



Commonwealth Standards Network (CSN) Update: October 2018

1. Background:

At the 2018 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, the UK Prime Minister announced the establishment of the Commonwealth Standards Network (CSN) to tackle non-tariff barriers and promote strong trade amongst all Commonwealth states through the participation, adoption and implementation of international standards.

The CSN aims 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. International standards play an important role in promoting productivity and efficiency, reducing costs, removing barriers to trade, and driving economic growth. As such, the CSN is especially relevant to National Standards Bodies (NSBs) from Commonwealth nations that are looking to boost their international trade capabilities.

There are no fees to join the CSN which is a collaborative network open to Commonwealth states and regional associations. The UK Government is funding BSI to oversee the establishment of the CSN through to April 2020 in which time the following outputs will be delivered:

- a. Platform.
- b. Framework of International Standards, and Toolkit.
- c. Training and Workshops.
- d. Technical Assistance.

Section 3 of this document outlines general expectations of the CSN, section 4.2 provides further information about the outputs and feedback on how they should be developed, and section 5 outlines the anticipated timelines for their development.

Further CSN background information can be found in **Annex B**.

2. Engagement to date:

- 2018-04: Introductory communications to Commonwealth NSBs.
- 2018-07: CSN update and invitation to the inaugural meeting.
- 2018-07: National Quality Infrastructure (NQI) survey of Commonwealth NSBs.
- 2018-08: Survey of Commonwealth NSB standardisation experience and expectations of the CSN.*
- 2018-09: Inaugural CSN meeting.**
- 2018-10: CSN update October 2018 (this document).



3. ***Survey results:**

- Research was undertaken to gather feedback from Commonwealth NSBs regarding their views on standards development and implementation, expectations for the CSN, and requirements for the CSN platform.
 - Highlights of the survey:
 - Having a voice in decisions related to standards is seen as the key benefit to participating in international standards development.
 - Financial constraints associated with attending meetings is cited as the main drawback to participation in international standards development.
 - Reducing international trade barriers, meeting WTO agreements and conformity across nations are three key benefits of using and adopting international standards.
 - Building capacity for standards development was cited as the key anticipated achievement for the CSN amongst members.
 - Workshops, CSN meetings and an online collaborative platform were viewed as useful to all participants in supporting their involvement with the network.
 - Standards training and workshop materials, a document store and event calendar are seen as key features of an online platform amongst CSN members.
 - Healthcare, farming and fishing, and construction are the top national priority sectors for development cited by participants.
 - For full survey results as of 2018/10/05 please see **Annex C**.
 - The survey was opened 2018/08/21, results as of 2018/10/05 are presented in this report but **the survey has been kept open until 2018/10/19. For those that have not yet completed the survey, please follow this link to provide responses: [CSN expectations survey](#)**

4. ****Inaugural CSN meeting 2018-09-26:**

The inaugural meeting of the CSN was held on 26th September 2018 in Genève, Switzerland. It is important that CSN members are actively involved in shaping its development to suit their needs, the inaugural meeting aimed to facilitate this collaborative approach.

24 Commonwealth National Standards Bodies, four regional standards organizations and several other interested stakeholders (**See Annex A**) contributed to the event where they helped shape the network to deliver the following outcomes:

- Increase use of existing international standards.
- Improve technical and institutional capacity of NSBs.
- Increase trade.
- Reduce poverty.

4.1. **Speakers:**

- **Julian Braithwaite**, Ambassador and Permanent Representative, UK Mission to the UN and Other International Organisations, Geneva - noted the UK



commitment to tackling international non-tariff barriers and the potential benefits for the international standardization community to a strengthening Commonwealth voice.

- **Scott Steedman**, ISO Vice President of Policy and Director of Standards at BSI – noted that ISO is supportive of the CSN and discussed the benefits of international standardization and how the CSN can help increase Commonwealth trade and reduce poverty.
- **Manuel Mutale**, Zambia Bureau of Standards (ZABS) Director - explained how the CSN Technical Assistance programme will help Zambia pursue its development goals.

4.2. Workshop discussions:

a. Platform:

- An **online collaborative platform** will encourage collaboration between NSBs throughout the Commonwealth, to support information exchange and peer to peer learning and support. It will include the following functions:
 - Information repository.
 - Event directory.
 - Framework of International Standards: A suite of existing international standards (See 5.2.b).
 - Toolkit: The Toolkit will support the development of standardization strategies and the participation in international standards development (See 5.2.b).
 - Member directory.
 - Discussion forum.
 - Member news/blogs.
 - Export hub: The Export Hub will provide functionality that will allow a company to search where an international standard is used in different Commonwealth Countries.
 - **Workshop feedback:**
 - Countries were very receptive to the platform proposal.
 - CSN members would like differing levels of user rights so that they can have a space for interaction, a more open environment for stakeholders and open access for others.
 - Developed economies were interested in putting content on the platform to support developing countries and to disseminate ideas for new international standard for development (this will help all Commonwealth countries shape future international standards from the outset to ensure that they meet their needs).
 - Developing economies were interested in:
 - Learning material to help them identify specific international standards that can be implemented to support their economic objectives.



