



CASCO

Convenor mentoring programme

Table of contents

Background and objectives.....	2
Essential reading.....	5
Self-test your knowledge.....	7
Role of the mentor.....	7
Preparing for your first meeting.....	8
Facilitating your first meeting.....	12
Other roles and responsibilities.....	18
Mentorship activities.....	20
References.....	21
Appendix A	
Examination of knowledge (self-test).....	22
Appendix B	
“Preparing for your first meeting” handout.....	28
Appendix C	
Post-meeting handouts.....	31

Background and objectives

CASCO is establishing a mentoring programme for individuals interested in serving as convenors/co-convenors for WGs developing CASCO standards

The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) is the world's largest developer of International Standards. Established in 1947, ISO now has more than 23 000 International Standards covering virtually every sector and business. ISO is a global network of national standards bodies, with 165 members representing virtually every country in the world. ISO members nominate their own experts to be involved in the more than three hundred technical committees that develop the standards.





The ISO Committee for conformity assessment (CASCO) is a policy committee that reports directly to ISO Council and ensures a consistent approach to conformity assessment. CASCO develops standards related to conformity assessment practices jointly with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC). These are the ISO/IEC 17000 series of standards referred to as the CASCO Toolbox. The ISO/IEC 17000 series allows for a harmonized and consistent approach to conformity assessment that positively impacts market access and facilitates international trade. CASCO does not perform conformity assessment activities; it creates conformity assessment standards.

CASCO members nominate experts to participate in the CASCO working groups (WGs) that develop CASCO standards and to serve as convenors or co-convenors of these working groups. A convenor is a person who facilitates the standards development process by leading the WG and ensuring it follows the ISO/IEC Directives, CASCO policies and procedures, and timelines for the development of CASCO standards. Most CASCO WGs have at least two co-convenors and some have more than two.

CASCO is establishing a mentoring programme for individuals interested in serving as convenor/co-convenor on WGs that develop CASCO standards. This mentoring programme will pair a mentee with a seasoned convenor/co-convenor who will provide advice and guidance as the mentee observes and participates in a WG. By mentoring interested individuals who have no experience of serving as a WG convenor/co-convenor, CASCO is facilitating the transfer of knowledge and experience to the convenors/co-convenors of tomorrow.

Convenor mentees must meet the following requirements:

- They must be nominated by their member body to serve as a convenor mentee.
- They must be willing and able to attend WG meetings (virtually or in person, as the situation dictates).
- They must be willing to read the required documentation and reference material, complete the mentorship assignments and meet with the mentor as requested.

CASCO has established a number of objectives for the CASCO Convenor Mentorship Programme.

Namely, upon completion of the programme, the mentee shall:

- Demonstrate an understanding of ISO, CASCO, the CASCO Toolbox, the standards development process, and the ISO/IEC Directives related to CASCO standards
- Demonstrate the ability to manage a project plan and timeline for the development of a CASCO standard
- Demonstrate the ability to facilitate and manage a CASCO WG meeting and lead participants to consensus
- Demonstrate the ability to review, and provide input into, a CASCO WG meeting summary
- Demonstrate the ability to create and present a WG report to the CASCO Chairman's Policy and Coordination Group (CPC) and other interested parties

Essential reading

ISO rules and role of convenor

- *My ISO job – What delegates and experts need to know*
- *Getting started toolkit for ISO working group convenors*
- *ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2: Principles and rules for the structure and drafting of ISO and IEC documents, Clause 33 “Aspect of conformity assessment”*
- *ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1: Consolidated ISO Supplement – Procedures specific to ISO, Clause 2.5.6 on the definition of consensus*
- *ISO Code of Conduct for the technical work*
- **Project management portal (online resource)**

CASCO rules and procedures

- *Conformity assessment for standards writers - Do's and don'ts*
- CASCO proceedings QS-CAS-PROC 01 **ISO CASCO Structure, process and rules of operation**
- *ISO/IEC 17007:2009 Conformity assessment – Guidance for drafting normative documents suitable for use for conformity assessment*
- CASCO proceedings QS-CAS-PROC 33 **Common Elements in CASCO standards**





Self-test your knowledge

Please complete the self-test located in Appendix A, which is designed to assess your knowledge of ISO, CASCO and the documents referred to in the essential reading list. This will help ensure that you are ready to participate in your first meeting. After completing the test, please score yourself. If you did not do well, take time to review the essential reading documents again.

