Roadmap for National Standards Bodies

Commonwealth Standards Network

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1. Executive summary

This roadmap builds from learnings established during the implementation of the Commonwealth Standards Network.

The objective of this document is to set out a series of practical steps that National Standards Bodies (NSBs) can take to support the utilisation of standards to support their domestic ambitions and goals. Standardization needs to be driven by domestic requirements, hence there is not a one size fits all model. This document aims to highlight core themes that are of interest to NSBs throughout the Commonwealth, it is not a prescriptive list of actions, but a menu of activities that NSBs can follow if there they have a requirement.

Activities

- **A** Assess the maturity of your National Quality Infrastructure.
- **B** Build your evidence base of the impact of standards to be deployed to policy makers and stakeholders.
- **C** Identify, prioritise and act on the opportunities and challenges that your NSB has.
- **D** Develop / enhance /implement a National Standardization Strategy.
- **E** Working with Government identify priority export sectors, target activity to increase the use of international standards in these sectors.
- **F** Identify the standards that will help your nation attain your priority UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- **G** Engage with the UNECE Gender Responsive Standards Programme, develop Gender Action Plan, utilise standards to support SDG5
- **H** Identify market requirements for standards, adopt or develop relevant deliverables.
- **I** Follow NSB Good standardization practice guidelines, engage with stakeholders and consider the best way of marketing standards.

2. CSN Overview

Background - The Commonwealth Standards Network (CSN) was created to build a community of Commonwealth National Standards Bodies (NSBs) with the aim of utilising international standards to facilitate intra-Commonwealth trade, enhancing economic prosperity across the Commonwealth, in support of positive developmental outcomes. The network was launched in April 2018 and from the period April 2018 – March 2021 was funded by UK Aid.

Membership and Governance - The CSN is a collaborative network open to Commonwealth states and their NSBs, regional associations and other interested stakeholders. The position of CSN co-chair is held by the NSB of the Commonwealth chair-in-office, this is the UK (BSI) from 2018-2021, and Rwanda (RSB) from 2021-2023.

Training and Technical Assistance - The CSN delivered a range of interventions to increase its members technical and institutional capacity to use and participate in the development of international standards via existing international standards organisations such as ISO and IEC. It further delivered a range of bespoke technical assistance programmes in Africa – Uganda, Zambia and Rwanda; the Pacific region – Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu and the Caribbean – Saint Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Dominica, and Belize.

Online and written resources - As part of the programme the CSN portal was created – www.commonwealthstandards.net. This platform includes a forum for NSB members of the CSN to discuss key standardization issues, it contains a repository of information and training that can support NSBs throughout the Commonwealth and beyond, and case studies demonstrating the impact of standardization.

Since its inception in April 2018 the Commonwealth Standards Network has achieved

- **52** — 52 of the 54 Commonwealth countries as members
- **30** — Associate members
- **1,500** — Delivery of training programmes to over 1,500 individuals from 48 countries
- **5** — Delivery of 5 e-learning packages
- **3** — The delivery of three Technical Assistance programmes in Africa, the Pacific and the Caribbean

3. Quality Infrastructure Activity A

Quality infrastructure (QI) is the ecosystem of legal and regulatory frameworks, and public and private actors that implement standardization, metrology, conformity assessment and accreditation. Governments play an important role in QI and the maintenance of National Quality Systems, either directly or by delegating responsibilities to the private sector (in areas including standardization, testing and inspection).

- Standardization – creates the national and international standards that specify how things should be made and done in a way that is mutually acceptable.
- Metrology – legal and physical measurement, implementation of specifications and standards to ensure validity and consistency.
- Conformity Assessment – testing and assessment that ensures that those who use standards and codes are applying them in the right way.
- Accreditation – ensures that those who carry out testing, certification and inspection are competent to do so.

An efficient and effective QI system that assures the quality of products and services is a critical enabler for firms to access and compete in domestic and foreign markets. QI can stimulate a range of positive outcomes:

- Enhanced competitiveness
- Increased efficiency
- Improved productivity
- Reduction of duplicative testing
- Diffusion of knowledge and good practice
- Trade facilitation
- Consumer and environmental protections
- Positive contributions to UN Sustainable Development Goals

Investment in National Quality Infrastructure (NQI) institutions can facilitate economic growth and prosperity. A range of international organisations have developed material that supports the assessment and validation of the maturity of NQI:

- The World Bank – alongside the National Metrology Institute of Germany, have developed the QI Diagnostics and Reform Toolkit. This helps to analyse and assess the maturity of a National Quality Infrastructure – providing recommendations and Gap analysis.
- The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) – have developed a range of guidance and collateral to support the development of NQI and National Quality Policy.

