



**SG13/046A/INF**

# **Guidelines for Consortia Working with IEC Committees**

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## **WORKING WITH IEC COMMITTEES**

### **Guidelines for Consortia**

#### **1 Introduction**

The International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) recognizes the very important role that consortia play in the development of standards and the adoption and use of these standards worldwide.

The IEC Strategic Plan acknowledged this role and identified the need to further facilitate consortia participation and encourage the formation of additional partnerships.

This document is part of the plan to better explain the ways in which consortia can work with the IEC in the development of standards. Such cooperation is viewed as a win-win situation for both parties and allows consortia to:

- gain access to the internationally recognized IEC consensus-based standardization process
- ensure that their work contributes to the international consensus and complies with World Trade Organization (WTO) rules
- ensure that their publications are internationally recognized
- strengthen their market position by facilitating the identification of other relevant global standards and conformity assessment requirements
- gain access to a well-developed maintenance process of publications
- gain access to an international standardization network in their domain of work; and/or
- gain access to a variety of conformity assessment schemes, including access to an international network of test laboratories.

#### **2 Additional Contact information**

In addition to this document, the IEC has established a contact point for further enquires. This “Consortia Facilitator” may be reached at [consortia@iec.ch](mailto:consortia@iec.ch).

#### **3 Frequently Asked Questions**

This document is organized as a series of “frequently asked questions” (FAQs) which a consortium may encounter when considering potential cooperation with the IEC. Should a question not in this list be identified, you are encouraged to contact the Consortia Facilitator at the email address above, so that the IEC can add to this list.

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## **4.1 General questions about the IEC**

### **4.1.1 What is the IEC?**

[The IEC](#) is a worldwide, independent, not-for-profit membership organization (funded by membership fees and sales), which develops state-of-the-art, globally relevant International Standards for electrical, electronic and information technologies.

The IEC also provides a standardized approach to conformity assessment and offers unique services to support the testing and certification of components, products and systems, as well as the competence of persons.

IEC work impacts about 20% of global trade (in value) and looks at aspects such as safety, interoperability, performance and the environment for a vast range of technology areas, including energy, manufacturing, transportation, healthcare, homes, buildings and cities.

The IEC operates on an annual budget of approximately CHF 25 million. In addition to the direct operational costs of the IEC, industry and National Committees (NCs), which are the members of the IEC, invest an estimated USD 2 billion each year for expert participation in IEC work.

[The IEC Strategic Plan](#) describes the vision, mission, values and strategic objectives of the organization.

### **4.1.2 What are the activities of the IEC in the area of my consortium? Why is the IEC relevant to me?**

The IEC, with more than 100 years of expertise, is a global network of some 170 countries that covers 99% of the world's population and electricity generation. [IEC Committees](#) which include Technical Committees, Subcommittees and Systems Committees, develop International Standards that represent a global consensus of state-of-the-art know-how and expertise. The IEC involves more than 20'000 experts in more than 200 Committees.

In addition to standards development activities, the IEC also administers four different [Conformity Assessment Systems](#)

Examples of technical domains pertaining to the IEC work are electrical energy including smart energy, renewables, and energy efficiency; industrial products; household products and appliances; medical equipment; world plugs and socket systems; functional safety; industrial cybersecurity; and many more.

Examples of some of the latest established IEC Committees are Personal e-Transporters (2018), Low Voltage Direct Current for Electricity Access (2017), Wearable Electronic Devices and Technologies (2017), Decentralized Electrical Energy Systems (2017), or Management of Network Assets in Power Systems (2016).

### **4.1.3 How do I identify the specific IEC Committee I should work with?**

The IEC has identified a specific "Consortia Facilitator" ([consortia@iec.ch](mailto:consortia@iec.ch)) who is ready to provide assistance to consortia, including assistance in identifying specific IEC Committees.

## **4.2 Who are the IEC members/experts? What is the IEC management structure?**

The IEC is a global not-for-profit organization with [National Committees \(NC\)](#) as its members.

Every IEC member-one National Committee (NC) per country- establishes local committees to mirror the IEC electrotechnical standardization and conformity work. Representing all private and public interests in electrotechnology, they determine national positions and support the provision of national experts for the IEC international work. This structure supports the requirements of World Trade Organization (WTO) for international cooperation and agreement on standards development and approval.

Our [Management Structure](#) - The Council consists of the NCs, which elect the members of the Council Board (CB), Standardization Management Board (SMB) and Conformity Assessment Board (CAB). The Executive Committee (ExCo) includes the IEC Officers from the different

Boards. The Market Strategy Board (MSB) comprises a Chair and 15 top-level technology officers from global corporations as members appointed from industry.