- Learning materials on how to better adopt standards and focus their NSB activity.
- Case studies and collateral that can be used to increase the visibility and use of international standards.
- Learning from developing economies through engagement.

b. Framework of International Standards, and Toolkit

- The CSN will agree a **framework of existing international standards**, based on the economic development priorities of its members.
 - **Workshop feedback:** The framework of existing international standards should cover the following sectors and topics:
 - Accreditation of management systems.
 - Agriculture export.
 - Anti-corruption.
 - Anti-Illicit trade.
 - Blockchain.
 - Certification.
 - CODEX.
 - European trade (harmonization).
 - Food security.
 - Healthcare (affordable).
 - Housing (affordable).
 - Manufacturing.
 - Packaging.
- A **Toolkit** will be tailored to support implementation of standards, it will include a literature review and a resource list of published material to support the development of NSB standardization strategies and participation in international standards development.
 - **Workshop feedback:** Useful topics for the toolkit to cover:
 - How NSBs can help support the international trading system.
 - NSB Business development.
 - NSB Engagement with policy makers.
 - NQI development.
 - Case studies where standards have assisted regulatory reform.
 - Case studies where standards have assisted with public procurement.
 - How National standards relate to International standards.
 - Commonwealth twinning within ISO and IEC.
 - Regional organisation development.
 - General capacity building for engagement with international standardization.



c. **Training and Workshops:**

- In-country three-day **Training programmes** will be delivered to 10 Official Development Assistance (ODA) eligible NSBs to support the development of their NSB standardization strategies and participation in international standards development and adoption of international standards.
- In-country **One day workshops** will be delivered to 20 ODA eligible NSBs and stakeholders to increase the visibility and understanding of the benefits that international standards can bring to support the development and export potential of organisations in ODA eligible countries.
 - **Workshop feedback:**
 - Countries should be identified on the basis of economic need and the sophistication/ development of their NSB.
 - Needs assessment will be undertaken with candidate countries to focus the development of the training programme.
 - Relevant trainers from BSI staff and external providers need to be identified.
 - Design and development of the training programme and workshops will be made in consultation with recipients.
 - Tailored training and workshops should consider the relevant topics outlined 5.2. a) and b).
 - Live case studies from the private sector to be presented and discussed showing the 20-50% gains, clearly setting out the economic benefits of standards adoption and implementation would be welcomed;
 - Sectors to focus on: agriculture, sugar (e.g. Mauritius), construction (climate change/ flood defence in Fiji), SMEs and how to get standards into public procurement. A workshop would be welcomed on why procurement should refer to international standards (floods/ metro construction etc.);
 - Engagement with Chambers of Commerce in Commonwealth Member States;
 - There is a need to address the 'Blue Economy' e.g. aquaculture;
 - Focal points – what are the barriers to trade;
 - Traditional herbal medicines – how to address the lack of international standards in this sector;
 - Country specific needs (e.g. Botswana want sector diversification away from diamond mining and beef (livestock) production, tourism sector needs strengthening across the Commonwealth).

d. **Technical Assistance:**

- Several developing countries within the Commonwealth will be provided with in-country technical assistance to gain the skills necessary to support



domestic standards development, use international standards effectively for trade, and be empowered to take an active role in standards development. Initially, the Following Technical Assistance programmes will be delivered by April 2020:

- Africa: Zambia and Uganda.
- Caribbean: St Lucia.
- Oceania: Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu.

5. Next steps:

a. Platform:

- October - December 2018: Portal development.
- January 2019: Portal Testing.
- February 2019: Portal launch.

b. Framework of International Standards, and Toolkit:

- **Framework of International Standards**
 - October - December 2018: Framework of existing international standards drafted.
 - Early 2019: Framework of existing international standards available for training programmes and portal.
- **Toolkit**
 - October-December 2018: Toolkit drafting.
 - Delivery in early 2019: Toolkit available for training programmes and portal.

c. Training and Workshops:

- In-country NSB training and stakeholder workshops will run from 2019 to early 2020.
 - October - December 2018: Courses to be developed.
 - November 2018 - February 2019: Stakeholders to be identified.
 - December 2018 - December 2019: Dates/venues to be confirmed.
 - Early 2019 - February 2020: Training and workshops delivered.

d. Technical Assistance:

- Initial in-country Technical Assistance programmes will run from October 2018 to April 2020.

6. Join the CSN:

To find out more about the network and/or membership, please contact the CSN Programme Manager Ben Hedley ben.hedley@bsigroup.com



ANNEX A: CSN launch event attendees 2018-09-26

Attendees at the inaugural meeting of the Commonwealth Standards Network:

- 24x National Standards Bodies:
 - Australia
 - Barbados
 - Botswana
 - Canada
 - Cyprus
 - Fiji
 - India
 - Jamaica
 - Kenya
 - Malaysia
 - Malta
 - Mauritius
 - New Zealand
 - Papua New Guinea
 - Rwanda
 - Saint Lucia
 - Singapore
 - South Africa
 - St Vincent and the Grenadines
 - Trinidad and Tobago
 - Uganda
 - United Kingdom
 - Vanuatu
 - Zambia.
- 4x Regional Associations:
 - African Organisation for Standardisation (ARSO)
 - The Pan American Standards Commission (COPANT)
 - CARICOM Regional Organisation for Standards and Quality (CROSQ)
 - Pacific Islands Forum (PIF).
- Other interested stakeholders:
 - UK Accreditation Service (UKAS)
 - UK Department for International Development (DFID).



