



ISOT Guidance Note 011 – Consumer Participation

Consumer participation plays a vital role in standards development and provides additional credibility to the standards-setting process. Consumer representatives provide valuable input to a standards body by giving feedback from the point of view of the end-user. Consumer concerns include issues such as product safety and compatibility; quality of products and services; ease of use and accessibility; the environment, health, and safety; and corporate and social responsibility.

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; and
- propose solutions to address consumer requirements such as safety, performance, quality, interoperability or enhanced consumer protection.¹

With its emphasis on balance, openness, and transparency, the U.S. standardization system provides a valuable forum for consumer input. ANSI strives to facilitate consumer participation in the voluntary consensus standards process by informing consumers and consumer representatives of standardization activities and conducting outreach to consumer advocacy and public interest groups to help identify representatives to participate in such activities. Promoting consumer participation in these activities allows consumers and consumer representatives to make a difference, develop topic expertise on a standard, and to become engaged in the standards development process.

We want to hear from you! If you are interested in learning more about consumer participation or growing your consumer participation, ANSI's consumer and legislative outreach manager, Cleo Manuel Stamatos, is available to

¹ <https://www.iso.org/files/live/sites/isoorg/files/store/en/PUB100277.pdf>

answer questions and help you identify opportunities. If you are interested in learning more, please contact her at cstamatos@ansi.org.

What this means to you as an ISO Committee Manager:

When a national standards body (NSB) submits a Form 4 for a New Work Item Proposal (NWIP), the proposer is requested to identify the stakeholder categories (including consumers) and how they will each benefit from or be impacted by the proposed deliverable. In addition, NSBs are required to identify the stakeholder category for experts they assign to working groups (WGs). If consumers will be impacted by the development of specific standards in your committee, it would be advantageous to confirm that consumer experts are participating on those WGs. In this way, the WG can consider these issues early in the development of the document. You may wish to work with the convenor or project leader to reach out to the NSBs for additional consumer participation.

What this means to you as a U.S. TAG Secretary:

The [ANSI International Procedures](#), Annex B4.2, describes the minimum criteria for balance with a U.S. Technical Advisory Group (TAG). Participation in U.S. TAGs is required to be open to all U.S. national interested parties who are directly and materially affected by the activity, and the process of developing U.S. positions shall provide an opportunity for fair and equitable participation without dominance by any single interest. Consumer representation on the U.S. TAG helps the U.S. TAG provide input on relevant standards.

About the ANSI ISO Team (ISOT)

The American National Standards Institute (ANSI) is the U.S. member body to the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). To ensure a strong and effective U.S. voice in international standardization, the ANSI ISO Team (ISOT) acts as the primary interface for U.S. Stakeholders—between ANSI-accredited U.S. Technical Advisory Groups (U.S. TAGs) and their related ISO Committees, and as the main contact for ANSI-delegated U.S. held ISO secretariats.

ISOT daily operations include monitoring and recording of ISO documents, processing votes on behalf of U.S. TAGs, accrediting delegates to attend international meetings, nominating experts to participate on working groups, coordination with key group such as the ANSI ISO Forum (AIF), ANSI ISO Council (AIC), and the ISO Technical Management Board (TMB), administering ANSI Virtual Technical Advisory Groups (VTAGs), facilitating training programs, among many other functions. In addition to daily responsibilities, ISOT is available to assist with any committee specific issues U.S. TAGs or U.S. held secretariats may be facing. ISOT staff is well versed in the ISO procedures, ANSI International Procedures, and has experience in all aspects of the ISO process.

For organizations that are new to ISO or want additional support with ISO related activities, ANSI's ISOT staff provides hands-on, practical guidance on all aspects of administration of U.S. TAGs or ISO Secretariats through its fee-based Enhanced Services program. For more information, contact isot@ansi.org.