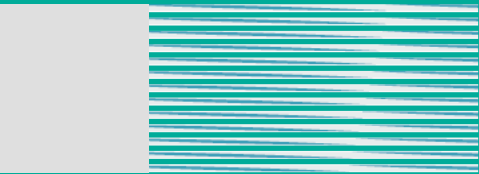




Inside the IEC

information

International Electrotechnical Commission





Inside the IEC

Information

International Electrotechnical Commission

© Copyright International Electrotechnical Commission, 2002.

All rights reserved.

IEC Central Office, 3 rue de Varembeé, PO Box 131, CH-1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland

CONTENTS

1/ General information

What is the IEC?	7
The IEC's mission	8
What is an International Standard?	8
Why are International Standard so important?	10

2/ Standards and conformity assessment

Producing the standards	11
Technical committees and subcommittees	12
– General information	12
– Meetings	13
– JTC 1	13
Languages	14
Preparation of standards	14
Document and project numbering	16
Conformity Assessment	17
– IECEE, IECQ, IECEX	18

3/ Publications

Numbering and review	19
– Standards, Technical Specifications, Technical Reports, Industry Technical Agreements, IEC-PAS, Guides, Technology Trend Assessments	19/21

4/ IEC structure and management

Council	23
Council Board	23
Executive Committee	24
Management advisory committees	24
– PACT, Marketing Committee, Sales Policy Committee, Finance Committee	24/25
Standardization Management Board	25
– Sector Boards	26
– Technical advisory committees	26
Conformity Assessment Board	27
Central Office	27
International Partners	28
Regional Partners	29
List of acronyms	30



Part 1:

General information

What is the IEC?

Founded in 1906, the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) is the global organization that prepares and publishes International Standards for all electrical, electronic and related technologies. The IEC was founded as a result of a resolution passed at the International Electrical Congress held in St. Louis (USA) in 1904. The membership consists of more than 60 participating countries, including all the world's major trading nations and a growing number of industrializing countries.

There are two forms of active participation in the IEC's work. Membership (informally referred to as "full membership") gives countries the possibility of fully participating in international standardization activities. Full members are National Committees each having equal voting rights. Associate membership allows for limited participation of countries with limited resources. Associate members have observer status and can participate in all IEC meetings. They have no voting rights.

On becoming a member of the IEC, each National Committee agrees to open access and balanced representation from all private and public electrotechnical interests in its country. The whole organization of the IEC is designed to ensure that the National Committees play a leading part in all decision-making instances of the Commission. This enables the widest degree of consensus on standardization work to be reached at an international level. It is up to the National Committees to align their policies accordingly at the national level.

In addition, the IEC Affiliate Country Programme is aimed at all newly-industrializing countries around the world. The programme offers such countries a form of participation in the IEC without the financial burden

of membership, making full use of all IT tools to reduce costs of participation. The programme has two principal aims: to encourage greater awareness and use of IEC International Standards in newly-industrializing countries; and to help newly-industrializing countries understand and participate in the work of the IEC.

The IEC's mission

The IEC promotes, through its members, international cooperation on all questions of electrotechnical standardization and related matters, such as the assessment of conformity to standards, in the fields of electricity, electronics and related technologies.

The IEC charter embraces all electrotechnologies including electronics, magnetics and electromagnetics, electroacoustics, multimedia, telecommunication, and energy production and distribution, as well as associated general disciplines such as terminology and symbols, electromagnetic compatibility, measurement and performance, dependability, design and development, and safety and the environment.

To further its mission, the Commission's objectives are to:

- meet the requirements of the global market efficiently;
- ensure primacy and maximum world-wide use of its standards and conformity assessment schemes;
- assess and improve the quality of products and services covered by its standards;
- establish the conditions for the interoperability of complex systems;
- increase the efficiency of industrial processes;
- contribute to the improvement of human health and safety;
- contribute to the protection of the environment.

What is an International Standard?

A standard (as defined in IEC/ISO Guide 2) is a document, established by consensus and approved by a recognized body, that

provides, for common and repeated use, rules, guidelines or characteristics for activities or their results, aimed at the achievement of the optimum degree of order in a given context. An International Standard is a standard adopted by an international standardizing/standards organization and made available to the public.

