

# WHO ARE ANSI, ISO & IEC?

## **American National Standards Institute (ANSI)**

The American National Standards Institute (ANSI) was founded in 1918 by five engineering societies and three government agencies. It remains a privately funded federation representing both the private and public sectors. ANSI's membership consists of approximately 1,300 companies; 35 government agencies; and more than 260 technical, trade, labor and consumer groups. ANSI was a founding member of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and plays an active role in its governance. It is one of five permanent members to the governing ISO Council, and one of four permanent members of ISO's Technical Management Board. U.S. participation, through the U.S. National Committee, is equally strong in the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC).

ANSI is the sole U.S. member body of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC). Through ANSI, the U.S. has immediate access to the ISO and IEC standards development processes. ANSI participates in almost the entire technical program of both the ISO (78% of all ISO technical committees) and the IEC (91% of all IEC technical committees), and administers many key committees and subgroups. As part of its responsibilities as the U.S. member body of the ISO and the IEC, ANSI accredits U.S. Technical Advisory Groups (TAGs), whose primary purpose is to develop and transmit, through ANSI, U.S. positions on activities and ballots of the international technical committees.

In many instances, U.S. standards are taken forward (to the ISO or IEC) through ANSI or the USNC, where they are adopted in whole or in part as international standards. Since the work of international technical committees is carried out by volunteers from industry and government, not by ANSI staff, the success of these efforts depends upon the willingness of U.S. industry and the U.S. government to commit the resources required to ensure strong U.S. technical participation in the international standards process.

One of the best indicators of the strength of the U.S. system is the government's extensive reliance on, and use of, private sector voluntary standards. Pursuant to OMB Circular A119, federal government agencies are required to use voluntary standards for regulatory and procurement purposes when appropriate. State and local governments and agencies have formally adopted thousands of voluntary standards produced by ANSI, and the process appears to be accelerating.

ANSI's mission is to enhance both the global competitiveness of U.S. business and the quality of life by promoting and facilitating voluntary consensus standards and conformity assessment systems.

ANSI has four basic functions: (1) to facilitate U.S. standardization policy developments; (2) to accredit national standards developers, which provides consistency in the national standards system and helps to ensure the consensus process; (3) to promote U.S. standardization interests globally, and (4) to provide information and training regarding standardization.

ANSI does not write standards, but serves as an impartial organization which, through its procedures, validates the general acceptability of the work of the technical experts. It ensures that the standards writing group used democratic procedures that gave everyone who will be "directly and materially" affected by the use of the standard an opportunity to participate in the development work or to comment on the document's provisions. It assures users that those interested in the work reached consensus on the standard's provisions and that the document is technically sound and does not conflict with or unnecessarily duplicate other national standards.

ANSI voluntary standards include more than 100,000 product standards developed by more than 400 standards development organizations, including government, industry, technical societies, trade associations and companies. There are hundreds of thousands of standards users, including companies of all sizes; federal, state and local government agencies; universities, colleges and trade schools; businesses; consultants and individuals.

The Committee for Graphic Arts Technologies Standards (CGATS) and the B65 Committee for Safety Standards are the two ANSI-accredited committees developing national standards for the printing, publishing and converting industry. The U.S. Technical Advisory Group (US TAG) to ISO TC 130 provides input into the ISO standards activities relating to the industry. NPES serves as the Secretariat for those committees. Information on CGATS, B65 and US TAG is contained in this booklet, and further information can be obtained by contacting Mary Abbott, Director of Standards Programs at NPES via Tel: 703-264-7200; Fax: 703-620-0994; or E-mail: [mabbott@npes.org](mailto:mabbott@npes.org).

## **International Organization for Standardization (ISO)**

The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies from some 147 countries, one from each country, consisting of 97 member bodies, 35 correspondent members, and 15 subscriber members. This book provides contact information for ISO member bodies.

ISO, a non-governmental organization, was established in 1947. Its mission is to promote the development of standardization and related activities in the world with a view toward facilitating the international exchange of goods and services, and to developing cooperation in the spheres of intellectual, scientific, technological and economic activity. ISO's work results in international agreements that are published as international standards.

"ISO" is not an acronym, but is a word, derived from the Greek "isos" meaning "equal." This is the root of the prefix "iso-" that occurs in many terms, such as "isometric" (of equal measure or dimensions - Shorter Oxford English Dictionary) and "isonomy" (equality of laws, or of people before the law - *ibid*). From "equal" to "standard," the line of thinking that led to the choice of "ISO" as the name of the organization is easy to follow. In addition, the name has the advantage of being valid in each of the organization's three official languages, English, French and Russian. The confusion that would arise through the use of an acronym is thus avoided.