Role of the mentor

As a mentee, you will be appointed a mentor who is an experienced CASCO WG convenor independent from your WG. The mentor will meet with the mentee on a regular basis to address any issues the mentee may have and provide constructive feedback.

Preparing for your first meeting

There is not one correct way to facilitate a meeting but as a co-convenor, you have some pretty important roles to play

Prior to attending your first meeting, you should meet with the other co-convenors. Work with the co-convenors to determine what the goals are for the first meeting. The project timeline and plan should provide some guidance. You will need to agree with your co-convenor on the way to facilitate the meeting and to reach consensus. For the facilitation, there is no one way to facilitate a meeting but you should work with the co-convenors to agree on a method prior to the first meeting. For example, do you want name-tents or some method of identifying the WG participants? Or are you OK to not have any and to simply remember everyone's names? Do you want to split up meeting facilitation? Will one of you facilitate for some period of time and then switch to the other person, or will one of you do one day and another co-convenor do another day? For reaching consensus, the mentor will provide you with some useful tool to achieve consensus but you need to discuss with your co-convenor on how will you intend to achieve it. For example, by simple voting? Will you have hands raised for voting? Or will you use some other method for achieve consensus?



There is no one way to facilitate a meeting but you should work with the co-convenors to agree on a method prior to the first meeting.

The first WG meeting is often the first time some individuals will be participating in a CASCO WG. So your role as the co-convenor is to help them feel welcomed and included as well as to help them understand the ISO/CASCO Standards development process. Because there are first time attendees, after introductions, the CASCO Central Secretariat normally will review a few documents with the WG including the New Work Item Proposal (NWIP), the track (timeline) the standard is targeted to meeting, the ISO Code of Conduct for WGs, and any other pertinent documents (including previous versions of the standard if there are any).



It is also helpful if you do a bit of homework prior to the first meeting. If this is a revision of a standard, do you know anyone who participated in the last WG? Can you meet with them and gain some insight into the contentious areas the last time (if any)? Have you reviewed the previous version of the standard and are you familiar with the major sections in the standard? Do you understand why it is being revised? Are there suggestions of sections that need to be updated? Or deleted? What information can you obtain about the standard? Have there been interpretation requests? Did you review them?

If this is not a revision but a true newly proposed standard, does the NWIP have a suggested content outline? Who submitted the NWIP and can you reach out to them to understand their reasons for this standard? Are there other experts you can reach out to in order to obtain more information about the issues leading to the need for a standard?

Very large WGs can be difficult to manage and sometimes difficult to move forward. Just imagine a WG with 50 or 60 members. If every



member wants to add a comment for each discussion point and each participant speaks for just one minute, it would take almost an hour for each discussion point and that's with each participant speaking only once and only for a minute. Normally participants speak several times on a discussion point and often speak more than a minute. It can be very difficult to move a WG forward under those conditions. Consensus can also be difficult to obtain with a very large group. With so many different opinions, you have to think about a process that will allow you to move the meeting forward while respecting the opinions of those in the WG. The mentor will share its experience convening different size of WG and give advice on how those can be managed in terms of facilitation and reaching consensus.

Also, what will be your plan for how you will call on participants to speak? You and your co-convenors should plan in advance how you will track interest in speaking and how you will call on those wishing to speak. This is particularly difficult when some of the participants are in the room and some are virtual or when all of the participants are virtual. If you cannot see hands raised, it adds a degree of difficulty. Co-convenors and/or CASCO staff may be able to help you by watching for virtual raised hands. In any case, you should think about how you will manage to keep organization in the meeting and yet provide opportunity for the participants to share their ideas.

The Secretariat will review the meeting logistics with you and your co-convenors prior to the meetings. Will it be a virtual or semi virtual meeting? Do you intend to break up into smaller groups? If so, do you have some idea of the groups and who will chair each group as well as record each groups decisions and proposed standards language? If you are meeting in person, have you reserved the appropriate meeting space for small group breakouts? If you are meeting in person, do you want to try a WG dinner? Some WGs like to go out together and others do not. Would you go out with your WG if they want a WG dinner together?