The definition given in all IEC standards reads: "A normative document, developed according to consensus procedures, which has been approved by the IEC National Committee members of the responsible committee in accordance with Part 1 of the ISO/IEC Directives as a committee draft for vote and as a final draft International Standard and which has been published by the IEC Central Office."

The word "consensus" is important since it represents a common viewpoint of those parties concerned with its provisions, namely producers, users, consumers and general interest groups. IEC's International Standards are reached by international consensus among the IEC's members (National Committees). Any member of the IEC may participate in the preparatory work of an International Standard, and any international, governmental and non-governmental organization liaising with the IEC also participates in this preparation.

Another vital feature of a truly International Standard is the fact that it can be submitted to public enquiry in any country. Thus, through the democratic tools of consensus and public enquiry, any interested party may speak up and have their say in the development and publication of an international standard.

Adoption of IEC standards by any country, whether it is a member of the Commission or not, is entirely voluntary.

The IEC is one of the bodies recognized by the World Trade Organization (WTO) and entrusted by it to monitor the national and regional organizations agreeing to use the IEC's International Standards as the basis for national or regional standards as part of the WTO's Technical Barriers to Trade Agreement (see below).



Why are International Standards so important?

IEC's International Standards facilitate world trade by removing technical barriers to trade, leading to new markets and economic growth. Put simply, a component or system manufactured to IEC standards and manufactured in country A can be sold and used in countries B through to Z.

IEC's standards are vital since they also represent the core of the World Trade Organization's Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), whose 100-plus central government members explicitly recognize that International Standards play a critical role in improving industrial efficiency and developing world trade. The number of standardization bodies which have accepted the Code of Good Practice for the Preparation, Adoption and Application of Standards presented in Annex 3 to the WTO's TBT Agreement underlines the global importance and reach of this accord.

Standardizing bodies that have accepted or withdrawn from this code shall notify this fact to the IEC and ISO (International Organization for Standardization) Information Centre in Geneva. The notification shall include the name and address of the body concerned and the scope of its current and expected standardization activities. The notification may be sent either directly to the IEC and ISO Information Centre, or through the national member body of the IEC or ISO.

IEC standards provide industry and users with the framework for economies of design, greater product and service quality, more interoperability, and better production and delivery efficiency. At the same time, IEC's standards also encourage an improved quality of life by contributing to safety, human health and the protection of the environment.

Part 2:

Standards and conformity assessment

Producing the standards

The IEC's principal activity is developing and publishing International Standards and technical specifications; International Standards serve as a basis for national standardization and as references when drafting international tenders and contracts. IEC publications are bilingual in English and French, while the Russian Federation National Committee prepares Russian-language editions. Certain publications have also been translated into Spanish.

The IEC has recognized the need to develop International Standards based on market demand in the light of rapid technological change and shortening product life-cycles. The IEC is reducing the average development time for its standards and increasing output, while maintaining quality.

Some 200 technical committees (TCs) and subcommittees (SCs), and some 700 project teams/maintenance teams carry out the standards work of the IEC. The technical committees prepare technical documents on specific subjects within their respective scopes, which are then submitted to the full member National Committees (IEC's members) for voting with a view to their approval as International Standards. In all, some 10 000 experts worldwide participate in the technical work of the IEC. Distribution of documents for standards production is 100% electronic, thus improving efficiency and reducing costs.



Technical committees and subcommittees

General information

The scope (or area of activity) of each technical committee (TC) and subcommittee (SC) is defined by the TC/SC itself, and then submitted to the Standardization Management Board (SMB)/parent TC for approval.

The TCs/SCs prepare technical documents on specific subjects within their respective scopes, which are then submitted to the National Committees for voting with a view to their approval as International Standards.

A technical committee is made up of National Committees, all of which are free to take part in the work of any given TC. If a technical committee finds that its scope is too wide to enable all the items on its work programme to be dealt with, it may set up SCs, defining in each case a scope covering part of the subjects dealt with by the main committee. The SCs report on their work to the parent TC.

Secretariats are assigned to P-member National Committees (see below for explanation) designated by the SMB in the case of TCs, and designated by TCs in the case of SCs.

