

May 2006 Beijing Trip

Meeting Reports

In May 2006 ANSI Chairman of the Board Bob Noth and ANSI Representative for China Affairs Elise Owen met with the Standardization Administration of China (SAC), the Certification and Accreditation Administration of China (CNCA), the China National Institute of Standardization (CNIS) and the U.S. Embassy in Beijing. Following are readouts from each meeting. Please direct any questions or comments to Elise Owen eowen@ansi.org; 202-331-3624.

Standardization Administration of China (SAC)

Key Conclusions

- SAC Administrator Liu demonstrated that he is experienced in standardization and pragmatic in his approach. We were left with the impression that rather than fixating on a specific ideological perspective, he would be very pragmatic in his approach to future development in standardization. He indicated a willingness to look at all the systems and tools employed throughout the developed world, and to evaluate all options based on their merits and potential benefits to the Chinese people.
- SAC Administrator Liu has outlined a future direction in standardization that will place a far greater focus on (Chinese) industry participation and leadership in standardization. He recognizes the U.S. leadership in this approach and welcomes cooperation both by ANSI as a policy body and its corporate members as China moves forward.
- The impact of standardization on trade is a key area of focus for SAC, as demonstrating economic impact is a key for SAC in gaining continued funding and support from the State.
- The U.S. – China Standards Portal will be a key deliverable within the overall ANSI-SAC cooperation and will receive full support from Administrator Liu and his staff.

SAC Requests for ANSI

- Support China's efforts to join the ISO Standing Council, and the applications of qualified Chinese enterprises to hold secretariats within ISO and IEC committees. Consider cooperating with Chinese enterprises to help them understand the ISO and IEC processes and procedures, possibly even under "twinning" arrangements.

- Cooperation to complete the first stage of the U.S. – China Standards Portal, and ongoing cooperation for future stages. Administrator Liu hopes that additional projects of mutual benefit will continue to be identified.
- Cooperation in standardization research, including research on global standards harmonization and the resulting benefits to trade.
- Creation of an informal ANSI-SAC mechanism to allow industries and enterprises to discuss and resolve their standards-related trade concerns before they reach the JCCT or WTO.
- Development of a single catalog of all the standards used in the U.S., and ultimately a “one-stop shop” where Chinese stakeholders can purchase the standards they will need to enter and compete in the U.S. market.

Participants

Liu Pingjun, Administrator
 Chen Gang, Planning and Information Management Department Director
 Li Yubing, International Standards Department Deputy Director General
 Fan Chunmei, Department of International Standards Director
 Huang Li, Department of International Standards.

Robert Noth, ANSI Chairman of the Board
 Elise Owen, ANSI Representative for China Affairs

Background

Administrator Liu opened the meeting with a brief self introduction. He has worked in standardization in China for over 20 years, beginning at the provincial level and working his way up. Mr. Liu indicated that he is passionate about standardization and what this work can bring to China’s economic prosperity. He has continued to focus on standardization work over the past twenty years, despite opportunities to focus on other areas.

In his discussion of SAC and its future priorities and directions, Mr. Liu focused heavily on trade-related areas within standardization and was quite forthcoming about the need for U.S. – China cooperation in this area. Mr. Liu noted Mr. Noth’s “Split Personality,” expressing his ability to represent both the national interest as well as his own industry’s interest. While he himself does not have industry experience, Mr. Liu recognized the importance of having participation by the “standards users” in the overall standardization process, and indicated a strong willingness to cooperate with ANSI in developing “an industry focused mechanism for standardization that looks more like developed countries.”

Chinese Industry Leadership in Standardization

Administrator Liu not only laid out lofty goals for Chinese development on standardization, but he also followed up with discussion of concrete funding mechanisms and reforming measures that he will employ to meet these goals. Two of the primary reforming measures include: first, encouraging Chinese enterprises to participate in

standardization and actually carry out this work and, second, encouraging Chinese enterprises to hold Secretariats. In this area, SAC will focus on “world class” enterprises (e.g. Haier, Lenovo). Liu outlined a vision for the future of Chinese standardization in which “first class” (world class) Chinese enterprises would become the representatives of Chinese technical advisory groups and ultimately represent China within the ISO/IEC context, actually carrying out the standardization work. Liu indicated that such enterprises would have the resources and willingness to take on these leadership roles and that they would be the best advocates for their respective industries.¹ Once developed, then China would adopt the final ISO or IEC standards as either mandatory or voluntary national “GB” standards. He hopes that the number of TC, SG and WG secretariats held by China will increase from 700 to 2000.