Please complete the Preparing for your First Meeting Handout in Appendix B.

Facilitating your first meeting

Facilitating your first WG meeting can be both exciting and intimidating. Some convenors are very comfortable speaking in front of a group while others have little public speaking experience. It's normal to feel a bit nervous when you are watched by an audience. Again, there is no one correct way to facilitate a meeting but, as a convenor, you have some important roles to play.



Your responsibilities as a convenor include:

- Ensuring the meeting is productive and moves the standard's development process forward
- Ensuring all WG participants are given equal opportunity to speak and that no one monopolizes the conversation
- Ensuring all WG participants are respectful of one another and adhere to the ISO Code of Conduct
- Ensuring that different perspectives are shared and understood by all WG members
- Ensuring that the ISO/IEC Directives and CASCO policies/procedures are followed
- Managing the discussions and activities to achieve the desired goals by the end of the meeting

Co-convenors generally take turns in facilitating the meeting. As a convenor, you should carefully watch for WG participants who appear intimidated or reluctant to speak. While you don't want to embarrass them by calling on them directly, you do want to give them an opportunity to share their ideas. There are a number of ways you can reach out to them. One option is to wait for a break in the meeting and have a private conversation. Another is to start on the opposite side of the room from them, informing participants that you are going to quickly go around the table and give everyone a chance to speak (obviously, this doesn't work in very large groups). The person then knows that they will be called upon and has time to think about what they want to say.

As the convenor, you may also have to deal with overly eager participants who, in their excitement, monopolize the discussion. These individuals are usually extremely dedicated and have strong opinions and feelings about the standard. They often have an in-depth knowledge of the standard and valuable information to share. You will, however, need to keep them from taking over the entire meeting. When this happens, the other participants tend to go quiet and agree with everything these persons are saying. While they may be correct, you don't want to risk fresh ideas and concepts not being brought to the fore because of one or two overbearing people. Your mentor will give you some techniques on how to ensure these experts don't monopolize the conversation.

Another thing to watch out for is the misinterpretation or misunderstanding of a person with limited English-language skills. Sometimes, a WG participant has difficulty explaining their position in a way that everyone can understand. As the convenor, you must make every effort to understand this person and convey the gist of their message to all those present. A similar situation occurs when the



WG participant's accent is so strong that other WG members cannot understand them. Again, your role as the convenor requires you to understand what the person is saying and make sure everyone else on the WG understands as well.

Language issues are another thing you will need to be mindful of. Sometimes, a word may be open to different interpretations or have a different meaning for someone who speaks another language. It may be that the word does not even exist in the other language, making it a poor choice for use in the standard. As the convenor, you should strive for language and terminology that are as simple as possible and can be understood and translated by the greatest number of WG participants.

In your role as a convenor, it is your responsibility to lead the WG to **consensus**. How do you do this when there is a clear split and the

chances of reaching a consensus seem compromised? In such a situation, you can move the WG forward by attempting to understand why individuals have opted for a specific position. Often, there is an underlying reason for this and, by getting to the bottom of the issue, you can look for a potential resolution. For example, there may be a third option nobody has considered that would reconcile people in opposing camps. Asking each person to explain why they are holding strong to their position and getting others in the room to understand their concerns often helps move the group forward. Ultimately, most WGs want to find solutions that meet everyone's requirements and, providing you can get the group to discuss the root concepts, a resolution can often be found.

One of the hardest but critical parts of being a convenor is not pushing your own opinions on the WG. Your position requires you to remain neutral and unbiased at all times, helping the WG to achieve consensus without steering it in a particular direction. If you have strong feelings that you would like to express, ask your co-convenor to take over and make it clear that you are temporarily exchanging your convenor hat for your expert hat to share a specific opinion. You should do this judiciously, however, so that the WG does not feel that you are trying to push your opinions and desires on to them.