There is no single model for the development of a NQI. NQI needs to be directly focussed on national priorities, the objectives and aspirations of nations. A NQI should build on international and regional good practice that can be applied to the specific needs, challenges and opportunities that nations are seeking to address. The National Quality Policy needs to be determined at a Government level, attributing different roles and responsibilities to different state and non-state actors that make up the complex ecosystem. Quality policy encompasses national legislation, governance, institutions and a focussed quality culture.

Action

Assessing the maturity of your NQI – complete the World Bank QI toolkit – understand the areas that require development and engage with Policy makers to highlight both the requirements and the impact of developing your NQI. You can use the outcomes of the diagnostic tools to engage with developmental funding organisations.

4. The value of standards Activity B

The value and positive impacts of standards are often misunderstood, standards play a pivotal role in supporting the achievement and advancement of domestic policy objectives (competitiveness, productivity, innovation, sustainability and consumer safety and protection) alongside supporting companies to trade globally, and the attraction of Overseas Direct Investment.

There have been a wide range of macroeconomic studies on the economic contribution that standards make at an economy level – they all reach broadly the same conclusion in that the use of standards supports productivity gains and export activity, leading to enhanced levels of economic growth.

- Australia - the economic benefit of standardization
- Canada- The economic value of standardization
- Germany – the economic benefits of standardization
- ISO – Economic Benefits of standards
- New Zealand - The economic benefits of standards
- Nordic Economies - The influence of standards
- Singapore - economic benefits of standards in the maritime sector
- UK - The economic contribution of standards

There are also a range of reports that study the impact of standardization at a company level. ISO has developed a methodology that is applied at a company level, if identifies the activities undertaken by the entity where standards are used and investigates how standards create value for the entity. This provides a repeatable evaluation of the impact of standardization and the methodology can be utilise by any entity using standards – providing an evidence base of the impact of standardization. Through the assimilation of case studies ISO has established three consistent benefits of enterprises using standards:

- Benefit 1 – Streamlining internal operations – enhancing efficiency by standardizing processes, reducing wastage and increasing productivity. From case studies developed, benefits range from 0.15% - 5% of annual sales revenue.
- Benefit 2 – Innovating and scaling up operations – standards are being utilised to innovate business processes, supporting enterprises to expand their supplier and customer bases, they have been found to reduce the risk of introducing new products onto domestic markets.
- Benefit 3 – Creating or entering new markets – Standards can be utilised to develop new products for placement on domestic and international markets. Some companies have demonstrated a gross profit of up to 33% of their annual revenue.

Economic benefits of standards – ISO Methodology 2.0
ISO repository on the studies of the benefits of standards

Academic literature typically highlights that standards play a role to solve a range of economic problems that impede the efficient operation of companies and the access of their products to the market. Standards assist companies and the supply chains in which they operate, to operate in a more efficient manner, thus reducing costs and enhancing revenues – allowing companies and industry sectors to enhance productivity.

As part of the CSN – dedicated e-learning courses were developed to support the understanding of international standards and the benefits of using international standards

Action

Complete the e-learning courses for additional information on international standards and the benefits of using international standards. Identify the type of evidence that you may need, this may include:

- Macroeconomic impact – for policy makers
- Sector level impact – for sectors that are your economic priority
- Company level benefit – to support engagement with the private sector, facilitating standards and services sales

Use a range of methodologies to build your evidence base, that can be presented to policy makers, stakeholders and prospective standards users.

5. Challenges and opportunities for National Standards Bodies Activity C

The importance of the role that NSBs play, has been placed fully into the spotlight throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. NSBs and QI more broadly have supported national healthcare and economic responses. Be that supporting the availability of safe PPE – either domestically manufactured, manufactured by domestic companies that have diversified their production lines to newly manufacture PPE, or imported. Delivering robust Covid-19 testing regimes, ensuring accurate analysis by accurate calibration tests, or supporting workers to operate in a safe environment.

Each NSB is unique in terms of its relationship with its own national government, the activities that it delivers, the way that it maintains its national standardization infrastructure, its funding structure and its participation in regional and international standardization activity. There is no single model for the establishment and operation of a national standards body, there is great diversity. Some are functions of Government and some are independent private entities. some purely deliver standardization activities, whilst others have a broader service offering including conformity assessment. Some NSBs are funded by their national Government, whilst some are reliant on commercial activities or fee-paying membership.