The Commonwealth Standards Network (CSN)



**Commonwealth
Standards
Network**

The CSN seeks to promote the use and awareness of international standards, and improve technical and institutional capacity to use and develop international standards amongst its members. Its key aim is to facilitate Commonwealth trade and poverty reduction through the increased use of international standards.

The Commonwealth:



The Commonwealth advantage:

Intra-Commonwealth investments generate 3.3 times more jobs than investments from non-Commonwealth countries. Intra-Commonwealth trade and productive investment are on track to exceed US\$1 trillion by 2020...

Commonwealth countries, on average, tend to trade around 20% more and generate 10% more investment with each other than with non-member countries.

Bilateral costs for trading partners in Commonwealth countries are on average 19% less than between those in non-member countries. ²

Policies which build upon this advantage can trigger even greater gains.

¹ 'Action on trade and inclusivity to benefit all Commonwealth citizens' Prime Minister's Office, 10 Downing Street. Press release. 2018

² Commonwealth Trade Review 2018', Commonwealth Secretariat. 2018

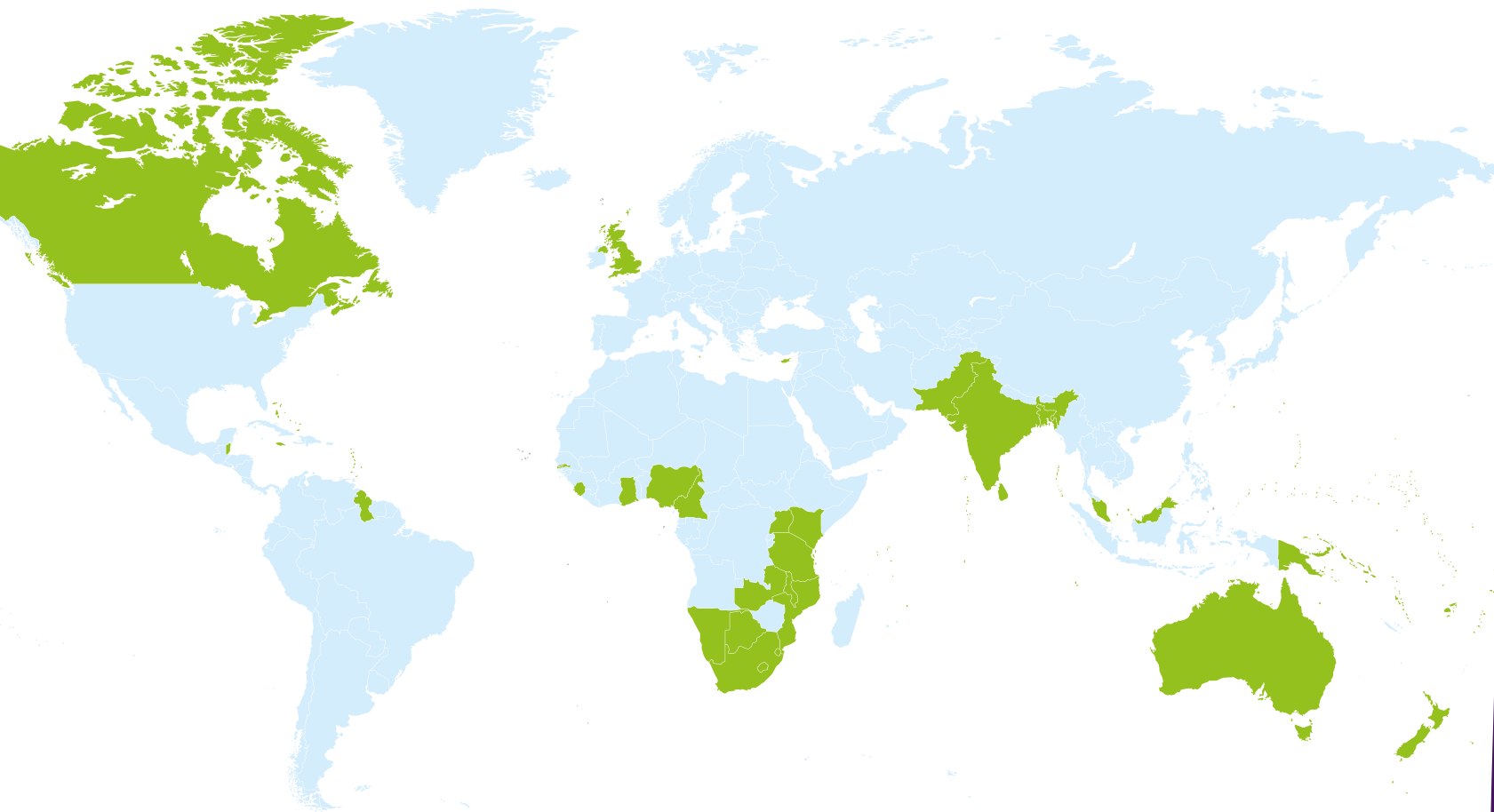
The UK Prime Minister recently announced UK Government funding for the development of a Commonwealth Standards Network (CSN):

“The network will provide a significant opportunity for national standards experts to collaborate and share best practice and it will empower developing countries to have a stronger voice in the international standards community – something that has benefits on a global scale.”