A chairman is proposed by the secretariat and appointed by the SMB. The term of office of a TC chairman is six years, with the possibility of renewal by periods of three years. The chairman of an SC is appointed by the parent TC on proposal by the secretariat of the SC. His/her term of office is six years, with the possibility of renewal by periods of three years.

Any National Committee accepting responsibility for the secretariat of a TC or SC undertakes to make all efforts to ensure rapid completion of the work. The ISO/IEC Directives and the "Guidance for TC/SC Secretaries" define the responsibilities of the National Committees assuming TC or SC secretariats (available on the IEC web site: www.iec.ch) through the TISS Resource Area.

To draft documents for new standards, a TC or SC sets up a project team, while for modifying standards, it sets up a maintenance team. Each are composed of a limited number of experts appointed by the P-members of the committee. (A TC comprises Participating members, who are obliged to attend meetings and vote on documents, and Observer members, who have the right, but not the obligation, to attend meetings and vote.)

Each member of a project team acts as an individual expert and not as a representative of his/her National Committee. The project leader of a project team is nominated by the proposer of the work. Project leaders are responsible for ensuring that all working drafts are produced on time. Upon completing its task, the project team is disbanded.

Meetings

The TCs and SCs decide for themselves when to hold their meetings, the frequency of which depends on the volume and timescales of work undertaken. The agenda and basic documents are sent to the Central Office for reproduction and circulation at least four months before the scheduled date of the meeting. Advice on the organisation of meetings is given in "Guidance for National Committees on the hosting of Technical Committee meetings" (available on the IEC web site: www.iec.ch) through the TISS Resource Area.

ISO/IEC Joint Technical Committee on Information Technology

The IEC is a key player in the preparation of International Standards in information technology (IT) through the ISO/IEC Joint Technical Committee on Information Technology (ISO/IEC JTC 1), which was formed in 1987 by an agreement between the IEC and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). Created to cover the IT work in both organizations, ISO/IEC JTC 1 also receives input from the International Telecommunications Union (which has an official liaison role in the joint committee).

ISO/IEC JTC 1 won the American Academy of Television Arts and Sciences "Emmy" Award in 1996 for its image-compression standards

JPEG and MPEG. The joint committee also has its own web site (www.jtc1.org) detailing its structure and work programme.

Languages

The three official languages of the IEC are English, French and Russian, but the administrative language of the Commission is English.

Preparation of standards

The preparation of a new IEC standard takes place in the following principal stages (for further details, see the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1). The revision of an existing standard starts at the committee draft stage.

Preliminary stage

This comprises projects envisaged for the future but not yet ripe for immediate development, or preliminary work, such as better definition of a project for new work, data collection or round-robin tests necessary to develop standards, which is not part of the standardization process.

At this stage, a Publicly Available Specification (IEC-PAS) can be prepared and submitted to an approval process that takes two months

Proposal stage

A proposal for new work generally originates from industry via a National Committee. It is communicated to the members of the appropriate TC or SC accompanied by a form. A simple majority vote of members on the interest of studying the proposal takes place within three months. If the result is positive and a minimum of four members or 25 % of the P-members, whichever is greater, undertake to participate actively in the work and nominate experts, it is included in the work programme together with a project plan including target dates.

Preparatory stage

During this phase a Working Draft (WD) is prepared, generally by a project leader within a project team.

Committee stage

At this point the document is submitted to the National Committees as a committee draft (CD) for comment.

Enquiry stage

Before passing to the approval stage, the bilingual Committee Draft for Vote (CDV) is submitted to all National Committees for a five-month voting period. It is the last stage at which technical comments can be taken into consideration. The CDV is considered as approved if:

- a majority of two thirds of the votes cast by P-members is in favour, and if *
- the number of negative votes cast by all National Committees does not exceed one quarter of all the votes cast.

A revised version is then sent by the secretary to the Central Office within four months for Final Draft International Standard (FDIS) processing. Note: If a CDV is approved by a 100% majority, the subsequent stage (FDIS) may be skipped.


Approval stage

The FDIS is then circulated to the National Committees for a two-month voting period. Each National Committee's vote must be explicit: positive, negative or abstention.