An important tool for focussing the activity of a NSB is a National Standardization Strategy (NSS). This provides a focussed policy roadmap targeted at the needs, ambitions, and priorities of nations, supported by national and international standards. The NSS helps NSBs to prioritise standardization activities ensuring an efficient allocation of resources. ISO have developed a National Standardization Strategy methodology and examples from a range of different National Standardization Strategies. During the CSN programme work was undertaken to support the development of National Standardization strategy in Rwanda.

During the delivery of CSN activities a number of key themes have consistently been raised:

The differences between technical regulations and standards – and their use.

Throughout the CSN programme, a common theme that has arisen in a range of countries is the differentiation between technical regulations and standards, and the role that each of these important tools play to support domestic policies. Both technical regulations and standards can set out a specific characteristic of a product – such as its size, shape, design, functions and performance, or the way that it is labelled or packaged before it is placed on sale[1].

The difference between technical regulations and standards lies in compliance, conformity with standards is voluntary and conformity with technical regulations is mandatory. To legally place a good or a service on a market it must meet the technical specification. Standards are the market expectation and not meeting those standards can affect market acceptance. .

This issue is further explored in the CSN publication – A role for standards in policy – what role do national standards bodies have in setting government policy.

The sometimes-overlapping responsibilities between regulators and the National Standards Body.

The relationship between the NSB and relevant Government Ministries is of key importance, this is often codified under a formal agreement that defines roles and responsibilities and the role that standards play to support Government policy. An example is the Memorandum of Understanding that BSI has with the UK Government.

It is important to establish where standards can play an effective role in supporting the domestic economy and national policy objectives. It is important to engage with policy makers to ensure they fully understand the powerful tool that standards play in support of the national interest. Standards can play an important role in supporting the implementation of Government policy in a range of different areas:

- Self-Regulation – where businesses voluntarily agree to meet certain standards, in lieu of regulation being put in place.
- Earned recognition – where regulators recognise companies that independently demonstrate compliance with standards.
- Co-regulation – where Government set the top-level regulatory approach in terms of performance and the market develops technical solutions (standards)

The identification and the development of standards (National, Regional, International).

When an NSB has identified that a standard is required, there are a range of potential solutions. Developing a national standard can be resource intensive and takes time for the development process to complete. A starting point is to look at what current international standards may meet the requirement and through your technical infrastructure appraise international standards to see if they meet your domestic requirements. There is an opportunity to shape international standards by participation in the relevant international technical committees., this requires a domestic assessment of the areas that are most aligned to your economic challenges and opportunities.

If there are no relevant international standards, you may want to engage with countries that have similar profiles to yours, to establish if they have solutions that meet your requirement. It is important to engage with your peers and you may find out that another NSB is developing a standard that is similar to your requirements. Utilise the Forum on the CSN portal to engage with other NSBs about their standards catalogue and development portfolio. There may also be a number of regional standards that may meet your requirements.

Engagement with the private sector.

Engagement with the private sector is of key importance for several reasons, they are ultimately the end user of the standards, they consume standards, and benefit from the impacts of using standards. Private sector involvement is of pivotal importance to the development of standards and subsequently, the uptake of standards.

During the delivery of the CSN programme there have been many examples where the implementation of standards into agricultural value chains has improved the quality of the produce, increased yields, reduced wastage and supported farmers to increase trade, advancing the quality of their lives.

What we saw on the ground was a “standards gap”, where the good practices instilled in standards were not easily accessible to the end users of the standards, namely the small-scale producers. As quality of a product originates from its inception, i.e. at the farm, the production practices adopted by farmers are of utmost importance. The two key barriers to changing the production practices were 1) lack of awareness of farmers on relevant standards and 2) understanding of how to implement it due to literacy gaps. As a result, with little understanding of quality, food safety or consumer demand, the produce sold is of a low quality and therefore attracts poor prices in the market.

To address this issue, the CSN programme collaborated with NSBs, to demystify relevant standards for selected value chains. By creating easily accessible guidance documents for farmers in local languages and using pictograms, the entry point to standards was simplified.

Outreach to the private sectors through intermediaries such as organized business and trade associations presents a systematic channel to access famers and advocate for the reason why standards are important and what it will bring to their business.

Engagement with the Private sector is key to realising the benefits that standards bring to support productivity gains and to drive export growth. As part of the CSN a range of activities were delivered in support of a range of a number of value chains.