UK Prime Minister Theresa May at the Commonwealth Head of Governments Meeting, 16th April 2018.

Funding is secured for the development of the CSN during the first two years of the project, engagement with CSN members and international donors will seek to secure continued funding post 2020.





Commonwealth countries by region:

Africa			Asia	Caribbean and Americas		Europe	Pacific	
Botswana	Malawi	Uganda	Bangladesh	Grenada		Cyprus	Australia	Solomon Islands
Cameroon	Mauritius	United Republic of Tanzania	Brunei	Guyana		Malta	Fiji	Tonga
Gambia, The	Mozambique	Zambia	Darussalam	Jamaica		United Kingdom	Kiribati	Tuvalu
Ghana	Namibia		India	Saint Lucia			Nauru	Vanuatu
Kenya	Nigeria		Malaysia	St Kitts and Nevis			New Zealand	
Kingdom of eSwatini	Rwanda		Pakistan	St Vincent and the Grenadines			Papua New Guinea	
Lesotho	Seychelles		Singapore	Trinidad and Tobago			Samoa	
	Sierra Leone		Sri Lanka					
	South Africa							

CSN overview:

The CSN seeks to promote the use and awareness of international standards, and improve technical and institutional capacity to use and develop international standards amongst its members. The following outputs will be delivered by April 2020:

- 1 Platform:** The CSN platform will encourage collaboration between National Standards Bodies throughout the Commonwealth, to support information exchange and peer to peer learning and support.
- 2 Framework of International Standards:** The network will agree a suite of existing international standards for use across the Commonwealth, based on members' economic development priorities. A toolkit will be tailored to support implementation of these standards and an online collaborative platform will be used for knowledge sharing.
- 3 Support:** In-country training and workshops will be delivered to a range of Commonwealth countries, focused on raising awareness of the benefits and use of international standards and empowering countries to take a more active role in standards development.
- 4 Technical Assistance:** A number of developing countries within the Commonwealth will be provided with technical assistance to gain the skills necessary to support domestic standards development, use international standards effectively for trade, and be empowered to take an active role in standards development. For more information on the Technical Assistance programmes please contact projects@bsigroup.com



Join the CSN:

The CSN is a collaborative network open to all Commonwealth countries and it is important that its members are actively involved in shaping its development so that outcomes will best suit their needs.

If you would like find out more about the CSN or wish to participate or support this important initiative please contact the CSN Programme Manager Ben Hedley ben.hedley@bsigroup.com



Commonwealth
Standards
Network



Commonwealth Standards Network (CSN), Update: October 2018
ANNEX C: CSN NSB expectations survey (Initial results 2018-10-05)



Commonwealth
Standards
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Please note: The survey is now open until 2018/10/19.
For those that have not yet completed the survey, please follow this link
to provide responses: [CSN expectations survey](#)

Research objectives, sample and methodology

Research Objectives:

Research was undertaken to gather feedback from Commonwealth National Standards Bodies (NSBs) regarding:

- Their views on standards development and implementation
- Their expectations for the Commonwealth Standards Network (CSN) on a whole
- Their needs for an online platform for CSN members

Methodology:

An online survey of NSBs was conducted from 2018/08/21, results as of 2018/10/05 are presented in this report but the survey has been kept open until 2018/10/19 for those that have not yet responded. Please follow this link to provide additional responses:

