Standards Council of Canada

Conseil canadien des normes

SCC Strategic Plan 2001 – 2004

(Last revised: 2001-02-26)

Canada

Preface

Background

The 2001 – 2004 Strategic Plan provides the basis for SCC's priorities, directions and commitments in the coming three year period. It draws on the Council's enabling legislation (which effectively provides SCC's objectives and purposes), the Canadian Standards Strategy, the Auditor General's 1999 Special Exam and other planning efforts.

The Plan also builds on new capacities of the SCC – internal reorganization carried out in early 2000, and a new Advisory Committee structure established in 1999-2000.

Process

The 2001 – 2004 Strategic Plan draws heavily on the two-year consultation and development processes which led to the Canadian Standards Strategy (CSS), released in March, 2000. The consultations and discussions which led to the CSS have served a dual purpose of establishing a consensus around many of the directions for the system and for its leading agency. As a roadmap for the National Standards System, the CSS and its implementation proposals provide specific directions for the SCC, the leader of the standards system in Canada.

Organization of this Document

The Mandate of the Council, provided under legislation, is a unique document, providing five overall **objectives** (e.g. *promote the participation of Canadians in voluntary standards activities*) as well as a set of six purposes (e.g. *in order to advance the national economy)*. This document provides what many organizations would term a "Mission Statement" for the SCC.

The 2001 – 2004 Strategic Plan sets out each of the five Objectives, and for each, lists a set of Strategies which will be pursued to reach the objectives. Each Strategy also provides a note on its contribution to the purposes of the Council set out in the Mandate.

For each Strategy, a set of Impact Measures is specified to enable the Council, its stakeholders and the public to monitor progress and success. Again, the Impact Measures will detail not only the success of the Strategy but also its contribution to the purposes of the Council set out in the Mandate.

Finally, each Strategy describes some of the specific actions which will be carried out by the SCC in order to accomplish each strategy. More detail on the actions, including their resourcing and timing, will be provided in SCC's annual Business Plans and Corporate Plan. Reporting on progress against the specific actions will be provided in the Annual Report as well as updates on progress against the Strategic Plan.

A. Mandate of the Standards Council

The Standards Council of Canada is a federal Crown corporation with a mandate from the Canadian Parliament to:

promote efficient and effective voluntary standardization in Canada, where standardization is not expressly provided for by law and, in particular, to

1) *promote the participation of Canadians in voluntary standards activities,*

2) *promote public-private sector cooperation in relation to voluntary standardization in Canada,*

3) *coordinate and oversee the efforts of the persons and organizations involved in the National Standards System,*

4) *foster quality, performance and technological innovation in Canadian goods and services through standards-related activities, and*

5) *develop standards-related strategies and long-term objectives,*

in order to advance the national economy, support sustainable development, benefit the health, safety and welfare of workers and the public, assist and protect consumers, facilitate domestic and international trade and further international cooperation in relation to standardization.

Section 4.(1), *the Standards Council of Canada Act*

B.   Standards Council Activities and Organization

The Standards Council is governed by a Council of 15 members that includes representatives from industry, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the federal, provincial and territorial governments. The Standards Council of Canada reports to Parliament through the Minister of Industry.

In carrying out its mandate, the Standards Council is engaged in the following activities:

- accrediting organizations engaged in standards development and conformity assessment;
- representing Canada's regional and international interests through membership in the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC), the Pacific Area Standards Congress (PASC), the Pan American Standards Commission (COPANT) and other organizations;
- coordinating Canada's participation in international standardization work;
- approving National Standards of Canada;
- providing advice and assistance to the Government of Canada in the negotiation of standards-related aspects of international trade agreements;
- working with international and foreign standardization bodies to develop arrangements that facilitate trade;

fostering and promoting the understanding, benefits and usage of standards and conformity assessment bodies, both nationally and internationally;
- collecting and distributing information on standards activities; and
- operating Canada's NAFTA and WTO Enquiry Points on behalf of the federal government.

The Council's staff of 70 is organized into five Branches, dealing with Standards, Conformity Assessment, Intergovernmental Affairs and Trade, Finance and Administration and Corporate Services.

The vast majority of standards work in Canada is carried out by thousands of volunteers who serve on technical committees developing Canadian positions for international standards under development or review.