Liu indicated that these reform measures have already received a lot of support from Chinese enterprises. Within three months, over 1000 Chinese enterprises have already applied to hold Secretariats within Chinese committees. To encourage these enterprises, China will establish an “Innovative Standardization Contribution” prize to encourage independent innovation among Chinese enterprises to demonstrate its economic value, and also to award their contributions for promoting the economic benefits.² Further, China is currently in the process of revising its Standardization Law, and will look for ways to accommodate greater input from Chinese enterprises.

In such areas, Liu recognized that the U.S. model is the strongest for Industry leadership in standards development, and indicated an eagerness to learn how this is managed in the U.S. He is eager to learn from the experience not only of ANSI, but also from ANSI’s company members, encouraging greater dialogue on standardization between U.S. industry and Chinese industry. He indicated that although their spoken language is different, U.S. and Chinese enterprises can relate well because they are able to speak the same language of economics and the market. Further, Liu indicated how pleased he was to see experts such as Mr. Noth who are able to wear two hats (split personality) as this ability will help bridge the understanding of enterprises and policy makers in China.

ANSI/SAC cooperation to Avoid Trade Conflicts

Liu further indicated a strong need for the U.S. and China to cooperate on potential standards concerns and to solve these before they become trade problems. He mentioned the recent U.S. China Joint Commission on Commerce and Trade (JCCT) in which U.S. Department of Commerce Secretary Gutierrez and then U.S. Trade Representative Robert Portman met with Chinese Vice Premier Wu Yi to discuss several trade-related concerns, including specific concerns in the areas of standards and technical regulations. Using a U.S. trade concern related to distilled spirits, Liu indicated that it is his sincere hope that in the future we will be able to solve such concerns through mutual cooperation and understanding, before they rise to the level of JCCT or the WTO.

U.S. – China Standards Portal

Within the broader context of greater U.S. – China cooperation, Bob Noth introduced a concept for a U.S. – China Standards Portal, and asked Elise Owen to present the specifics of the idea. Owen indicated that ANSI had received NIST grant funding to put together such a resource, and that it was ANSI’s hope that this would become a mutually

¹ Of note, Mr. Liu referenced a recent trip to Zhejiang province, which houses several of China’s “ultra entrepreneurial” cities. In this area, because of the tremendous success and prosperity enjoyed by enterprises, private industry in many ways out shadows the influence of Chinese national and local government.

² “Independent Innovation” also sometimes translated as “Indigenous Innovation” is currently a buzz word in China, as it was identified as a priority area in China’s most recent “Five Year Plan.”

beneficial project for both the U.S. and China. This resource would provide a “one stop shop” for information on standards and related areas in the U.S. and in China, with the primary objective of facilitating trade.

Liu indicated that he was very supportive of this proposal, and believed that the timing couldn't be better, as SAC has recently begun working on a “China Standardization Information Network” platform (CSIN). The two projects will dovetail nicely together and will present an unprecedented means for the employment of technology in bilateral cooperation on standardization.

Administrator Liu assigned Mr. Chen Gang, who is also the main point of contact for the CSIN project to be the main point of contact for the U.S. – China Standards Portal. He indicated that he would provide a high level of support to this project, and left the discussion with the suggestion that ANSI make all the standards used in the U.S. market available for sale on the portal. Owen outlined the challenges associated with this, but agreed to explore the idea further.

China Certification and Accreditation Administration (CNCA)

Key Conclusions

- CNCA Administrator Sun demonstrated an overall willingness to cooperate with ANSI in the area of conformity assessment.
- CNCA would like to select a “pilot sector” in which U.S. and Chinese perspectives could be discussed and mutually beneficial solutions could be reached. Success in such a pilot sector could then be leveraged to bring about change in other sectors.

Participants

Sun Dawei, Administrator
Xie Jun, Deputy Chief Administrator
Liu Zhuohui, Deputy Chief Administrator
Bo Yumin, Director General, Department of International Cooperation
Huang Shouyun, Director, Department of International Cooperation
Fan Chunmei, Standardization Administration of China (SAC)

Robert Noth, ANSI Chairman of the Board
Elise Owen, ANSI Representative for China Affairs

Background

Administrator Sun opened the meeting with a discussion of CNCA's progress in the past five years. It has made significant progress in unifying conformity management in China through promulgating relevant standards and regulations, unifying accreditation (product

certification, personnel certification and laboratory), implementing certification programs such as the China Compulsory Certification (CCC) program, and performing market surveillance.