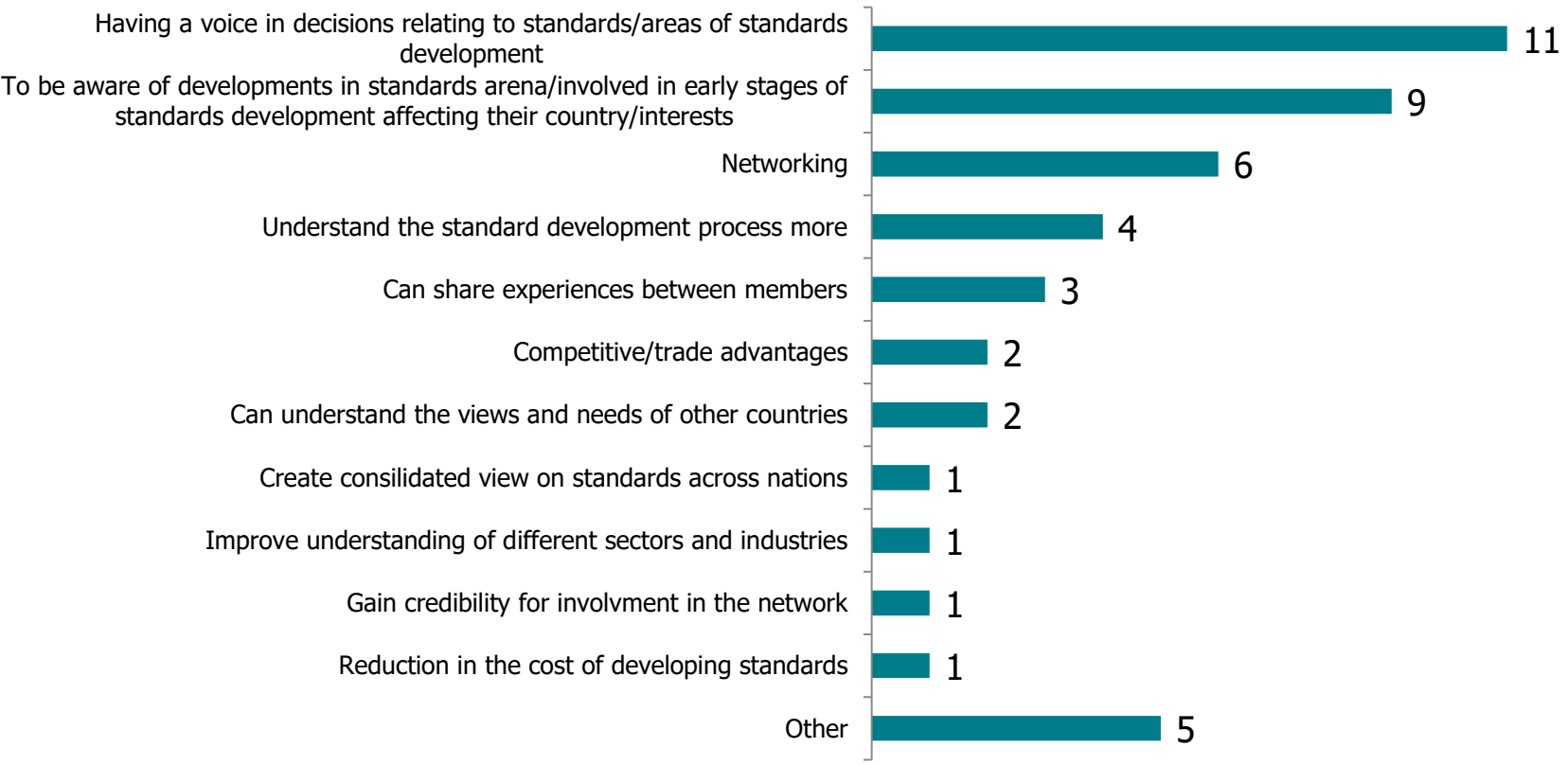
<http://surveys.bsigroup.com/wix/1/p1867520481.aspx>

There are 53 commonwealth countries, 45 of which have NSBs and were sent the survey. To date, there have been 19 responses to the survey – representing a response rate of 42%.

For further information, please contact CSN Programme Manager Ben Hedley (ben.hedley@bsigroup.com)

Having a voice in decisions related to standards is seen as the key benefit to participating in international standards development

Q1. What do you see as the benefits, if any, to participating in international standards development?



Financial constraints associated with attending meetings is cited as the main drawback to participation in international standards development

Q2. And what do you see as the drawbacks, if any, to participating in international standards development?



