

International Update

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IEC items of interest for December 2016 are as follows:

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International

1. WTO: Canada has ratified the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA)

Canada has ratified the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA), making it the 103rd WTO member to do so. The instrument of acceptance was submitted to the WTO on 16 December. The TFA will enter into force once two-thirds of the WTO membership has formally accepted the Agreement. Only seven more ratifications from members are needed to bring the TFA into force.

In addition to Canada, the following WTO members have also accepted the TFA: Hong Kong China, Singapore, the United States, Mauritius, Malaysia, Japan, Australia, Botswana, Trinidad and Tobago, the Republic of Korea, Nicaragua, Niger, Belize, Switzerland, Chinese Taipei, China, Liechtenstein, Lao PDR, New Zealand, Togo, Thailand, the European Union (on behalf of its 28 member states), the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Pakistan, Panama, Guyana, Côte d'Ivoire, Grenada, Saint Lucia, Kenya, Myanmar, Norway, Viet Nam, Brunei, Ukraine, Zambia, Lesotho, Georgia, Seychelles, Jamaica, Mali, Cambodia, Paraguay, Turkey, Brazil, Macao China, the United Arab Emirates, Samoa, India, the Russian Federation, Montenegro, Albania, Kazakhstan, Sri Lanka, St. Kitts and Nevis, Madagascar, the Republic of Moldova, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, Peru, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Bangladesh, the Philippines, Iceland, Chile, Swaziland, Dominica, Mongolia, Gabon, and the Kyrgyz Republic.

Concluded at the WTO's 2013 Bali Ministerial Conference, the TFA contains provisions for expediting the movement, release and clearance of goods, including goods in transit. It also sets out measures for effective cooperation between customs and other appropriate authorities on trade facilitation and customs compliance issues. It further contains provisions for technical assistance and capacity building in this area.

According to a 2015 study carried out by WTO economists, full implementation of the TFA would reduce members' trade costs by an average of 14.3 per cent, with developing countries having the most to gain. The TFA also has the ability to reduce the time to import goods by over a day and a half while also reducing time to export by almost two days, representing a reduction of 47 per cent and 91 per cent respectively over the current average. The TFA also has the potential to increase global merchandise exports by up to \$1 trillion.

The TFA broke new ground for developing countries and LDCs in the way it will be implemented. For the first time in WTO history, the requirement to implement the Agreement was directly linked to the capacity of the country to do so. In addition, the Agreement states that assistance and support should be provided to help them achieve that capacity.

A Trade Facilitation Agreement Facility (TFAF) was also created at the request of developing and least-developed country members to help ensure that they receive the assistance needed to reap the full benefits of the TFA and to support the ultimate goal of full implementation of the new agreement by all members.

Further information on TFA is available at www.TFAFacility.org.

2. First training course on trade in services underway for countries seeking to join WTO

The WTO's first Training Course on Trade in Services for Acceding Governments was held from 28 November to 2 December 2016 at the WTO's headquarters in Geneva. Twenty-seven representatives from 14 governments seeking to join the WTO attended the course.

Deputy Director-General Xiaozhun Yi, who opened the course, said: "The services component is one of the key pillars of the accessions negotiations. Many delegations from governments engaged in accessions have indicated that there is less familiarity with the subject matter of services than with other areas of the accession process. The course will allow for interaction between participants, but also with negotiating partners and recently acceded members."

The course has provided participants with an opportunity to learn about key services-related aspects of the WTO accession process, to enhance their understanding of the negotiating objectives of WTO members involved in the accession negotiations, and to exchange views with services negotiators from countries that have recently completed accession to the WTO, including Kazakhstan's WTO Ambassador Zhanar Aitzhanova. Participants also received in-depth training on issues such as how to schedule their WTO commitments in services — including how to classify services sectors — as well as on implementation of these commitments.

Linda Kassem Moukashar, Senior Legal Trade Specialist at Lebanon's Ministry of Economy and Trade, who has attended the course, said: "This course is one of a kind. Rather than solely focusing on the implementation of WTO agreements, it is providing us with some very useful tools to conduct our WTO accession negotiations. It touches upon key areas of interest to us and allows us to be forward looking in our WTO accession negotiations."

Volha Kazakevich, Counsellor at the WTO Unit at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belarus, who is also taking part in the course, said: "This course will help me improve my awareness of the services aspects of WTO accession negotiations. As Belarus has started to intensify its accession process, this training course will help us respond to questions posed by WTO members throughout this process. I hope the WTO Secretariat will organize more courses of this type."