Once the meeting is over, one of the convenor's duties is to review the meeting report prepared by the CASCO Secretariat. It is important that you study it carefully to ensure that it accurately captures what was said and accomplished at the meeting. Accuracy is important as these reports are referred to occasionally to determine what occurred during a meeting. As a convenor mentee, you will mainly be observing at the initial meeting. Your mentor may give you a special assignment (e.g. convene one clause of the standard) and debrief with you after the meeting to discuss how things went and what can be improved.

Once your first meeting is over, please complete the **Post-meeting questionnaire** in Appendix C.



Other roles and responsibilities

As a convener, there are other responsibilities you will be required to assume. One of these will be to review the comments after a standard has been balloted. This is often done in conjunction with the CASCO Secretariat, but you will need to examine every single comment and assist in proposing a resolution prior to the meeting. Depending on the number of comments received, this can sometimes be a very big task. In case of need, a Drafting Group (or Preparatory Group) can be called to help pretreat and order comments (according to key issues) ready for discussion by the WG, draft proposed changes and resolve simple editorial questions. This group is made up of a small number of volunteers (10-12 people) including convenors. In addition, after the WG meeting, the convener often has to be available to review and approve documents prepared by the Secretariat in view of ballots or future meetings.





Another responsibility is preparing a WG report for the CPC twice a year that provides an update on the WG's progress. Often, one co-convenor will prepare the report and the other will present it; however, you can decide with your fellow convenors who will be responsible for what. Alternatively, one co-convenor can take the responsibility for one meeting and the other co-convenor for the next meeting. The important thing is not to put the entire burden of the report on to one person. If you are a co-convenor, you should expect to take responsibility for creating the CPC reports at least a couple of times during your mandate.

What's more, you will occasionally be required to prepare a progress update for the CASCO Plenary or a presentation on the WG's outcomes once work on the standard has been complete. You can coordinate the workload with your co-convenors so that no one is overburdened with having to prepare these presentations. Finally, upon completion of the standard, you will also be required to prepare a PowerPoint slide deck listing the outcomes of the standards work. In the case of a new standard, it should explain the purpose of the standard, while for a revision, it should highlight the major changes in the revision. As a convenor mentee, you most likely will not be creating any of these reports. However, your mentor may ask you to meet with your co-convenors to review the documents and reports created. Your mentor might also ask you to draft a report on your own as an assignment.

Mentorship activities

Following are the anticipated activities that take place during a convenor mentorship:

- Mentee is selected and a mentor assigned.
- First call/meeting between mentee and mentor to explain the programme, share documents and discuss reference materials (essential reading).
- Mentee reviews essential reading materials.
- Call/meeting between mentee and mentor to discuss essential reading materials. Mentor answers questions that mentee may have.
- Mentee completes self-test to ensure understanding.
- Mentee completes handout to prepare for first meeting.
- Mentee meets with WG co-convenors to prepare for first meeting.
- Call/meeting between mentee and mentor to review meeting preparation handout.
- Mentee attends WG meeting.
- Mentee completes handout.
- Call/meeting between mentee and mentor to review meeting handout and discuss the results of first meeting.
- Mentee continues to participate in WG meetings and meets mentor at regularly scheduled times to receive feedback and ask questions.
- Mentee graduates from mentorship.

References

Non-essential reading for more detailed information:

- **“Resources for Conformity Assessment”** page on ISO.org
- ISO/IEC 17000, Conformity assessment – Vocabulary and general principles, Annex A, Figure A.1: Functional approach to conformity assessment
- **Building trust – The conformity assessment toolbox**



A P P E N D I X

Appendix A

Examination of knowledge (self-test)

Please test your knowledge by answering the following questions, then check your answers.

