Guidance for ISO national standards bodies
# Engaging stakeholders and building consensus

# ISO in brief

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.

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\* In October 2010.

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# Engaging stakeholders and building consensus

## Contents

**Why an owl ?**

Why an owl to symbolize the work of the ISO/TMB
Process Evaluation Group ? Because owls have a
reputation for wisdom and seem to have a critical,
evaluative look…

# Section 1

**About the ISO Technical Management Board Process Evaluation Group (PEG)**

In recent years, to be responsive to both current and new stakeholder needs and to maintain itself as a highly relevant International Standards developer, ISO has seen its work programme expand and evolve into new subject areas. Compelling challenges for ISO regarding its standards development processes have come with this evolution, as stakeholder expectations of the ISO system are changing.

As a result, the ISO Technical Management Board (ISO/TMB) has formed its Process Evaluation Group (PEG) to investigate the responsiveness of the ISO standards development processes to these changing dynamics. The ultimate intent of the PEG's efforts is to safeguard the outcomes of the ISO system and to promote the existing value, strength and authority of International Standards and the processes by which they are produced. Indeed, the ISO/TMB agreed that the PEG, in its work, must uphold the commitment of the ISO system to participation via national standards bodies (NSBs), as well as through the consideration of the input received from liaison organizations.

Essentially the PEG has two main tasks:

## Task 1

- To review the current situation and consider the possibility of alternative models[1] of standards development operations and participation in ISO[2].

## Task 2

- To examine processes for consensus decision-making and stakeholder engagement within national standards bodies (NSBs) and liaison organizations, which may impact the credibility of resulting ISO standards[3].

Please note that this document is a result of the PEG's pursuit of Task 2 above.

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[1] It is important to note that, in the majority of cases, the existing ISO model works well, is well defined and is accepted by stakeholders.

[2] It is anticipated that the PEG will provide recommendations to the ISO/TMB for action on this task by February 2011.

[3] It was anticipated that the PEG would provide recommendations to the ISO/TMB for action on this item by September 2010.

# Section 2

**ISO/TMB PEG Task 2 – Why is it important? Why is it being pursued?**

Any discussion of the rationale for PEG Task 2 must begin by recognizing the following important statements made in ISO governance documents:

*"ISO members are committed to developing globally relevant International Standards by... Organizing national input in a timely and effective manner, taking into account all relevant interests at national level..."*

*"ISO parties are committed to... Communicating in a fair and transparent manner to interested parties when work on new standards is initiated and subsequently on the progress of their development..."*

**From the *ISO Code of Ethics*, 2004**

*"For the ISO work in which they choose to participate, ISO members are expected to organize national consultation mechanisms, according to their national needs and possibilities, which prepare national positions that reflect a balance of their country's national interests..."*

**From the *List of Fundamental Principles of the ISO System*, 1999**

*"...National bodies have the responsibility of ensuring that their technical standpoint is established taking account of all interests concerned at national level..."*

**From the *ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1*, Foreword, Item C on Discipline**

In addition, ISO/IEC Guide 59:1994, *Code of good practice for standardization*, states the following under clause 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."*

Generally, ISO processes and national body engagement have been viewed as successful to result in ISO standards reflecting a double level of consensus – among market players and experts at the drafting stages of the standards, and among countries at the formal voting stages of the standards.

However, **recently within some ISO activities there have been some concerns expressed regarding the integrity of ISO national body processes for stakeholder engagement and consensus decision making. The credibility of these national processes is vital to ensure the credibility of the resulting ISO standards and, ultimately, of the ISO brand in the marketplace.** It is important to recognize that the ISO standards development process is one that is collectively owned and implemented by ISO and its members in accordance with broadly accepted principles and guidance.

It is important to consider that international and some broadly based regional organizations also make active contributions to the development of ISO standards as recognized liaisons. Therefore, **if the credibility of internal processes of national bodies has an impact on the credibility**

**of ISO standards and ISO itself, then in principle, the same is true for the internal processes of organizations in liaison and their input.**

It is for this reason that the PEG has decided to seek input from ISO national bodies and liaison organizations on their internal processes for stakeholder engagement and consensus decision making. The process for collecting input and summary observations of that input is detailed in Annex A to this document. Through consideration of this input, the PEG has developed the principles and guidance presented in Section 3 of this document.

