



IEC 2018 Regulator Forum

Report and recommendations

Table of contents

1. Abstract.....	2
2. Standards and conformity assessment	2
3. Breaking down silos.....	2
4. Fast pace of technological evolution	3
5. Standards and conformity assessment in the regulatory process.....	3
6. Representing the interests of consumers	3
7. Supporting regulators	4
8. Strengthening the system	4
9. Recommendations.....	4
9.1 For regulators: acquire more knowledge about standards and conformity assessment	4
9.2 For IEC: improve engagement and outreach	4
10. Conclusions.....	5

1. Abstract

More than 150 stakeholders from across the renewable energy sector have attended the first IEC Regulator Forum. The ground-breaking meeting took place during the 2018 IEC General Meeting, in Busan, South Korea.

Energy producers, suppliers and transmission and distribution system operators joined representatives of regulatory bodies and standardization and conformity assessment experts for an engrossing exchange of ideas. The consensus was that standards organizations and regulators needed to find ways to work together more closely in order to achieve key societal and economic goals.

Participants identified a number of important objectives shared by standards organizations and regulators from both the executive and legislative branches. Shared objectives include facilitating international trade, bolstering economic competitiveness and enhancing safety and efficiency.

This short report includes an overview of the meeting with representative quotes and a list of key recommendations from participants.

2. Standards and conformity assessment

“Reference to standards helps keep regulations simple, eliminating the need for long technical details. International standards help to avoid island solutions and they encourage the cooperation of different stakeholders towards a common outcome,” the IEC General-Secretary and CEO, Frans Vreeswijk, told the meeting.

Mr. Vreeswijk underlined the importance of combining standards with conformity assessment. Standards provide written instructions, while testing and certification verify that those instructions are properly applied in real-world technical systems. He said that standards and conformity assessment facilitated the work of regulators by providing technical frameworks, metrics and specifications that were revised as technologies evolved.

“Standards together with conformity assessment are important tools for the regulators. They promote best regulatory practice by providing reference points that allow laws and regulations to stay up to date.”

“Testing and certification, including the four IEC conformity assessment systems, are crucial to build a quality and market surveillance infrastructure that verifies the safety and reliability of the goods that enter the national market.”

3. Breaking down silos

Chris Villarreal, a veteran of the electricity regulatory policy industry in the United States, including two years as Director of Policy at the Minnesota PUC, said, “It’s important that the entire community are working together to address and break down silos.”

“It’s not just regulator and regulator,” said Mr. Villarreal, “but regulator and utility, utility and market, vendor and market, working together to come up with a solution that’s based on standards that enable both the policies of government and also the goals of society.”

He said that regulators had a critically important coordination role but they needed help from the standardization bodies to inform their policy decisions. It would also help, he said, if utilities were more transparent about the standards they employed to support reliability, safety and everyday business practices.

He urged the IEC to build on previous experiences of working with regulators, such as in the nuclear industry, rather than trying to reinvent the wheel.

4. Fast pace of technological evolution

The President of the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), Michael Picker, argued that the fast pace of technology changes made it increasingly urgent for regulators and standards experts to find more effective ways of working together.

“The challenge that we both face is that there are intense amounts of innovation taking place, some of which is visible only to the local regulators and may not show up as a priority,” he said.

“So having new ways to actively relate between local regulators and IEC is becoming more and more important. But I don’t see that we’ve yet found ways to do that.”

5. Standards and conformity assessment in the regulatory process

Hein Bollens, Deputy Head of Unit for European Standardisation in the [Directorate General in charge of Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs](#), said that ideally standards should be an integral and seamless part of the regulatory process. “The best standard is the one you do not see,” he said.

“Nowadays there is the need for having standards in a regulatory context to make sure, for example at the European level, that European policies are being endorsed and implemented. More and more legislators are looking for alternatives to legislation and therefore we need to learn from each other and know from each other about the requirements, be they legislative requirements or technical requirements, to make sure that the standards would be timely and available to implement those legislations.”

Dr. Thomas Zielke of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy said that the German government had seats in the management boards of the German standardization organizations because of the importance of standards to all stakeholders. He emphasized, however, that the government did not influence the standardization process, preferring to finance innovative standardization research on a project-related basis.