In 2020 in Uganda the CSN delivered a programme that simplified a range of standards that support small scale manufacturers, farmers and fisherfolk. The guidance documents were translated into local languages and supported by practical training activities to embed the learning from the standards into these global value chains.

Example: Assistance to the small-scale farmers

- 5 standards based guidance documents available for the avocado, pineapples, rice, soy beans and shea nut value chains
- Guidance documents available in 13/52 Ugandan languages
- 111,500 brochures disseminated
- 4,936 farmers were trained, 55% are women.

The relevant standards are now becoming known across many regions, and the concept of quality is becoming understood. Trained farmers are starting to adopt better practices, avoid bad practices and produce better quality produce.

The outcomes are likely to include improved quality products, increased productivity, reduced waste and the ability to sell products to a wider range of purchasers.

The business models of National Standards Bodies

There is no single business model for NSBs – some receive all of their funding from their Governments, others sell standards and associated products, and others charge for the participation in standards development activities. Some NSBs also deliver conformity assessment activities, when doing so it is important to separate the activities of the NSB and those delivering conformity assessment services – this helps to manage any potential risk of conflicts of interest. Financial sustainability is key to maintaining an effective infrastructure for the developments of standards and NSBs should seek to attain this in a way that is best suited to their circumstances. Engaging with government and industry and delivering solutions that add value to these key stakeholders is an important part of determining your business strategy.

NSBs have a lot that they can learn from one another are the CSN platform provides a forum for NSBs to share good practice.

Action

Identify the opportunities and challenge that your NSB faces. Prioritise these opportunities and challenges and which stakeholder groups you need to engage with to support the development of solutions. Interact with your NSB peers, they hold a wealth of expertise and experience and are happy to share good practice. Set out your national standardization priorities by developing / refining your National Standardization Strategy.

6. National Standardization Strategy Activity D

A National Standardization Strategy (NSS) is a policy roadmap for a country to ensure that its domestic strategic priorities are supported by relevant international and national standards. A country's NSS is coordinated by a Country's NSB, it ensures that the most relevant standards are identified and developed to support the national agenda. It ensures that standards are developed in areas of most relevance to a country's needs, hence streamlining resource allocation.

A National Standardization Strategy is fully linked to the domestic policy objectives of nations, encompassing economic, societal and environmental considerations. A national standardization strategy addresses both medium term and longer terms objectives for the National Standards Body and can be utilised as a tool to enhance National Quality Infrastructure.

ISO has developed guidance on the development of National Standardization Strategies, the guidance incorporates:

- A methodology for the development of national standardization strategies
- Specific aspects and extensions
- Examples from different national standardization strategies
- Supporting forms, presentations and calculation tools

Good Standardization Practices (GSP) is based on applying the concept of a "value chain" to a national standards body (NSB) that identifies its core activities, i.e.. the operations the NSB has to perform to develop and publish standards and the support activities which describe the infrastructure and resources that should be available in an NSB to enable it to operate the essential core-activities effectively and efficiently. A diagnostic tool has been developed to enable an NSB to review and evaluate its current situation and performance and can be utilised to identify the solutions that are appropriate for an NSB to comply with GSP.

Action

Analyse the ISO guidance on the development of National Standardization Strategies, using the ISO templates map out national priorities, develop three-year National Standardization plan. Appraise the Good Standardization Practice documentation and undertake diagnostic.

7. Standards and Trade Activity E

The global economic landscape is constantly evolving, this has been highlighted by the Covid-19 pandemic and the way that economies and businesses will bounce back from the Covid challenges. Using international standards is a strategic priority that enables businesses to capitalize on the benefits of international trade, while strengthening business operations, protecting brand reputation and managing change. International standards from ISO and IEC are a cornerstone of the WTO rules-based trading system. They are adopted at a national level to create a common language for trading partners: they deliver simpler market access globally.

International standards are a key tool that supports international trade. Standards act as a passport to trade. Standards play an important role in facilitating international commerce. They provide for interoperability, reduce transaction costs and provide a signal of quality to customers. International standards act as a major catalyst for trade – allowing companies to sell their goods and services across multiple markets without the need for adaptation.

Standards represent the market expectation, when seeking to place a product on a market, they provide a signal of quality to consumers and an international language to facilitate interoperability. International standards are often referenced in the procurement policies of multi-national companies.

When considering an export market, companies need to be aware of any tariffs and quotas that affect the product being exported, alongside the rules and regulations relating to these products. Companies can establish this information through the ITC Market Access Map. Companies further need to establish if there are any licences needed to export those goods, any certifications that are required and any labelling requirements.