The WTO Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade has established certain principles for the development of international standards that should be observed when international standards, guides and recommendations are elaborated, to ensure transparency, openness, impartiality and consensus, effectiveness and relevance, coherence, and to address the concerns of developing countries. The correct reference for the WTO/TBT document providing these principles is *Decisions and Recommendations Adopted by the WTO Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade since 1 January 1995, Annex B. G/TBT/1/Rev.9, 8 September 2008*. These principles, especially in relation to transparency, openness, impartiality and consensus, communicate important ideas that, if implemented by standards bodies, contribute to the credibility of the internal processes of ISO national standards bodies and international liaison organizations. Therefore, these ideas have been incorporated in the development of the principles and guidance presented in Section 3 of this document.

One of the unique strengths of the ISO system is the diversity that exists among NSBs and liaison organizations. Such diversity is seen not just in geographic location, number of staff or annual budgets of the NSBs or liaison organizations, but also in the array of approaches they employ that may be suitable to support their engagement in ISO standards development.

Differences in approach may occur for many reasons, and may be based on differing organization operational models, stakeholder dynamics or available resources. Embracing and sharing the range of effective approaches and good practices enriches the total ISO process, while forcing very specific expectations on all parties may inhibit creativity, innovation and the engagement of important market players in ISO's work. **Effective and cooperative consensus standards development must be built on a foundation of mutual respect and constructive collaboration among all parties engaged. Therefore, ISO, NSBs and liaison organizations benefit from diversity of thought and approach and from mutual respect.**

Within the documents developed for this ISO/TMB PEG task, we hope to strike a balance between helpful principles and guidance to benefit the processes of NSBs and liaisons and recognizing and respecting the sovereignty of NSBs and liaison organizations to determine their processes.

# Section 3

**Principles and guidance on stakeholder engagement
and consensus decision-making for ISO liaison organizations**

## 3.1 Stakeholder engagement for new ISO projects

This section provides principles and guidance to enable ISO NSBs to assess their level of interest in, and support for, new work proposed in ISO that does not relate to existing ISO committees and in the absence of an existing and relevant NSB national committee.

### Principles

**3.1P1** For new ISO projects, the proposer of the initiative should indicate the range of organizations/stakeholder groups supporting the initiative, as well as those that, according to their interests and identified needs should as a minimum be involved in its development in order to facilitate the arrangements of national consensus building.

**3.1P2** The range of relevant national stakeholders to be engaged will depend on the ISO subject and will vary from one subject to another.

**3.1P3** **ISO NSBs should be committed to informing and seeking input from a broad range of relevant national stakeholders on any new ISO projects when they are proposed.**

**3.1P4** All relevant national stakeholders should be given equal access to information and equal opportunity to provide input.

**3.1P5** Information on new ISO projects should be provided to the national stakeholders in a timely manner and at the earliest appropriate opportunity to allow all relevant national stakeholders to access the information, determine their interest in it and provide input effectively by any deadlines.

**3.1P6** ISO NSBs should make provision for a range of approaches to support timely and effective stakeholder engagement and participation based on the needs of the stakeholders.

**3.1P7** ISO NSBs should seek input that represents organizational perspectives (e.g., companies, organizations, trade associations, government agencies, consumer interest groups, etc.) and/or the perspective of individual experts.

**3.1P8** **ISO NSBs should be committed to base decisions on whether to support the proposed new work and their level of involvement in the ISO activity (P or O) on consideration of the collected input received from relevant national stakeholders.**

**3.1P9** Comments submitted by NSBs should reflect the national consensus rather than a compilation of all comments expressed at the national level. Submittal of redundant or even contradictory comments should be avoided.

### Guidance

To assist in achieving these principles, the following guidance may be helpful :

**3.1G1** ISO members should conduct a national consultation with all relevant stakeholders. This could take place via a step-wise approach such as :

a) Identification of potential stakeholders – In addition to any internal processes, advertisements and general meetings, NSBs are encouraged to seek input on potentially relevant stakeholder from

trade organizations, other organizations, governmental agencies, user/consumer groups that can complement the NSBs knowledge. This is especially the case in a new field for standardization

b) Providing stakeholders with information on the project proposal

c) Collecting feedback from stakeholders regarding whether there is a need for the proposed International Standard(s). This could be done via postal or e-mail input, or by conducting a workshop or an in-person meeting, teleconference or Web-based discussion of the proposed International Standard(s)

d) Identifying those stakeholders willing to participate in the new ISO work on an ongoing basis.

