

# GUIDE FOR ALIGNMENT OF APEC MEMBER ECONOMIES' STANDARDS WITH INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS



ASIA-PACIFIC ECONOMIC COOPERATION

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Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation  
Subcommittee on Standards and Conformance  
APEC Committee on Trade and Investment

GUIDE FOR ALIGNMENT  
OF APEC MEMBER  
ECONOMIES' STANDARDS  
WITH INTERNATIONAL  
STANDARDS

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## Foreword

The APEC Sub-Committee on Standards and Conformance (SCSC) was formed in November 1994 to promote co-operation among member economies on standards and conformance to facilitate trade in the region. One of the objectives of the APEC SCSC is to achieve alignment of member economies' standards with international standards by the year 2010 for developed economies and 2020 for developing economies. This would lead to the convergence of standards among member economies to facilitate trade flows.

This Guide was developed to recommend actions that APEC SCSC member economies should take to align their standards with international standards. It was developed by the APEC SCSC in cooperation with the Pacific Area Standards Congress (PASC). A working group comprising Standards Australia and Japan Industrial Standards Committee, which represented the PASC Standing Committee, and Singapore, which represented the APEC SCSC, was established to undertake the project. The Guide was accepted by the APEC SCSC and endorsed by the Committee on Trade and Investment in August 1996.

At the same time that this Guide was being developed, the working group also undertook a consolidation and revision of the ISO/IEC Guides 3 and 21, which provide guidance on identifying the degree of equivalence with and indicating deviations from international standards. The draft revised Guides were submitted to ISO for consideration. The revision and consolidation of ISO/IEC Guides 3 and 21 are being undertaken by ISO/IEC. When this work is completed this APEC Guide may need to be revised.

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# GUIDE FOR ALIGNMENT OF APEC MEMBER ECONOMIES' STANDARDS WITH INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS

## 1 Introduction

Alignment of APEC member economies' standards with international standards will help to reduce costs, facilitate trade and improve the efficiency of administrative processes related to trade. International standards generally reflect the best experience of manufacturers, trade organizations, purchasers, consumers, testing laboratories, regulatory authorities and other interested parties worldwide and cover common needs in a variety of countries. Therefore, the broader alignment of member economies' standards with international standards is an important element for promoting trade in the Asia Pacific region.

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Note: This Guide is not intended to cover technical regulations.

## 2 Scope

This guide gives member economies recommended actions to be taken in aligning member economies' standards with international standards. It is recommended that the methods listed in the ISO/IEC Guides 3 and 21 be used.

## 3 Definitions

In this Guide, "International Standards" means:

- a) ISO and IEC, and also
- b) Standards published by other international bodies listed in the ISO/IEC KWIC (Keyword-in-context) Index of international standards. See Annex 1.

"Member economies' standards" means:

- a) Voluntary standards developed or adopted by member economies' standards bodies that are members of relevant international standards bodies such as ISO/IEC; or,

- b) Where members of relevant international standards bodies do not exist, voluntary standards recognised by the governments of the respective economies as their official standards.

"Alignment with International Standards" means to adopt international standards as member economies' standards with:

- as few technical deviations as possible, taking into account the specific conditions and needs of each member economy;
- deviations clearly identified, and;
- a general explanation of the deviations with their reasons provided.

## 1 Actions for Alignment

### (1) Evaluation of International Standards

The first step in preparing or revising any member economies' standards should be a thorough review of international or draft international standards with the

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aim of adopting the most appropriate, while taking into account the following factors:

- Is the international standard or draft international standard being considered applicable to the specific situation of a member economy?
- Does the international standard reflect the latest technologies? (Note that existing standards may reflect old technologies but new or revised standards may be in the process of preparation).
- Is the international standard used in practice in other countries?

## **(2) Adoption of International Standards**

To achieve alignment with international standards, it is recommended that the relevant international standards be adopted as the member economies' standards to the maximum possible extent by using

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the methods described in the ISO/IEC Guides 3 and 21.

## **(3) Elimination of Deviations from International Standards**

Deviations from international standards can exist because international standards may not meet all the needs of member economies for the following reasons:

- a) International standards may be limited in scope since they are developed on a consensus basis that generally reflects the common needs of those countries involved in the standardizing process, and some criteria may not be covered because consensus could not be reached.
- b) Specific conditions of member economies may not be adequately addressed by international standards for reasons that include an insufficient level of protection, fundamental climatic or geographical factors and

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fundamental technological problems. These are recognised by the World Trade Organization Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (WTO TBT) and the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures.

Notwithstanding the above, deviations of member economies' standards from international standards should be removed whenever possible.

#### **(4) Clear Identification of Deviations**

For transparency, it is recommended that the degree of equivalence be identified and any deviations from the international standards, and reasons for the deviations, be clearly indicated. The ISO/IEC Guides 3 and 21, as well as other relevant ISO/IEC Guides, gives guidance on how to do this.

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#### **(5) Participation in International Standardization Activities**

It is recommended that representatives from member economies participate positively and co-operate closely in international standardization activities to influence the contents of international standards so as to make them suitable for adoption in the region.

In order to achieve this goal, representatives from member economies are encouraged to:

- consult with each other regarding common requirements and put forward these requirements to the relevant international technical committees for consideration;
- where there are no applicable international standards, after consultation amongst member economies, propose new work items and provide draft requirements for inclusion in the new international standards;

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- participate actively in the activities of relevant international standards bodies, and
- undertake the role of secretariat of relevant technical committees and subcommittees particularly where new international standards of benefit to the region are being prepared.

#### (6) Cooperation with Specialist Regional Bodies

To promote alignment with international standards and participation in international standardization activities, it is recommended that member economies seek assistance from their standards bodies, PASC and other relevant specialist regional bodies.

#### INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS LISTED IN THE ISO/IEC KWIC INDEX OF INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS

<u>Name</u>	<u>Official Acronym</u>
International Bureau of Weights and Measures	BIPM
The International Bureau for the Standardization of Man-made Fibres	BISFA
Codex Alimentarius Commission	CAC
Customs Co-operation Council	CCC/CCD
International Commission on Illumination	CIE
International Special Committee on Radio Interference	CISPR
International Atomic Energy Agency	IAEA/AIEA
International Air Transport Association	IATA
International Civil Aviation Organization	ICAO/OACI
International Commission on Radiation Units and Measurements, Inc.	ICRU
International Dairy Federation	IDF/FIL
International Electrotechnical Commission	IEC/CEI
International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions	IFLA
International Institute of Refrigeration	IIR/IIF
International Labour Organization	ILO/OIT
International Maritime Organization	IMO/OMI
International Olive Oil Council	IOOC/COI
International Commission on Radiological Protection	ICRP/CIPR
International Organization for Standardization	ISO
International Telecommunication Union	ITU/UIT
International Office of Epizootics	OIE
International Organization of Legal Metrology	OIML

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## Annex 1

International Vine and Wine Office	OIV
International Union of Railways	UIC
United Nation Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	UNESCO
World Health Organization	WHO/OMS
World Intellectual Property Organization	WIPO/OMPI