ANSI ISO Team (ISOT)

ISOT Guidance Note 2013-03 – Hosting a meeting in the US

Does your US/TAG want to host an ISO meeting in the US? Is your TC/PC/SC meeting in the US?

The ISO Directives state in Annex SF that “For technical committee or subcommittee meetings, the ISO member body in the country shall be the host and its pre-approval of the meeting is required.” ANSI, as the US national member body to ISO, extends the official offer to host ISO TC or SC meetings in the US. ANSI’s ISO Team (ISOT) will issue an invitation letter to the ISO TC or SC secretary after the US/TAG administrator provides the following required information:

- Exact dates of proposed meeting
- Location / Venue
- Which committees are meeting (sometimes the TCs and SCs will meet at the same time)
- Meeting host/sponsor(s) (While ANSI is considered, under the ISO Directives, the official host for all ISO meetings held in the US, ANSI does not provide financial support for ISO meetings held in the US. Therefore, US/TAGs and/or other entities organizing ISO committee meetings in the US must agree to take full financial responsibility for the meeting.)
- Meeting coordinator’s contact information (this is the US person who will work directly with the TC/PC/SC secretary to coordinate meeting arrangements)

Many ISO committees have meeting calendars that are set far in advance. In other cases, meeting hosts may be solicited during a plenary meeting. In any case where a US delegation wishes to make an offer at a TC/PC/SC meeting that has not been pre-approved by the US/TAG, the offer shall be considered tentative until confirmed by ANSI.

One of the most important reasons to plan meetings far in advance is to allow delegates ample time to make travel arrangements. Many people travelling to the US from other countries will require visas to enter the US. The visa process in some countries can take up to 6 months. When the US is hosting a meeting, early notification affords delegates time to make proper travel arrangements.

Please note WG meetings operate differently. US WG experts can offer to host a meeting in the US by directly communicating the offer to the WG convenor. It is then the responsibility of that convenor, rather than the national member body, to issue a meeting invitation. Recently, ISO also updated the Directives and now asks that the National Standards Body (NSB) in the host country be informed of WG meetings taking place in the country. For WG meetings located in the US, ISOT asks that the US/TAG administrator email us providing the dates and locations of the WG meetings. If necessary, ISOT can assist international delegates that require an invitation letter in order to obtain an entry visa.
Finally, whether your US/TAG is hosting a meeting or you are a secretary of an ISO committee arranging a meeting in the US, here are some things to consider:

Location:
- Is the meeting location in the US? For example, the US cannot host a meeting in Canada.¹
- What are the current travel restrictions in the US? The ISO Directives state no restrictions can be “imposed by its country to the entry of representatives of any P-member of the technical committee or subcommittee for the purpose of attending the meeting.”
- Does the meeting location have additional security requirements? Some buildings restrict foreign nationals from certain countries on their premises.
- Is the meeting location near an international airport?
- Are there hotels nearby?
- Is there adequate transportation to the meeting from the airport / hotel?

Logistics / Meeting Requirements:
- How many days will the committee meet?
- How many delegates are anticipated?
- How many rooms are required / are different meetings taking place simultaneously?
- What are the audio/visual needs?
- What are the onsite requirements (printing, internet etc.)?

Optional:
- Will a social event be hosted?
- Will meals/breaks be included?

What this means to you as an ISO secretary:
Official offers to host ISO meetings in the US are issued by ANSI. When you receive an offer to meet in the US, it is also important that you ensure that holding a meeting in the US complies with ISO Directives, Annex SF (see above). If you have questions with regard to US regulations concerning entry to the US, please review the US State Department’s website for further information: http://travel.state.gov(visa/).

Also as the secretary, you will probably receive questions from delegates requiring invitation letters for the visa appointments. These should be handled by ISOT. While the ISO Directives only require a 4 month meeting notice, we suggest that you issue an initial notice to the committee as soon as you have confirmation from ANSI. This will provide potential delegates additional time to make their travel arrangements and complete the visa process.

What this means to you as a US/TAG administrator:
Hosting meetings is one of the responsibilities of the committee’s P members, but we understand that this is a significant undertaking as the US/TAG or a sponsoring organization is responsible for the funding of the ISO meeting.

Often US/TAG’s host meetings in conjunction with annual conferences or other events, where either some delegates may already be attending or meeting space is available at a discounted rate. ISO has rules related to signage, logos, fees etc.; the ISO Directives’ Annex SF provides specific guidance on these matters.

¹ If necessary, ANSI can discuss the possibility of the US hosting a meeting in another country with the NSB.
For more information on meetings, please review the following documents:
Annex SF in the ISO Directives Part 1
Section 1.4 in the ANSI International Procedures

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 interface between ANSI-accredited U.S. Technical Advisory Groups (US/TAGs) and/or ANSI-delegated U.S. held ISO secretariats.

ISOT daily operations include distribution of ISO documents to US/TAG administrators, processing votes on behalf of US/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 US/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 US/TAGs or ISO Secretariats through its fee-based Enhanced Services program. For more information, contact isot@ansi.org.