An FDIS is approved if:

- a majority of two thirds of the votes cast by P-members is in favour, and if

* When it is planned that the document will become a Technical Specification (and not an International Standard), only the first criterion concerning two thirds of the votes needs to be fulfilled and the revised version is then sent to Central Office to be published.



– the number of negative votes cast by all National Committees does not exceed one quarter of all the votes cast.

If the document is approved, it is published. If the document is not approved, it is referred back to the TC or SC to be reconsidered.

Publication stage

This is entirely the responsibility of the Central Office and leads to publication of the International Standard, normally within two months of approval of the FDIS.

Numbering of publications

In 1997, at the recommendation of the ISO/IEC Joint Technical Advisory Board (JTAB), the IEC introduced a new numbering system for all of its International Standards, Guides and Technical Reports. The IEC uses a block of numbers ranging from 60000 to 79999 when assigning numbers to its publications. Existing publications also adopt this new numbering system. For example, the former IEC 34-1 is now referred to as IEC 60034-1. The 80000 series is allocated to multipart standards jointly developed by IEC and ISO in some exceptional case, in which some parts are published by ISO and others by IEC. The use of the ISO/IEC prefix is strictly limited to JTC1 publications as well as some ISO/IEC guides.

Document and project numbering

Working documents

All IEC technical documents intended for circulation carry a reference composed of three parts:

1. A number indicating the technical committee or subcommittee from which the document emanates;
2. A unique document number in a single chronological series for each TC or SC;
3. A letter code indicating the type of document.

For example, 49/347/DA is the 347th document originating from TC 49 and is a Draft Agenda.

Some of the approximately 20 letter codes, including RM (Reports on Meetings) and Q (Questionnaires), are for documents that will not become standards. Others, however, such as CD (Committee Draft) and FDIS (Final Draft International Standard), cover a variety of documents containing specific technical information which may be considered as a project or a standard under development.

Project numbers

Each work item assigned to a committee is given a project number consisting of the following elements:

1. A number indicating the technical committee or subcommittee responsible for the project;
2. A number giving the reference of the future standard;
3. A sequence of numbers referring to parts, sections, amendments and fragments.

For example, 49/61178-3-1/A2/f1 is the first fragment of the second amendment to the standard IEC 61178-3-1, which is the work of TC 49.

Miscellaneous details

Those interested in further details concerning the work of the IEC should refer to the ISO/IEC Directives (Parts 1 & 2). In particular, Part 2 (Rules for the structure and drafting of International Standards) gives all details required for drafting International Standards.

Conformity Assessment

The IEC's multilateral conformity assessment schemes, based on its International Standards, are truly global in concept and practice, reducing trade barriers caused by different certification criteria in different countries and helping industry to open up new markets. Removing the significant delays and costs of multiple testing and approval allows industry to be faster and cheaper to market with its products. With increasing market demand, the IEC is expanding its activities.



As technology becomes more complex, users and consumers are becoming more aware of their dependence on products whose design and construction they may not understand. In this situation, reassurance is needed that the product is reliable and will meet expectations in terms of performance, safety, durability and other criteria.

How can the industrial user and the final consumer be sure that the product they buy conforms to the criteria of an IEC standard? The IEC's three conformity assessment and product certification schemes exist to provide just this reassurance, and the regulatory nature of some products now also sees recognition of the CA schemes amongst some government regulators. The three schemes are:

- **IECEE** (www.iecee.org)

- **CB Scheme** for the mutual recognition of test certificates for electrical equipment (www.iecee.org/cbscheme/default.htm); and

- **CB-FCS Scheme** for mutual recognition of conformity assessment certificates for safety of electrical equipment (www.iecee.org/cb-fcs/default.htm);

- **IECQ** for the quality assessment of electronic components and associated materials and processes (www.iecq.org);

Note: IECQ is also providing a certification service for the Global Approval Program for Photovoltaics (PV GAP);

- **IECEX Scheme** Scheme for certification to standards for electrical equipment for explosive atmospheres (www.iecex.com).

Using IEC standards for certification at the national level ensures that a certified product has been manufactured and type-tested to well established International Standards. The end user can be sure that the product meets minimum (usually high) quality standards, and need not be concerned with further testing or evaluation of the product.