Circle the correct answer(s):

- 1. Which of the following activities does ISO perform?**
 - a. Certifies organizations to ISO standards
 - b. Accredits organizations to ISO standards
 - c. Develops deliverables for conformity assessment
 - d. Establishes Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRAs) for acceptance of certification

- 2. Which of the following is a policy development committee that deals with matters pertaining to conformity assessment?**
 - a. TMB
 - b. CASCO
 - c. DEVCO
 - d. COPOLCO

3. Who may serve as a convener or co-convener of a CASCO working group?

- a. A CASCO employee
- b. Anyone who wants to serve
- c. Anyone nominated by a P-member
- d. Anyone nominated by an ISO subscriber member

**4. Which of the following is a type of ISO deliverable?
(select all that apply)**

- a. A Technical Report
- b. A Technical Specification
- c. An International Standard
- d. A Publicly Available Specification
- e. A Mutual Recognition Arrangement
- f. An International Workshop Agreement

5. What does Part 1 of the ISO/IEC Directives describe?

- a. The rules for the structure and drafting of standards
- b. The management organization and structure of ISO
- c. The standards development process that must be followed
- d. Guidance on the accepted use of terminology and units

6. What does Part 2 of the ISO/IEC Directives describe?

- a. The rules for the structure and drafting of standards
- b. The management organization and structure of ISO
- c. The standards development process that must be followed
- d. Guidance on the accepted use of terminology and units

- 7. Which of the following standards development tracks (SDT) must standards development projects follow? (*select all that apply*)**
- a. SDT – 12 (6 months to produce the DIS and 12 months to publication)
 - b. SDT – 18 (8 months to produce the DIS and 18 months to publication)
 - c. SDT – 24 (12 months to produce the DIS and 24 months to publication)
 - d. SDT – 36 (24 months to produce the DIS and 36 months to publication)
 - e. SDT – 48 (36 months to produce the DIS and 48 months to publication)
- 8. What happens to a P-member of ISO that fails to vote on over 20 % of ballots?**
- a. It loses its membership in ISO
 - b. Its P-membership is downgraded to an O-membership
 - c. It is no longer allowed to participate in any ISO meetings
 - d. It is fined an amount related to the amount it pays in membership fees
- 9. What is the **BEST** way to keep up to date with the changes ISO makes to tools or services related to the standards development process?**
- a. Review the ISO/IEC Directives every few years to check for changes
 - b. Subscribe to the “Changes to Services” page on ISO Connect by selecting “Watch”
 - c. Read ISOfocus magazine as soon as it is issued to ensure you have the latest information
 - d. Regularly review e-mails from the ISO Central Secretariat since, as a convener or co-convener, you will be notified by e-mail of all changes made to the standards development process

10. Which of the following is part of a convenor’s role in a CASCO WG meeting? (select all that apply).

- a. Be impartial
- b. Advance the document
- c. Help deal with difficult situations that may arise
- d. Set an example by following the ISO Code of Conduct
- e. Take notes and track all the WG discussions in a document
- f. Encourage all WG members to adopt the views of the convenor or co-convenors

11. What is the “neutrality principle”?

- a. A principle according to which every ISO standard must be written in order to be neutral of other standards
- b. A principle according to which CASCO WG convenors and co-convenors must remain neutral at all times while convening a WG meeting
- c. A principle according to which all ISO documents containing requirements must be written so that conformity can be assessed by a first, second or third party
- d. A principle according to which all ISO documents containing requirements must be created by a WG that has been appointed based on the neutrality of its WG members

12. Which of the following is the ISO agreed definition of “consensus”?

- a. General agreement as determined by a 3/4 majority of WG members established via a vote
- b. General agreement as determined by a majority of the voting WG members established via a vote
- c. General agreement as determined by a simple majority of WG members established via a vote
- d. General agreement characterized by the absence of sustained opposition to substantial issues

13. An attempt by CASCO WG convenors to win the committee over to their personal views is a violation of what?

- a. The ISO/IEC Directives
- b. The neutrality principle
- c. The ISO Code of Conduct
- d. The CASCO Convenor Agreement

14. Your WG has fallen behind in the project timeline. As a convenor, what is your responsibility to rectify this situation?

- a. Don't do anything. It is OK if your WG falls behind and does not complete the standard according to the timeline.
- b. See where you can shave off time, for example by holding additional meetings or compressing the time between meetings, if possible.
- c. Make the standard shorter. Instead of completing the entire standard, you may break up the standard into two parts. You can then complete the first part on time and issue a NWIP to do the second part under a new timeline.
- d. Skip the balloting step in the process. Since the WG is composed of P-member representatives and balloting a standard is what takes the most time, you can request that CASCO skip the balloting phase of standards development.

