ICONTEC hosted the ISO workshop about

INCREASING CONSENSUS AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

9-11 December 2013, Bogotá, Colombia

The workshop was aimed at providing guidance to national standards bodies (NSBs) on how to involve stakeholders, and to communicate to stakeholders the benefits of participating actively in standards development. The workshop was also meant as an opportunity to share experiences and to discuss best practices with a view to define concrete steps for increasing stakeholder engagement in standardization work at the national and international level.

Workshop Participants

The workshop was facilitated by

Mr Staffan Söderberg, independent consultant and ISO Expert from Sweden
Mrs Sophie Clivio, Manager, Technical Policy (ISO)
Mr Stephen Cornish, Director of International Policy at ANSI (USA)

Experts from NSBs and stakeholders representatives from the following countries attend the workshop: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Rep., Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Jamaica, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago and Uruguay.

The workshop was opened by Maria Zulema Velez, Executive Director of ICONTEC, the national standards body hosting the event, who gave a warm welcome to the participants.

Later María Laura Prada take the floor, representing stakeholders in Colombia, from the multinational company Corona, dedicated to the manufacture and marketing of products for home and construction, who shared the reasons that motivated her company to participate in standardization, naming the need to build networks of the national ceramic industry, internal learning, knowledge generation and continuous updating; the expectations they have regarding standardization are to increase the participation of different stakeholders, quicker update of national standards by following the international work through the standards mirror committees and align the infrastructure of the national laboratories.
The workshop consisted of presentations by the expert facilitators regarding the procedures of ISO and the explanation of the document “Guidance for ISO NSBs – Enganging stakeholders and building consensus” and secondly group discussions to share experiences and lessons learned from the participants about their efforts to involve stakeholders in the processes of national and international standards.

The discussions were based on a previous survey sent to participants and they were also provided with a form entitled “Self-Assessment Tool” as a tool to measure the effectiveness of the actions taken by the NSB to involve stakeholders in the standardization process.

The key findings of the workshop were the following:

- The NSBs are neutral platforms and require the expertise of stakeholders to enrich the content of their standards
- The fundamental principles of the standardization process is openness and transparency, that should in addition be publicly available
- Every country is different, however there are many similarities and each region share more than they think and can save a lot of time working cooperatively
- The NSBs are already working with various stakeholders, which must be engaged at an early stage of the process
- The importance of national mirror committees is to accompany the study of (new or revised) international standards and not simply to translate and adopt them when they already been published
- Each NSBs can improve its focus on approaching stakeholders to involve them and build consensus
- It is important to promote awareness and continuous training of stakeholders supported by those stakeholders most engaged, include information documents on the websites of the NSBs and start training projects on “Education about Standards”.

Note: Two ISO publications that help training members of the committee:

- My job at ISO
- Joining it