



# ANSI ISO Team (ISOT)



(Revised December 2015)

## ISOT Guidance Note 2015-04 – Vienna Agreement

In the ISO world we hear a lot about CEN and the Vienna Agreement (VA). ISO recently released the 6<sup>th</sup> edition of the *Guidelines for the implementation of the Agreement on Technical Cooperation between ISO and CEN* and a new FAQ document, so ISOT thought this would be an appropriate time to inform you (or remind you!) what the VA is all about.

The VA is an agreement on technical cooperation between ISO and CEN. It first recognizes the importance and primacy of international standards. The Agreement lays out the opportunities for ISO and CEN to share information and jointly develop standards that serve both the global and European markets. Clearly, companies that do business globally prefer to see the same standards exist around the world, and the VA helps work toward ensuring that ISO and European standards do not diverge. ISO and CEN's [Guidelines for the VA agreement](#) provide the detailed instructions on how ISO and CEN committees should work in cooperation. In general, the guidelines help avoid duplication of work, increase transparency and speed up the process, both during the standards development process as well as during ongoing maintenance of the standards.

This new version of the VA implementation guidelines, approved by the ISO Technical Management Board in 2013, includes the following new information:

- ISO lead is preferred for ISO/CEN projects under the VA. CEN lead is only possible if supported by a simple majority of non-European P-members of the ISO committee involved.
- If an ISO committee agrees that the project should advance under CEN lead based on clear documentation that the ISO committee cannot meet an EC mandate, the ISO committee decision shall be presented to the ISO/TMB for information. If the ISO committee cannot agree, the ISO/TMB will consider the case and decide.
- All ISO standards that are VA projects originally developed under CEN lead shall have their revisions take place under ISO lead. Exemptions are only possible for reasons which are agreeable to the non-European members of the ISO committee involved.
- Any past ISO committee resolutions specifying that all standards or groups of standards should be developed automatically under CEN-lead are cancelled. Decisions on lead should be taken on a project-by-project basis.
- In the case of CEN lead, comment resolution following voting should be conducted jointly by both committees, preferably by a comments resolution panel comprising experts from both committees.

- ISO meetings should be held in different regions around the world. ISO committees should avoid meeting exclusively in Europe, even if much of their work is joint ISO/CEN work under the VA.
- European Commission funding for projects should not be a factor in taking decisions on lead assignment.

As of 2015, ISO and CEN have aligned the DIS process for projects registered under the VA. This means that all DIS ballots are now posted for a 2 month translation period followed by a 3 month DIS ballot. Similarly to the ISO process, the FDIS ballot can now be skipped and the document can go straight to publication; the CEN/TC secretariat just needs to provide the ISO/TC secretariat with the decision each time. Please note that if there are substantial technical changes or a negative assessment by the CEN consultant an FDIS is required. CEN has provided a flow chart documenting the DIS and optional FDIS processes, which is attached as an annex to this guidance note.

The VA can be complicated depending on the circumstances within the various committees involved. We've attempted to outline below some "red flags" for our ISO secretariats and US/TAG administrators to be aware of. If your ISO committee has documents that it is processing in cooperation with a CEN committee under the VA, and you have any questions about the process, we encourage you to engage with ISOT early on for assistance. There are many resources on ISO's website at <http://www.iso.org/va>, but sometimes it's easier to talk to someone about the specifics of your committee and experience.

#### **What this means to you as an ISO secretary:**

As an ISO secretary, if the European P-members are promoting CEN standards in your committee you must become familiar with the VA process and its guidelines. You should consult with your TPM to ensure that items are being properly registered as VA items and communicate information clearly to P members about how the VA process differs from the normal ISO process. Your first indication of a VA document will be on the NWIP form (ISO form 4), where the proposer must identify "Joint / Parallel Work."

Some questions you should be aware of throughout the process are as follows:

- Does CEN want to lead the development of this document?
- Are there a number of non-European countries interested in this work?
- How do ISO P-members, who are not CEN members, participate in CEN-led work?
- Who is my CEN consultant and what role does he or she play in this work?
- How do CEN led documents get revised?

#### **What this means to you as a US/TAG administrator:**

As a US/TAG administrator, the US/TAG members will be looking to you for guidance on how to be prepared to handle CEN and VA documents. When new proposals are circulated by the ISO secretary it is important for you to identify which items might be developed in cooperation with CEN. When a NWIP is circulated, there is a section entitled "Joint / Parallel Work" and the proposer can indicate if CEN will be involved. That is your first indication that you might be embarking on a VA document.

Some questions you might encounter throughout the process are as follows:

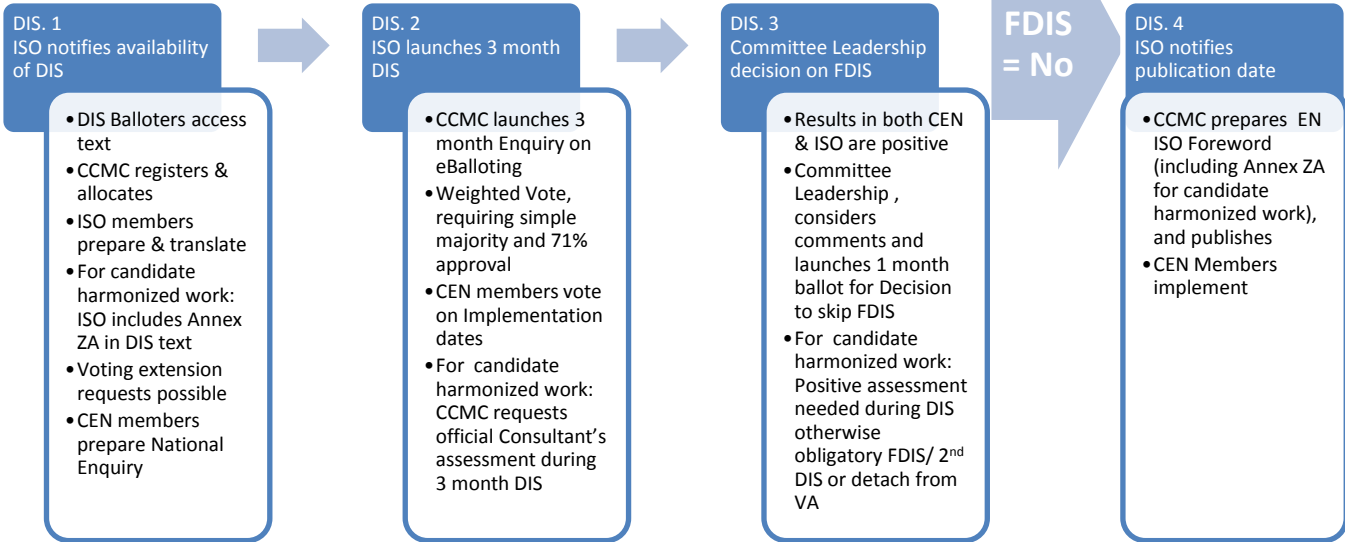
- What is ISO vs. CEN lead?
- How can the US participate in CEN led VA documents?
- How can we deal with CEN bloc voting?
- What happens during the revision process?
- How can I best prepare the US/TAG delegates to ISO meetings?

## 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](mailto:isot@ansi.org).



**FLOWCHART  
– OPTIONAL  
PARALLEL  
FDIS/FV FOR  
VIENNA  
AGREEMENT  
PROJECTS**

**2 months**

**3 months**

**FDIS = Yes**