Part 3:

Publications



Numbering and review

All information on IEC publications can be found on the IEC web site (www.iec.ch). IEC publications can be identified by their IEC number, through the International Classification for Standards (ICS) system, or by the respective TC/SC responsible for that publication.

All IEC publications are subject to a maintenance cycle appropriate to the technology in the publication. In the IEC Catalogue of Publications the next date for evaluation is given in the field MRD (Maintenance Result Date). When the publication is evaluated a decision is taken as to whether the publication will be:

- confirmed for a further period;
- the subject of a complete revision;
- the subject of an amendment;
- withdrawn, as the publication is obsolete and of no further value.

Standards

Standards are publications resulting from international consensus on a particular area of technology with the prime objective of promoting international trade. Consensus is obtained by following a rigorous process required for the approval and publication of International Standards.

Technical Specifications

Technical Specifications approach International Standards in terms of detail and completeness, but have not yet passed through the approval stage either because consensus has not been reached or because standardization is seen to be premature.

Technical Reports

Technical Reports contain information of a kind different from that which would normally be published in an International Standard, for example data obtained from surveys or information on the "state of the art" of a particular area of technology. Technical Reports are non-normative documents.

IEC-PAS

Another IEC product for meeting market demands in rapidly developing technology are the IEC-PAS or publicly available specifications, which come from within the IEC technical committee structure. The objective of IEC-PAS is to speed up standardization in areas of rapidly developing technology. This process gets information to market quickly (since PAS are *de facto* standards) and transforms PAS into *de jure* international standards when they are approved and accepted by the international community. PAS are usually created by consortia and rapidly gain wide acceptance in the global market. They are brought into the IEC technical committee processes primarily by a new liaison mechanism with such consortia.

Guides

Guides are non-normative publications which give information and advise on matters relating to international standardization and conformity assessment activities.

Industry Technical Agreements (ITAs)

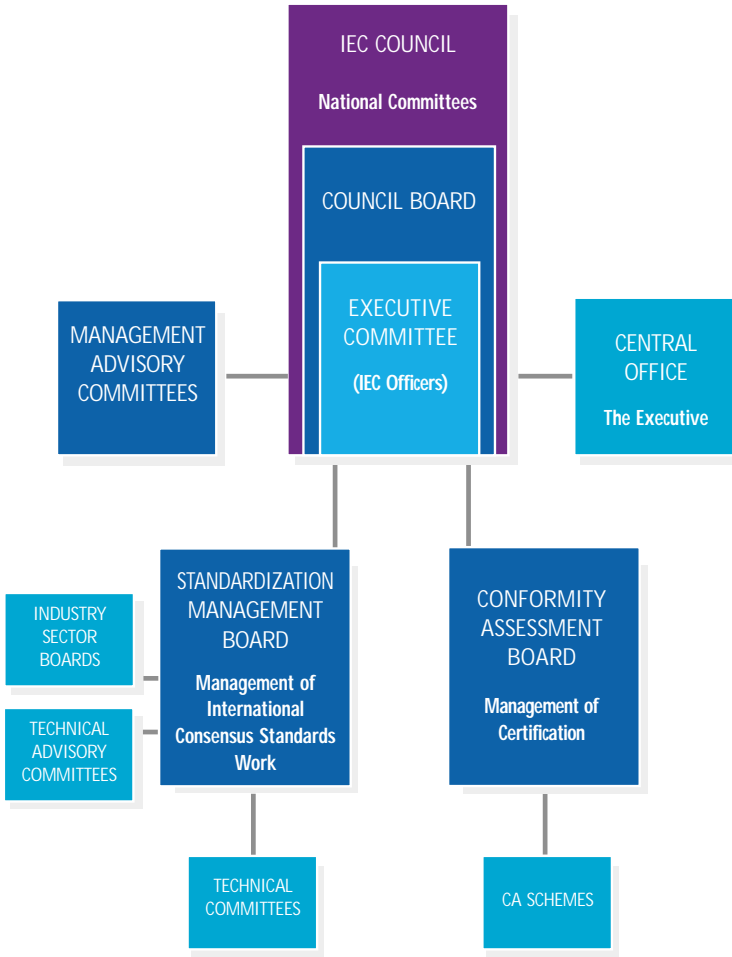
ITAs (Industry Technical Agreements) offer a platform for reaching technical agreements among key industry players in time-critical market sectors. ITAs are intended for use by industry where business and trade in high-technology products and services do not need consensus-based International Standards at market launch. They deliver a product in months rather than years. Workshops are made up of experts nominated by the industrial and user parties wishing to participate in the process and conclude the ITAs. ITAs are not reached within the existing IEC technical committee structure. These agreements may progress to International Standards or Technical Reports through the normal IEC TC/SC processes only if a market demand is foreseen.