International standards are a vital tool in ensuring products and services are fit for the wider economy and society, the effect of standards on facilitating free trade can be transformative. They bring greater access to higher-quality, lower-priced goods, drives competitiveness, and fuels economic growth and job creation. Standards also support transparency and accountability for producers and consumers, both significant issues for industries undergoing rapid change driven by the fourth industrial revolution.

Action

Does your country have an export strategy? map out your priority export sectors against internationally relevant standards. Highlight the importance of international standards to the private sector as a tool to support export growth. Utilise the ITC Market Access Map to understand market access conditions in export markets. Present relevant information to companies in export prevalent sectors.

8. Standards and the Sustainable Development Goals Activity F

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were launched as a "blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all". They were included on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which was adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015.

The 17 SDGs recognize that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and reducing environmental damage.

International standards support the three pillars of sustainable development:

- Economic - International Standards promote economic sustainability by facilitating international trade, improving a country's national quality infrastructure and supporting sustainable business practices.
- Social - International Standards promote social sustainability by helping countries and communities to improve the health and well-being of their citizens. They cover all aspects of social welfare, from healthcare systems and related products to social inclusion and accessibility.
- Environmental - International Standards promote environmental sustainability by helping businesses and countries manage their environmental impact. They cover aspects such as implementing an environmental management system, measuring and reducing greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption, and encouraging responsible consumption.

ISO standards contribute to the delivery of SDGs.

- ISO have created a guide on contributing to SDGs with ISO standards.
- ISO standards are mapped against the SDGs that they correspond to and ISO has created an online resource to help identify them.

All stakeholders can benefit from using international Standards to achieve SDGs:

- Government: Regulators can use international standards to create public policy that helps further SDG goals. International Standards also help governments achieve their SDG commitments.
- Industry: International standards help industry achieve SDGs by providing guidelines and frameworks. The standards cover everything from topics such as gender equality, health, safety, trade, through to climate impacts.
- Consumers: Using international standards to contribute to achieving SDGs benefits consumers in many ways, including: reducing poverty, improving health and environment, and improving safety.

Action

Identify international standards that can support the attainment of your prioritised SDGs. Utilise these standards to support positive SDG outcomes.

9. Gender responsive standards and Gender declaration Activity G

Full gender equality remains unreached, SDG 5 is to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

- International standards: 168 ISO Standards contribute to SDG 5, one of the most widely used is ISO 26000 'Guidance on social responsibility' which highlights the importance of empowerment of women and their equality in society.
- UNECE's Gender responsive standards initiative provides a way for NSBs bodies to work towards making the standards they develop and the standards development process they follow gender responsive. The activities of the Gender Responsive Standards Initiative culminated in the drafting of the Declaration for Gender Responsive Standards and Standards Development.
- CSN interventions: The CSN has promoted Gender responsive standards and the Gender declaration to its membership via engagement activities and the sharing of information via the CSN Portal. A CSN webinar hosted by the Chair of the UNECE Gender Responsive Standards Initiative included presentations and Q&A from CSN NSBs that had adopted the declaration.
- Women owned micro businesses in Saint Lucia represent a major proportion of the food service industry on the island but they are unable to expand or participate in trade export as they are challenged to meet the requirements of regional and international standards. The Caribbean stream of the Technical Assistance support promoted the role of food safety standards as a tool to mitigate risks associated with ensuring food safety and strengthening the capacity of local female-owned food businesses to compete, through the adoption of standards. The project recruited a local team of four women (three food experts and a project coordinator) to conduct gap assessments on local businesses based on the draft Saint Lucian Standard: Saint Lucian Code of Practice DCP 1 for Food Safety Pre-requisite Program (PRPs) and Good Hygiene Practices (GHPS) General Principles.

CSN Members that have signed the UNECE Gender Declaration as of January 2021:

Australia, Botswana, Canada, Cyprus, The Gambia, India, Malta, Mauritius, Mozambique, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, South Africa, Trinidad and Tobago, UK.

Action

Engage with the UNECE Gender Responsive Standards Programme, sign the declaration for 'Gender Responsive Standards and Standards Development', develop and implement a gender action plan. Identify international standards that align with UN SDG 5: Gender Equality.