Finally, the activities of the Council are supported by six major Advisory Committees, dealing with Trade, Standards, Conformity Assessment, Consumer and Public Affairs, Standards Development Organizations and Provincial and Territorial Governments. These Committees bring together a balanced matrix of consumer, business, government and NGO representatives with expertise on standards. A range of sub-committees, similarly composed, address work areas such as the Canadian National Committees on ISO and IEC, ISO's Developing Countries, Consumer and Conformity Assessment committees, Canadian safety councils, etc.

C.   Strategic Outlook

The new decade brings with it a **growing importance for standardization** at both the international and national levels. Within the former, standards and conformity assessment issues are emerging as a pillar for regional and global trade arrangements and a facilitator for growth and technology diffusion. They are also becoming more evident in a broadening range of health, safety and environmental issues. Domestically, industry and all levels of government are moving to reduce administrative costs and regulatory burden while still protecting the public interest and meeting market needs. Service delivery partnerships are increasingly providing a third party option to traditional delivery of accreditation services by government departments and agencies. Paralleling the international scene, standards are increasingly evident in Canadian social and environmental activities.

As the Standards Council of Canada positions itself to meet these new activity areas, it must also recognize and lead **a changing national standards system**. That system was reasonably well-defined in past decades, with prescribed participants, narrowly described definitions for standards, and established standards processes. In the coming years, however, the Council and its partners will deal increasingly with *de facto*, temporary standards and those developed and used by coalitions and industry sectors in addition to formally developed standards. Similarly, we must recognize both formal and informal standardization processes**,** such as those used for the production of public policy standards and conformity assessment tools such as self-declaration. Finally, the Council must recognize and include new participants in the national standards system – the range of individuals and organizations which contribute to the development, monitoring, revision, and conformity assessment of standards in Canada and internationally. The range and nature of these participants is changing. As environmental pressures increase and the population ages, and as privacy, health, safety and environmental issues become more important to Canadians, more sectors and organizations are playing an active role in standardization.

These general trends in the Standards Council's 'environment' lead to specific implications for each of the Council's mandated objectives:

- In "**promoting the participation of Canadians in voluntary standards activities"** the Council will act to bring more volunteers from new social and economic sectors to the table to deal with the emerging, broader range of standards activities.

- In "**promoting public-private sector cooperation in relation to voluntary standardization in Canada"** the primary challenges are to enhance Canada's capacity to develop and benefit from Mutual Recognition Agreements, to provide standardization support for inter-provincial trade and to heighten the visibility of standards in public policy.

- In "**coordinating and overseeing the efforts of the persons and organizations involved in the National Standards System"** the Council will:

  a) address three core infrastructure requirements of the NSS – its funding systems, its policy development and analysis capacities, and its Web-based communications infrastructure;
  b) where appropriate, develop new programs and services and engage new partners to bring conformity assessment activities working outside the NSS under the umbrella of the National Standards System

- In **"fostering quality, performance and technological innovation in Canadian goods and services through standards-related activities"**, the Council's focus will be on the international marketplace. Standards for electronic commerce, global accreditation systems, emerging conformity assessment practices and global management systems standards are some of the emphases in this section.

- In **"developing standards-related strategies and long-term objectives"** Council's emphasis will be on priority-setting frameworks, for national positions, for standardization activities in social policy areas, and for internal business practices. This element will also include action to build greater sectoral participation in the standards system.

D.   Objectives, Strategies and Impact Measures

> ## 1. Promote the participation of Canadians in voluntary standards activities

Strategies:

1.1   *Promote the Use of the National Standards System (NSS)* (CSS)

Contribution to Mandate: This strategy supports all aspects of the SCC mandate.

Impact Measure: Total number of participants involved in standards development committees, total number of standards referenced in legislation.

Actions:
i.   finalize the SCC communication plan and implement it throughout the broader constituencies of NSS members
ii.   continue to support the NSS Communications and Marketing Committee

1.2   *Implement a Volunteer Program* (CSS)

Contribution to Mandate: Many of the Council's activities, and the effective functioning of the NSS, depend on volunteers.

Impact Measure: Increase in numbers of volunteers, and positive feedback from volunteers undertaking the new program.