**3.1G2** **Once relevant stakeholders have been engaged in the process and have contributed views and comments on the proposal, based on the input received, the responsible individual within the NSB should develop a recommended response for review and endorsement as the NSB position and comments on the ISO proposal.**

**3.1G3** There are many ways of engaging with the relevant stakeholders, both proactively and passively. For example, if your organization has a Website, details of the proposal should be placed on the site and a more targeted identification can be made via notices in relevant publications, on-line news items to stimulate discussion, and through already established sectors within NSBs. Furthermore, active outreach and communications to identified stakeholders should be pursued. Stakeholders in need of funding to support their participation should seek out sources of such funding.

**3.1G4** NSBs new to active engagement in the ISO system may wish to seek advice and best practices from other NSBs who have had substantial experience to date.

## 3.2 Stakeholder engagement and consensus decision-making on ISO work

This section provides principles and guidance to support the efforts by NSBs related to stakeholder engagement and consensus decision-making in the development of national positions on ISO work on an ongoing basis.

### Principles

**3.2P1** **The approach by which an NSB determines its national position is the decision of the NSB.**

**3.2P2** NSBs should establish an appropriate process to develop national positions and comments on ISO work, as well as to determine the NSBs' representation at ISO meetings. It is recommended that national mirror committees (NMCs) are formed whenever possible, but some NSBs may determine their national positions by other means.

**3.2P3** Some NSBs may already have national committees in a field where new international projects are started and the NSB should use this existing national committee in a capacity as an NMC if it is interested in serving in such a capacity and able to fulfill the requirements of such a role.

**3.2P4** **Differences in approach may be based on differing operational models, national dynamics or available resources. Regardless of the specific approach used, what is vital is that the development of the national position is informed by, and responsive to, the input collected from the relevant national stakeholders.**

**3.2P5** A description of how the NSB determines its national positions should be publicly available to all national stakeholders or made available to them upon request.

**3.2P6** It is the responsibility of the NSB to arrive at a national position

that reflects and reconciles the views of the range of its national stakeholders that have a legitimate interest in the ISO subject.

**3.2P7** At times the development of a national position may require consideration of stakeholders' interests in other related national mirror committees.

**3.2P8** Decisions within NSBs should be taken based on the consensus principle and such decisions should carefully consider the balance of interests across the input collected from relevant national stakeholders.

**3.2P9** **All relevant national stakeholders should have equal access to participation in the NSB's process for development of national positions, and all national stakeholders formally engaged in the NSB's process should be assured of fair and equitable treatment and consideration in that process.**

**3.2P10** All relevant national stakeholders and NSB procedures must be committed to the development of a national position that reflects consensus across multiple stakeholders and stakeholder categories.

**3.2P11** When consensus is reached among stakeholders within an NSB on technical content issues and on a national position on ISO work, it is expected that the NSB will submit the stakeholder consensus position and technical comments to ISO in accordance with its established procedures. It is recognized that on occasion an NSB may need to make editorial revisions for political or legal reasons.

**3.2P12** Comments submitted by NSBs should reflect the national consensus rather than a compilation of all comments expressed at the national level. Submittal of redundant or even contradictory comments should be avoided.

**3.2P13** When consensus is reached within an NSB on a national position on ISO work, all relevant national stakeholders should respect and support that national consensus position within ISO activities and at ISO meetings, and they should not express views within the ISO activity that may limit the success of the national consensus position.

**3.2P14** Where consensus cannot be reached and a fundamental objection cannot be overcome, it is important that the NSB have a procedure for dispute resolution or appeals.

**3.2P15** If all efforts to achieve consensus on a national position fail and where there is therefore no agreement on a national position, a position of abstention should be submitted to ISO.

**3.2P16** A P-member of an ISO committee should represent broad national interest.

**3.2P17** If an ISO member is requesting P membership of a committee, an NMC or equivalent process should be in place to determine a national consensus position.

**3.2P18** **If there is very limited national interest (e.g. one or a very small number of stakeholders) in the standardization area, it is recommended that Observing O membership should be sought. An NSB may seek Participating P membership in the ISO activity provided that the limited level of interest represents the existing and relevant national stakeholders.**

**3.2P19** ISO committees and their leaders, NSBs and liaison organizations and their delegates and experts should respect the consensus positions submitted by NSBs and liaisons. SBs with concerns regarding the credibility of another NSB's consensus position, based on the process to develop that position, should pursue their concerns via direct bilateral dialogue between the concerned NSBs.