10. Standards adoption Activity H

International Standards are widely adopted at the regional or national level and applied by manufacturers, trade organizations, purchasers, consumers, testing laboratories, authorities and other interested parties. Since these standards generally reflect the best experience of industry, researchers, consumers and regulators worldwide, and cover common needs in a variety of countries, they constitute one of the important bases for the removal of technical barriers to trade.

The adoption of international standards is explicitly acknowledged in the WTO/TBT Agreement under Annex 3:

> *(para F) ...Where International Standards exist or their completion is imminent, the standardizing body shall use them, or the relevant parts of them, as a basis for the standards it develops, except where such International Standards or relevant parts would be ineffective or inappropriate...*
>
> *(para G) ... shall, in an appropriate way, play a full part, within the limits of its resources, in the preparation by relevant International Standardizing bodies of International Standards regarding subject matter for which it either has adopted, or expects to adopt, standards...*

All standards (whether adopted, or drafted nationally) should respond to a market need:

Identify what international standards are available. It is best practice to follow the WTO TBT Agreement and not create new national standards if there are already international standards that answer the need. With over 20,000 ISO standards it is likely that there is already a relevant international standard available that can be adopted nationally.

The WTO TBT agreement also states that countries adopting international standards should be involved in their development. This helps ensure that the standards reflects their requirements, gains buy-in, and ensures that the country is a 'standards maker not just a standards taker'.

NSB international standards adoption policies and procedures, and the involvement of regulatory bodies varies globally. The CSN has developed training materials to support standards development and adoptions:

> On examination of an international standard by the NSB and its national stakeholders, the standard may be adopted as it stands (an identical adoption) or may be changed (a modified adoption), in accordance with the criteria set out in the ISO/IEC Guide 21.
>
> The adoption of an international standard requires the involvement, participation and support from stakeholders (including regulators if necessary) in the adoption process in order to avoid standards which are unsuitable for the country or are not used.
>
> Conflicting national standards should be withdrawn to avoid confusion.
>
> International standards are written as voluntary documents, but they are sometimes used to demonstrate compliance with legislation, and WTO disputes consider use of international standards.

In most countries, NSBs are directly involved and, in several cases, responsible for some or all of the activities related to country obligations under the WTO TBT Agreement. If a standard becomes linked to mandatory national Technical Regulations then the WTO TBT Enquiry point should notify the WTO.

Action

Identify market need, identify if there is a relevant international standard - if yes - adopt the international standard following ISO guidelines, (if no - see section #11), withdraw conflicting national standards, add international standard adoption to NSB catalogue and make it available to market (see section #12), notify the WTO if the standards becomes linked to national mandatory Technical Regulations.

11. Standards Development Activity I

The Key principles of standards development are:

Standards should respond to a market need and should only be produced where there are not relevant international standards already available to revise or adopt.

Standards should be based on expert opinion through a multi-stakeholder process of technical committees that are made up of experts from industry, consumer associations, government, NGSs, academics and developed via a consensus-based approach through a formal development process that includes commenting and voting stages before publication is approved.

If there is no relevant international standard to adopt then standards can be produced nationally. They should comply with the relevant sections of the WTO TBT agreement and NSBs follow the ISO Good Standardization Practice guidelines

If a country has a National standard that has value in being internationally available, they should propose it as an international standard via the new work item proposal processes.

Action

Identify market need, identify if there is a relevant international standard (if yes- see section #10), follow ISO GSP guidance and formal standards development procedures, submit application for national standards to become an international standard, add standard to NSB catalogue and make it available to market (see section #12), notify the WTO if the standards becomes linked to national mandatory Technical Regulations.

12. Standards sales Activity I

NSBs selling national standards should follow the ISO Good Standardization Practice guidelines

NSBs should consider their ISO and IEC membership category. Depending on the membership category, members have different rights to sell international standards and publications and use copyright trademarks.

Each NSB should maintain an up to date and accurate catalogue of all its standards. The catalogue should be publicly accessible via the NSB website and follow the International Classification for Standards (ICS) and allow the purchase of standards.

NSBs should proactively market the value of using their standards. NSBs should use market research, determine distribution and pricing strategies (e.g., subscription services), develop communication strategy - include workshops on the value of standards (see section 4.2#, and additional CSN resources), develop long-term market development goals.

Action

Follow NSB Good Standardization Practice Guidelines, determine the most beneficial NSB membership category of international standards organisations – considering the rights this offers to sell international standards, maintain an up to date and accessible catalogue of standards and online shop, pro-actively market the value of using standards.

