



Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) - Sub-Committee on Standards and Conformance (SCSC)

Background

The APEC-SCSC was established in 1994 with the goal of eliminating trade distortions arising from domestic regulations and standardization activities. Its primary purpose is to promote cooperation and joint initiatives, facilitate information exchange between member economies and monitor compliance with key APEC objectives. The SCSC has activities under four categories:

1. Alignment of members' national standards with international standards
2. Recognition among members of conformity assessment in the regulated and voluntary sectors
3. Promote cooperation for technical infrastructure development
4. Ensure the transparency of the standards and conformity assessments of members.

The committee meets three times per year. Participants from the 22 member economies include a mixture of trade and regulatory officials, representatives of voluntary standards bodies and industry.

Current Activities

1. Alignment with International Standards

Voluntary Action Plan (VAP) – APEC members annually submit VAP reports, which outline each member's alignment of their standards with international standards in the following priority areas:

- Electrical and electronic appliances, food labelling, rubber products and machinery.
- Electrical safety (International Electrotechnical Commission - IEC 60335) and Electromagnetic Environment Committee (The International Special Committee on Radio Interference – CISPR).
- Safety of information technology equipment (IEC 60950).
- Standards and guides on conformity assessment and management systems.

The VAPs, including Canada's, can be found by going to www.apecsec.org.sg/scsc/scsc-vap2001.html.

Good Regulatory Practice (GRP) – The SCSC promotes the use of GRP through materials available on the Web site and by encouraging the participation of members, particularly those from developing economies, in annual seminars and conferences.

Active Participation in International Standardization Activities – Members are encouraged to participate in international standardization bodies such as IEC and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). Canada (the Standards Council of Canada - SCC) holds Participant-Status on over 400 committees and Observer-Status on over 120 committees within the IEC and ISO.

2a Recognition of Conformity Assessment in the Regulated Sector

The SCSC will continue to review and improve the effectiveness of the APEC MRA on Conformity Assessment of Foods and Food Products, the Arrangement for the Exchange of Information on Toy Safety, the APEC Arrangement for the Exchange of Information on Food Recalls, and the APEC MRA on Conformity Assessment of Electrical and Electronic Equipment.

2b Recognition of Conformity Assessment in the Voluntary Sector

To achieve its objectives of promoting mutual recognition and acceptance of conformity assessments systems within the region, the SCSC encourages members to actively participate in the Regional Specialist Bodies:

- The **Asia Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (APLAC)** is a group of accreditation bodies responsible for accrediting calibration, testing and inspection facilities. www.aplac.org
- The **Asia-Pacific Legal Metrology Forum (APLMF)** is a group of legal metrology authorities of APEC economies and other economies on the Pacific Rim, whose objective is the development of legal metrology and the promotion of free and open trade in the region through the harmonisation and removal of technical or administrative barriers to trade in the field of legal metrology. www.aplmf.org/
- The **Asia Pacific Metrology Programme (APMP)** is primarily responsible for developing international recognition of the measurement capabilities of the region's national and territorial measurement laboratories. www.nrlm.go.jp/apmp/
- The **Pacific Accreditation Cooperation (PAC)** is an association of accreditation bodies and other interested parties whose objective is to facilitate trade and commerce among economies in the Asia Pacific region. Its ultimate objective is the creation of a global system that grants international recognition of certification or registration of management systems, products, services, personnel and other programmes of conformity assessment. www.apec-pac.org
- The **Pacific Area Standards Congress (PASC)** is an organization to exchange information and views and initiate necessary actions to help ensure that international standardization activities are properly coordinated on a consensus basis to meet world needs and foster international trade and commerce. www.pascnet.org

3 Cooperation on Technical Infrastructure Development

The objective of the Mid-Term Technical Infrastructure Program is to identify the technical infrastructure development needs, and ways of addressing those needs, so that all APEC member economies can participate in mutual recognition arrangements on conformity assessment being developed in the region. The program provides assistance to Specialist Regional Bodies and individual members who develop project proposals that meet the objective of the program. The Standards Council of Canada (SCC) has assumed an active role in providing assistance to developing economies in establishing their technical and administrative infrastructures, and is involved in various APEC-sponsored projects, and some of these projects are:

- **Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA) Readiness Project in Product Certification:** The purpose of this PAC project was to develop the technical infrastructure of member economies particularly in accreditation of product certification bodies. Most accreditation and certification bodies from developing economies need assistance in drawing up their schemes in accordance with international guidelines. This project involved several training courses including peer evaluator training. SCC was involved in the training.
- **APEC/PASC Training Programs on Participation in International Standardization Process:** The purpose of these seminars is build APEC member economy capacity in the area of participation in international standardization

activities. Particular emphasis is on the implementation of the World Trade Organization's Technical Barriers to Trade (WTO-TBT) agreement. Two seminars (Singapore and Vietnam) will be held in 2003, and the SCC is presenting at one of the seminars.

- **Workshop Addressing the Implementation of Quality Systems in National Metrology Institutes:** This aim of this APMP workshop is to improve the capacity to participate in international metrology standardization. The first workshop will be held in Canada in 2003.
- **Survey of Accredited Calibration and Testing Laboratory Performance:** The purpose of this APLAC survey is to provide data to support the APLAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement and thus to increase regulator confidence in the APLAC MRA as the means to underpin calibration and test data associated with APEC MRAs in the regulated sectors.

4 Transparency

The SCSC has established a TIC-CAR (Testing, Inspection, Calibration, Certification, Accreditation and Mutual Recognition) database of Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs). This online database serves as a source of information about CABs in the APEC region providing testing, inspection, calibration, certification and accreditation services. Registration is voluntary, so to browse the database, visit their Web site at www.apectic-car.org. Please note that not all organizations listed on the site are accredited, and it is each organization's responsibility to keep their information accurate and up-to-date.

Standard Council of Canada's Role

The SCC provides advice and comments to this committee through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAIT). In addition to providing advice to DFAIT, the SCC actively participates in the Specialist Regional Bodies (SRB) listed above, and is involved in the efforts to coordinate technical assistance among APEC and SRBs.

Related Links

APEC	www.apecsec.org.sg/
APEC Thailand 2003	www.apec2003.org
DFAIT-APEC	www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/canada-apec/menu-e.asp
Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada	www.asiapacific.ca/

Intergovernmental Affairs and Trade (IGAT) is a branch of the Standards Council of Canada. Our role is to strengthen Canadian policy development and strategic participation with respect to international standardization, international trade and intergovernmental cooperation.

Information briefings on other topics can be found at http://www.scc.ca/igat/index_e.html.

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