**3.2P20** NSBs should periodically assess their processes and procedures for stakeholder engagement and consensus-decision making on ISO work, and seek to continually improve them as necessary.

## Guidance

To assist in achieving these principles, the following guidance may be helpful:

**3.2G1** Consensus is defined in the *ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1* as: "General agreement, characterized by the absence of sustained opposition to substantial issues by any important part of the concerned interests and by a process that involves seeking to take into account the views of all parties concerned and to reconcile any conflicting arguments. Consensus need not imply unanimity."

**3.2G2** In practice, consensus has its origins in the desire to achieve the general acceptance and application of a standard within its intended sphere of influence. This entails trying to ensure that the interests of all those likely to be affected by it are taken into account and that the individual concerns are carefully and fairly balanced against the wider public interest.

**3.2G3** **Achievement of consensus entails recognizing the wider interest and sometimes making certain compromises. Arguments for and against the existence of an ISO project should be pursued at the stage where the project proposal is considered and action is taken on it. However, once an ISO project has been approved, all NSBs and stakeholders involved in the process should be committed to advancing the global relevance of International Standard(s) within the agreed-upon scope, and they should not seek to hinder its further development. Where a member sustains a fundamental objection and supports it with sound arguments, these concerns will be taken seriously.**

**3.2G4** NSBs have an obligation to address, and make an effort to resolve, all views expressed.

**3.2G5** When establishing national positions on International Standards ((committee drafts (CD), draft International standards (DIS), final draft International Standards (FDIS)) etc.) it is good practice for the NSB to identify for its own records the range of stakeholders that have been involved in the national decision-making process. ISO processes and voting questions at all stages (proposal, CD, DIS, FDIS) should remind NSBs that they should be conducting broad stakeholder consultations in the development of positions and comments, and ask them to verify that they are doing so.

**3.2G6** When a national position has been established, it is good practice for the NSB to communicate this national position to all relevant stakeholders that have been engaged in its development.

**3.2G7** The procedure to appeal NSB decisions should, as a first step, promote informal and open dialogue between the concerned parties to attempt to resolve conflicts via informal rather than formal means whenever possible.

**3.2G8** **Any formal appeal process should be fair and transparent and include provisions to ensure that the decision-makers are perceived by the concerned parties as being neutral on the issue in question.**

**3.2G9** NSBs may organize national meetings, teleconferences or Web-based discussions to assist in the development of national positions. All relevant stakeholders should have an opportunity to participate.

**3.2G10** Again, as under Item 3.1G4 above, NSBs new to active engagement in the ISO system may wish to seek advice and best practices from other NSBs who have had substantial experience to date

## 3.3 National participation at ISO standards development meetings

This section provides principles and guidance on selecting and preparing (1) national delegation members to attend meetings of ISO technical committees (TCs), project committees (PCs) and subcommittees (SCs), and (2) national experts to attend ISO working group meetings.

### Principles

**3.3P1** National delegations and national experts are appointed by the NSB.

**3.3P2** The identification of NSB delegations and experts should occur within an NMC, or by equivalent means, within the NSB.

**3.3P3** **All relevant and interested stakeholders who are members of the NMC should be afforded fair and equitable consideration to serve as an NSB delegate or expert.**

**3.3P4** The NSB delegation should be able to represent all aspects of the agreed national position. This might entail having more than one delegate attend the ISO meeting.

**3.3P5** **All members of an NSB delegation to an ISO TC/PC/SC meeting should be expected to speak with one voice to advocate for the NSB's national position.**

**3.3P6** National experts to an ISO WG should be selected on the basis of their relevant technical expertise.

### Guidance

To assist in achieving these principles, the following guidance may be helpful :

**3.3G1** National delegations should be selected from the members of the NMC and be actively engaged in the work of the NMC.

**3.3G2** The selection criteria may be based on a number of factors, for example technical expertise, effective communication skills in language of meeting, and active participation in the work of the NMC.

**3.3G3** National experts should be selected and nominated through the NMC. Though selected for their individual technical knowledge and expertise, such experts should be aware of national positions in order to minimise conflict as the project progresses. WG experts should regularly report to their NSB or NMC on the progress of work within the WG.

**3.3G4** It is preferable that appointed individuals from national delegations and national experts be in a position to commit the necessary time and resources.

**3.3G5** Continuity of participation in national delegations and as WG experts throughout the life-cycle of an ISO project should be preferred and encouraged.

