World Health and Safety day 2022

How consultation and participation is at the heart of the standards-making process

ISO/TC 283
Occupational health and safety management systems

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How consultation and participation is at the heart of the standards-making process

It is one of the strengths of ISO that its processes seek and encourage very wide and diverse participation to shape the content of standards and related guidelines.

In ISO/TC 283, we have involvement from 100 countries, the vast majority as participants, but with others as observers who can comment on our work at any stage.

Their input is formulated by national mirror committees, which again bring together a wide diversity of stakeholders. Those committees vary in size from a handful of people to over 100 people, with participants from all sectors of industry and commerce, from government and regulatory bodies, academia, professional institutions, sector bodies and trade unions, together with individual experts. That means our work is reviewed and shaped by inputs from many different perspectives. I take this opportunity to acknowledge the work done by all the national mirror committee members who give generously of their time and expertise to help shape our standards.

Collaboration at the heart of the discussions

We also have a number of international organizations which participate directly in the work of the committee, including professional bodies, and organizations representing workers and employers; our membership also includes representatives of other ISO committees to whom our work is relevant. They all provide valuable input to our work.

Our draft standards are made available for public comment, at least once during their development and sometimes more, giving us the opportunity of direct input and suggestions from users of the standards.

Every comment is individually considered by the committee, and they really do make a difference to the final published product, so I would very much encourage users to take the chance to comment on draft standards when they're available for public comment. I'd also encourage people to consider joining national mirror committees too, for an even greater opportunity to influence the content of the standards, and an opportunity to better understand other people's perspectives on some of the contentious issues.

With input from national mirror committee, liaison organizations, other ISO committees, and directly from users, we have a real diversity of input helping to shape our work. This requires our committee members to work very collaboratively to reach consensus when considering the many diverse comments and suggestions received at each iteration of our documents. Personally, I always find it educational to participate in this process. There’s so much to learn from other people's perspectives, and it can be very rewarding to see how much this input improves each iteration of the standard as we move towards publication.

TC/283 website: committee.iso.org/home/tc283