International Update

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IEC items of interest for November 2014 are as follows:

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International

1. Montenegro & New Zealand joined the WTO's Government Procurement Agreement

Montenegro and New Zealand have become the newest members of the WTO’s Government Procurement Agreement (GPA) after their accession bids received the green light on 29 October 2014, a move which will help the two countries gain access to procurement markets currently valued at up to $1.7 trillion annually.

Participation in this agreement means access to $1.7 trillion in procurement opportunities for companies in Montenegro and New Zealand. Beyond the possible export gains, membership in the GPA also means that governments in Montenegro and New Zealand can benefit from greater competition in their own procurement markets and consequently from lower prices and a wider selection of goods and services from which to choose.

Government procurement accounts for 15-20 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) in developed and developing countries. Only a part of this is currently covered by the Agreement on Government Procurement. The aim of the Agreement is to open up as much of government procurement as possible to international trade and competition, while ensuring appropriate transparency and a commitment to good governance.

Recently, the GPA was revised to modernize certain aspects of its rules and to expand its scope. The revised version of the Agreement came into force last April. Currently, it covers 43 WTO members: Armenia; Canada; the European Union, with its 28 member states; Hong Kong, China; Iceland; Israel; Japan; Korea; Liechtenstein; the Kingdom of the Netherlands with respect to Aruba; Norway; Singapore; Switzerland; Chinese Taipei and the United States.

2. 2014 CTI Annual Report to Ministers is now available

The CTI Annual Report to Ministers for 2014 has been released. It outlines the Committee's accomplishments and recommendations in the key priority areas of APEC’s Trade and Investment Liberalization and Facilitation (TILF) agenda in support of APEC’s 2014 priorities under the theme of “Shaping the Future through Asia-Pacific Partnership”.

Following the endorsement of the 2014 CTI Annual Report to Ministers in Beijing recently, the report is now available for download on the APEC Secretariat Publications webpage: http://publications.apec.org/publication-detail.php?pub_id=1589.

3. Record number of new trade concerns raised in WTO standards committee in 2014

Forty-seven new trade concerns, mostly dealing with issues such as the protection of health and the environment, were raised by WTO members at the Technical Barriers to Trade Committee on 4-6 November 2014. For 2014, more new trade concerns have been raised than in any other year since the establishment of the WTO in 1995 and three-quarters of the concerns were expressed by developing countries, which constituted a record-breaking number.

Members raise specific trade concerns (STCs) to find out more about the scope and implementation of each other's regulations in light of the core TBT obligations (for example, regulating health without unnecessarily disrupting trade). The discussion is mostly about measures in the pipeline, but can also be about the implementation of existing measures.

Such "real world" discussions were highlighted during the November TBT Committee meeting. For example, nutrition labeling, present in the everyday life of consumers, was in focus - in particular, various proposals relating to health claims such as “traffic-light” nutrition labeling, consisting of adding a label with a red or green “traffic light” according to the healthiness of the content of food products.

Tobacco was also high on the agenda, with a record number of four measures on so-called plain packaging being discussed. Discussions also addressed a wider range of products, including electronics, automotive parts, chemicals, food and beverages, alcohol, cosmetics and pharmaceuticals, and toys.
4. CEN Workshop Agreement ‘CHANCE’ (WS 70) on healthy food is published

CEN Workshop Agreement ‘CHANCE’ (WS 70 Healthy food for people at risk of poverty) on healthy food for low-income population has been published in October 2014.

This publication has been developed to help address the increasing concerns about the low income part of population having poor quality food intake. The project was funded under the 7th Framework Programme with the aim of exploring ingredients and raw materials that could be used for development of food products which address nutritional problems and at the same time are affordable and attractive to people at risk of poverty.

CHANCE EU project aims at adopting a new multidisciplinary approach, leading to nutritional strategies for the prevention of malnutrition in population groups at risk of poverty in Europe. Moreover, it aims at the development of attractive, affordable and nutritious food products using low-cost technologies and traditional ingredients.
ISO

1. Proposal to upgrade an ISO/PC to ISO/TC: Asset management (TS/P 247)

A proposal has been submitted by BSI (UK) to upgrade an existing project committee to a technical committee on Asset Management (TS/P 247). This technical committee would have a broader scope and program of work.

The scope of the proposed committee is on Standardization in the field of asset management.

For more information or to provide any comments on this proposal, please email Varant Meguerditchian, National Sector Manager: Varant.Meguerditchian@standards.org.au by 19 January 2015.

2. Revised proposal to establish an ISO Project Committee (NWIP): Audit data collection

A revised work item proposal has been submitted by SAC (China) for the establishment of an ISO Project Committee on Audit data collection.

The scope of the proposal is on formulating international standards for collecting audit data, which is to provide solution on how auditors obtain accounting data, including format and content requirements of accounting data elements and data interface output files.

For more information or to provide any comments on this proposal, please email Varant Meguerditchian, National Sector Manager: Varant.Meguerditchian@standards.org.au by 26 January 2015.
3. ISO 22004 is now published

ISO 22004 Food safety management systems -- Guidance on the application of ISO 22000 has recently been published. ISO 22004 is a companion and a guide to ISO 22000, and does not add any new requirements. But because it is a guidance document, it goes into more detail and focuses on areas that may need more explanation.

Its parent standard, ISO 22000, gives information on setting up a Food Safety Management System (FSMS), which includes three layers of hazards control: 1) Prerequisite programmes (PRPs); 2) Critical control points (CCPs); and 3) Operation prerequisite programmes (OPRPs).

ISO 22004 will be useful for any organization in the food supply chain looking to implement a FSMS based on ISO 22000, from feed producers and primary producers through food manufacturers, transport and storage operators, and subcontractors, to retail and food service outlets (as well as related organizations such as producers of equipment, packaging materials, cleaning agents, additives and ingredients). Service providers will also find it helpful.