**3.3G6** **All national delegation members or WG experts with a financial need should have fair and equitable access to, and consideration for, such funding from any source. It should not be assumed that the NSBs themselves will be able in all cases to provide such funding. Any source for such funding, should have procedures established for the administration of the funding program, the application process to acquire the funding and the criteria for approving requests for the funding. These procedures should be open, transparent and available to any relevant party for the fund.**

**3.3G7** National delegations should select a head of the delegation. If another delegate can speak to an issue more effectively than the head of delegation, the head of delegation should seek to be recognized to speak and then request the other delegate to speak for him or her.

**3.3G8** Members of national delegations and WG experts should have sufficient language skills to effectively communicate in the environment of the particular ISO committee or WG.

**3.3G9** Preparation of national delegations and national experts before meetings should include :

    a) A briefing by the NMC on national positions (this may occur via a physical meeting, a teleconference or a Web-based discussion)

    b) Formal or informal training on ISO rules and procedures (e.g. *ISO/IEC Directives*)

    c) Access to documentation, meeting minutes and any papers that are relevant to the technical subject and meeting.

**3.3G10** National delegations and national experts should maintain close communication, which should include a debriefing by the national delegation members or national experts to the NSB or NMC following the international meeting.

**3.3G11** NSBs and NMCs should very carefully consider whether they should allow one or a very small number of delegates from a single organization to represent the NSB at an ISO meeting when the organization(s) may be the only interested stakeholder within the NSB.

**3.3G12 If new business is raised for action at the meeting that was not appropriately communicated to the committee in advance of the meeting, the national delegation should seek that such action be deferred until effective national consultations of all NSBs that are P members can take place.**

**3.3G13** NSBs and/or their NMCs should provide their delegates and experts with guidance concerning how much negotiating flexibility they have regarding the national consensus position and comments at an ISO TC, SC or WG meeting. In addition, the NSB and/or its NMC should advise the delegates and experts as to their positions and negotiating flexibility in relation to positions and comments of other NSBs.

## 3.4 Establishment and operations of national mirror committees

This section provides principles and guidance to NSBs on NMCs to ISO work, for NSBs that choose to use an NMC approach.

### Principles

**3.4P1 Internal procedures for the establishment and operations of NMCs should exist and should be publicly available.**

**3.4P2** For those NSBs who form NMCs, an NMC should be established as early as possible in the process to ensure that the NSB is in a position to respond to the ISO process.

**3.4P3** Some NSBs may already have national committees in a field where new international projects are started and the NSB should use this existing national committee in a capacity as an NMC if it is interested in serving in such a capacity and able to fulfill the requirements of such a role.

**3.4P4 The NSB should make every effort to identify the relevant stakeholders that should be engaged in the NMC and those stakeholders that the NSB has been engaged with early in the process, should be contacted at this stage to ensure continuity.**

**3.4P5** The composition of the NMC should demonstrate participation of representative organizations across the relevant stakeholders with a legitimate interest in the ISO subject.

**3.4P6** All members of the NMC should have equal participation rights and equal access to relevant information.

**3.4P7 Attempts should be made to achieve balance with respect to the composition of the NMC. Procedures should exist to safeguard against dominance by any stakeholder or stakeholder category.**

**3.4P8** Once the mirror committee has been established, the composition of the committee should be reviewed regularly and additional stakeholders may be invited to participate

throughout the life-cycle of the ISO work.

**3.4P9** NSBs should provide suitable information, advice or training on ISO standardization to all members of the NMC.

**3.4P10** The NMC's formation should be approved by the NSB, for example by senior management or by a governance group made up of relevant stakeholders.

**3.4P11** NMCs should maintain records of their decisions.

## Guidance

To assist in achieving these principles, the following guidance may be helpful :

**3.4G1** Relevant stakeholders to be contacted and invited to participate will depend on the subject matter of the ISO activity. Examples of how this may be approached may include enquiries, Internet searches, networks, personal approaches, advertisements, etc.

**3.4G2** For NSB senior management or a governance group made up of relevant stakeholders to approve the establishment of the NMC, the following information should be provided:

 a) Background and justification for the ISO activity;

 b) Scope of the proposed ISO activity

 c) Proposed NMC membership

 d) A clear statement for the level of participation (P or O) in the ISO activity

 e) A work programme or business plan of the ISO activity

 f) A commitment of sufficient resources in place in order to establish and operate the NMC.

**3.4G3** For the purposes of openness and transparency, the procedure for the establishment of a NMC should be made publicly available (e.g. through the NSB Website, presentations, experts communicating within the community, etc.)