Technology Trend Assessments (TTAs)

TTAs cover a stage between theoretical work and standardization. They are technical publications which provide early information on new technologies to help anticipate future standardization requirements.



IEC'S GOVERNING STRUCTURE



● LEGISLATIVE
 ● DECISION MAKING
 ● EXECUTIVE

Part 4:

IEC structure and management

The supreme authority of the IEC is the Council, which is the general assembly of the National Committees, who are the Commission's members. The IEC also comprises management, executive and advisory bodies and Officers. The Officers of the IEC are the President, Deputy President (Immediate Past President or President Elect), Vice-Presidents, Treasurer, and General Secretary.

Council

The Council sets IEC policy and long-term strategic and financial objectives. It delegates the management of all IEC work to the Council Board, with specific management responsibilities in the spheres of standards and conformity assessment being assumed by the Standardization Management Board (SMB) and the Conformity Assessment Board (CAB). The Council is a legislative body and comprises the IEC Officers, Past Presidents of the IEC and Presidents of the full member National Committees.

In addition to setting policy and being responsible for financial matters, the Council elects the IEC Officers, and the members and Chairmen of the Council Board, the Standardization Management Board and the Conformity Assessment Board. Council is responsible for revising IEC Statutes and Rules of Procedure and for appeal resolution from the Council Board. The Council meets at least once a year at the IEC General Meeting (a list of general meetings dating back to 1904 is available on the IEC web site at www.iec.ch/pagm-e.htm).

Council Board

The Council Board (CB) implements the IEC Council policy and makes policy recommendations to it. The CB is a decision-making

body that comprises the IEC Officers and 15 voting members elected by Council. The CB reports all its decisions to Council.

In addition, the CB endorses agendas and prepares documents for Council meetings, and receives and considers reports from the Standardization Management Board and Conformity Assessment Board. The CB also sets up advisory bodies, as needed, and is responsible for appointing chairmen and members of such advisory bodies. The CB normally meets at least twice a year.

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee (ExCo) implements Council's and Council Board's decisions and supervises the operation of the IEC Central Office as well as communication with IEC National Committees. The ExCo comprises the IEC Officers.

The ExCo also prepares agendas and documents for the Council Board. The ExCo normally meets at least four times a year.

Management advisory committees

President's Advisory Committee on future Technology (PACT)

This body advises the IEC President on new technologies that require preliminary or immediate standardization work. PACT is an advisory body and comprises the IEC President, the General Secretary and top-level industry and scientific executives.

PACT is designed to form a direct link with private and public research and development activities, keeping the IEC abreast of accelerating technological changes and the accompanying demand for new standards. Small industrial project teams examine new work initiatives that can be introduced into the regular IEC working structure.



Marketing Committee

The Marketing Committee (MC) is an advisory body to the Council Board that creates awareness of the IEC and its contribution to global trade. It comprises a chairman and members appointed by the CB.

The MC also promotes increased participation by key players who are most aware of market needs in appropriate IEC activities.

Sales Policy Committee

The Sales Policy Committee (SPC) is an advisory body to the Council Board that helps to plan sales policy and product strategy for the IEC. It comprises a chairman and members appointed by the CB. The chairman is automatically a member of the Marketing Committee.

The SPC's other responsibilities include planning the development of services to support members' sales and product promotion activities and IEC copyright policy.

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee is a consultative committee to the IEC Treasurer that advises him on all matters relating to IEC finances. It comprises the Treasurer, the IEC General Secretary and seven members appointed by the Council.

