Commonwealth Standards Network

UKaid from the British people

Commonwealth Standards Network (CSN) Annual meeting 2019-09-18: Notes

CSN Annual Meeting 2019 Highlights *(See Annex A for Agenda)*

The 2019 Commonwealth Standards Network (CSN) meeting took place on 18th September in Cape Town, South Africa. The 57 attendees included representatives from 18 Commonwealth National Standards Bodies, 5 regional standards organisations and several other interested organisations. Keynote speakers included His Excellency Nigel Casey (British High Commissioner to South Africa), Verne Emmanuel (Director, Saint Lucia Bureau of Standards) and Shirley Bailey-Wood (Director, Information Solutions, British Standards Institution). The meeting proved to be an important opportunity for participants to be updated on CSN progress and to help shape the future work programme.

Speeches *(See Annex B for presentations)*

- **Shirley Bailey-Wood** (Director, Information Solutions, BSI)
  - Overview of the importance of standards and the CSN background and purpose.
- **His Excellency Nigel Casey** (British High Commissioner to South Africa)
  - UK commitment to tackle international non-tariff barriers.
- **Verne Emmanuel** (Director, Saint Lucia Bureau of Standards - SLBS)
  - How the CSN Technical Assistance programme has delivered benefits to SLBS and Saint Lucia.
- **CSN Secretariat**
  - **Peter Sissons** (Head of International Engagement, BSI)
    - CSN overview.
  - **Ben Hedley** (CSN Programme Manager, BSI)
    - Update on CSN Network and Portal components.
  - **Charles Davies** (Principal Consultant, BSI)
    - Update on CSN Technical Assistance programmes.

September 2019 Survey result highlights *(see Annex C for full results)*

Question	% answering 'Yes'
Should the CSN initiative be expanded to focus on Quality Infrastructure?	90%
Would you like the CSN to include twinning programmes?	100%
Would you like the CSN to have an alternating Chairperson and Secretariat?	55%
Would you be interested in receiving training on how to use the portal and forum?	85%
Would you be interested in receiving short term NSB training?	85%
Would you be interested in receiving private sector workshops to raise the visibility of standards with your stakeholders?	85%
Would you be interested in receiving technical assistance?	85%

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Workshop

Following the Annual meeting speeches and presentation of the September 2019 CSN survey, a workshop session split the attendees into three groups to gain feedback on: 1. CSN Portal (with Peter Sissons), 2. CSN Network (with Ben Hedley), 3. CSN Technical Assistance (with Charles Davies).

Outcomes

The overarching message from the speeches and feedback from the CSN membership at the workshop and via the survey was that international standards play a vital role in defining the quality of products and processes, increasing levels of trust across global markets. International standards are powerful tools that can break down barriers to trade; when the same international standards are used, it makes it easier and more cost effective to trade with one another. As such, the original aims of the CSN are still relevant: To support the increased development and use of international standards through the Commonwealth to facilitate greater volumes of intra-Commonwealth trade – the CSN programme should continue to peruse these overarching aims, the following methods were suggested by the CSN membership:

- **Governance**
  - NSBs should be the primarry **CSN primary contact point** where available – they can disseminate information to their governments and other stakeholders in-country;
  - A CSN **Terms of Reference** should be written, it should be 'light touch' e.g. outlining that NSBs should provide primary CSN contact points and strive to attend CSN Annual meetings where possible and reply to surveys;
  - BSI should retain the **CSN Secretariat** for the time being, but it could be beneficial to offer the **CSN Chair** to other NSBs- possibly following the Commonwealth Chair in-office position which Rwanda will be holding from April 2020-March 2022.
- **Support:**
  - Assist Commonwealth countries to be involved with international **standards development;**
  - **Twinning** should be supported by the CSN (encouraging CSN members to Twin and for the CSN Secretariat to support the activities);
  - Develop a **Technical Regulation** guidance/toolkit**.**
  - Develop a **Standards catalogue/indexing database** (noting standards links to Technical Regulations);
  - Conduct **Market surveillance;**
  - Develop resources to assist with the **Marketing of standards;**
  - Assist with the development of **NSB Business models;**
  - Assist NSBs to develop their websites to **sell international standards online**;
  - **Short-term NSB training** sessions should focus on:
    - Quality Infrastructure (checking there is not cross-over with the World Bank and other initiatives);
    - NSB Capacity Building;

        - Technical Regulations and how they relate to standards;
        - ISO Technical Committee secretariat training;
        - Stakeholder engagement;
        - 'Train the trainer' (and those trained by CSN to train on other CSN sessions).
    - **Short-term non-NSB training sessions** should focus on:
        - The value of being involved with the development of international standards;
        - The value of using international standards.
    - **Technical Assistance should focus on:**
        - Regulatory Framework & Regulatory Impact Assessment;
        - New Standards Act;
        - Case Studies illustrating value;
        - Industry 4.0;
        - Standardization Participation (National and Regulatory);
        - SME Engagement – Productivity;
        - Secondary and Tertiary sectors;
        - Biodegradable products;
        - National Standardisation Strategies;
        - Road and railway standards;
        - 5G digital inspection schemes;
        - Import inspection.
- **CSN Portal**
    - Explain the activities of the network and its members in an '**About us**' tab.
    - **Raise awareness** on the purpose and how this portal and forum can be used.
    - More detail on the Technical Assistance activities of the network should be added to the '**News**' tab;
    - Add more information on **trade related issues**;
    - Add **eLearning**;
    - **List CSN members** and governance arrangements;
    - Additional information on **Conformity Assessment Procedures**;
    - Additional information on **Quality Infrastructure**;
    - A new Menu should be created that calls for **support on New work item proposals** on International Standardization work from CSN Members.

More information:

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