**3.4G4** **NMC members should be encouraged to develop their knowledge of**

standardization operations and procedures. This could be achieved via introductory information packages, training and education sessions, mentoring programs, IT tools, etc.

**3.4G5** **The consensus development process of NSBs and NMCs should be open to all who are directly and materially affected by the standardization activity in question. Any stakeholder may contribute via public review and comment without joining the NMC if it wishes, but it is the responsibility of the NMC to develop the national consensus positions. This includes an obligation to consider input received from the public review and comment. There should be no undue financial barriers to participation. If a fee for participation is charged, then it should be reasonable and fair. A fee waiver or fee reduction option is encouraged. Where potential funding sources for participating (underrepresented) stakeholders are known, such information should be made available as appropriate.**

## 3.5 Leadership of national mirror committees

This section provides principles and guidance for NSBs on the selection, qualifications and training of NMC Chairs and NMC secretaries, for NSBs that choose to use an NMC approach.

## Principles

**3.5P1** The selection of the chair and secretary of a new NMC should take place as soon as possible after the establishment of the new ISO committee and decision is taken to establish a new NMC.

**3.5P2** **Once the establishment of the NMC is approved, the NSB or a governance group of relevant stakeholders may assign the secretariat role for the NMC to an internal staff member or outsource the secretariat role to an external organization. Where the secretariat role for the NMC is outsourced, an agreement should**

**be signed between the NSB and the external organization, and there should be ongoing monitoring by the NSB, to ensure good performance.**

**3.5P3**  NMC chairs are selected on the basis of their chairing abilities, willingness and availability to be committed for the duration of a project, subject-matter knowledge and understanding of ISO. Where possible, chairs should be selected from amongst the members of the NMC.

**3.5P4**  NMC secretaries are selected on the basis of their knowledge of ISO rules and procedures, availability of adequate resources to manage the NMC and willingness to be committed for the duration of a project.

**3.5P5**  The NMC chair and secretary have the primary responsibility to act in a neutral manner to facilitate the NMC's decision-making and to ensure: that all relevant stakeholders on the NMC have fair and equitable access to information, that they have an opportunity to provide input, and that consideration of their input is given in the development of the national position.

## Guidance

To assist in achieving these principles, the following guidance may be helpful:

**3.5G1**  The selection process for NMC chairs and secretaries is a very important part in establishing an effective NMC. For this reason, steps should be taken to ensure that the selection is highly informed, e.g. by clearly placing the issue on the agenda of the first meeting.

**3.5G2**  NMC chairs and secretaries are appointed by the NSB, in some cases on the basis of a nomination and approval process within the NMC.

**3.5G3**  **Effective chairing abilities are the most important skills for an NMC chair. These abilities include managing the NMC's decision-making processes, effectively resolving disagreements, guiding the NMC to consensus, and managing meetings and discussions**

**that cross stakeholder categories and perspectives. Training for NMC chairs should, inter alia, focus on the enhancement of these skills.**

**3.5G4**  **Extensive knowledge of ISO rules and procedures are the most important skills for NMC secretaries. This includes knowledge of the *ISO/ IEC Directives*, the ability to use the required IT tools and good drafting skills. Training for secretaries should, inter alia, focus on the enhancement of these skills.**

**3.5G5**  Training for both chairs and secretaries can be provided through any number of means such as manuals, seminars, workshops, training courses, and individual advice upon request. This also includes ensuring that the NMC is well informed regarding the expected duties of chairs and secretaries.

**3.5G6**  It may be useful for the NSB to facilitate information exchanges among chairs and secretaries across all of the NSB's NMCs, to promote the sharing of experiences and good practices. This can be done via seminars and workshops or via online tools.

**3.5G7**  NSBs have a responsibility to ensure that chairs and secretaries are aware of their roles and responsibilities both nationally and internationally.

**3.5G8**  NSBs should also ensure that they regularly update chairs and secretaries on any developments or changes (e.g. *ISO/IEC Directives*) that may impact the work of the NMC.

# Annex A

**PEG Task 2 – Input collection methodology and summary observations**

To collect input for consideration to produce Section 3 of this document, the ISO Secretary-General issued a letter to all ISO full members, inviting them to submit their input on a series of questions via an online survey tool. Of the approximately 100 ISO full members that received this invitation, responses were received from 41. This was regarded as a very good survey response, and in particular, it should be noted that the responses showed a very good distribution of developed and developing countries, as well as geographic diversity.

