



**Criteria for
Designation
as an
Australian Standard**

27 September 2007

Application of the Criteria

These criteria in Part A and Part B apply to the preparation, amendment, reconfirmation or withdrawal of an Australian Standard and comprise the minimum requirements for designation as an Australian Standard.

These criteria are to be read in conjunction with the *Requirements for Accreditation of Standards Development Organisations*.

PART A Criteria – New Project Registration

The Standards Development Organisation ('SDO') is required to document compliance with the following Part A criteria in relation to each proposed Standard when registering the project with the National Standards Office ('NSO').

1 - Relevance

A Standard must provide a value or benefit to the Australian community that exceeds the costs likely to be imposed on suppliers, users and other parties in the community as a result of its development and implementation.

- 1.1 The SDO must define the scope and intent of each proposed Standard and demonstrate:
- a. the need for the proposed Standard;
 - b. a broad base of support for the development of the proposed Standard;
 - c. the benefits and potential or actual impacts of implementing the Standard;
 - d. the costs required to implement and comply with the proposed Standard;
 - e. whether the Standard will be prescriptive or performance based and how this is appropriate for the objectives of the Standard; and
 - f. why the proposed Standard will not create a restraint of trade or inhibit innovation.

2 - Values

A Standard must be consistent with the national interest and public benefit.

- 2.1 The SDO must demonstrate:
- a. the relationship between the proposed Standard and the national interest and/or the public benefit as applicable in terms of one or more of the following:
 - i. support for innovation, trade and economic benefit,
 - ii. advancement of the health, safety and wellbeing of the community
 - iii. protection of the natural environment
 - iv. international competitiveness
 - b. that the proposed Standard will take account of the most widely used technology .

3 - Duplication

There must not be more than one set of requirements dealing with any given subject however, there may be alternative solutions or methods of assessment achieving the same performance outcome.

- 3.1 The SDO must demonstrate either:
 - a. that the proposed Standard will not create duplication, or
 - b. provide adequate justification for any duplication or apparent duplication.
- 3.2 The SDO must demonstrate that the proposed Standard is within the SDO 's scope of accreditation.

4 - Timeliness

A Standard must be able to be prepared in a reasonable timeframe considering the nature and complexity of the Standard, the needs of the specific user group, industry, government and the community and the resources available.

- 4.1 There must be a development plan for each Standard which describes –
 - a. The objectives of the Standard
 - b. The specific groups to take part in the development of the Standard, such as industry, government, community and other interested parties
 - c. The Standards development process to be followed
 - d. The anticipated timeframe for completion of the proposed Standard and how this meets the needs and expectations of the specific user group, industry, government and the community; and
 - e. Any dependencies that may impact the timely completion of the Standard.

The development plan must be updated at regular intervals throughout the Standards development process.

PART B Criteria – Final Process Approval

The SDO is required to document compliance with the following Part B criteria when applying to the National Standards Office for final process approval.¹

1 – Independent Facilitation

The Standards Development Process must be co-ordinated and overseen with sufficient independence and neutrality to ensure compliance with intent of the *Criteria for Designation as an Australian Standard*.

- 1.1 An SDO must be able to demonstrate freedom from bias and conflict of interest between its role as a facilitator of the Standards Development Process and any role it may have as a participant in the process.
- 1.2 A person must be appointed and made responsible for the development of the Standard and provided with the authority, autonomy and resources necessary to enable them to demonstrate compliance with these Criteria.

2 - Consensus

Consensus must be achieved in relation to the technical content of the Standard.

- 2.1 Each Standard must have a corresponding Standards Reference Body ('SRB')² that:
 - a. Meets the requirements of Part B *Criteria 3 – Balanced Representation*; and
 - b. Is independent and has the authority to reach consensus on technical matters within the scope of the Standard.
- 2.2 Evidence of consensus must be a formal vote, with all members of the SRB being given the opportunity to vote.

Consensus is achieved when all of the major interests involved with the subject of the Standard have collectively accepted the content of the document and have voted affirmatively. This normally implies a unanimous affirmative vote, but occasionally it may be achieved where there are one or more outstanding negative votes.

If the SRB has made all reasonable efforts, but is still unable to resolve one or more negative votes, consensus may be deemed to have been achieved if

- a minimum 67% of those eligible to vote have voted affirmatively, and
- a minimum 80% of votes received are affirmative, and
- no major interest involved with the subject of the Standard has collectively maintained a negative vote.

¹ These criteria do not apply to SDO's that have authority for process approval under the *Requirements for Accreditation*

² A Standards Reference *Body* is a balanced and representative group of specific users, industry, government, community and other interested parties, who provide direction to the SDO on the development of a specific Standard and who are responsible for demonstrating that consensus has been achieved in relation to that Standard.

