provided, on a request basis, for elementary, junior/senior high and technical college students at school.

Case Study – KATS (Korean Agency for Technology and Standards)

As part of its efforts to enhance public understanding and teach basic knowledge related to standards, KATS is actively participating in educational activities by reflecting standards-related content in the textbooks of elementary, middle, and high schools. It is also developing educational programs and teaching materials for university students to nurture specialists in standardization fields including electricity & electronics and information & communications technology. It is also organizing a training course designed for a specific audience from industry, academia and research institutes on how to become international standards experts. KATS also holds an annual Youth Standard Olympiad which helps teenagers' understanding of weights and measures units by law. A seminar on promoting the participation of consumer groups regarding standardization was hosted by KATS during World Standards Week to broaden awareness of standards and to promote active consumer participation. KATS is also developing an educational course to help consumer groups learn about standardization.

ISO resources

A comprehensive list of training resources developed by COPOLCO, many of which are aimed at guiding consumer representatives in standardization activities, is available on ISO Online at :

www.iso.org/iso/resources/resources_consumers/publications_produced_by_copolco.htm. This includes the COPOLCO distance learning module *Consumers and standards: partnership for a better world* available on ISO Online or on a CD-ROM and presentations to be used in the COPOLCO Train-the-trainer course.

For more details on how specific ISO members involve consumers in their standards activities, see the *ISO Directory of Consumer Interest Participation* :

www.iso.org/iso/resources/resources_consumers/iso_directory_of_consumer_interest.htm. This directory also identifies staff at the NSBs who may be a further resource for additional information about how consumer participation is organized.



Links to organizations named in this brochure

ANCO – Asian Network for Consumer Participation in Standardization

www.standardsusers.org

ANEC – The European Consumer Voice in Standardization

www.anec.org

ANSI – American National Standards Institute, Consumer Affairs

www.ansi.org/consumer

BIS – Bureau of Indian Standards

www.bis.org.in

BSI – British Standards Institution, Consumer & Public Interest Unit

www.bsigroup.com/Consumers

CFA – Consumers' Federation of Australia

www.consumersfederation.org.au

CI – Consumers International

www.consumersinternational.org

Consumer Voice

www.consumer-voice.org

CSA – Canadian Standards Association, Consumers

www.csa.ca/cm/ca/en/consumers

DIN – Deutsches Institut für Normung, Consumer Council

www.verbraucherrat.din.de

DSM – Department of Standards Malaysia

www.standardsmalaysia.gov.my

ICONTEC – Instituto Colombiano de Normas Técnicas y Certificación

www.icontec.org

IRAM – Instituto Argentino de Normalización y Certificación (IRAM)

www.iram.org.ar

JISC – Japanese Industrial Standards Committee

www.jisc.go.jp/eng/index.html

KATS – Korean Agency for Technology and Standards

www.kats.go.kr/english

SA – Standards Australia

www.standards.org.au

SCC – Standards Council of Canada, Consumer and Public Interest Committee

www.scc.ca/en/about-scc/governance/advisory-committees-at-scc/cpic

Standards Users – Malaysian Association of Standards Users

www.standardsusers.org

UL – Underwriters Laboratories Inc., Standards Technical Panels – Consumer News

http://ulstandardsinfonet.ul.com/stp/consumer_news.html

Also see ISO Online (**www.iso.org**) for a list of these organizations.



ISO Central Secretariat
1, ch. de la Voie-Creuse
Case postale 56
CH-1211 Genève 20
Switzerland

Tel. + 41 22 749 01 11
Fax + 41 22 733 34 30
Web www.iso.org

ISBN 978-92-67-10544-4
© ISO, 2011-04/1500