



STANDARDIZATION AND TRADE FACILITATION

Engaging Developing Countries in International Standardization

Issue

The delivery of standardization-related technical assistance to developing countries

Standardization-Related Technical Assistance Goals:

1. To engage developing countries in international standardization;
2. To develop and strengthen developing country standards and conformity assessment infrastructure and build institutional capacity that will facilitate the implementation of regulatory frameworks and promote sustainable development.

Background

The significant challenges associated with trade liberalization are emerging as priorities for developing countries. As a result, this has significantly raised the profile of the need to address trade related technical assistance (TRTA) and capacity building within the context of development assistance.

Developing countries face significant standardization challenges. Many are not able to adequately participate in international standards development and lack the basic technical infrastructure for conformity assessment activities. The provision of technical assistance is aimed at strengthening the institutional capacities of developing countries to enable them to effectively participate in global trading activities, to become signatories to international agreements and develop a strong base for sustainable economic development.

With the increasing globalization of markets, standards have become critical to ensuring access to export markets. Standards and Conformity Assessment are the 'pillars' that underpin the global trading system. Standards not only assist in the creation of a domestic market, but also increase competitiveness and provide an excellent source of technology transfer to developing countries.

The Standards Council of Canada Act (SCC) mandates the SCC to further "international cooperation in the field of standards" as well as to promote, in cooperation with Canadian organizations and other countries engaged in voluntary standards, the formulation of harmonized approaches to conformity assessment and facilitate international trade. The SCC is committed to setting priorities for standardization activities in the areas of health, safety, the environment and other social issues.

The Canadian Standards Strategy (CSS) directs the SCC to engage developing countries in international standardization processes. To support the implementation of this item, the CSS identified the actions required from CAC/DEVCO with a focus on two areas:

- provision of assistance to developing countries in establishing their technical and administrative infrastructure (thereby improving their capacity to meet international trade obligations); and,
- leveraging trade benefits for Canada

The priorities established by the SCC support the foreign policy objectives of the Government of Canada which underscore the vital role of international assistance in promoting principles of good governance and foster the development of civil society. Technical cooperation in the area of standardization contributes to the basic infrastructure that underpins society including health, safety and environment while promoting sustainability and good regulatory practice.

Standardization is an integral part of trade facilitation agenda and plays a critical role in the integration of developing countries into the multilateral trade system. This is true for middle income and least developed countries. International standards are key to improving developing country access to international markets and to strengthening their ability to implement international trade obligations.

Standards, Conformity Assessment and Accreditation

- The SCC is the focal point for standardization and conformity assessment in Canada. The SCC doesn't develop standards or verify the conformity of products or services to standards, but accredits the organizations that do. The SCC approves **National Standards of Canada** and represent Canada in international standards forums.
- Technical competency is generally determined through accreditation. Accreditation is the procedure by which an authoritative body (e.g SCC) gives formal recognition of the service providers' technical competency to carry out specific conformity assessment services and tasks.
- Accreditation programs can extend the chain of confidence internationally and thereby eliminate or reduce the need for multiple conformity assessments in the case of harmonised standards.
- Accreditation is a basic service for industrial (products) and services sectors. It is a technical tool that enables the evaluation of the competence of bodies carrying testing, conformity assessment and certification.
- The establishment of National Accreditation Bodies requires a significant commitment and resources. Not all countries would have access to the expertise necessary to develop an accreditation system.

The Canadian Advisory Committee on Developing Country Matters

The Canadian Advisory Committee on Developing Country Matters (CAC/DEVCO) was established with a view to providing coordinated assistance to developing countries focusing on two approaches:

- internationally – representing Canadian interests in International Organization for Standardization (ISO) Committee on Developing Country Matters (DEVCO) and related fora; and,
- nationally - reporting / monitoring and assessing developments in this area and providing policy advice to the Council on developing country matters.