3 - Balanced Representation

The SDO must make every effort to ensure that the Standards Reference Body comprises a balanced representation from all major stakeholder interests relevant to the Standard.

- 3.1 No one interest may have disproportionate representation or exercise undue influence.
- 3.2 No relevant interest group with a bona fide desire to participate may be excluded from the Standards Reference Body.
- 3.3 Credible attempts must be made to involve significant interests and, as far as reasonably practicable, to achieve meaningful engagement. As a minimum, the SDO must inform these parties about the Standards development activity, and take proactive steps to encourage their involvement. Where a major sector does not accept the invitation to participate, the SDO must determine whether the obstacle is due to:
- Lack of resources
 - Lack of interest in the subject; or
 - Lack of confidence in the structural or procedural aspects of the process

If one of these issues is the obstacle, the SDO must make reasonable efforts to address the obstacle.

- 3.4 The interest categories relevant to the Standard (eg. 'producer', 'user') must be defined and available on request. The balance between these interests must be clearly defined.
- 3.5 Any changes to the constitution of the Standards Reference Body must be recorded, including the rationale for the change, and be available for audit.

4 - Consultation

Parties outside the Standards Reference Body must be allowed a reasonable opportunity to have input into the Standards Development Process.

- 4.1 The SDO must publish in a range of suitable media details of the Standard being developed and allow sufficient time for a response from those with an interest in its activities in accordance with ISO/IEC Guide 59 *Code of Good Practice for Standardization*. Information should be readily accessible and should include the work to be undertaken and the formation of any new Standards Reference Bodies.
- 4.2 A draft of the Standard achieved through consensus must be made available for public comment in a suitable media and a reasonable period allowed for the receipt of feedback. The SDO's processes must include a mechanism to receive, review, consider and record the disposition of all feedback.

5 - Transparency

The Standards Development Process must be open and transparent.

- 5.1 The documentation relating to the history of development of a Standard must provide objective evidence of compliance with the *Criteria for Designation as an Australian Standard* and be made available to industry, government and the community as required. Specific reference must be made to the action taken where unanimity was not reached during the development process.
- 5.2 All aspects of the Standards development process must be documented and available to verify that the processes have been followed. Records that must be kept include-
 - a. The development plan,
 - b. Standards Reference Body or work group composition (interest groups)
 - c. Draft documents
 - d. Stakeholder comments and their disposition; and
 - e. Final published Standard
- 5.3 The SDO must have a documented process to accept and respond to public feedback on the standard and a documented dispute resolution procedure for the timely hearing of complaints related to Australian Standards and any aspect of the Standards Development Process. The appeals procedures must be impartial, maximise participation and must not impose an undue burden on any party.

6 – International Alignment

A Standard must meet in the requirements of Standards Australia's Policy Guide on Adoption of International Standards.

- 6.1 All new and revised Standards are to be based on International Standards to the maximum extent feasible and use the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (commonly referred to as the TBT Agreement) as a benchmark.
- 6.2 Standards Australia's Policy Guide on Adoption of International Standards forms one of the bases for the Memorandum of Understanding between the Commonwealth Government and Standards Australia. It provides a mechanism to ensure that the obligations of the Australian Government as a signatory to the TBT Agreement as they affect standards that might be referenced in technical regulations are implemented.

7. National Compatibility

A Standard must incorporate or be compatible with related, broadly-used Standards where possible.

- 7.1 The SDO must make all reasonable attempts to achieve harmonization with existing national Standards, and where this is not possible the SDO must document reasons for any deviation.
- 7.2 SDO's must have regard for the interface between Standards and all reasonable efforts must be made to avoid the creation of conflicting requirements between Standards on the same or similar subjects.

ABSDO

Terminology

In addition to the following terms, the definitions in *ISO/IEC 17000 Conformity Assessment: Vocabulary and general principles* shall apply.

Standards Reference Body – Means a balanced and representative group of specific users, industry, government, community and other interested parties, who provide direction to the SDO on the development of a specific Standard and who are responsible for demonstrating that consensus has been achieved in relation to that Standard.

Criteria for Designation as an Australian Standard – Means the criteria for designation as an Australian Standard described in this document.

National Standards Office means the body responsible for oversight, co-ordination and governance of Standards development and related activities.

Standard means an Australian Standard developed in compliance with the *Criteria for Designation as an Australian Standard* and approved on behalf of the Council of Standards Australia as an Australian Standard

Standards Development Organisation means an organisation accredited by the Accreditation Board for Standards Development Organisations to develop Australian Standards.

Standards Development Process means the process used to develop a Standard in compliance with the *Criteria for Designation as an Australian Standard*.