Another course participant, Saman Yousefvand, WTO Desk Officer at Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said: "This course is extremely helpful in improving my understanding of how accession negotiations are conducted, particularly as we are hearing from experts who were involved in the accession negotiations of their country. This course is very timely as my government is preparing to submit to the WTO updates on our foreign trade regime as part of the resumption of our WTO accession negotiations."

The course, organized jointly by the WTO Accessions Division, the Trade in Services and Investment Division and the Institute for Training and Technical Cooperation, is offered as part of the WTO's technical assistance and capacity building courses. It is implemented within the WTO's Progressive Learning Strategy and represents "level 2".

3. Gender-informed standards contribute to women's empowerment

In order to make sure that standards are gender neutral, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) has formed a Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies and launched a new initiative to make standards gender-informed and ensure that they contribute to women's empowerment.

In some cases, standards may become a barrier in realizing women's full potential at the workplace - when they fail to properly address women's needs within the existing cultural background. On the other hand, standards can facilitate women's empowerment—for example by identifying and giving recognition to organizations that take a commitment on anti-discrimination, equal opportunities and the promotion of diversity through human resources management policy.

This Working Party will start work to identify entry points for mainstreaming gender into standards development and implementation and to ensure that standards become effective tools for the implementation of SDG Goal 5 and, more specifically, Target 5.5: "Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life".

One early result from this newly born initiative was the announcement by the International Electrotechnical Commission that their General Secretary and CEO - Mr Frans Vreeswijk – will officially join the Geneva Gender Champions Initiative, a leadership network that brings together male and female decision-makers with a commitment to break down gender barriers.

For more information, please visit: <http://www.unece.org/trade/wp6/welcome.html>

About UNECE

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) was set up in 1947 by ECOSOC. It is one of five regional commissions of the United Nations. The others are the:

- Economic Commission for Africa (ECA),
- Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP),
- Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC),
- Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA).

UNECE's major aim is to promote pan-European economic integration. UNECE includes 56 member States in Europe, North America and Asia. However, all interested United Nations member States may participate in the work of UNECE. Over 70 international professional organizations and other non-governmental organizations take part in UNECE activities.

ISO

1. New Field of Technical Activity (NFTA) for Gold

ISO has received a proposal from the Chinese National Standards Body (SAC) for a New Field of Technical Activity (NFTA) on Gold. The scope is:

The standardization of gold ores, gold concentrates, gold alloys (excluding gold jewellery), gold compounds, gold material and the standardization of the development, recovery and recycling of gold.

Standards Australia will be consulting with stakeholders on this proposal. For more information or to make a submission, please contact Daniel.Chidgey@standards.org.au by 6 March 2017.

2. Establishment of Project Committee ISO/PC 310 – Wheeled child conveyances

A new Project Committee ISO/PC 310 *Wheeled child conveyances* is established following approval by the ISO member bodies.

The new Project Committee will have the following provisional title and scope:

Title: Wheeled child conveyances

Scope: Standardization deliverable in the field of wheeled child conveyances designed for the carriage of one or more children. It covers safety requirements and test methods.

The scope excludes toys, shopping trolleys, baby carriers fitted with wheels, wheeled child conveyances propelled by a motor and wheeled child conveyances designed for children with special needs.

The secretariat of this Project Committee (ISO/PC 310) has been allocated to AFNOR (France) and SAC (China) as part of a twinning arrangement. Australia is currently a Participating member on this committee.

3. The presentations of ISO CASCO Stakeholder Forum in London are now available

The ISO/CASCO has hosted its first Stakeholder Forum with the insurance industry in London. It brought together experts from conformity assessment and insurance industry, regulators, standards developers and business representatives to discuss pressing issues such as extreme events and business continuity planning; reducing exposure to product liability claims; the challenges of globalized supply chains, and more.