#### 4.2.1 Is the IEC working with any consortium today?

Yes, the IEC has over 750 liaison arrangements with over 200 organizations, many of which are professional organizations, industry consortia and fora that share common objectives and technology insights to stay ahead of market trends. For the current list of consortia working with the IEC, [Go to partners and liaisons](#)

### 4.3 Benefits of working with the IEC

#### 4.3.1 What are the benefits for my consortium to work with the IEC?

There are many benefits for your consortium and the IEC working together:

**A world of Experts** - We can connect you to a national and global community of tens of thousands of leading technology experts. Together we can manage the rapid pace of digital, technology, market and societal changes.

**Inclusive participation** - We are transparent, consensus driven, and our Standards are globally accepted as “best practice”

**Ensure wide adoption of your specifications** - Use us as a tool for marketing and promotion to develop your specifications into an International Standard that will enjoy wide market adoption

**Gain recognition** - As your specifications mature into International Standards, you will gain access to expert committees and obtain the international recognition afforded to IEC Standards.

**Conformity testing** - We are the only organization that standardizes conformity assessment at the global level

**Enhance your reputation** - You can benefit from our recognized leadership role – for all fields of electrotechnology – in International Standards and Conformity Assessment.

**Access global markets** - If your inputs become part of IEC deliverables, you will gain fast track access to a wide global market.

**An independent voice** - We will help you to leverage the neutrality of the IEC to mitigate the influence of dominant technology players in your sector

**A two-way relationship** - IEC and consortia experts share insights to stay ahead of trends and anticipate future market developments. There are different ways for working or liaising with the IEC. Liaison always operates in both directions, with suitable reciprocal arrangements.

Some consortia collaborate actively with working groups, maintenance teams or project teams. Others prefer to gain simple access to reports on the work of a technical committee or subcommittee.

**Focus on what you do best** - We can save you the hassle of setting up rules, voting processes and membership charters because we already have everything in place.

**Help your bottom line** - Benefit from the world's most cost-effective platform for developing International Standards, including access to standard editors and global publication services.

#### **4.3.2 Are there past examples of good cooperation between the IEC and consortia?**

Yes, over the years, the IEC has been expanding and adjusting the services it offers to the global community. Whether it be for bringing consortia specifications to the IEC stream or bringing commercialized product standards to the IEC or accelerating international regulatory harmonization and convergence or for pushing the standardization to upstream in your innovation pipeline, we have several examples of case studies and best practices for a [win-win partnership](#).

#### **4.3.3 How can the IEC help my consortium?**

To become part of the IEC standard portfolio means a lifetime maintenance and updating of your transferred specifications. The IEC gives your transferred specifications sustainability and stability for many years ahead and as a consortium liaison you always have direct access to the IEC's large pool of Committee experts nominated by the IEC National Committees (NCs).

The IEC has one of the most efficient, rigorous and accepted process for developing and maintaining International Standards and other deliverables. The IEC offers access to world leading professional editors and technical experts. IEC processes meet the requirements of the World Trade Organization (WTO) to ensure that approved standards do not introduce unnecessary technical barriers to international trade. These processes are also sensitive to addressing regional differences, with specific methods to address mandated-by-government regional differences.

A cooperation with the IEC strengthens your consortium in many ways and gives your consortium a globally recognized footprint.

### **4.4 Participation in IEC work**

#### **4.4.1 How can I partner with the IEC for my work?**

- Are you in one of the IEC member countries? Then reach out to your IEC National Committee (NC). [Go to IEC National Committee](#)

They can tell you more about how you can get involved at the national level and/or the global level in the IEC. The NC is responsible for accrediting your experts to participate in the co-development of your standards development projects addressing your needs.

- In case where no relevant NC can be found please contact your nearest [IEC Office](#)
- The IEC has also identified a specific "Consortia Facilitator" ([consortia@iec.ch](mailto:consortia@iec.ch)) who is ready to provide assistance to you, including guidance in identifying specific IEC Committees most relevant to your needs and pathways to jump-start your partnership activities. An initial consultation with the Consortia Facilitator may clarify the options available to you.

#### **4.4.2 Which National Committee do I need to approach if my consortium has a global reach?**

As a first step, please contact an [IEC Office](#) or reach out to the Consortia Facilitator ([consortia@iec.ch](mailto:consortia@iec.ch)) to receive guidance.

#### **4.4.3 Can my consortium work with the IEC if it already has an agreement with another SDO?**

Yes, collaboration with the IEC is possible.

