



INSTITUTO ARGENTINO  
DE NORMALIZACIÓN  
Y CERTIFICACIÓN

ORGANISATION  
FOR ECONOMIC  
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AND DEVELOPMENT



# **OECD WORKSHOP AND POLICY DIALOGUE ON TECHNICAL BARRIERS TO TRADE**

Promoting good practices in support  
of open markets  
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# **INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT**

## **Successes and Difficulties**

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# 1.- WTO/TBT Agreement (Fourth Triennial Review–November 2006) Some issues

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## Technical Regulations and good Regulatory Practices

“When considering regulatory options, the Committee recalls that ... relying on voluntary instruments can facilitate adaptability and innovation ...”

2

## Standards

The Committee reiterates the importance of Members using relevant international standards ... when drafting new regulations or conformity procedures.



# 1.- WTO/TBT Agreement (Fourth Triennial Review-November 2006) Some issues

3

## Conformity Assessment

The Committee notes that voluntary MRAs have been reached among laboratories, certification and inspection bodies and MLAs have been reached between accreditation bodies ... can facilitate acceptance of results of conformity assessment.



## 2.- Technical Regulations

**Success in some regional agreements: European Union, APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation), Mercosur**

**Mercosur** (for instance)

- ❑ Reference to (voluntary) standards for groups of products: toys, electrical, safety parts for cars (in process), others

**But ...**

- ❑ What about harmonization of specific technical regulations at international level ?
- ❑ How does international/national financial crisis influence technical regulations favoring protectionism in the countries ?



## 3.- Product Standards

**Principles:** International Standards favor International Trade

- ➔ Reference to International Standards in Technical Regulations favors trade.
- ➔ ISO and IEC are doing many efforts to improve participation in their preparation (ISO/DEVCO programs)
- ➔ Adoption of International Standards at national level (in their own languages) is a key element to favor reference in local Technical Regulations



# 3.- Product Standards

## But ...

Participation of developing countries in the elaboration of international standards is still weak: for economic and technical reasons (even language reasons)

We are on the way, but still there are thousands (hundred of thousands) of national standards, reflecting the needs of government, manufacturers, consumers at national level

These national standards differ not only in the requirements for products but also in testing methods, acceptance requirements, etc.



## 4.- Conformity Assessment Standards

**Principles:** International Standards for Conformity Assessment Bodies (CAB) and Conformity Assessment Systems favor International Trade

→ ISO/CASCO has created a toolbox of ISO/IEC Standards and Guides which is accepted worldwide

→ Many of these standards have been adopted at national level (the main ones by more than 80 % of ISO/CASCO members)

→ Many of them are referenced in national or regional technical regulations.

**Examples:** ISO/IEC 17025; ISO/IEC 65; ISO/IEC 17021; ISO/IEC 17020



# 4.- Conformity Assessment Standards

## But ...

ISO/IEC Conformity Assessment Standards contain general requirements, not sector ones, except in a handful of cases (i.e.): foods, car industry.

They do not contain harmonized procedures for:

- how many inspections/evaluations per year
- sampling criteria
- market surveillance
- initial and follow up testing
- grouping products in "Families"
- they do not provide (nor can do) for unique certification schemes



## 5.- Conformity Assessment Systems and Conformity Assessment Schemes

→ Conformity Assessment Systems have a general description (Guide ISO/IEC 67) and only one (Guide ISO/IEC 28), System N° 5 (Mark of Conformity), has a full description.

→ What about the other CA systems? There are no standards/guides for them.

→ Conformity assessment schemes refer to CA systems for specific product standards (or other normative documents) and specific CA procedures.



# 5.- Conformity Assessment Systems and Conformity Assessment Schemes

## CA schemes “owners” can be:

- Governments for mandatory certifications
- Certification bodies: for the use of their certification marks (AFNOR NF Mark, VDE Mark, IRAM Mark, etc.)
- Private owners: for their own purchases (like Global Gap, BRC, IFS) or private developments (like SA 8000, ethical trade)



# 5.- Conformity Assessment Systems and Conformity Assessment Schemes

## But ...

- Many of these CA schemes are not harmonized globally, even if some are regionally harmonized
- Some of the “private CA schemes” are “open”, based on international standards for conformity assessment
- Some of the “private” are “closed” based on their own requirements for conformity assessment and with high fees for entrance
- Some of them are almost “mandatory” to enter in some markets



# 6.- Conformity Assessment results: recognition/acceptance

## Principles

- ➔ Accreditation of CA bodies by signatories of the Multilateral Arrangements (IAF, ILAC) favors international recognition
- ➔ Peer assessment of CA bodies (like in IECEE CB Scheme) favors international recognition
- ➔ Mutual Recognition Arrangements (bilateral or multilateral [i.e. IECEE CB Scheme]) favor acceptance of certificates



## 6.- Conformity Assessment results: recognition/acceptance

### But ...

Not all accreditation bodies have signed the MLAs

Some certification schemes do not require accredited CABs or require their own "private" assessment of the CABs

Some governments do not accept foreign CA results as basis for local certification



# 7.- Market Surveillance

**Principles:** Market Surveillance is a fundamental tool to verify conformity of products (particularly for SDOC)



In different countries there are different governmental rules to perform Market Surveillance



Some Certification Systems and/or Schemes require Market Surveillance to be performed by the responsible Certification Bodies



In some Certification Schemes the owners are responsible for the Market Surveillance



# 7.- Market Surveillance

But ...

There is no International Standard/Guide for Market Surveillance

There are no “best practices” (in my knowledge) internationally harmonized

Different practices for Market Surveillance in different countries can lead to real “nightmares” for importers and exporters



## 8.- As a summary

### GOOD NEWS

- International standards for products, adopted nationally and referenced in technical regulations.
- Intensive efforts to improve participation of developing countries in the elaboration of international standards.
- National standards reflect national needs (the “economics of standardization”).

### BAD NEWS

- Scarce harmonization of technical regulations at international level.
- Participation of developing countries in the elaboration of International Standards, particularly for “hard” products (“nuts and bolts”) if still low.
- National (or regional) standards could create “unnecessary obstacles to trade”.



## 8.- As a summary

### GOOD NEWS

- The ISO/IEC CASCO “toolbox”: requirements for accreditation and conformity assessment bodies and related matters.
- Many certification scheme “owners” are using the CASCO toolbox and accepting accreditation or peer assessment schemes (“open”).
- CA bodies and Accreditation bodies in many Technical Regulations have to comply with relevant International Standards.

### BAD NEWS

- Lack of international standards for CA Schemes.
- Some are not and require high fees for entrance (“close”).



## 8.- As a summary

### GOOD NEWS

- The Multilateral Arrangement (MLA) by accreditation bodies and the Mutual Recognition arrangement among CA bodies.
- WTO/TBT recognizes the importance of Market Surveillance.

### BAD NEWS

- Some developing countries have serious problems with their infrastructure for quality.
- Some accreditation bodies are not signatories of the MLAs.
- Some CABs cannot enter in MRAs.
- There are neither international standards nor internationally harmonized technical regulations for Market Surveillance.



# 9.- And then what ... ? (for international trade TBT issues)

## To continue to work on the same path:

To reinforce the systems of international standards and their adoption at national level.

To improve participation of developing countries.

To promote the “good regulatory practices”.

To foster international recognition agreements

## In brief



To deepen the enforcing of the requirements of the WTO/TBT AGREEMENT



**THANKS FOR YOUR  
ATTENTION**

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