The event has allowed an opportunity to share expectations, experiences, and best practices related to insurance industry and conformity assessment working together to address the issue of risk. It hosted two panels including:

- natural disasters, risk management and business continuity planning;
- resilient fire safety in building design;
- mechanisms to reduce insurance premium for companies adopting the OHSAS 18001
- standards and requirements for laboratory insurance;

Presentations are now available at:

<http://www.cvent.com/events/supporting-the-reduction-of-insurance-losses-the-role-of-standards/custom-20-0cb357382c2f42fc95db8241dead9157.aspx>

4. New ISO specification for better management of animal welfare worldwide

ISO/TS 34700:2016 *Animal welfare management -- General requirements and guidance for organizations in the food supply chain* is now published. It provides requirements and guidance for the implementation of the animal welfare principles as described in the introduction to the recommendations for animal welfare of the OIE TAHC (Chapter 7.1).

The OIE's guiding principles on animal welfare mention the universally recognized "Five Freedoms", stated in Chapter 7.1 of the OIE TAHC, which outline five aspects of animal welfare under human control. The five freedoms for animal welfare, as currently expressed, are:

- Freedom from hunger, malnutrition and thirst
- Freedom from fear and distress
- Freedom from physical and thermal discomfort
- Freedom from pain, injury and disease
- Freedom to express normal patterns of behaviour

ISO/TS 34700:2016 applies to terrestrial animals bred or kept for the production of food or feed. The following areas are excluded: animals used for research and educational activities, animals in animal shelters and zoos, companion animals, stray and wild animals, aquatic animals, killing for public or animal health purposes under the direction of the competent authority, humane killing traps for nuisance and fur species.

This document is designed to guide users in conducting a gap analysis and developing an animal welfare plan that is aligned with the OIE TAHC. It can also be used to facilitate the implementation of any public or private sector animal welfare standards that meet at least the OIE TAHC.

As consumer awareness of animal welfare issues continues to rise, the demand for products complying with animal welfare standards is growing, giving producers who maintain these high standards a competitive advantage.

Likewise, the food industry is taking more action to better implement animal welfare management. This new technical specification will help the food and feed industry to develop an animal welfare plan that is aligned with the principles of the World Organization of Animal Health (OIE) Terrestrial Animal Health Code (TAHC)* and ensure the welfare of farm animals across the supply chain.

ISO/TS 34700 represents the culmination of a joint effort between ISO and the OIE following the cooperation agreement signed in 2011 between the two organizations. The new technical specification is intended to support the implementation of relevant practices to ensure animal welfare in livestock production systems. It will be a way for business operators in the food supply chain to demonstrate their commitment to animal welfare management.

It will serve as a helpful tool for the private sector and competent authorities alike to clear up discrepancies in the regulatory framework, especially in developing countries facilitating public-private partnerships for animal welfare policy.

ISO/TS 34700:2016 was developed by ISO working group ISO/TC 34/WG 16, The working group in charge of developing the technical specification brings together more than 130 experts from all regions of the world, with strong participation from developing countries and a broad range of stakeholders (private sectors, competent authorities, NGOs...), providing a representative balance in the search for consensus.

1. New generation of smart charging for portable consumer devices

The amount of global e-waste—discarded electrical and electronic equipment—reached nearly 42 million tons in 2014. By next year it is predicted that the world will produce approximately 50 million metric tons of e-waste/year, according to a study conducted by a partnership of United Nations organizations, industry, governments and scientists.

In an effort to increase consumer convenience and reduce e-waste, the IEC is now enabling a smart charging solution that allows chargers to be re-used for many different consumer portable devices. The IEC has published new International Charging Interoperability Standards that open the way for a new generation of smart and eco-friendly charging solutions that can be used in every country in the world.

Chargers for products ranging from smartphones to high power devices such as notebook computers, will not only be compatible with the same types of devices from different manufacturers, they will also be able to charge a wide range of other kinds of electronics. Consumers will be able to use their notebook charger to charge a tablet or a smartphone or any other portable consumer electronic device. Likewise, if need be, a smartphone or tablet charger can be used to give a boost to a notebook, albeit at a slower rate.

This new smart charging approach relies on a standardized charging interface defined by the following new IEC International Standards:

- IEC 62680-1-3 and 62680-2, based on the latest USB Type-C™ and USB Power Delivery specifications. These Standards specify the common technologies needed to support charging of devices up to 100 watts;
- IEC 63002: Identification and communication interoperability method for external power supplies used with portable computing devices defines interoperability guidelines for chargers and devices that implement the latest USB technologies. In particular, it defines the data parameters for communicating power adapter characteristics and capabilities.

Global market adoption of these International Standards is expected to significantly increase charger re-usability well beyond smartphones and other low power devices, which were enabled by legacy USB technologies and related IEC International Standards IEC 62680-1-1, IEC 62680-2 and IEC 62684.