#### **4.4.4 How are my intellectual property rights (IPR) of my consortium's specifications respected?**

For the purposes of partnership, the IEC has different models for cooperation agreements and the details of the arrangements arising from IPR might differ from case to case.

For the purposes of developing and drafting standards, [common patent policy for IEC/ISO/ITU](#) and [copyright policy](#) will apply.

To bring the work of the industry fora and consortia into the realm of the IEC, we have designed a [publicly available specification](#) which speeds up standardization in areas of rapidly evolving technology and generally responds to an urgent market need.

#### **4.4.5 What about the existing logo (Trademark) of my specifications? Can I use the IEC logo on my specifications?**

The general answer is no, unless there is a particular dual logo agreement with the IEC (e.g. IEEE), which can be established in very exceptional cases. Once a consortium specification is transferred to the IEC the deliverable will contain the IEC logo only

#### **4.4.6 How much does it cost to participate in IEC work?**

The IEC does not charge any direct fee for participation of experts in its work.

Your expert members need to be nominated and accredited by your NC. Please refer to **4.4.1** above. The NC will provide you info on any further costs involved for your consortia.

For a liaison agreement between your consortia and the IEC, please consult with Consortia Facilitator ([consortia@iec.ch](mailto:consortia@iec.ch)) .

### **4.5 IEC work process**

#### **4.5.1 What is the process for developing standards within the IEC?**

The IEC has a well-established process for developing and maintaining standards. Please refer to our [Standards Development Process](#) .

#### **4.5.2 What are the various types of IEC publications?**

For a full list of IEC publications and their approval process, refer [publications](#)

#### **4.5.3 How do I propose new IEC standards or other publications?**

There are different ways for the consortia to liaise with the IEC for proposing new standards/publications. Some have liaison agreements with various working groups. Some collaborate actively with other consortia in a single IEC working group to define a single standard, with needed profiles added to address any differences. Yet others streamline their specification to meet IEC requirements for an International Standard to promote among its own member group and/or taken to be widely used in their industrial sector.

#### **4.5.4 What if I do not know what kind of documents would best fulfil my requirements?**

An initial consultation with the Consortia Facilitator ([consortia@iec.ch](mailto:consortia@iec.ch)) may clarify the options available. However, if the answer requires a more complex discussion with relevant experts, the consortium may wish to enter into a liaison agreement with the corresponding IEC Technical Committee so that an initial technical investigation can be carried out with IEC experts. This work can be initiated with a simple Preliminary Work Item (PWI) application only requiring simple approval by IEC Committee members. A successful PWI will add the work to the programme of the IEC Committee and this work can result in a proposal for a normative document or a simpler Technical Report (TR).

#### **4.5.5 Can I become a Project Leader or Convenor within the IEC?**

Yes, if you are nominated as a national expert by a National Committee (NC).

#### **4.5.6 How much time does it take to develop an IEC standard or other publications?**

It depends on the complexity of the technical field. The average time for development of an International Standard is about 32 months. This time can be considerably shorter if the consortium already has a mature candidate document. For example, there is a fast-track procedure which can take less than 6 months.

#### **4.5.7 How do I get international certification through the IEC?**

While the IEC is not a certification body, it supports both the development of standards and a conformity assessment programme based on IEC deliverables. The IEC manages the operation of four worldwide [conformity assessment systems \(CA\)](#)

### **4.6 IEC publications**

#### **4.6.1 Who owns the publication?**

Once it is an IEC publication the copyright belongs to the IEC. In exceptional cases, special agreements can be made with the IEC Central Office.

#### **4.6.2 How will the IEC handle and distribute our publications?**

All IEC publications are available from the [IEC Webstore](#), from National Committees (NCs), or from retailers and distributors.

#### **4.6.3 Are IEC publications free of charge?**

No, IEC publications are in general not free of charge.

#### **4.6.4 What happens to my publications if they currently are available free of charge?**

In general, IEC publications are not free of charge, some exceptions may however apply and need to be discussed with the IEC Central Office.

### **4.7 For more information**

#### **4.7.1 Which services can the IEC offer to my consortium?**

##### **Which level of engagement or collaboration is available with the IEC?**

The type and level of collaboration with the IEC should first be discussed. Based on an agreed cooperation framework, different types of services could be offered by the IEC. Please contact the IEC Consortia Facilitator ([consortia@iec.ch](mailto:consortia@iec.ch)).

#### **4.7.2 Who can I address my question to?**

The IEC Consortia Facilitator is always available for any question concerning consortia ([consortia@iec.ch](mailto:consortia@iec.ch)).