Roadmap

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Activity	Assess the maturity of your National Quality infrastructure	Identify the evidence that you require to increase the understanding of the value of standards	Identify the challenges and opportunities that your NSB face	Develop / enhance / implement a National Standardization Strategy	Prioritize standards development / adoption in sectors that can drive export growth	Identify international Standards that can support the attainment of your prioritized Sustainable Development Goals	Engage with UNECE Gender Responsive Standards programme	Identify market need for standards	Develop a standards sales strategy
Resources	World Bank QI tool kit	• ISO repository on studies of the benefits of standards • Other NSBs	• Internal assessment • Engagement with NSB peers	• ISO National Standardization Strategy Methodology • Other NSB good practice	• Export statistics • National export plans • ITC market access data	• ISO SDG mapping	• UNECE collateral • ISO SDG 5 mapping	• Stakeholder engagement • ISO standards catalogue	• ISO Good standardization practice • Good practice of other NSBs
Output	Complete the Rapid Diagnostic Tool - identifying strengths and gaps	Develop the evidence that you need to use to inform policy makers and the private sector	Prioritised list of actions	National Standardization Strategy	Develop programmes to suppoert exporters, in opportunity areas	Prioritise international standards that can help with your SDG ambitions	UNECE Declaration	Prioritized standardization programme	Development of standards sales strategy
Next steps	• Prioritize areas that need development • Present findings to policy makers • Present findings to development funders	• Present findings to policy makers • Use evidence to develop marketing material for standards users • Promote the evidence base	Develop capability to realize the opportunities - build this in to your business plan	• Implementation of National Standardization Strategy • Implementation of Good Standardization Practice	• Engage with policy makers • Engage with sector relevant industry / trade assocations • Design support for specific sectors	Promote / adopt / support the implementation of standards to support SDG objectives • Publicize standards and their outcome	Develop and implement Gender Action Plans	• Identify / adopt any relevant international standards • Remove any conflicting national standards • Develop a national deliverable • Notify WTO if standard to be linked to a technical regulation	• Engage with stakeholders • Develop marketing collateral • Proactively promote the benefits of standards

Useful documents:

BSI (British Standards Institution)

Benefits of using standards

Education

Reasons to become a standards maker

Standards and accreditation – tools for delivering better regulation

What is the national standards body?

CEBR (Centre for Economics and Business Research)

The Economic Contribution of Standards to the UK Economy

Commonwealth Standards Network (CSN)

About CSN

eLearning resources

CSN Forum

CSN Library

CSN Toolkit and Framework

IEC (International Electrotechnical Commission)

About IEC

IEC Academy & Capacity Building

IEC members

IEC standards development

IFAN (International Federation of Standards Users)

About IFAN

Standards tutorials

ISO (International Organization for Standardization)

About ISO

ISO - Economic Benefits of Standards

ISO - members

ISO - Good Standardization Practice

ISO - standards development

ISO - National Standardization Strategies

ITC (International Trade Centre)

About ITC

Voluntary standards

ITU (International Telecommunication Union)

About ITU

ITU Standardization Sector

WTO (World Trade Organisation)

About WTO

Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT)

UKQI (UK Quality Infrastructure)

The value of National Quality Infrastructure

UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development)

About UNCTAD

World Standards Cooperation

UNECE (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe)

About UNECE

Gender responsive standards

UNIDO (United Nations Industrial Development Organization)

About UNIDO

Standards and conformity

National Quality Infrastructure

Kellermann, Martin. 2019. Ensuring Quality to Gain Access to Global Markets: A Reform Toolkit. International Development in Practice. Washington, DC: World Bank; Braunschweig, Germany: Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt.

Kellermann, Martin. 2019. Comprehensive Diagnostic Tool: Annex to the QI Toolkit. International Development in Practice. Washington, DC: World Bank; Braunschweig, Germany: Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt.

Rapid Diagnostic Tool (Excel form)

CSN Achievements

Network:

- Membership and Governance:
- 52 of 54 Commonwealth states are participating CSN members, they represent over 99% of intra-commonwealth trade.
- 30 Associate CSN members (including regional standards associations, government departments, universities).

Portal:

- CSN portal users: The CSN Portal receives an average of 1,500 unique page views per month. >400 portal users, this engagement and peer-to-peer learning has lead to positive outcomes of NSB collaboration and development.
- CSN News items are regularly posted (>150 articles), they relate to standards development and resources:
  - CSN eLearning courses received >1,000 views 99% of participants that completed the e-learning said that the courses was 'extremely useful' or 'very useful'.

