



Snapshots of IO Practices

Review of Standards Procedure

Organisation(s): ASTM International

The Snapshots of IO Practices present examples of specific efforts undertaken by an international organisation to work towards more effective international instruments. They aim to highlight examples of practices within the five focus areas of the Partnership of International Organisations for Effective International Rulemaking (IO Partnership), namely the variety and development of international instruments, their implementation, evaluation, ensuring stakeholder engagement, and co-ordination among IOs. The snapshots are submitted by the secretariats of the relevant international organisations implementing the relevant practice. The practices were compiled by the OECD Secretariat and focal points of the IO Partnership (UNCITRAL, OIE, WHO, ISO, WCO, BIPM, and SIECA), with a brief review to ensure consistency and comparability of the information provided within the snapshots. The inclusion of a practice in these snapshots implies no endorsement or assessment of that practice on the part of the OECD Secretariat or the focal points of the IO Partnership.

1	Overview of the Practice	Answers	Comments and intersections
1.1	Organisation	ASTM International	
1.2	Area of relevance among the IO partnership focus themes (variety of instruments, implementation, stakeholder engagement, evaluation, co-ordination)	Evaluation	
1.3	Name of the Practice	Review of Standards Procedure	
1.4	Name of person(s) completing the template		

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2	Description of the Practice	Answers	Comments and intersections
2.1	Please describe the practice shortly, providing information on its core features.	Per ASTM Regulations, a standard should be reviewed in its entirety by the responsible subcommittee and shall be balloted for re-approval, revision, or withdrawal within five years of its last approval date. If the standard has not received a new approval date by December 31 of the eighth year since the last approval date, the standard will be withdrawn. Each technical subcommittee decides through consensus on whether a standard should be revised or reapproved. Many standards are revised much more frequently than every 4-5 years to ensure that they continue to be up-to date and market relevant.	
2.2	What are the objectives of the practice?	Making sure that standards are technically up-to date and market relevant	
2.3	What have been the key results of the practice?	On average, 1 750 standards are revised each year following the review process, 1 934 standards were reviewed in 2019 to reflect technical developments and market needs confirming a regular process to maintain the standards up to date. An average of 90 standards are withdrawn each year. . ASTM also creates between 200-300 new standards each year to address emerging technology areas.	
2.4	In what year was the practice introduced?	1898	

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2.5	Has the practice been updated/reformed since then? If yes, when and how has it evolved over time?	Yes. The ASTM Review of Standards Process has evolved over the past 125 years. We receive recommendations from our members and governance structure on how the process can be improved and made more efficient without compromising the credibility of the resulting documents. ASTM's Standing Committee COTCO (Committee on Technical Committee Operations) is in charge of the Regulations Governing ASTM Technical Committees. COTCO, together with a voting process from the technical committees, can vote to approve new process changes.	
2.6	What do you consider to be the primary strengths of the practice?	The practice ensures that standards reflect market needs and stay relevant by involving all interested stakeholders (openness). ASTM requires that there be a balance between producers and non-producers which ensures that all viewpoints are taken into consideration during the process. Another strength of the process is that there are procedures for handling all opposing viewpoints (negative votes).	
2.7	What do you consider to be the main challenges faced during the implementation of the practice?	One challenge is that consensus can be difficult to achieve especially when the subject matter is highly technical and there is a high degree of commercialism. The average time to develop a new standard is about 15 months and a revision is about 6 months.	
2.8	Does the practice have a formal/normative basis within the organisation or is it conducted informally? Does this basis make the practice mandatory or voluntary? If there is formal basis, please provide the relevant link or documentation.	Art. 10.6 of Regulations Governing ASTM Technical Committees. The practice is mandatory. https://www.astm.org/Regulations.html#s10.6.2	

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2.9	At what frequency is the practice applied? i.e. is it conducted once or on an iterative basis?	While revisions can be proposed and considered by the responsible subcommittee at any time, all standards need to be completely reviewed by the subcommittee, and then balloted for reapproval, revision or withdrawal, within five years of the last approval date of the standard.	
2.10	Is this practice applied systematically, (e.g. with respect to every normative instrument, according to specific criteria or on an ad hoc basis)?	Yes, the practice is applied systematically to all 13000 standards. ASTM has an automated balloting system that includes reminders to our technical leaders about deadlines. Our system also automatically generates the a report of the balloting results and they are posted for everyone on the committee to view (transparency).	The automated balloted system demonstrates how digital technologies can be integrated into international rule-making processes.
2.11	Please provide specific details or examples to illustrate the practice (including supporting links and documents).	This powerpoint helps explain and illustrate the process. https://www.astm.org/MEMBER_TRAINING/#Balloting	Intersection between evaluation (WG4) and implementation (WG2).
3	Design of the Practice	Answers	Comments and intersections
3.1	Who designed the practice (e.g. Was it developed internally, in collaboration with other organisations, etc?)	The review of standards procedure is part of ASTM standards development process set forth in the Regulations, which has evolved over the past 125 years. ASTM International receives recommendations from members and governance structure on how the process can be improved and made more efficient without compromising the credibility of the resulting documents. ASTM's Standing Committee COTCO (Committee on Technical Committee Operations) is in charge of the Regulations Governing ASTM Technical Committees. COTCO, together with a voting process from the technical committees, can vote to approve new process changes.	