15. In the standard you are developing, your WG would like to define “conformity assessment” as the “demonstration that specified requirements are fulfilled”. Which of the following statements is true?

- a. This is acceptable. That is the definition in ISO/IEC 17000:2020.
- b. This is not acceptable. You must define it as “demonstration that specified requirements relating to a product, process, system, person or body are fulfilled”.
- c. This is not acceptable. You must define it as “assessment activities such as testing, inspection and certification that verify conformance with a standard”.
- d. This is not acceptable. You must define it as “third-party verification of conformance with a standard”.

Check your answers to the above questions:

- 1. c
- 2. b
- 3. c
- 4. a, b, c, d, f
- 5. c
- 6. c
- 7. b, c, d, e
- 8. b
- 9. b
- 10. a, b, c, d
- 11. c
- 12. d
- 13. c
- 14. b
- 15. a

Appendix B

“Preparing for your first meeting” handout

Meeting preparation questionnaire

In preparation for your first meeting, please meet with the CASCO Secretariat and your co-convenors to complete the following questions. Once this is done, you should be prepared to meet with your mentor to discuss your responses.

- 1. Do you know your co-convenors? What are their names and what do you know about them (for ex. where are they from, what constituency do they represent, how much convenor experience do they have, etc.)?**

- 2. Do you know who your contact at the CASCO Secretariat is?
Have you met with this person?**

3. What do you know about the document (standard, specification, etc.) you are developing/revising? Are there any issues or controversies surrounding the document you should be aware of? If it is a revision, have there been requests for clarification? Did you review them? What did you learn from reviewing the NWIP, if there is one?

4. Did you review the other documents associated with your WG (meeting documents, proposed project plan/timeline, etc.)? What are your thoughts about these?

5. How many participants will the meeting have? Will the meeting be virtual or in person or a mix of both? If so, how many will be attending virtually vs in person? Is the WG especially large or small?

6. What has been planned between the co-convenors as to how the meeting will be facilitated? How will you and your co-convenors manage the meeting? Will you be facilitating any of the meeting?

**7. Do you have any questions you would like to ask your mentor?
If so, what are they?**

Notes:

Appendix C

Post-meeting handouts

Post-meeting questionnaire

Once your first meeting is over, please complete the following questionnaire, then meet with your mentor to discuss your responses.

**1. When and where was your first meeting? Did you attend?
What is your overall impression of its success or failure?**

**2. What are your observations of your co-convenors?
Do they have particular strengths you can emulate?
Did they use processes that you can use in the future?
What do you think they did that worked especially well?**

- 3. Were you able to facilitate any of the meeting? How did it go?
Do you feel you did a good job?
What do you think were your strengths and weaknesses?**

- 4. Were any WG participants particularly difficult to manage?
If so, how did your co-convenors deal with them?
Is there anything you can learn from observing the situation?
Is there anything you would have done differently?**

- 5. Were there any controversial issues or difficulties in reaching consensus? If so, how did your co-convenors deal with them? Is there anything you can learn from observing the situation? Is there anything you would have done differently?**
- 6. Did the WG accomplish what it set out to accomplish in the allotted time? If not, why do you think that was? What do you think could have been done differently? What will your WG need to do now to maintain the project plan's timeline?**

**7. Were there any barriers to communication based on language?
If so, what were the issues and how were they resolved?**

**8. What are your observations of the CASCO Secretariat and staff?
Did you find them helpful?**

9. Did you review the meeting report prepared by the CASCO Secretariat? Did you find it to be an accurate recording of what occurred at the meeting?

10. How do you think you might prepare to play a bigger role in the next meeting? Is there something you need to work on?

11. Are there any additional thoughts about the WG meeting you would like to share?

**12. Are there any questions you would like to ask your mentor?
If so, what are they?**

Notes:

About **ISO**

ISO (International Organization for Standardization) is an independent, non-governmental international organization with a membership of 165* national standards bodies. Through its members, it brings together experts to share knowledge and develop voluntary, consensus-based, market-relevant International Standards that support innovation and provide solutions to global challenges.

ISO has published more than 23500* International Standards and related documents covering almost every industry, from technology to food safety, to agriculture and healthcare.

For more information, please visit www.iso.org

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