The standardization of this smart charging interface is supported by global industry as the best approach to enable broad re-usability of different chargers with different products. It ensures charging reliability and provides the flexibility needed for future innovations.

Chargers can be designed to optimally match the power and functional requirements of the target product while being able to charge many other products as well. Devices will be able to communicate with the smart charger to accurately identify its capabilities before safely drawing power. The expected broad adoption by industry will exponentially increase interoperability, compatibility and re-usability of chargers and as a result significantly increasing consumer convenience while contributing to global e-waste reduction.

Frans Vreeswijk, IEC General Secretary and CEO, said: “The IEC continues to be committed to reducing e-waste for developed and developing countries alike. These important new IEC International Interoperability Standards will further advance global environmental goals by substantially increasing the re-usability of chargers for consumer electronics and ICT devices.”

2. Moving from the cloud to the edge

Members of the IEC Market Strategy Board have initiated a project to produce a White Paper on Vertical Edge Intelligence in cooperation with Fraunhofer Institute for Open Communications Systems FOKUS. The project experts were recruited from: the IEC, Mitsubishi, Huawei, SAP, Johnson Controls International and FOKUS NGNI (Germany).

The goal of the project is to explore market potential and vertical use-case requirements, analyze gaps and produce recommendations for adopting Vertical Edge Intelligence technologies. To enable the true value of the Internet of Things (IoT), edge intelligence, which moves processing for data intensive applications away from the core of the cloud to the edge of the network, continues to grow.

As processors, microcontrollers, and connectivity are embedded into a wealth of new devices, edge intelligence in smart appliances, wearables, industrial machines, automotive driver assistance systems, smart buildings, and the like continue to develop.

This means that several IT and OT technologies can be placed so close towards the edge of the network that aspects such as real time networks, security capabilities to ensure cybersecurity, self-learning solutions and personalized/customized connectivity can be addressed.

This radical transformation from the cloud to the edge will support trillions of sensors and billions of systems and will treat data in motion differently from data at rest.

The kick-off meeting took place on the 21 and 22 November at FOKUS. The next meeting will be hosted in Shenzhen, China on 24 and 25 January and will include new experts from the IEC. The resulting White Paper will be published by the IEC in October 2017.

About MSB

The Market Strategy Board (MSB) was set up by the IEC to identify the principal technology trends and market needs in the IEC fields of activity. The MSB helps maximize market input and establishes priorities for IEC technical and conformity assessment work, enhancing the response of the Commission to the needs of innovative and fast-moving markets. Its members comprise Chief Technology Officers of major international corporations.

About Fraunhofer FOKUS

Fraunhofer FOKUS researches digital transformation and its impact on society, economics and technology. Since 1988 it supports commercial enterprises and public administration in the shaping and implementation of the digital transformation. For this purpose, Fraunhofer FOKUS offers research services ranging from requirements analysis to consulting, feasibility studies, technology development right up to prototypes and pilots in the business segments Digital Public Services, Future Applications and Media, Quality Engineering, Smart Mobility, Software-based Networks, Networked Security, Visual Computing und Analytics. With 424 employees in Berlin and an annual budget of approximately 30 Million Euro, Fraunhofer FOKUS is the largest ICT institute of the Fraunhofer Society. Over 70% of its budget is generated through projects from industry and the public domain.

3. The IEC takes systems approach for standardization in Active Assisted Living

By 2050, world population aged 60+ years is expected to total 2 billion. Seniors, people with disabilities can benefit from new technological developments that help them remain as independent, active and healthy as possible.

The development of smart devices and wearables, the Internet of Things, robotics, and the emergence of smart homes and buildings will play a major role in assisting these population categories.

The launch of the Systems Committee (SyC) dealing with Active Assisted Living (AAL) issues has seen the IEC take a leading role in the development of International Standards in this field. The scope of SyC AAL is to create a vision of AAL that takes into account the evolution of the market: "Foster standardization of Active Assisted Living (AAL) systems, services, products and components to enhance the quality of life and enable independent living through the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) by ensuring usability, accessibility, interoperability, security and safety for all users including caregivers".

As one of the emerging trends of the 21st century is the ageing of the world population, it is essential to put in place strategies that allow older and/or disabled people to live their life in the best possible conditions and environments.