Sun indicated a strong interest in cooperation with ANSI in the future, and identified product certification as one positive area where U.S. and Chinese perspectives could be discussed. Rather than trying to make sweeping changes in this area, it was suggested that starting with one “pilot sector” of focus would be a more successful approach. Creating successful cooperation would provide additional strength in the U.S. and in China to expand such cooperation into other sectors.

Mr. Sun indicated that he was pleased to see that ANSI had dedicated a staff member entirely to cooperative work with China and that he felt that this would help ANSI and CNCA work more closely in the future. He indicated that Mr. Huang Shouyun would be the primary point of contact for ANSI at CNCA and encouraged future working-level discussions.

China National Institute of Standardization (CNIS)

Key Conclusions

- As China’s largest standardization research institute, CNIS has several priority projects on which it would welcome U.S. expert input. CNIS staff is thirsty for knowledge about the U.S. system in general, and the role and approach of ANSI in particular.
- While CNIS is not itself a policy body, much of the policy guidance, standards texts and other laws and regulations ultimately promulgated through SAC originates within CNIS.

Participants

Zheng Weihua, President
Yu Xinli, Director, Subinstitute of General Standardization
Wang Jinyu, Deputy Director, Subinstitute of Standardization Theory and Strategy
Wang Ping, Vice Chief Engineer, Department of Planning and Scientific Research
Huang Li, Standardization Administration of China (SAC)

Robert Noth, ANSI Chairman of the Board
Elise Owen, ANSI Representative for China Affairs

Background

President Zheng opened the meeting by indicating that CNIS is China’s largest Standardization research institute and plays an important role in China’s overall standardization work. As China’s economy transitions, he indicated that he sees the

future role of SAC as similar to that of ANSI in the United States, and the role of CNIS as similar to that of NIST. He hopes to learn from the experience of NIST and other foreign governmental research institutes, and to expand the scope of CNIS into new areas such as testing laboratories. He further explained that while CNIS is directly under the control of AQSIQ, its direction and projects come directly from SAC. Under SAC's direction, CNIS holds the secretariat for 20 of China's 200 national technical committees.

Following President Zheng's introduction, three CNIS staff introduced the functions of their respective divisions and major projects of focus. Further information and the full Power Point is available at (URL TBD). Identified areas of high priority include the following: development of China's Standards Strategy, work on the revision of China's standardization law; research into the convergence of IP and standardization; evaluation in the revision or removal of outdated Chinese standards; research in standardization for public security (accidents, natural disasters, public health, "social accidents" such as SARS); graphics and symbols (including international symbols for Beijing to use in the 2008 Olympic Games); terminology; ergonomics anthropomorphic research; research into the economic impact of standardization; research into standardization for services; and research for the standardization of credit (with an emphasis on enterprise credit above government credit and individual credit); and social responsibility.

Mr. Noth indicated that members of the U.S. standardization system (including corporations, associations, academics and others) would be very interested in the research being carried out by CNIS. In many instances, U.S. organizations have a lot to add to the work of CNIS and, in some cases, may have already carried out similar research (e.g. SAC research on ergonomics). Mr. Noth suggested that CNIS continue to keep Ms. Owen abreast of current and proposed work items so that she can coordinate input from members of the U.S. system. CNIS indicated a strong willingness to receive such input.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Zheng reinforced his interest in strong CNIS-ANSI cooperation, and indicated a willingness to benchmark ANSI as a model "coordinator" in a market economy. He applauded ANSI's leadership in dedicating a staff member singly to ANSI-China cooperation and indicated an interest in enhancing cooperation through regular email and telephone exchanges between staff, exploring the possibility of an ANSI-CNIS MOU, and looking into possible personnel exchanges between the two organizations.

U.S. Embassy Consular Section

May 8, 2006

Key Conclusions

- The vast majority of Chinese technical experts are eligible to receive a U.S. visa, provided they are able to provide sufficient documentation of ties to China and lead time for the application process.
- ANSI must work with TAGs to ensure that proper guidance is given to each Chinese technical expert, and that these technical experts have an appropriate understanding of the visa application process. Many Chinese applicants have misconceptions about the process which lead either to costly delays or denials in the visa application process.