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3.2	Which stakeholders were engaged with in the design of the practice?	A balance of stakeholders, composed by producers, users, consumers and general interest participants, designed the practice. However all Executive subcommittees have an opportunity to vote on the practice whenever changes or improvements are recommended.	
3.3	How long did it take to design the practice?	Unknown.	
3.4	What resources were needed to design the practice initially (i.e., staff, budget etc.)?	It originally was used back in 1898 so that original resources to design the practice is unknown.	
3.5	What challenges were encountered during the design of the practice and how were they overcome?	All Executive subcommittees have an opportunity to vote on the practice whenever changes or improvements are recommended. Some committees have different opinions on how the practice should be defined based on each committees unique circumstances (number of standards, number of members, average attendees at meetings, etc.)	
3.6	Has the practice been tested before implementation (i.e. pilot phase)? If yes, please describe.	It originally was used back in 1898 so we are not sure if there was a pilot. Since the practice is subject to change, we are really constantly monitoring the utility of the practice and considering improvements.	
4	Implementation of the Practice		Comments and intersections
4.1	Which units are responsible for implementing the practice within your IO?	Subcommittees and main committees are responsible but there are also rules that individual members must follow as well (Responsibilities of Membership).	

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4.2	Are IO members involved in implementing the practice? If so, how?	Yes, members participate in the balloting process by casting votes and they also participate when resolving negative votes at meetings. Every voice matters.	
4.3	Are external actors beyond the organisation or its membership involved in implementing the practice? If so, how?	Only members are allowed to vote through the balloting process. Non members can participate in the technical discussion and make comments. Membership is open to everyone and is very accessible (only 75 USD per year).	Intersection between evaluation (WG4), stakeholder engagement (WG3), and implementation (WG2), with respect to the participation of non-members in technical discussion and comments procedures.
4.4	Which resources are needed to implement the practice (e.g., staff and budget)?	One staff manager is in charge for the correct operations of the balloting process. We also have an appeals process where members can appeal if they feel like the standard-development process, including their review, was not followed. The Committee on Standards (COS) is a volunteer governance standing committee that hears and rules on all appeals.	The appeals process highlights a linkage between the implementation (WG2) – or, more specifically, monitoring – and evaluation (WG4) aspects of international rulemaking processes.
5	Outputs and Evaluation of the Practice	Answers	Comments and intersections
5.1	Has the practice been evaluated or reviewed?	It is reviewed consistently by the Committee on Technical Committee Operations (COTCO). Members can submit recommendations for changes for COTCO to consider at their twice a year meetings.	
5.2	If yes, who carried out the evaluation (please specify whether it was done internally or externally)	COTCO (internally).	

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5.3	If yes, please describe the evaluation methodology? (e.g. were any quantitative or qualitative indicators/criteria used to measure/assess the outcomes of the practice?).	ASTM tracks the time periods associated for how long a new standard and revision takes to complete as mentioned above. Members suggesting changes and COTCO considering those changes happens twice a year. Again, all changes to the practice have to be voted on by the 140 Executive Subcommittees.	
5.4	If yes, what were the conclusions of the evaluation, and has the practice evolved subsequently? If possible, please attach related documents or provide a link.	<p>There have been many changes to the practice over the years it has been in existence..</p> <p>One of the main reforms to the practice is from 20 years ago when ASTM combined the main committee ballot stage with Society Review. This was done because COTCO was informed of the extremely low number of negatives received on Society Ballot. That was a huge time saver (trimmed 30 or more days from the development cycle) not having to adjudicate the main negatives and then going to Society Ballot several months later. This also afforded ASTM the opportunity to address any Society Review negative votes at the same time as the main negatives votes without losing any input with the reform while shortening the procedure.</p>	
6	Additional comments and information	Answers	Comments and intersections
6.1	Is there any more information or documentation that would be valuable to share in relation to the practice (e.g. links, reports, meeting minutes, supporting documents)?		
Sources			