4. ISO 9001 Quality management systems – Requirements is now at FDIS stage

The revision of ISO 9001 Quality management systems – Requirements has reached its FDIS stage. Its latest draft (DIS) was put to vote according to ISO procedures and received nearly 90% approval. The new edition, expected in 2015, will feature some important changes.

ISO 9001 is one of ISO’s most well-known standards, with more than 1.1 million certificates worldwide. It provides requirements to help companies demonstrate that they can offer their customers consistent, good quality products and services. It also provides a framework to help them streamline their processes and become more efficient at what they do.

The new version is very strongly based on three basic core concepts: that process approach which was very successful in the 2008 version of the standard superimposed on that system of processes is the plan-do-check-act methodology, and a third core concept which is new in the 2015 version is risk based thinking, aiming at preventing undesirable outcomes.

Experts in the ISO subcommittee revising the standard will now go through all the comments received during the DIS vote in order to produce a final draft which will then be put forward for voting.

5. ISO 37500 Guidance on outsourcing is now published

ISO 37500 Guidance on outsourcing has now been published. It covers the main phases, processes and governance aspects of outsourcing, independent of size and sectors of industry and commerce. It is intended to provide a good foundation to enable organisations to enter into, and continue to sustain, successful outsourcing arrangements throughout the contractual period.

The value of outsourcing has been noted by organisations who want to increase their efficiency and reduce their costs by sending work to external third-parties. The practice which encourages mutually beneficial collaborative working relationships, has grown over the past 20 years and is estimated to generate revenues in the region of trillions of US dollars a year.

ISO 37500:2014 gives guidance on:
- good outsourcing governance for the mutual benefit of client and provider;
- flexibility of outsourcing arrangements, accommodating changing business requirements;
- identifying risks involved with outsourcing;
- enabling mutually beneficial collaborative relationships.

ISO 37500:2014 can be tailored and extended to industry-specific needs to accommodate international, national and local laws and regulations (including those related to the environment, labour, health and safety), the size of the outsourcing arrangement and the type of industry sector.

It is intended to be used by outsourcing clients, providers and practitioners, such as:
- decision makers and their empowered representatives;
- all stakeholders engaged in facilitating the creation and/or management of outsourcing arrangements;
- staff at all levels of experience in outsourcing.
IEC

1. IEC General Meeting in Tokyo

From 10-14 November 2014, more than 2,200 global technology leaders and experts attended the IEC (International Electrotechnical Commission) 78th General Meeting in Tokyo, to focus on practical solutions to make the world safer, and more sustainable.

The theme “integration for a smarter world” was in recognition of the need to increase the “smartness” of everything from grids, to cities, to transportation and manufacturing to improve energy efficiency and sustainability.

The official opening ceremony was led by the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry, Mr Yoichi Miyazawa; Dr Junji Nomura, IEC President; and Dr Tamotsu Nomakuchi, President of the Japanese National Committee of the IEC.

Keynote speeches were given by the President of Hitachi Ltd, Mr Hiroaki Nakanishi and the President of Panasonic Corporation, Mr Kazuhiro Tsuga. And on Wednesday, 12 November, the world’s highest honour in electrotechnology, the Lord Kelvin Award, was awarded to Dr Shuji Hirakawa from Toshiba.

Stakeholders from every industrialised and most developed countries in the world actively support the IEC; some since its inception in 1906. By participating in IEC work, companies find it easier to innovate and spread new technologies globally. They are also better able to collaborate on increasingly complex systems with companies both in their country and outside. With 166 countries the IEC has truly global reach. Australia and other countries that participate in the IEC use IEC International Standards as a strategic tool to grow their exports. This approach helps them overcome hurdles to global trade, allowing companies to sell products to a large number of markets.

2. The 7th annual SCADA Asia Summit

The 7th annual SCADA Asia Summit will be held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 27-30 January 2015.

The Summit will combine best minds from utilities, oil & gas firms, industry associations and technology providers to discuss these challenges and come up with practical case studies in improving the security, efficiency and scalability of our SCADA systems.

At the 7th Annual SCADA Summit, key players from utilities, oil and gas firms, industry associations and technology providers will discuss how to improve security, efficiency and scalability of SCADA systems, by addressing how to control and monitor critical infrastructure aspects.

For the first time the event will have a dedicated focus day ‘cyberSCADA’ Asia focusing on the cyber security challenges to SCADA installations covering communications modes, loopholes in protocols, smart devices etc.

3. International debut for IECRE

The IEC, which has been at the forefront of international standardization in the wind, solar and marine energy fields for many years, has now gone a step further and launched IECRE, the IEC System for Certification to Standards Relating to Equipment for Use in Renewable Energy Applications.

The IECRE Management Committee held its inaugural meeting on 16-17 September in Boulder, Colorado, USA. Three parallel meetings of the Marine, Solar PV, and Wind Energy Sectors were also organized in conjunction with the REMC meeting.

Commonalities can be found in the technologies used for generating energy from the sun, the wind or the oceans: high capital investment and harsh environmental conditions in installation deployment, the need for a systems approach to cover stages from design concept to prototype, to production of equipment and components, transportation, installation and commissioning.
Practically speaking, the IECRE System will be organized in sectors and schemes. Three sectors have currently been defined:

- Solar PV Energy
- Wind Energy
- Marine Energy

Each of these sectors will be able to operate Schemes that cover:

- Products, e.g. components and systems
- Services, e.g. installations and other related offers of the sector
- Personnel, e.g. covering the competence of those working in the sector

At the end of September, 16 countries had joined the System: Austria, Canada, China, Denmark, Egypt, France, Germany, Hungary, Japan, Korea, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom and United States.