- ANSI should avoid hosting ISO/IEC activities that either cannot give a lead time of at least 45 days to Chinese experts, or which would require travel to the U.S. of technical experts who have associations with Chinese organizations sanctioned by the U.S. (e.g. China National Aero-Technology Import and Export Corporation (CATIC), China North Industries Corporation (NORINCO), Zibo Chemet Equipment Company, Hongdu Aviation Industry Group, Ounion International Economic and Technical Cooperative, and Limmt Metallurgy and Minerals Company)
- ANSI should continue to work with the U.S. Embassy in Beijing, as well as the other U.S. Consulates in China, to improve our process for inviting Chinese technical experts to the U.S. and ensure that their applications are processed efficiently.

Background

Mr. Bob Noth and Ms. Elise Owen met with Mr. Thurmond Borden, Non-Immigrant Visa Chief at the U.S. Embassy Consular (Visa) Section in Beijing. The meeting commenced with Mr. Noth explaining the impact on Chinese participation in standards development activities in the U.S., not only on ANSI and its members, but also on the overall Sino-U.S. bilateral economic and diplomatic relationship.

Mr. Borden explained the tremendous challenges in ensuring that no individuals who could potentially threaten U.S. national security or become potential flight risks, while at the same time ensuring that legitimate visitors to the U.S. are processed with minimal delay. Each week, the twelve staff member of the non-immigrant visa section processes over thousands of applications. Mr. Borden further indicated that 99.9% of Chinese applicants are denied either because they did not supply enough information, or because they did not leave enough lead time for their application to be processed. Very seldom are visas denied for reasons outside the applicant's control.

To ensure that visas are processed efficiently, Mr. Borden offered simple ABCs for Visa Applicants. Further, Mr. Borden provided a point of contact for ANSI to use for future inquiries. Ms. Kim Steenber manages visa applications for events and trade shows, and will provide guidance to ANSI on what documentation is helpful to facilitate the visa applications for standards development activities in the U.S., which is outlined below. Additionally, Mr. Borden suggested that Chinese technical experts use the Electronic Visa Application Form (EVAF) available through the U.S. Embassy's website and submit it electronically. This helps the visa officers to streamline the process and more easily confirm the stated details on the form.

Apply early (A)

As a general rule, the Consular Section recommends that a lead time of at least one month from the intended date of travel be left by the applicant. Actual processing time will vary based on several factors, including the time of year of the application. Generally, the summer months (May – August) will experience much higher application volume than winter months (November – March). Current estimated wait times are available on the U.S. Embassy official website. Additional factors include the individual's affiliation within China (Chinese government officials and employees of certain enterprises, as well as student applicants are given priority applicant status) and whether the individual has background experience that would require a Security Advisory Opinion (SAO) to be processed (further details on the SAO process are outlined below).

Be prepared (B)

Unlike Canada, Australia and several other countries, U.S. law states that “Every alien shall be presumed to be an immigrant until he establishes to the satisfaction of the consular officer, at the time of application for admission, that he is entitled to a nonimmigrant status...” In other words, the burden of proof to demonstrate strong ties to China falls on the applicant. Even when traveling with a group or under arrangements made by someone else, the applicant must have a detailed knowledge of his own schedule and activities. Further, the applicant must be prepared to demonstrate a strong tie to China, typically through possessions, employment, social and family relationships. Without demonstration of such ties during the interview, a visa application is likely to be denied. Fortunately, a denial under this basis is not permanent: if the applicant’s situation changes or if he is able to provide additional documentation, the officer will reconsider the case.

Clearances (C)

Any applicant with background experience associated with the U.S. “Technology Alert List” will be subject to an additional Security Advisory Opinion (SAO) procedure before a visa can be issued. The Technology Alert List is a sensitive document that cannot be released to the public, but Mr. Borden indicated that any applicant with experience in scientific or technical fields, regardless of the purpose of the upcoming visit, should assume that the SAO procedure will be necessary.

The SAO process, which generally adds approximately 30 days to the application process, is not intended to ultimately deny visa applications, but rather to inform U.S. Federal agencies of the plans of individuals falling within the scope of the Technology Alert List. The process requires that an official cable, containing the individual’s résumé (including publications) and detailed itinerary (including cities and points of contact), be sent to Washington, and that a response be received back from each relevant agency. Mr. Borden indicated that 99.9% of the individuals falling within the scope of the Technology Alert List ultimately receive their visas (although it is common for the applicant to receive his visa after the intended travel). Applicants who are ultimately denied visas generally have associations with organizations under sanctions by the U.S. government (e.g. Norinco, Huawei, etc.).