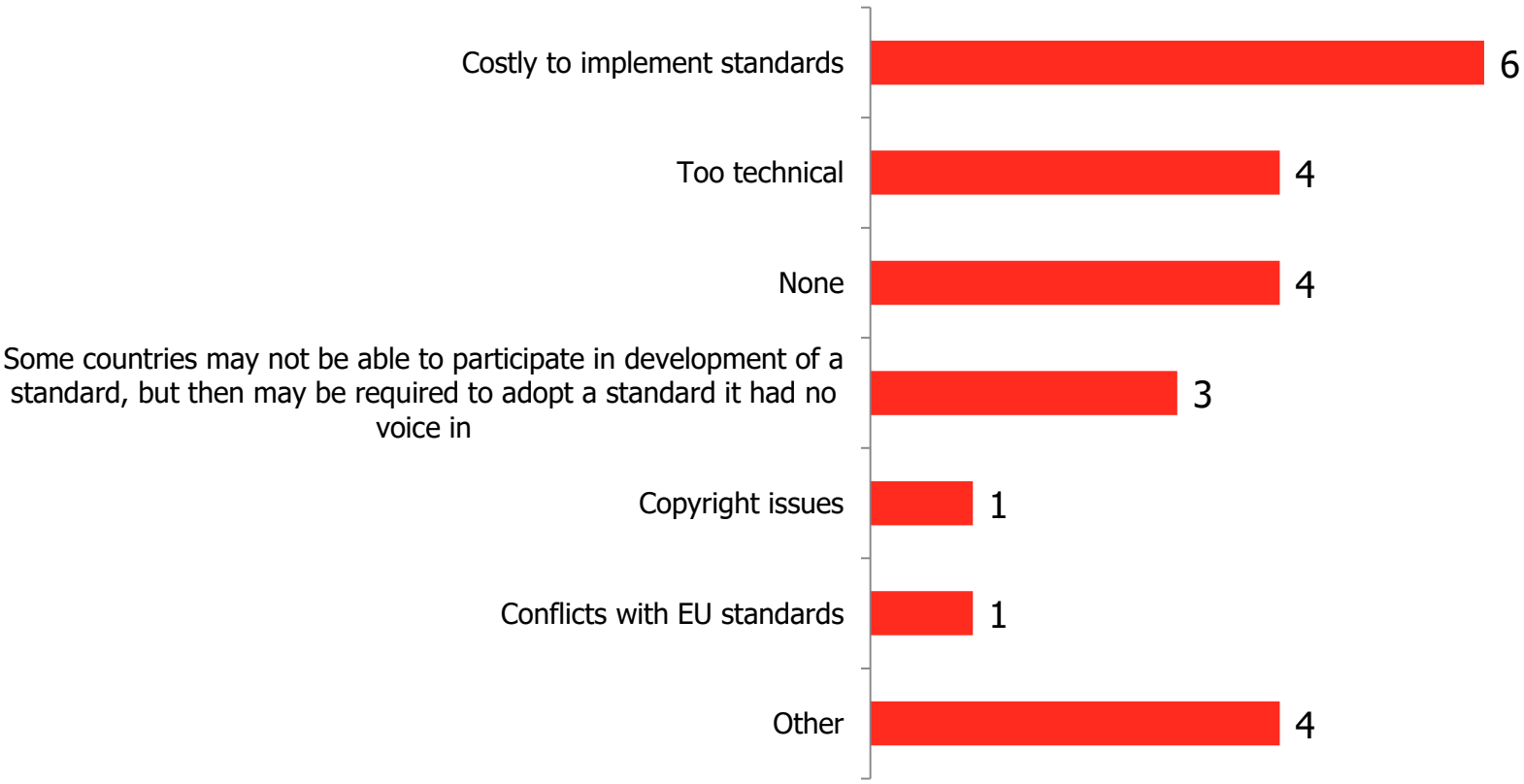
Reducing international trade barriers, meeting WTO agreements and conformity across nations are three key benefits of using and adopting international standards

Q3. What do you see as the benefits, if any, of using and adopting international standards?



Although a number of participants felt there are no drawbacks to using and adopting international standards, the cost of doing so was highlighted as a possible issue

Q4. And what do you see as the drawbacks, if any, to using and adopting international standards?



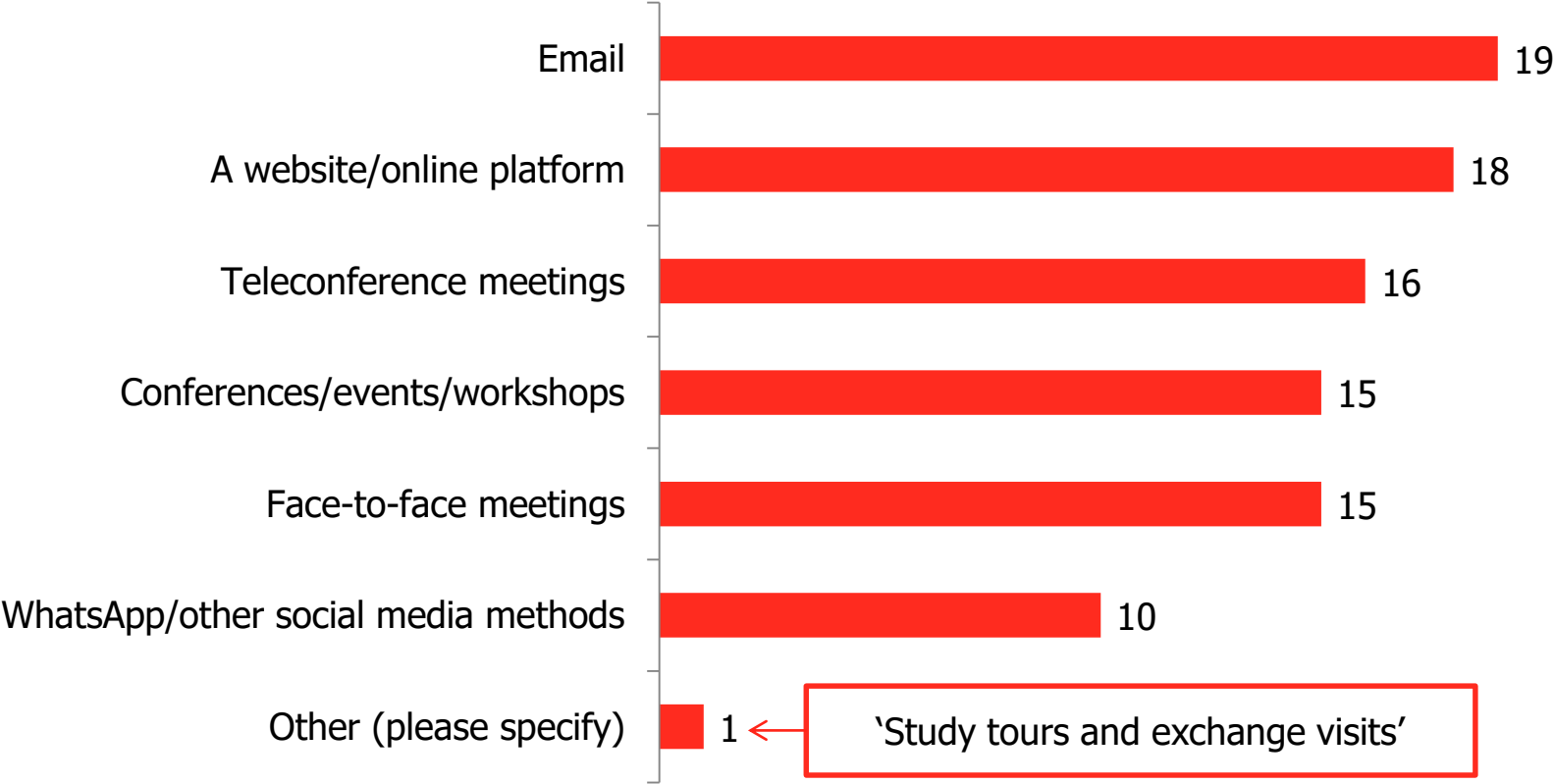
Building capacity for standards development was cited as the key anticipated achievement for the CSN amongst members

