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INTRODUCTION

The Standards Alliance is a public-private partnership between the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and USAID designed to assist developing countries in effectively implementing their commitments under the WTO's Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) agreement.

The main objectives of the overall Standards Alliance program includes increased understanding of WTO TBT principles, encourage transparency in the development and alteration of technical regulations, and improve implementation of the TBT Agreement's Code of Good Practice for the preparation, adoption and application of standards, with the larger goal of promoting trade and economic development.

Colombia's Ministry of Trade, Industry and Tourism (MinCIT) has submitted a proposed statement of work for engagement under the Standards Alliance, and a joint assessment was conducted by ANSI, MinCIT and other Colombian partners in Bogota in August 2013. The results of those meetings, in addition to consultations with stakeholders in both countries have informed this work plan.

The Standards Alliance project for Colombia has the following objectives:

- Improve the relationship between the of U.S. standards developing organizations (SDOs) with the Colombian National Standards Body, Organismo Nacional de Normalizacion (ICONTEC), including participation in technical activities and referencing of standards.
- Increase the use of international standards in Colombia, by adoption, adaption or normative referencing.
- Establish uniform or third party accreditation of certification programs, based on international standards for accreditation.
- Strengthen the capacity of national and regional government institutions, to support programs and projects related to standardization, certification and accreditation.

The specific program tasks under the Colombia Standards Alliance Project (described in more detail in the next section) include:

- Conduct a 2 day in-country WTO Code of Good Practice training
- Create and promote the StandardsPortal online tool in Spanish for industry, working with other countries in the Pacific Alliance (Colombia, Peru, Mexico, Chile)
- Identify the relevant U.S.-based standards developing organizations (SDOs)in accordance with the Colombian prioritized (3-4) sectors

- Assist Colombian lab (ICONTEC or other) with becoming recognized by CPSC
- Conduct a U.S.-Colombia FTA meeting in Colombia in April/May 2014 and work toward resolving specific regulatory issues between the United States and Colombia

The work plan for the first year will be reached and carried out through an interactive process of establishing appropriate scope on specific areas of collaboration. Under the Standards Alliance Project ANSI will work with in country and national institutions and organizations to identify and prioritize specific needs and elaborate on these needs with training and capacity building programs. The second year will incorporate additional activities and training based on the results of the first year progress and outcomes.

Following completion of the year one activities, expected outcomes of the initiative include:

- WTO Code of Good Practice supplement/guide
- Spanish language Standards Portal developed among Spanish speaking Standards Alliance partners
- Established connections with US SDOs in 3-4 specific sectors of interest (e.g. signed MoU's or other informal agreements)
- At least one Colombian lab recognized by CPSC in a designated scope

ACTIVITIES

In support of the overall project objectives listed above, this section outlines the activities that have already been identified to be carried out in the first year (2014). To the extent possible, the activities listed include the full scope of work. Some activities may require further discussion between counterparts in Colombia and the U.S., and other activities may be added to the work plan upon mutual agreement by ANSI and MinCIT, and pending availability of resources.

1. Training/Information Exchange on the WTO Code of Good Practice

According to Article 4.1 of the WTO TBT Agreement, all WTO Members “shall ensure that their central government standardizing bodies accept and comply with the Code of Good Practice for the Preparation, Adoption and Application of Standards” (Annex 3 of the WTO/TBT Agreement, referred to as the “Code of Good Practice”). Adherence to the Code includes (1) Publishing a work program every six months, including titles of proposed standards in one of the WTO languages (e.g., English); (2) allowing for a 60-day public comment period before adoption of a standard; providing a copy of draft standards upon request; and (3) providing prompt responses in writing to comments received from standardizing bodies that have accepted the Code.

Successful implementation of the Code of Good Practice improves predictability for industry and facilitates trade flows, while also helping government users and developers of standards. A 2-day information exchange in Bogota, or another location agreed upon by ANSI and MinCIT, will bring together standards developers, regulators, industry, and other experts to share experiences on implementation of the Code of Good Practice and develop a guide that summarizes the best practices identified. In addition to the basic principles of the Code, the event will include related topics such as effective participation in and use of international standards and engagement with the private sector. The guide will assist industry by making companies aware of opportunities provided by the Code, and it

will assist government standards users and developers by providing a common resource for future officials.

ANSI will facilitate the 2-day event, including bringing experts from the U.S. government and private sector, and developing the agenda in consultation with MinCIT and others in Colombia. Interpretation and translation of materials will be provided, with input from local partners to identify translators and interpreters that are well-versed with relevant concepts and terminology.

Following the event in Bogota, ANSI will develop a summary guide in English and Spanish that will include the materials from the event, as well as the mutual best practices and guidelines identified for improving implementation of the Code. The guide will be made publicly available through the Standards Alliance website (<http://standardsalliance.ansi.org>), or the StandardsPortal (see below).

2. Development of StandardsPortal in Spanish language

To foster transparency and provide easy-to-use tools for industry to access the requirements that impact market access, ANSI maintains the StandardsPortal (www.StandardsPortal.org) as an online resource for global trade. The StandardsPortal currently contains basic information about the U.S. system and the key organizations involved in standards and conformity assessment, as well as links to other resources for accessing standards, regulations, and other requirements. The website also currently holds similar information for China, India and Korea. Under the Standards Alliance project, this tool will be expanded to include accessible information on the systems for standards and regulations in Colombia, and existing U.S. information will be translated into the Spanish language (U.S. information is currently available in English, Mandarin Chinese, and Korean.)