“This ensures that standardizers serve the business community and stakeholders from the civil society and not just the government alone,” Dr. Zielke said.

6. Representing the interests of consumers

Honoré Bogler, the Chairman of the [ECOWAS Regional Electricity Regulatory Authority](#) for West Africa echoed his views. “Regulators, in their jobs, have to protect consumers and they are interested in the quality and efficiency of the materials brought to consumers in the electricity business,” said Professor Bogler.

Gerda De Jong, representing the European Network of Transmission System Operators for Electricity ([ENTSOE](#)) argued that the role of the regulator was to represent the needs of the customer to the standards organizations. “The customer wants to be more active in the market and wants to be able to access all markets freely,” she said.

“Since the customers are very diverse, very distributed and don’t have the resources to participate in the IEC, for example, we think it’s very important that the regulator can be a surrogate, the voice of the customer.”

7. Supporting regulators

Stefano Bracco, Team Leader of the Security Office in the Director's Office at the [Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators](#), said that working together meant sharing plans, projects and agendas. He suggested that IEC should consider mapping standards with case studies and templates to help regulators understand their value and importance.

“Regulators are sometimes confused because they have so much information that they cannot even catch up with it,” he said.

8. Strengthening the system

IEC President James Shannon noted that several speakers had signalled a clear need to strengthen the educational process between the IEC and regulators. He said that too few policymakers understood the unique international system of standards and conformity assessment for advancing technology and improving safety and reliability.

He cited Ms. De Jong and said it was important to have a dialogue between standards bodies and regulators to ensure that the wider needs of society were taken fully into account.

“I’ve never really thought of the regulator as the surrogate for the consumer, but the regulator is the surrogate for the consumer. Consumers of medical technology or energy are not going to come and participate qua consumers in the IEC but the regulator is the voice of the consumer in that context.

“I think it’s vitally important that we strengthen the system, strengthen the process and we strengthen the relationship between IEC and the regulatory community,” Mr. Shannon concluded.

9. Recommendations

9.1 For regulators: acquire more knowledge about standards and conformity assessment

1. Regulators should prioritize international standards in order to remove technical barriers to trade. In areas such as cyber security adhering to international standards is crucial.
2. Regulators should regard IEC National Committees as their main interface for gathering information and conveying standardization needs.
3. Institutions should share their plans, projects and agendas with the IEC as part of a two-way flow of information.
4. Regulators should be inspired by the UNECE WP 6 initiative to develop harmonized programmes for international regulation supported by standards.

9.2 For IEC: improve engagement and outreach

1. Raise awareness about standards and conformity assessment, wherever possible by simplifying IEC messaging and avoiding the use of jargon and acronyms.
2. Help IEC National Committees to be the main conduits of information to regulators.

3. Provide regulators with training and briefing papers to help them understand how standards can support their policy goals.
4. Collect a selection of case studies demonstrating how international standards and conformity assessment services are used by regulators around the world.
5. Develop “one-stop shop” packages of standards and conformity assessment that cater to specific sectors, products and services. This would combine IEC standards with those of other standards bodies to help regulators save time and effort.
6. Tailor IEC brochures for regulators as executive briefing papers. Produce regular webinars.
7. Develop and implement a coordinated outreach programme to provide regulators with regular information and to collect feedback.

10. Conclusions

Participants highlighted the importance of having effective exchanges of information in order to foster closer collaboration. Regulators need more data to understand the contribution that standards and conformity assessment make towards achieving societal and market goals. At the same time, standards experts require more input about the needs of regulators.

Delegates suggested that regulators could interact more efficiently with standards and conformity assessment experts via the National Committees. This might make it possible to align the standardization process more closely with the regulatory life cycle to develop standards “just in time”.

Delegates pointed out that the IEC had the advantage of being able to build on previous experiences of working with regulators and to apply the lessons learned to all other sectors: “There is no need to re-invent the wheel.” Most found the Regulator Forum a valuable experience and an important first step in bringing the two worlds closer. “I think this forum is very beneficial for me,” said Professor Jayoon Koo, former Chairman of the [South Korea’s Electricity Regulatory Commission](#) (KOREC) and former board member of the [Korea Electric Power Corporation](#) (KEPCO). “it gave me the opportunity to understand what other countries are doing.”