The Finance Committee also strengthens the liaison on financial matters between the Treasurer and the National Committees, and contributes to the exchange of financial information between the Officers and the National Committees of the IEC. The Finance Committee works by correspondence and meets only when required.

Standardization Management Board

The Standardization Management Board (SMB) is responsible for managing the IEC's standards work, including the creation, dissolution and scopes of the IEC technical committees, the timeliness of standards production and liaisons with other international organizations

and consortia. The SMB is a decision-making body and comprises a chairman, the IEC General Secretary and 15 members (and alternates) elected by Council. It reports all its decisions to the Council Board and to all National Committees.

The SMB is also responsible for appointing secretariats and chairmen of TCs and ensures that priorities for the technical work are set according to the recommendations of the IEC Sector Boards, technical advisory committees and technical committees. The SMB normally meets at least three times a year.

Sector Boards

Sector Boards report to the Standardization Management Board and are responsible for advising on priorities and ensuring the continuing market relevance of IEC standards. Sector Boards comprise senior executives with market awareness who provide strategic guidance.

Sector Boards work with all technical committees in an industry sector also to ensure coherence at the systems level. At present, Sector Boards cover electricity transmission and distribution, industrial automation systems and infrastructure of telecommunications networks. The IEC has plans to create further Sector Boards.

Technical advisory committees

The IEC's four Standardization Management Board advisory committees on electronics and telecommunications, safety, electromagnetic compatibility, and the environment help to ensure horizontal co-ordination and the inclusion of relevant requirements in IEC standards.

- **ACET** (Advisory Committee on Electronics and Telecommunications) groups the chairmen and secretaries of the relevant TCs
- **ACOS** (Advisory Committee on Safety) is composed of members appointed by the Standardization Management Board and of members from relevant TCs. ACOS assigns "horizontal safety functions" to certain TCs for the preparation of basic safety publications. It also

assigns "safety group functions" to TCs involved with families of products for preparing group safety publications.

- **ACEC** (Advisory Committee on Electromagnetic Compatibility) groups individual members, members from the International Special Committee on Radio Interference (CISPR), TC 77 members, and members of IEC product TCs.
- **ACEA** (Advisory Committee on Environmental Aspects) co-ordinates and focuses the IEC's efforts to ensure that IEC product standards don't harm the environment. It is composed of 12 individual members knowledgeable in environmental matters and standardization.

Conformity Assessment Board

The Conformity Assessment Board (CAB) is responsible for the overall management of the IEC's conformity assessment activities. The CAB is a decision-making body and comprises a chairman, 12 voting members (and alternates) elected by Council, one representative from each IEC conformity assessment scheme, the IEC Treasurer and General Secretary. It reports all its decisions to the Council Board.

The CAB is also responsible for evaluating and modifying IEC conformity assessment activities, including approval of their budgets, as well as liaison with other international organizations on conformity assessment matters. The CAB meets at least once a year.

Central Office

Right at the hub of all IEC activities, the Central Office plays a particularly important part in the smooth progress of work through the support it gives to TCs and SCs, as well as to the National Committees.

The Central Office supervises proper application of the Statutes, Rules of Procedure and Directives and implements Council and

Council Board decisions under the supervision of the Executive Committee. By means of its modern electronic data processing and telecommunications equipment, the Central Office staff ensure project management, transmission of working documents and the publication of final texts of standards. It takes part in the organization of the annual General Meeting as well as grouped or individual meetings of TCs and SCs convened on invitation by National Committees.

On-line information sources, such as electronic publishing and a site on the World Wide Web, help the IEC meet demands from governments, industry and the general public.

International Partners

On-line information sources, such as electronic publishing and a site on the World Wide Web, help the IEC meet demands from governments, industry and the general public.

ISO and ITU

The IEC works closely with its international standardization partners, the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), other regional standardization organizations and international organizations, including the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Labour Office (ILO), the International Commission on Illumination (CIE), and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the International Council on Large Electric Systems (CIGRE), the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the International Organization of Legal Metrology (OIML) and the Union of the Electricity Industry (EURELECTRIC).

An initial agreement was signed with ISO in 1976 and 10 years later the two bodies established Joint Technical Committee 1 (JTC 1) to cover the vast and expanding field of information technology.