The numbered items presented below represent the questions asked of ISO national bodies, and following each question are the PEG's summary observations on the responses received.

## 1) Initiation of new ISO work

**1.1)** When ISO embarks on a new field of standardization, and in the absence of a relevant national committee, how does your NSB assess the level of interest, in and support for, this ISO activity in your country ?

*Summary observations :*

*A number of good practices were identified within the responses – almost all conduct some form of stakeholder engagement to assess the level of interest within their country. A few limit their consultations to an assessment by staff within their respective organizations.*

## 2) Establishment of ISO national mirror committees

**2.1)** Do you have an internal procedure for the establishment of national mirror committees to ISO activities ?

*Summary observations :*

*Forty of 41 respondents have such a procedure.*

**2.2)** If yes, please provide details of the procedure.

*Summary observations :*

*A few procedures were identified within the responses. Some chose not to go into detail of the procedure but advised that a committee is established, if relevant. In a number of the responses, it is apparent that the national committee is considered if the national body is approached by an external party as opposed to a proactive approach by the national body to identify and create. Some respondents do not have any (or many) national mirror committees.*

**2.3)** Please advise if, and how, this procedure is made publicly available.

*Summary observations :*

*It appears that in the majority of cases, the procedures are made publicly available. Where the procedure is not publicly available, all those involved in the development of standardization appear to be provided with the details.*

## 3) Mirror committee membership

**3.1)** How do you identify stakeholder groups and ensure balance of participation in your mirror committees ?

**3.2)** How do you determine which stakeholders will be involved

*Summary observations :*

*Stakeholder identification is central to the establishment of consensus positions, but there are few specific procedures surrounding how to do this activity and few procedures regarding the balance of*

*participation were provided in the responses to question 3.1. Responses to question 3.2 indicated that there are also differences among the respondents regarding the type of stakeholders that are contacted to participate.*

**3.3)** Do your procedures allow for new members to join the mirror committee at any time ?

***Summary observations :***

*Forty of the 41 responses indicated that new stakeholders may join their mirror committees at any time.*

**3.4)** Please describe any special resources or approaches that support the participation of persons in particular stakeholder groups in the mirror committee.

***Summary observations :***

*Responses on this question represented a broad spectrum of input. Some NSBs responded that they provide special support either in the form of training and orientation of delegates and experts or in the form of funding to support participation in the mirror committee. Other NSBs indicated that they provide no special support.*

**3.5)** How do you address the composition of mirror committees in cases where there is limited but strong interest in your country in the outcome of an International Standard ?

***Summary observations :***

*A number of NSBs responded that they have no special procedures to address this issue. Others indicated it would be unlikely that a mirror committee would be formed and unlikely the NSB would take active participation in an ISO activity if the interest is so limited. Still others indicated that they would conduct further outreach to seek more interest to participate, or they would try to proceed as much as possible with the limited interest they have.*

## 4) Addressing differing ISO technical subjects in mirror committees

**4.1)** Do you approach the establishment and membership of the mirror committee differently dependent upon the subject area and the participation level (P, O, etc.) ?

***Summary observations :***

*Fourteen respondents indicated that they handle establishment and membership of mirror committees based on subject or level of participation, and 25 respondents indicated that they do not.*

**4.2)** If yes, please provide details.

***Summary observations :***

*Some responded that the process for establishing mirror committees is always the same, but the members or stakeholder groups may be different depending on the subject. Some respondents indicated differing approaches in relation to O (observer) membership, and some indicated that, in the case of O membership, they may not form mirror committees at all.*

## 5) Decision-making in mirror committees

**5.1)** Please describe how you take decisions (e.g., by consensus, by voting, requirements to take decisions) in your mirror committees.

***Summary observations :***

*The majority of responses indicated that decisions are taken in accordance with the consensus principle, while some NSB mirror committees have numeric voting procedures to be implemented when consensus may be in question.*

**5.2)** Please describe what happens within your mirror committees if agreement cannot be reached on a decision.

***Summary observations :***

*A variety of responses were provided, including abstaining when consensus is not reached, instituting a numeric voting procedure if consensus is not reached or clear, and in some cases, referring the final decision on the NSB position to a staff person of the NSB senior management.*

**5.3)** Please describe any mechanism in place for appeals of decisions taken by mirror committees.

*Summary observations :*

*Most NSB responses indicated that their national mirror committee procedures contain provisions for handling appeals. Others indicated that they had no such procedure but that the national mirror committee would continue to discuss the item until it was resolved. Almost all responses indicated that appeals are referred to the parent group of the body that took the action being appealed. This can extend up to governance bodies of the NSB. One respondent indicated that it handles appeals as it would customer complaints under an ISO 9001 quality management system.*

## 6) Participation at ISO standards development meetings

**6.1)** Please describe how you select and approve your national delegation members to meetings of ISO TCs, PCs and SCs, and your national experts to ISO WGs.