The scope of ISO covers standardization in all fields except electrical and electronic engineering standards, which are the responsibility of the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC). Together, ISO and IEC form the specialized system for worldwide standardization: the world's largest non-governmental system for voluntary industrial and technical collaboration at the international level.

The work in the field of information technology is carried out by a joint ISO/IEC technical committee (JTC 1).

The results of ISO technical work are published in the form of international standards. There are nearly 10,000 international standards and technical reports covering hundreds of industry fields.

ISO work is decentralized, being carried out by 2,850 technical committees, subcommittees and working groups organized and supported by technical secretariats in 35 countries. In these committees, qualified representatives of industry, research institutes, government authorities, consumer bodies and international organizations from all over the world come together as equal partners in the resolution of global standardization problems. The Central Secretariat in Geneva assists in coordinating ISO operations, administers voting and approval procedures, and publishes the international standards.

Developers of international standards are an estimated 30,000 engineers, scientists and administrators. They are nominated by ISO members to participate in the committee meetings and to represent the consolidated views and interests of industry, government, labor and individual consumers in the standards development process. Approximately 500 international organizations are in liaison with ISO technical committees, including nearly all of the UN specialized agencies.

The major responsibility for administering a standards committee is accepted by one of the national standards bodies that make up the ISO membership. The member body holding the secretariat of a standards committee normally appoints one or two persons to do the technical and administrative work relating to the committee. A committee chairman assists committee members in bringing work to consensus. Generally, a consensus will mean that a particular solution to the problem at hand is the best possible one for international application at that time.

The Central Secretariat in Geneva acts to ensure the flow of documentation in all directions, to clarify technical points with secretariats and chairmen, and to ensure that the agreements approved by the technical committees are edited, printed, submitted as Draft International Standards to ISO member bodies for voting, and published.

Each member body interested in a subject has the right to be represented on a committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The ISO Technical Committee that develops standards for the graphic arts is TC 130. The U.S. Technical Advisory Group (US TAG) to TC 130 consists of experts from the graphic arts industry who provide guidance to ANSI on the development of the U.S. position on international standards relating to the graphic arts. ISO TC 130 and the US TAG to ISO TC 130 are described more fully in another section of this book.

## **How are ISO standards developed?**

ISO standards are developed according to the following principles:

- **Consensus**  
The view of all interests are taken into account: manufacturers, vendors and users, consumer groups, testing laboratories, governments, engineering professions and research organizations.
- **Industry-wide**  
Global solutions to satisfy industries and customers worldwide.
- **Voluntary**  
International standardization is market-driven and therefore based on voluntary involvement of all interests in the marketplace.

There are three main phases in the ISO standards development process.

The need for a standard is usually expressed by an industry sector, which communicates this need to a national member body. The latter proposes the new work item to ISO as a whole. Once the need for an International Standard has been recognized and formally agreed, the first phase involves definition of the technical scope of the future standard. This phase is usually carried out in working groups which comprise technical experts from countries interested in the subject matter.

Once agreement has been reached on which technical aspects are to be covered in the standard, a second phase is entered during which countries negotiate the detailed specifications within the standard. This is the consensus-building phase.

The final phase comprises the formal approval of the resulting Draft International Standard (the acceptance criteria stipulate approval by two thirds of the ISO members that have participated actively in the standards

development process, and approval by 75% of all members that vote), following which the agreed text is published as an ISO International Standard.

Most standards require periodic revision. Several factors combine to render a standard out of date, such as technological evolution, new methods and materials, new quality and safety requirements. To take account of these factors, ISO has established the general rule that all ISO standards must be reviewed at intervals of not more than five years. On occasion, it is necessary to revise a standard earlier.

## **The membership of ISO**

The membership of ISO is divided into three categories:

A member body is the national body "most representative of standardization in its country." Thus, only one body in each country may be a member of ISO. In the case of the United States, the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) is the voting member.

A member body takes the responsibility for:

- informing potentially interested parties in their country of relevant international standardization opportunities and initiatives;
- ensuring that a concerted view of the country's interests is presented during international negotiations leading to standards agreements; and
- providing their country's share of financial support for the central operations of ISO, through payment of membership dues.

Member bodies are entitled to participate and exercise full voting rights on any technical committee and policy committee of ISO.