In consideration of other Spanish-speaking partner countries active in the Standards Alliance, ANSI and MinCIT will explore opportunities to leverage input from multiple partners, perhaps through the Pacific Alliance or other existing collaborations. The information currently maintained on www.StandardsPortal.org is hosted entirely on ANSI's servers and the U.S. information is updated by ANSI as needed. In the past, ANSI has utilized several models for developing the material for partner countries and in non-English languages for StandardsPortal. These include:

- Guest researchers from local agencies or organizations may work at ANSI for 3-9 months.
- ANSI develops English-language material for partner country, with feedback from local agencies and organizations. Partner organization develops material in local language.
- ANSI maintains English and non-English resources on www.StandardsPortal.org
- Non-English resources are maintained separately on www.StandardsPortal.org and entry site maintained by local partner.

In addition to the resources currently available on the StandardsPortal, ANSI and MinCIT may agree to develop additional resources based on the needs and priorities of stakeholders in the U.S. and Colombia. Examples of these resources may include information on regulated sectors in the U.S. and Colombia, additional information on the standards or conformity assessment used in priority sectors, and others.

3. Conduct a U.S.-Colombia FTA meeting

In conjunction with the Code of Good Practice exchange described above, or at another mutually agreed upon date, the second meeting of the [U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement](#) TBT Chapter Coordinators will be conducted in Bogota, Colombia. The FTA was signed in May 2012, and the first meeting took place in Washington, DC in October 2012.

The TBT Chapter of most U.S. FTAs establishes either a TBT Committee or TBT Chapter Coordinators to address any issue that a Party raises related to the development, adoption, application, or enforcement of standards, technical regulations, or conformity assessment procedures. The Committee and the Coordinators have approximately the same functions, including inter alia, to enhance cooperation in the development of standards, technical regulations and conformity assessment procedures; facilitate sectoral cooperation between conformity assessment bodies; exchange information on TBT developments; expeditiously address concerns that arise with respect to TBT measures; and exchange information on third party issues.

U.S. experience under these various committees has been useful in promoting regulatory compatibility. For example, with respect to the U.S.-Peru Trade Promotion Agreement and the U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreements, the engagement in their respective TBT committees includes cooperative work programs on standardization, conformity assessment procedures, Good Regulatory Practices, and improved implementation of the WTO TBT Agreement.

The programming under the Standards Alliance provides a natural gathering of most of the representatives to the U.S.-Colombia FTA Chapter meeting. Currently, regulatory differences exist or capacity building is needed in the following areas –

- Implementation of approvals of biologic or biosimilar medicines
- Adaptation of biofuel quality standards to automobiles and trucks
- Recycling standards for vehicles and trucks
- Duplicative certification for processed food
- Greater alignment of training for Colombia to APEC Member regulatory alignment goals

4. Facilitate connections between ICONTEC and U.S.-based SDO's in 3-4 priority sectors

Through the activities listed above and other facilitated communication, ANSI will help ICONTEC establish stronger connections with the relevant U.S.-based standards developing organizations active in 3-4 priority sectors. These connections may include the signing of Memoranda of Understanding or other informal agreements, staff exchanges, training or other information exchange, or referencing of standards or other publications.

The connections established in this manner will help establish a streamlined market access environment for industry in the U.S. and Colombia. It will also allow the standards developers in both countries to leverage maximum input from private sector experts in the specific sectors identified.

5. Assist Colombian lab with becoming recognized by CPSC

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) has laid out guidelines for laboratories interested in becoming officially recognized to test children's products for conformity with CPSC's children's product safety rules. At a minimum, laboratories must be accredited by an International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation-Mutual Recognition Arrangement (ILAC-MRA) signatory accreditation body. Colombia will sign the ILAC MRA as a full member in March 2014, and is very interested in achieving recognition by CPSC for at least one Colombian laboratory. ANSI will work with Colombia (ICONTEC, ONAC, and others) to identify the appropriate laboratory to submit the application, review the scope of testing, and CPSC's additional requirements for registration. ANSI will also work with CPSC to provide additional information on CPSC's requirements. This may include a visit to CPSC's lab program in the U.S. by a Colombian delegation, videoconference meetings, and other exchanges.

SCHEDULE

The schedule envisioned for the implementation of the activities described above is shown below.

	Apr-14	May-14	Jun-14	Jul-14	Aug-14	Sept-14	Oct-14	Nov-14	Dec-14	Jan-15	Feb-15	Mar-15
Code of Good Practice Exchange												
Set date/location for exchange												
Agree on draft agenda												
Hold exchange												
Assistance for laboratory recognition by CPSC												
Develop application with Colombia Exchange with CPSC												
Application/recognition process												
StandardsPortal												
Agree on content and model												
Develop content												
StandardsPortal complete												
U.S.-Colombia FTA meeting												
Hold meeting												
ICONTEC-SDO Connections												
Facilitate connections												