*Summary observations :*

*In almost all responses, the national mirror committee decides on the members of the national delegation or the experts from the NSB who attend ISO meetings.*

**6.2)** Please describe how you prepare your national delegation members to meetings of ISO TCs, PCs, SCs.

**6.3)** Please describe how you prepare your national experts to meetings of ISO WGs.

*Summary observations :*

*In response to questions 6.2 and 6.3, most NSBs responded that they provide all appropriate ISO committee or WG documentation to the delegates and/or experts and hold national meetings in advance of ISO meetings to discuss issues and determine positions and comments to be carried forward to the meeting. Some NSBs also provide specialized training programs and orientation sessions to prepare delegates and experts.*

**6.4)** Please describe any special resources or approaches that support the partici-

pation of persons in particular stakeholder groups in the international committee meetings.

*Summary observations :*

*In general, responses to this question were similar to the responses provided to question 3.4 above.*

## 7) Mirror committee leadership

**7.1)** Please describe any procedure you have for the selection and appointment of mirror committee chairs and secretaries.

*Summary observations :*

*In general, most responses indicated that the mirror committee chairs are selected by the mirror committee membership based on considerations such as: leadership skills, consensus-building, capability and expert knowledge of the subject of the ISO committee. Generally, secretaries of mirror committees are assigned these roles by the management of the NSB, or the management of an external organization administering the mirror committee on behalf of the NSB.*

**7.2)** Please describe any procedures you have for the qualifications and responsibilities of mirror committee chairs and secretaries.
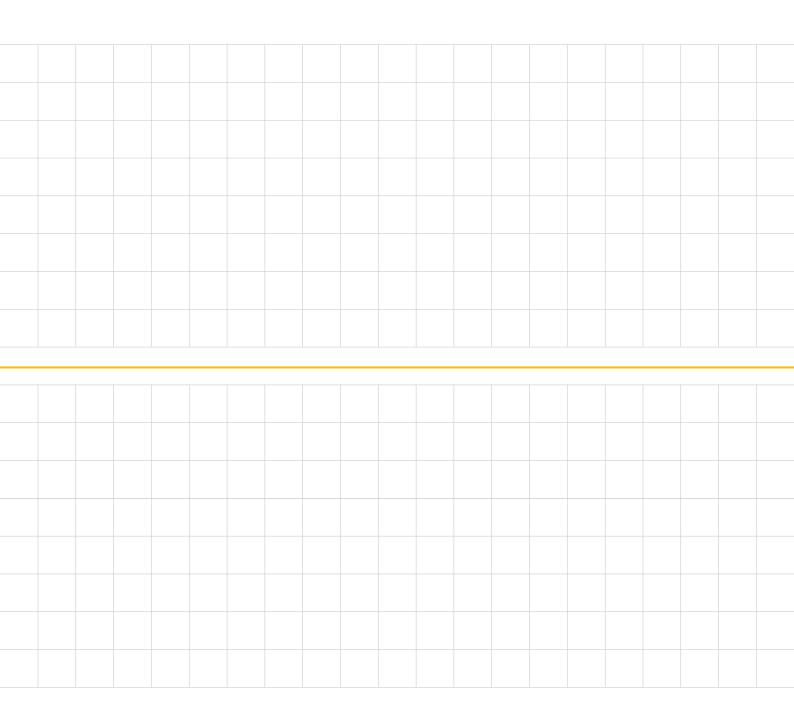
*Summary observations :*

*Many respondants indicated that their mirror committee procedures contain details on the qualifications and responsibilities of mirror committee chairs and secretaries.*

**7.3)** Please describe any programmes or activities you have for training or preparation of mirror committee leadership.

*Summary observations :*

*A number of respondents indicated that they provide orientation sessions and specialized training courses for mirror committee leaders. Some NSBs also organize regular conferences of mirror committee chairs and secretaries that provide good opportunities to network, discuss issues of common concern and share good practices.*

**International Organization for Standardization**