Q5. What would you like the Commonwealth Standards Network to achieve for your National Standards Body or organisation?



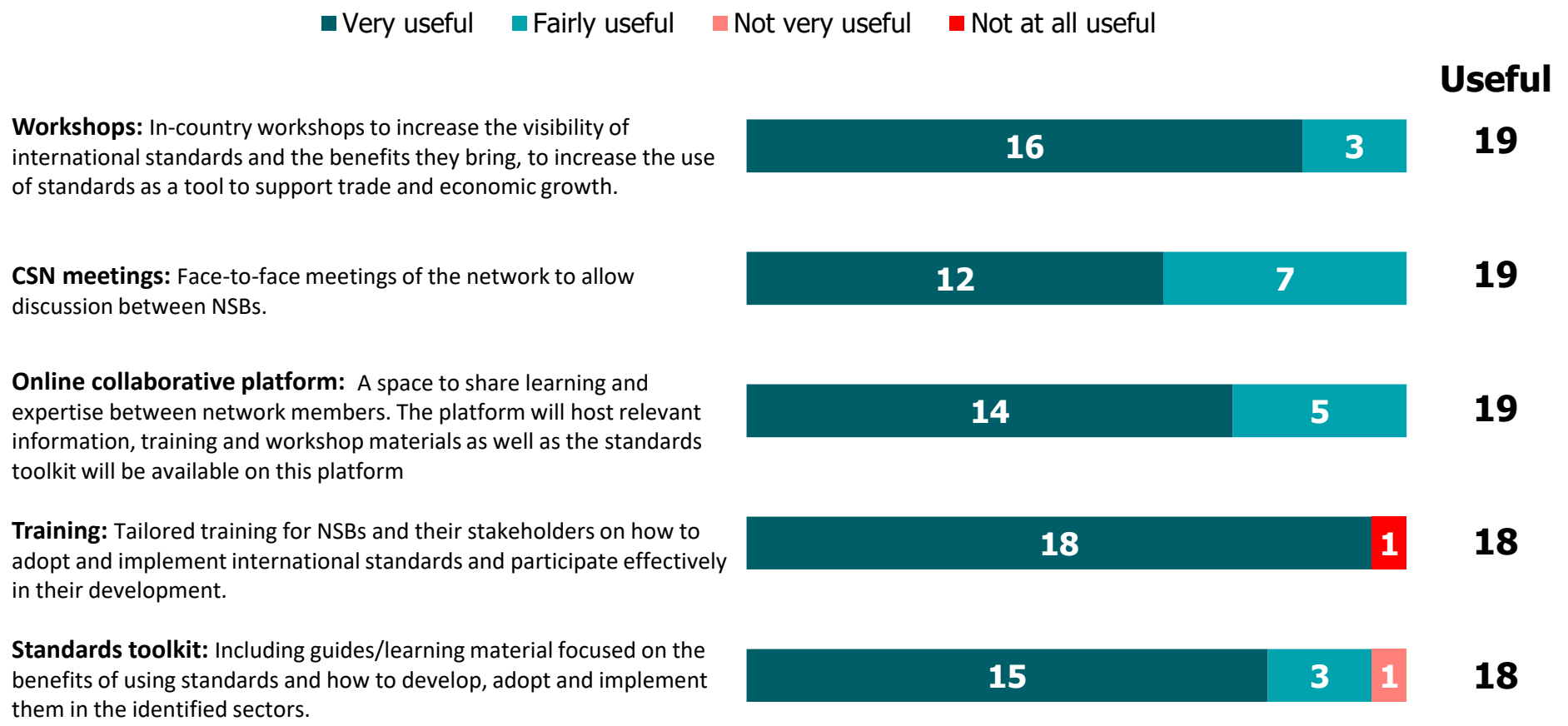
All participants stated they would prefer to interact with other CSN members by email

Q6. How would you prefer to interact with other members of the Commonwealth Standards Network?