Actions:
i.   provide resourcing for program development and delivery
ii.   develop recruitment, orientation and training materials
iii.   develop volunteer recognition system
iv.   coordinate volunteer programs with SDOs and other major NSS partners

1.3   *Ensure that standards development processes support social policy objectives* (CSS)

Contribution to Mandate: The mandate of the SCC involves economic objectives such as trade and technology development, and supporting sustainable development, benefiting the health, safety and welfare of workers and the public, and assisting and protecting consumers.

Impact Measure:	Every standards development process carried out under the jurisdiction of the SCC will include consideration of current and emerging social policy objectives.

Actions:	i.	Review relevant CAN-P documents (National standards System operational guides) for inclusion of social policy objectives.
	ii.	Establish procedures and timelines for revision of CAN-P documents as necessary.

1.4   Connect Emerging Industries to Standardization Activity(CSS)

Contribution to Mandate:	New industries are often the emerging employment generators of the new economy and developers of key new technologies. As such, they are critical to national economic development.

Impact Measure:	Establishment of standards contacts (individuals or groups) in emerging industrial sectors.

Actions:	i.	Assemble information on relevant standards activity for selected new industries
	ii.	conduct seminars on standardization issues for individuals from these industries

1.5   Engage Developing Countries in International Standardization (CSS)

Contribution to Mandate:	Supporting the standardization efforts of developing countries facilitates domestic and international trade and furthers international cooperation in relation to standardization. It also has potential to support consumer protection and global sustainable development.

Impact Measure:	Increase in the number of developing countries assisted by Canada in standardization.
Actions:	i. through CAC-DEVCO, provide assistance to developing countries in establishing their technical and administrative infrastructure
	ii. Build contacts between CAC-DEVCO and trade and development agencies and experts in Canada (e.g. CIDA)
	iii. Record and report on current efforts

2. Promote public-private sector cooperation in relation to voluntary standardization in Canada

Strategies:

2.1 Identify and make available to stakeholders the objectives and strategies underlying trade-related Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs) *(CSS)*

Contribution to Mandate: MRAs are a key component of international cooperation on standards issues and facilitate Canadian trade success.

Impact Measure: Stakeholder awareness of and confidence in MRA strategies

Actions:
   i.   Develop a strategic decision-making model for application to new MRA activity.
   ii. Establish communications avenues that will let key stakeholders provide input into the prioritization of MRA activity.

2.2 Provide Support for the Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT) *(CSS)*

Contribution to Mandate: This measure contributes to the SCC mandate to facilitate domestic trade.

Impact Measure: Greater recognition and use of standardization mechanisms in AIT activity.

Actions:
   i.   identify opportunities and offer to advise the Committee of Ministers for Internal Trade (CMIT) of opportunities for greater provincial and territorial government use of the NSS to remove internal trade barriers.
   ii. Build specific action items through PTAC workplans.

2.3 Make Standards and Conformity Assessment a Full Part of the Public Policy Debate *(CSS)*

Contribution to Mandate: Public policy deals with economic growth, *sustainable development, health, safety and welfare, consumer protection and domestic and international trade.*

Impact Measure:	Increased awareness of standards and conformity assessment among public policy officials.

Actions:	i.	Support Industry Canada and PTAC efforts to advance standards issues in public policy agendas.
	ii.	Ensure that communications and marketing strategies target public sector decision makers

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3. Coordinate and oversee the efforts of the persons and organizations involved in the National Standards System

Strategies:

3.1 Employ Innovative Funding Mechanisms(CSS)

Contribution to Mandate:	The SCC's continuing ability to meet its mandate depends on innovation in resource and service issues.

Impact Measure:	Deployment of new funding approaches.

Actions:	i.	develop a funding proposal designed to ensure that resources are targeted at key priorities, including Canadian involvement in standardization activities at the international level
	ii.	develop a reporting mechanism to inform stakeholders of progress, accomplishments and other information that will tell them how their time and financial contributions are being used.

3.2 Provide policy development and analysis support to the Advisory Committees of Council

Contribution to Mandate:	The Advisory Committees of Council contribute NSS perspectives to Council decision-making. Their effectiveness is largely contingent on effective policy support.
Impact Measure:	Advisory Committee satisfaction with support provided.