A correspondent member is usually an organization in a country that does not yet have a fully developed national standards activity. Correspondent members do not take an active part in the technical and policy development work, but are entitled to be kept fully informed about the work of interest to them.

A subscriber member is generally a country with a very small economy. Subscriber members pay reduced membership fees that still allow them to maintain contact with international standardization.

Contact information for the national member bodies is listed on the pages that follow.

## **ISO Central Secretariat**

### **International Organization for Standardization (ISO)**

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## National Member Bodies of ISO

### Algeria (IANOR)

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### Argentina (IRAM)

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AR-C1068AAB Buenos Aires  
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### Armenia (SARM)

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Ministry of Trade and Economic Development  
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### Australia (SAI)

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WWW: <http://www.standards.org.au/>

### Austria (ON)

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Austrian Standards Institute  
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WWW: <http://www.on-norm.at/>

### Azerbaijan (AZSTAND)

State Agency on Standardization, Metrology  
and Patents of Azerbaijan Republic  
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AZ-370078 Baku  
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### Bahrain (BSMD)

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### Bangladesh (BSTI)

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### Barbados (BNSI)

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### Belarus (BELST)

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WWW: <http://www.gosstandart.gov.by>

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**Bosnia and Herzegovina (BASMP)**

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**China (SAC)**

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**Columbia (ICONTEC)**

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**Costa Rica (INTECO)**

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**Côte-d'Ivoire (CODINORM)**

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**Croatia (DZNM)**

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**Cyprus (CYS)**

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**Guinea (INM)**

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**Hungary (MSZT)**

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**Indonesia (BSN)**

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**Iran, Islamic Republic of (ISIRI)**

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**Iraq (COSQC)**

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**Israel (SII)**

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**Italy (UNI)**

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**Jamaica (JBS)**

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**Japan (JISC)**

Japanese Industrial Standards Committee  
Technical Regulation, Standards and Conformity  
Assessment Policy Unit  
Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry  
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## **International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC)**

The IEC was founded in 1906 as a result of a resolution passed at the International Electrical Congress held in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1904. The membership consists of 54 participating countries. Regular members are National Committees each having equal voting rights. On becoming a member of the IEC, each National Committee agrees to open access and balanced representation from all private and public electrotechnical interests in its country. Associate members have observer status and can participate in all IEC meetings, while pre-associate members receive support in forming a national electrotechnical committee from the IEC Central Office with the aim of becoming associate members. Membership includes all the world's major trading nations and a growing number of industrializing countries.

The entire organization of the IEC is designed to ensure that the National Committees play a leading part in all decision-making instances of the Commission. This enables the widest degree of consensus on standardization work to be reached at an international level.

IEC work is carried out by technical committees, their subcommittees and working groups. Some 200 such committees span virtually all electrotechnical sectors as well as associated disciplines such as terminology, symbols, safety and performance.

The responsibilities of IEC cover the field of electrical and electronic engineering, with all other subject areas being attributed to ISO. When necessary, attribution of responsibility for work programs to ISO or IEC is made by mutual agreement. In specific cases of mutual interest, joint technical bodies or working groups are set up. Common working procedures ensure efficient coordination and the widest possible global application. ISO and IEC have been working to develop joint procedures and formats.

IEC standards are widely adopted as the basis of national or regional electrotechnical standards, and are often quoted in manufacturers' specifications and by users when stating their requirements. This widespread adoption facilitates international trade in the electrical and electronic engineering sectors.

### **U.S. Participation in IEC**

ANSI is the sole U.S. representative to the IEC through the United States National Committee (USNC). Just as ANSI accredits U.S. Technical Advisory Groups (US TAGs) to ISO, it also accredits USNC Technical Advisors (TAs) to IEC. The TA's primary purpose is to develop and transmit, via ANSI, U.S. positions on activities and ballots of the international technical committee. The U.S., through ANSI, is active in 91% of all IEC committees.

### **Liaisons**

The IEC maintains working relationships with some 200 international governmental and non-governmental organizations, particularly with the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), and increasingly with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). An initial agreement was signed with ISO in 1976, and ten years later the two bodies established Joint Technical Committee 1 (JTC 1) to cover the vast and expanding field of information technology.

At the regional level, there is a joint working agreement with the European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization (CENELEC), comprised of 18 national committees of which most are also IEC members, and a cooperation agreement with COPANT, the Pan American Standards Commission.

Close links are also enjoyed with other bodies in non-electrotechnical areas, such as the liaisons with the World Health Organization, the International Labour Organization, the International Organization of Legal Metrology and the International Atomic Energy Agency.

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