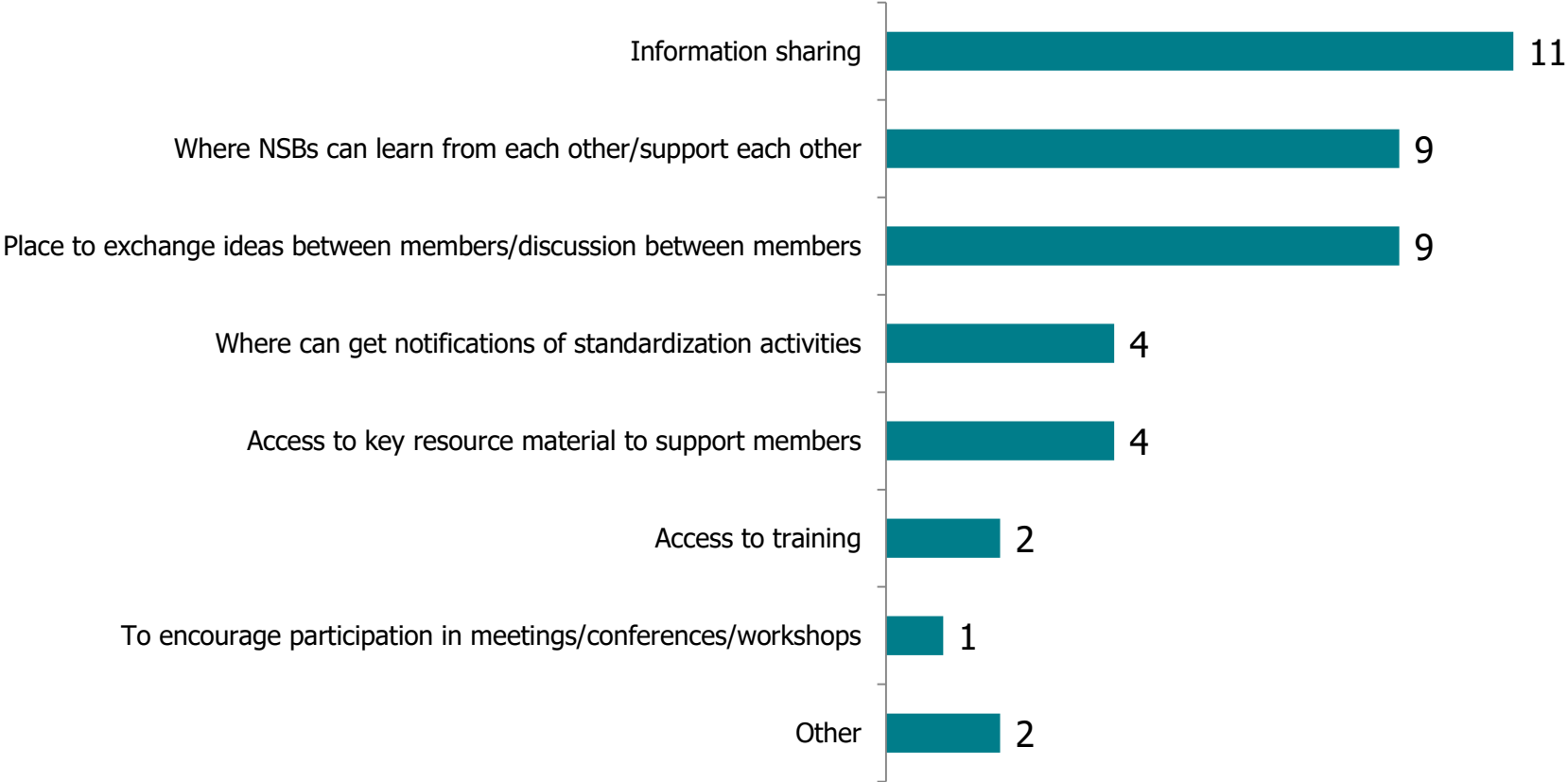
Workshops, CSN meetings and an online collaborative platform were viewed as useful to all participants in supporting their involvement with the network

Q7. How useful do you feel each of the following would be to support your involvement with the network?



Members expect to use the online platform primarily as a space for information sharing and interaction with other NSBs

Q7a. What are your expectations for the online platform?



Standards training and workshop materials, a document store and event calendar are seen as key features of an online platform amongst CSN members

Q7b. What features would you like to be able to access in the online platform to help interact with other Commonwealth Standards Network members?



Sharing knowledge and expertise between members are seen as the main benefits of participating in the CSN

Q8. What do you see as benefits, if any, to your participation in the Commonwealth Standards Network?



Over half of participants do not see any drawbacks to their participation in the CSN

Q9. And what do you see as drawbacks, if any, to your participation in the Commonwealth Standards Network?



Healthcare and farming and fishing are the top national priority sectors for development cited by participants

Q10. What are your national priority sectors for development?