Actions:	i.	Identify adequate policy resources for each Advisory

Committee

ii. Ensure coordination of Advisory Committee-related policy staff and issues.

3.3 *Develop a Web Portal for the NSS(CSS)*

Contribution to Mandate: This strategy supports SCC's leadership role in the NSS and as such contributes to all of its mandate aspects.

Impact Measure: Customer feedback on quality and utility of SCC web site.

Actions:
i. develop and disseminate collaborative, system-wide marketing and information material, using messages, themes, tools and information sharing approaches which are acceptable and useful to the NSS.
ii. Improve architecture and navigation consistent with internet norms.
iii. Ensure that users have full connectivity to international standards organization sites.
iv. Ensure that the site provides a modern suite of facilitation, collaboration, and communication tools.
v. Assess needs for support for individuals and groups who are not currently connected electronically.

3.4 *Where appropriate, develop new programs and services to bring independent programs under the National Standards System*.

Contribution to Mandate This strategy supports SCC's leadership role in the NSS and reduces duplication of effort.

Impact Measure: Reaction of other stakeholders to a coordinated accreditation service in Canada.

Actions
i. Identify potential new programs and services
ii. where appropriate, engage new partners to bring conformity assessment activities working outside the NSS under the umbrella of the National Standards System
iii. develop new programs and services under the umbrella of the National Standards System.

4. Foster quality, performance and technological innovation in Canadian goods and services through standards-related activities

Strategies:

4.1 Take Leadership in Developing International Standards for Electronic Commerce(CSS)

Contribution to Mandate: This strategy advances the national economy by sustaining a key infrastructure element and industrial sector. Consumer protection is also an important aspect of e-commerce standardization activity. International cooperation in relation to standardization is the thrust of this strategy.

Impact Measure: Number and reach of coordination mechanisms established, formal proposals developed, international leadership roles held.

Actions:
  i.   establish working groups, networks and forums to identify and develop standardization approaches for priority electronic commerce issues
  ii.   mobilize concerned industries and federal, provincial and territorial departments to establish funding to support coordination efforts

4.2 Move Toward a Global Accreditation Regime(CSS)

Contribution to Mandate: Canadian efforts to unify the myriad national, regional and international accreditation systems will contribute directly to the *facilitation of international trade and the furtherance of international cooperation in relation to standardization.*

Impact Measure: Increase in number of Canadian positions advocating global accreditation unity, put forward in regional and international accreditation forums.

Actions:
  i.   actively promote the extension of existing MLAs to include programs not yet covered.

        ii.   join the Interamerican Accreditation Cooperation (IAAC)

        iii.   rationalize and prioritize SCC participation in regional accreditation bodies

4.3   *Examine the Use of Alternative Conformity Assessment Practices(CSS)*

Contribution to Mandate: As conformity assessment tools and approaches evolve, they have a direct impact on corporate economic performance and trade success, as well as the health, safety and welfare of workers and the public and consumer protection.

Impact Measure: Availability of information on the use, risks, benefits and other impacts of new conformity assessment practices.

Actions:
i.   Through ACCA, coordinate NSS partner research and policy development activities
ii.   Examine conditions for success of various approaches, impacts on various stakeholders, costs and benefits, etc.

4.4   *Examine/Evaluate Management System Standards(CSS)*

Contribution to Mandate: Management system standards such as ISO 9000 and 14000 are increasingly popular global quality approaches and affect the ability of many companies to supply goods and services nationally and internationally.

Impact Measure: Quantity of information on management system standards developed and provided to the public.

Actions:
i.   Finalize and distribute existing analyses
ii.   Maintain information to NSS stakeholders and public on developments in management system standards.
iii.   Coordinate the development of case studies in the field.

4.5   *Establish a Broader Mandate for Technical Committees under CNC-ISO and CNC-IEC(CSS)*

Contribution to Mandate: This strategy will contribute to a strengthening of domestic and international trade and will further international cooperation in relation to standardization. It has the potential to involve Canadian advisory committees in social policy areas as well.

Impact Measure: Development of Committee Business Plans that expand their

focus, impact and contribution to Council.

Actions:
    i.   Draw on sectoral and stakeholder input to develop priorities for ISO and IEC activity at the technical and policy committee levels to enhance their effectiveness.
    ii.   Develop recommendations for new areas of CNC focus, including emerging global and regional standardization forums.
    iii. Establish more substantive ties to federal, provincial and territorial governments regarding standardization issues in the ISO and IEC domain.

