TO ALL NATIONAL COMMITTEES
TO ALL IEC MANAGEMENT BOARD MEMBERS
TO ALL TC/SC OFFICERS
TO ALL IEC CA SYSTEMS OFFICERS

Feedback from the CA Systems to the IEC TC/SCs

Dear Sir/Madam,

1. Introduction

With reference to the SMB Decisions 156/14 and 159/19, this Administrative Circular provides further information about the feedback processes related to CA Systems decision sheets.

2. Background

The IEC CA Systems are key customer users of IEC standards and their feedback on the practical testing and verification of those standards is valuable to the standards writers and should be treated accordingly. IEC CA Systems have committees and expert groups that are harmonizing the application of standards for conformity assessment purposes such as testing, inspection, auditing and certification. To ensure that testing and evaluation to IEC standards is done under the same conditions and circumstances worldwide within the CA Systems with the goal of achieving consistent results, these committees and expert groups are defining common understanding and methodology (where necessary), and documenting their results in decision sheets.

While in some areas, this process is already well managed with involvement of both the CA System experts and the TC experts (see the best practices employed by IECEx and TC 31), some other areas would benefit from improvement to the current situation by creating a formal quality improvement feedback path between the CA Systems and the standards development TC/SCs with the objective of reducing the number of decisions sheets by adapting the normative documents themselves (as far as appropriate) with the ultimate goal of obtaining higher consistency and reproducibility of CA results.

3. Actions for CA Systems and TCs/SCs

The Officers of CA Systems and TC/SCs are expected to take into account:

- The need for CA Systems to involve TC/SCs when developing decision sheets;
- The opportunity for TC/SCs to comment on draft decision sheets;
- The need for published decision sheets to be submitted to TC/SCs in case it is necessary to clarify ambiguities or correct errors in their normative documents;
- The opportunity for TC/SCs to communicate their feedback about DSs to the CA Systems;
- The need to improve communications between all CA Systems and the relevant TC/SCs by offering participation in each other's meetings, as is already the case in certain areas.

It is at the CA System's discretion when to implement a decision sheet.

4. Procedure

Each CA System shall have a published operational procedure (e.g. Operational Document OD) in place that satisfies the above requirements. This Procedure shall be publicly accessible, possibly via the CA System's own website. In the absence of a published operational procedure, the CA System will adopt the following procedure. All relevant TC/SCs shall adopt the following procedure.

All decision sheets (and/or other appropriate feedback information), shall be submitted by the CA System Executive Secretary directly to the relevant TC/SC(s) Secretary(s) who will immediately acknowledge receipt. The TC Secretary will then circulate this information amongst the subgroup(s) of the TC/SC concerned. This subgroup(s) shall evaluate the decision sheet (and other feedback information) and provide a written report to the respective CA System describing in which way this information will be taken into account. The possible ways that a decision sheet (and other feedback information) may be taken into account is entirely up to the TC/SC, but can be:

- Rejecting the content, but only with substantive argumentation
- Adopting the content and:
  - Issue a corrigenda or an amendment (acc. 2.10.3 of the IEC supplement)
  - Issue an interpretation sheet (acc. 2.10.5 of the IEC supplement)
  - Include it in the next revision of the standard (adapting the maintenance date or not)

The TC/SC report shall contain reasonable justifications and shall be submitted to the relevant CA System Secretariat(s) within 4 weeks after having received the decision sheet (and/or feedback information). When extensive discussion or confirmation within the TC/SC is required, the report shall be submitted to the relevant CA System Secretariat(s) within 4 weeks after the next relevant meeting was held. The TCs are requested to invite expert(s) from the CA System(s) as far as appropriate.

To enhance the mutual understanding of the different views it is proposed to allow:

- IEC CA Systems to nominate observers to TC plenary meetings and relevant TC/SC WGs.
- TC/SCs to nominate observers to IEC CA Management Committee meetings and their subgroups responsible for decision sheets.

Yours faithfully,

F.W.P. Vreeswijk
General Secretary & CEO

JRS/DHA