Governmental Agencies

One of the IEC's principal partners is the World Trade Organization (WTO), whose 100-plus central government members explicitly recognize, through

their Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), that International Standards play a critical role in improving industrial efficiency and developing world trade. These relations at government level are of particular importance in heavily regulated areas like safety, health and the environment. The number of standardization bodies which have accepted the Code of Good Practice for the Preparation, Adoption and Application of Standards presented in Annex 3 to the WTO's Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade underlines the global importance and reach of this accord.

The IEC encourages industrializing nations to share in the benefits of joining in its work and liaises closely with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the World Bank, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Regional Partners

The IEC works to achieve harmonization of standards among regional standardization organizations, such as CANENA, CENELEC, COPANT, EASC, ETSI and PASC. A joint working agreement exists with the European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization (CENELEC), comprising some 20 IEC National Committees. In addition, the IEC has agreements with CANENA, COPANT, EASC and ETSI, based on the exchange of information.

Co-operation between the IEC and CENELEC

The co-operation agreement between the IEC and CENELEC ratified in September 1996, and commonly known as the Dresden Agreement, relates to common planning of new work and parallel IEC/CENELEC voting.

The object of this agreement is to avoid duplication of efforts, speed up standards preparation and to ensure the best use of the resources available and particularly of experts' time. If the results of parallel voting are positive in both the IEC and CENELEC, the IEC will publish the International Standard, while the CENELEC Technical Board will ratify the European Standard.

Note: for more details, copies of the Dresden Agreement are available from the Central Office.

List of acronyms

ACEA	Advisory Committee on Environmental Aspects
ACEC	Advisory Committee on Electromagnetic Compatibility
ACET	Advisory Committee on Electronics and Telecommunications
ACOS	Advisory Committee on Safety
CAB	Conformity Assessment Board
CANENA	Consejo de Armonización de Normas Electrotécnicas de las Naciones de las America (Council for Harmonization of Electrotechnical Standardization of the Nations of the Americas)
CB	Council Board
CD	Committee Draft
CDF	Comité des finances (Finance Committee)
CDV	Committee Draft for Vote
CENELEC	Comité Européen de Normalisation Electrotechnique (European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization)
CIE	Commission Internationale de l'Eclairage (International Commission on Illumination)
GIGRÉ	Conseil International des Grands Réseaux Electriques (International Council on large Electric Systems)
COPANT	Comisión Panamericana de Normas Técnicas (Pan American Standards Commission)
EASC	Euro-Asian Interstate Council for Standardization
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ETSI	European Telecommunications Standards Institute
EURELECTRIC	Union of the Electricity Industry
ExCo	Executive Committee
FDIS	Final Draft International Standard
IEC-PAS	IEC-Publicly Available Specification
IECEE	IEC System for Conformity Testing and Certification of Electrical Equipment
IECEX	IEC Scheme for Certification to Standards for Electrical Equipment for Explosive Atmospheres
IECQ	IEC Quality Assessment System for Electronic Components
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMO	International Maritime Organization
ISO	International Organization for Standardization

IT	Information Technology
ITA	Industry Technical Agreement
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
JPEG	Joint Photographic Experts Group
JTAB	Joint Technical Advisory Board
JTC 1	ISO/IEC Joint Technical Committee on Information Technology
MC	Management Committee
MPEG	Motion Picture Experts Group
NC	National Committee
OIML	Organisation Internationale de Métrologie Légale (International Organization of Legal Metrology)
O-MEMBER	Observer Member (of a TC or SC)
P-MEMBER	Participating Member (of a TC or SC)
PASC	Pacific Area Standards Congress
PACT	President's Advisory Committee on future Technologies
PV GAP	Global Approval Program for Photovoltaics
Q	Questionnaire
RM	Report of Meeting
SC	Subcommittee
SMB	Standardization Management Board
SPC	Sales Policy Committee
TBT	Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade
TC	Technical Committee
TTA	Technology Trend Assessment
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
WD	Working Draft
WTO	World Trade Organization



International Electrotechnical Commission

3, rue de Varembe
CH-1211 Geneva 20
Switzerland
Telephone: +41 22 919 0211
Telefax: +41 22 919 0300
E-mail: info@iec.ch
Web: www.iec.ch