    International standards

    Benefits of using international standards

    International standards: A tool to support policy

    Safe working during the COVID-19 pandemic – General guidelines for organisations

    Business continuity
- CSN Framework of international standards downloaded >150 times. The Framework outlines existing international standards that are of most use to Commonwealth ODA countries in facilitating trade and reducing poverty.
- CSN Toolkit (2019 and 2021 versions) downloaded >300 times. Users note how it has been useful resource for information on standards development and adoptions, and NSB development.
- CSN training materials: >30 presentations are available on the CSN Portal for free download. They cover topics such as standards development and adoption, consumer engagement, standards and SDGs, standards and gender, NSB business development, standards to support policy and trade.

Training:

- Attendance: 1,500 Delegates from 48 of the 54 Commonwealth countries have attended a CSN training session or workshops.
- NSB Training sessions: > 20 have taken place with a focus on empowering NSBs to take a more active role in international standards development and adoption.
- Stakeholder workshops: > 40 have taken place with a focus on raising awareness of the benefits and use of international standards.
- Remote training: Many of the training sessions took place in-country, however, with COVID-19 travel and meeting restrictions the training sessions successfully moved to remote access.
- COVID-19 support: Regional needs-assessment meetings resulted in several specific outputs:
- COVID-19 Framework of international standards: Outlines existing international standards that are relevant to COVID-19 mitigation and are available for free download.
- COVID-19 section of the CSN Forum: Sharing of relevant information to support COVID-19 mitigation. Posts from this part of the Forum have received a total of >20,000 views.
- Support for the development and adoption of BSI's 'Safe working during the COVID-19 Pandemic Guidelines'.
- Collated CSN NSB COVID-19 responses: Regularly updated and shared on the CSN Portal and Forum, receiving >4,000 views.
- Remote training:

  Pandemic preparedness: Five training sessions delivered to >40 delegates from nine countries.

  Safe working during COVID-19: Five training sessions delivered to >70 delegates from 15 countries.

  Also, Business continuity and Occupational Health and Safety courses were delivered.

Technical Assistance Africa:

The Africa technical assistance programme focuses on providing standards-related technical assistance to three countries – Rwanda, Uganda and Zambia. In all three countries the prime beneficiary is the NSB, namely the Rwanda Standards Board (RSB), the Uganda National Bureau of Standards (UNBS) and the Zambia Bureau of Standards (ZABS). In addition, the CSN programme attempts to stimulate interest in and demand for the quality infrastructure services of these NSBs among the MSME sectors. The underlying ethos of this approach has been that uplifting small businesses - for example small agricultural producers – leads to a triple benefit in that producers will offer better products, increasing their ability to market and sell these – and eventually in some cases, to export them to other Commonwealth countries, while stimulating demand for conformity assessment activities and thereby supporting the sustainability of the national NSBs involved.

Technical Assistance Caribbean:

The Caribbean technical assistance programme focuses on three objectives. The first is the finalization of the National Quality Policies (NQP) for the four targeted Commonwealth members states (St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Dominica and Belize). The second is the finalization of the associated NQP Implementation Strategies and ensuring appropriate linkages to the strategic and business plans of the four National Standards Bodies, the Saint Lucia Bureau of Standards (SLBS), the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Bureau of Standards (SVGBS), the Dominica Bureau of Standards (DBOS) and the Belize Bureau of Standards (BBS). The third objective has been focused on strengthening the food safety regime of Saint Lucia by developing two island appropriate food safety standards. This has built capacity to assist local companies to understand and comply with requirements and strengthen the local certification body - aiding them to offer internationally recognised accredited certification services to these companies.

Technical Assistance Oceania:

The objective of the Oceania technical assistance programme has been to contribute to the removal of technical barriers to trade between Papua New Guinea (PNG), Vanuatu (ROV), and their trading partners (particularly other Commonwealth Member States and the UK) to ensure the free movement of goods between the parties. The institutional frameworks and quality infrastructure of PNG and Vanuatu have been strengthened to enable better implementation of international best practices facilitating the free movement of goods and services.

Contact details for the CSN

There are no fees to join the CSN which is a collaborative network open to Commonwealth states & NSBs, regional associations and other interested stakeholders.

To find out more about the network and/or membership, please see www.commonwealthstandards.net or contact Ben Hedley, Senior Programme Manager, Commonwealth Standards Network

T: +44 20 8996 7122

E: ben.hedley@bsigroup.com

Twitter: twitter.com/network_csn

Linkedin: linkedin.com/groups/12166620

Commonwealth Standards Network

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