WORKSHOP ON EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCES

COPANT members had the opportunity to exchange good practices in the development of standard documents

In February 2019, the first version of the Virtual Workshop on Exchanges of Experiences among COPANT members was held. It is the first of four virtual workshops to be held this year.

The activity was an initiative of ICONTEC, the COPANT member for Colombia, who were in charge of leading the discussions and exchanges. Two sessions were held, one in Spanish (February 18 and 19) and one in English (February 20 and 21).

The **objective** of the workshop was to identify and share the factors, problems, concerns, achievements and good practices of standardization bodies with respect to the current process of developing normative documents that impact the elaboration of standards that are relevant, timely, transparent, that are in the general interest and that do not create unnecessary barriers to trade and to propose possible actions to face the challenges and take advantage of the opportunities.

For the Spanish version of the workshop, 30 participants representing 12 countries were connected, and for the English version, 15 people from 8 countries were connected.

The most important conclusions of this workshop are as follows:

- **Technology:**
    - o Advances in technology are important and represent support for the process; however, with their use there has not been a significant increase in participation in activities such as public consultation or in the discussion (consensus) of documents in the committee.
    - o New technology is being applied for a traditional way of making standards. It is necessary to identify new ways of developing standards and reaching different audiences (taking into account, for example, the sector, generational differences, the practicality of standards for their application).
    - o There is a need to develop applications that help the user to have the information of the standards at hand, facilitate their participation in the standardization process and help them to understand and apply the standards.
- **Public consultation of draft standards:**
    - o Public consultation is a critical activity to ensure the transparency of the process, especially to consult stakeholders who did not participate in the discussion of the document in committee. There are no established criteria/indicators to determine whether a public consultation is effective or not. However, the response to the public consultation is considered low.
    - o Involvement and maintenance of stakeholders is a vital point for the process, however, it is still a point that needs to be worked on. Standardization bodies should develop strategies as such to identify the stakeholders of a process/document and their needs in order to personalize communication with them as much as possible. Strengthening relationships such as trade unions and academia would help the process of dissemination and participation.
    - o Not all policy documents require a 60-day public consultation. For example, some management documents that are worked on at the international level and that are intended to be adopted in an identical manner. (Once the international standard is published it can no

longer be modified, what is the point of doing public consultation, if identical adoption is required? The idea is to participate in the process of developing the standard at the international level).

- o It is important to identify the criteria for establishing which documents may not require public consultation or require less time for consultation.

- **Document preparation times:**
  - o The development of normative documents should be managed with a project approach and generate the tools required for their control. In general, the aim is to reduce the time required to publish standards with the speed required by the market, without sacrificing the quality of technical requirements, consensus building, balance of interests and due process.
  - o Debate should be encouraged and criteria established (including consultation with the WTO) as to whether all identical non-product adoption documents (e.g. terminology, management, guides) should go through all stages of the regulatory process or whether direct adoption can be made.
  - o Some sectors such as IT have a considerable number of standards, and there is no capacity to adopt them at the speed required if the whole process is to be carried out. It should be noted that in this sector the terms are used in English and not in Spanish. These cases should be considered when discussing new ways of developing documents. Does the IT sector see the added value of having standards in Spanish? It is clear that, although English terminology is used, not all users understand English. This type of sector represents a challenge for standards bodies.

- **Measurement of the standard-setting process**
  - o Information related to sales and certification of standards is available, but there is no indicator of the impact of standards as such.
  - o There are process indicators, however, some indicators such as customer satisfaction, useful standards and non-conforming product stand out. Work could be done on the creation of base indicators that could be voluntarily applied by NSBs for performance and control. Mechanisms should be identified to obtain information from users/sectors on the standards in order to obtain information on elements such as non-conformities, relevance, relevance and timeliness.
  - o The project-based approach facilitates performance measurement and the creation of a baseline of standards development times.
  - o Most NPOs have the number of standards per year indicator, which is based on the standards program. It was identified that for NSOs that have a large number of standards in their catalog it is not a relevant indicator. However, for those whose objective is to expand their catalogue it is.

- **Competence**
  - o Given the importance of this topic and the current development of the IWA 30 competencies, it is determined to have a specific session to discuss the competencies set forth in that document.

- **Cooperation**
  - o NSBs understand the importance of creating mutually beneficial relationships. Relationship strategies are identified with government entities and with different sectors. These relationships contribute to strengthening the normative process (elaboration and dissemination of norms) and can generate alternative resources for the sustainability of the NSB.
  - o It is identified that some agencies that develop standards in another language are already translating their documents into Spanish, which represents a challenge for NSBs. Additionally, these organizations are not interested in making agreements with the NSBs since they do not find an added value. This issue requires vigilance and further debate.

- **Innovation**
    - o New strategies and means are required to: involve stakeholders in the standardization process, raise awareness of standards, understand requirements and increase their application.
    - o NSBs should seek to orient their work towards lines of research in order to obtain resources for their sustainability.
    - o The standardization process is not known; strategies must be developed to make the process known.
    - o Greater involvement of new generations in standardization processes is required.

The meeting was recorded and can be heard through the following link: http://edu.copant.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/TALLER_INTERCAMBIO_EXPERIENCIAS_1_DESARROLLO_NORMAS_SESION_1_20190218_ESP.mp4

Source: ICONTEC