



TBT enquiry point
in LAOS

STANDARDS ALLIANCE

Standards and technical regulations are critical to global trade. Producers must understand the regulations governing their products in target export markets; and importers must ensure goods they bring in meet national standards and technical regulations. To facilitate trade flows—as well as public safety and health—governments must have effective national standards bodies, transparent and participatory standards-setting processes, and up-to-date laws, regulations, and information portals.



How the alliance works

The Standards Alliance (SA) will provide technical and financial resources to advance reforms that help businesses participate in the global trading system while building the capacity of developing countries to implement the WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT). A U.S.-sponsored technical assistance facility, the SA will work with government authorities

to design and provide technical assistance and training based on international standards and best practice. Requests for technical assistance received from least-developed countries will be prioritized.

The SA is a flexible funding facility that will respond quickly to requests for assistance from developing country regulatory and standards authorities. The SA will also consider requests from regional economic communities. The SA will tailor the type and mechanism of assistance to specific needs, including opening access to a broad range of U.S. Government expertise in standards and technical regulations.

Alliance assistance

Since 2000, the U.S. Government has provided developing countries over \$14 billion in trade-related technical assistance and training in, among other areas, developing aspects of national standards regimes, implementing the TBT Agreement, and enhancing public-private dialogue on standards and technical regulations. USAID expands on this commitment through SA assistance, including:

- Development and provision of technical training programs for public sector standards experts
- Institutional and organizational capacity building in standards development
- Development and implementation of legal and regulatory frameworks for standards, technical regulations and conformity assessment
- Outreach and communication strategies for increasing public and private sector awareness on the benefits of international standards and conformity assessment procedures.



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



ALLIANCE SERVICE AREAS

Implementing an effective TBT enquiry point

Under the TBT Agreement, each WTO Member must set up a national enquiry point and notification authority. This entity, usually within a country's national standards body, acts as a focal point where domestic and foreign producers, consumers, or government entities can obtain information on a Member's technical regulations, standards, and certification procedures. The notification authority must also inform the WTO Secretariat when standards, conformity assessment procedures, or technical regulations are being proposed that could significantly affect trade of other Members.



Improving the standards development process

WTO members must comply with the Code of Good Practice for the Preparation, Adoption, and Application of Standards under the TBT Agreement with respect to all activities in development and adoption of standards. The code also requires that the National Standards Body notify the WTO at least twice a year of its work program and where details of the program can be obtained. An effective national standards body facilitates development of country-wide standards through technical committees consisting of experts from industry, research organizations, government, consumers, and non-government organizations.

Strengthening the legal and regulatory framework for standards

An effective and updated legal framework is the foundation of a national quality system, protecting human health, safety and the environment while facilitating trade and export competitiveness. Many developing countries use outdated standards and regulations and will benefit from reviewing their inventory. This will ensure producers know which standards are relevant and applicable and give regulators confidence that mandatory technical regulations are applied.

Private sector outreach and communication

Standards serve both public and private functions which raise fundamental questions about the appropriate roles of government and the private sector. The United States' standards setting process reflects a strong bias in favor of the marketplace, with the U.S. government's role focused not on setting standards, but on insuring that the process undertaken by private sector entities is fair and effective. While respecting each nation's approach to standards formulation, the SA will focus on promoting a positive working relationship between government and private sector interests and an appropriate division of labor in the standards setting area that recognizes each constituency's comparative strengths and weaknesses.

For further information, contact

Paul Fekete

Contracting Officer's Representative
Business Environments for Agile Markets
E3/TRR
US Agency for International Development
Washington, DC 20005
pfekete@usaid.gov
+1(202)712-1163



Next steps

Governments interested in technical assistance from the SA should contact USAID at SA@usaid.gov with a brief expression of interest. The SA will then provide a one-page formal application. Applications received by March 31st, 2013 will be prioritized. Applications received after that date will be considered on a rolling basis. USAID will work with applicants directly to develop a detailed statement of work, timeline, and budget for implementation.

Erin Endean

Chief of Party
Business Environments for Agile Markets
CARANA Corporation
4350 North Fairfax Drive, Suite 900
Arlington, VA 22203
eendean@carana.com
+1(703)778-3211