4.6   *Strengthen Canada's metrological infrastructure(CSS)*

Contribution to Mandate: The national metrological infrastructure is one of the bases of international trade, economic growth and consumer protection.

Impact Measure: National and international confidence in Canada's metrology system.

Actions:
    i.   Continue to support and encourage NRC/INMS in this activity and in all aspects of its role as Canada's National Metrology Institute.

5. Develop standards-related strategies and long-term objectives

Strategies:

5.1   *Create and Maintain a Framework for Developing National Positions(CSS)*

Contribution to Mandate: All aspects of the SCC mandate, and in particular facilitating domestic and international trade and furthering international cooperation in relation to standardization, demand prioritization of effort and resources.

Impact Measure: Application of framework to SCC and NSS decisions.

Actions:	i.	Develop and maintain a list of international participation activities
	ii.	Establish a framework of priorities, objectives and strategies for Canadian participation in international (including multilateral, regional, bilateral) standardization forums, and develop national positions from this framework in preparation for international participation, agreements and events.
	iii.	Undertake strategic planning with respect to the hosting of major regional and international standardization events and meetings.

5.2 Develop, implement and maintain processes for setting priorities for standardization activities in the areas of health, safety, the environment and other social issues(CSS)

Contribution to Mandate:	This strategy directly meets the SCC mandate of *supporting sustainable development, benefiting the health, safety and welfare of workers and the public and assisting and protecting consumers.*
Impact Measure:	Number of standards-related activities dealt with by Advisory Committee workplans in new social policy areas.

Actions:	i.	Through the Advisory Committees, establish subcommittees, working groups and other advisory mechanisms to provide input on standardization issues in social policy areas.
	ii.	Establish priorities for social policy standards work via the Advisory Committee workplans where appropriate.
	iii.	Review the work of the CSS Environmental advisory group for the potential to establish a template for new approaches to standardization work in social policy areas, focusing on resource issues, key stakeholder relationships, research requirements and action plans and priorities.

5.3 Develop and maintain the capacity for standards-related policy development, analysis and dissemination(CSS)

Contribution to Mandate:	One of the underpinnings of the SCC's capacity to lead the National Standards System is its ability to provide or coordinate research and policy development and analysis. This strategy is critical to the Council's capacity to undertake most other strategic directions in this Plan.

Impact Measure:	Recognition by NSS partners and stakeholders of the availability of high quality policy service at the Council.

Actions:	i.	Identify resources to support the hiring of policy staff at SCC
	ii.	Ensure that all operational units of the SCC have or have access to policy resources
	iii.	Build linkages between SCC policy services and those of other key stakeholders, including government, sectoral groups and NGOs.

5.4   *Generate Strategic Sectoral Participation(CSS)*

Contribution to Mandate:	SCC's ability to meet all aspects of its mandate depends on building effective linkages to all relevant sectors of society and the economy.

Impact Measure:	Two-way communication flows between SCC and major economic and social sectors.

Actions:	i.	Identify existing sectoral structures, associations and networks which could be built into the SCC advisory network
	ii.	Establish agreements with sectoral representatives on the nature of sectoral-SCC links

5.5   *Facilitate Consumer Input to the NAFTA(CSS)*

Contribution to Mandate:	This strategy contributes to the SCC's mandate to assist and protect consumers, facilitate domestic and international trade and further international cooperation in relation to standardization.

Impact Measure:	Creation of formal, long-term, effective avenues for consumer input to NAFTA forums.

Actions:	i.	Through the Advisory Committees, explore with representatives of the U.S., Mexico and the standards community the possibility of establishing a body similar to ANEC.

5.6 Implement Consistent Business Planning Practices

Contribution to Mandate: The core capacity of the Standards Council to deliver its mandated programs and activities is enhanced by this objective.

Impact Measure: Every SCC Branch will have annual business plans that integrate the SCC mandate, strategic directions, budget plans, HR plans and performance indicators.

Actions:
    i.   Continue to develop and monitor Critical Performance Indicators, moving wherever possible to impact indicators.
    ii.   Synchronize activity, budget and HR planning.