



IFAN Newsletter

No. 1 April 2022

From the President



Dear Colleagues,

I bring greetings from your Board and welcome you to the latest IFAN Newsletter.

Despite the challenges in 2021 and to date IFAN has been able to continue its work of being the "Voice of Standards Users" using virtual meetings hosted by IFAN and also where we have participated. Ironically perhaps and a lesson for the future, we have been able to reach more users in this period than possibly any other time in our nearly 50-year history.

In October last, we were delighted to participate with several other international organizations to share our interest, experience and liaison with CASCO. From our perspective we were delighted to be able to have this discussion and learn about these other organizations and their involvement in conformity activities. They included:

1. International Federation of Standards Users (IFAN): Ross Wraight, Andrea Beddard-Smith
2. European Federation of Associations of Certification bodies (EFAC): Ivan Savov
3. Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI): Marie-Claude Quentin
4. Independant International Organization for Certification (IIOC): Marcus Long
5. European Organization for Quality (EOQ): Ulf Gustavsson
6. TIC Council: Aparna Dhawan
7. International Accreditation Forum (IAF): Xiao Jianhua
8. World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE): Jennifer Lasley
9. IQNet Association

IFAN also supported International Women's Day and several very well-known women in the standards industry spoke about their favourite standards. I encourage you to follow [this link](#) to listen to the webinar.

Later this year in October at our Members Assembly hosted by our German member ANP and DIN in Berlin, we will be holding a workshop on conformity assessment and we have invited CASCO and others to speak.

If you are interested in attending, please contact our secretary Andrea Beddard-Smith at: secretary@ifan.org

I wish you all the very best for the months ahead

My very best wishes

Ross Wraight, IFAN President

IFAN celebrates International Women's Day 2022

Some of the world's most influential women in standards came together with IFAN to celebrate this year's International Women's Day. Covering the word, our video stars were asked to talk about their favourite international standard, that they found influential, important and interesting and why, all in thirty seconds.

Our stars provided classic, unusual and entertaining ideas, in a five minute video that is memorable and continues to celebrate women's achievements long after International Women's Day has passed. It has attracted an excellent number of views.

The video was produced by IFAN Board Member Vered Oren of SIL. You can view it from the IFAN website <https://www.ifan.org>

Or from the [IFAN YouTube Channel](#)



Working Group 3 Standards Access & Distribution Co-Chair Claudia Bach

As the voice of the standards user, the International Federation of Standards Users (IFAN) is constantly looking for information on our community's needs. IFAN is embarking on a survey of standards users with the intention of making this a routine part of our IFAN activities.

Our last questionnaire was in 2006 with responses from members of 9 National Standards Users Groups (NSUGs). Many of the same issues remain relevant. Technological change continues to push for change in both the ways that standards are developed and used.

Issues that face the standards community continue to expand, with some of the basic concepts up for review. The fundamental question of what is a standard now requires a fresh take. A deeper understanding of how standards are actually used in various jurisdictions and communities of interest is required as well. And determining who owns the intellectual property of standards information and documents may be challenged by the necessity of closely integrating machine-controlled processes and company protocols.

Keith Wilson and I are co-chairs of IFAN Working Group 3 (WG3). In my role of providing oversight to this task, I have a personal focus on reaching as many standards users worldwide as is possible. During the last year, it has become apparent that there is a need for out-reach to many areas around the world. There are a large number of ISO and IEC National Standards Organizations that do not have a corresponding NSUG. It is clear that we are currently only scratching the surface towards uncovering the diversity of standards usage around the world. With the continuing impact of globalization (like it or not!), this is clearly important to make sure that no standards user is left behind.

Another area of interest for IFAN and its membership is the issue of technology adoption in the areas of standards as machine-readable information (as in the use of XML) and as integrated subscription products (we might say Standards as a Service). The possibility of deep changes to standards information and documents requires serious consideration of future impacts, both on the standards user and the standards developer. There is no doubt that continuing technological change means financial investments by all. IFAN can help the community avoid costly errors as we work through these issues.

If any IFAN Member (or their member standards users) would like to join, then please contact us at ifan@ifan.org. Your details will then be passed along to the Chairs of WG3 for inclusion in all future meetings and messages.

Update on IFAN WG 16, Education and Training

IFAN Working Group 16 on Education and Training is tasked with supporting and promoting initiatives in Education and Training in the Standardization field at international, regional and national levels. Current activities of IFAN WG 16 includes:

Collaborating with ISO Research and Innovation Unit and providing input on new ISO Educational Strategy aimed to ramp up the capacity building activities;

Reviewing IFAN Guide 4, Education and Training about Standardization, to determine if it needs to be revised. IFAN WG 16 welcome any comments on IFAN Guide 4.

Finding ways to promote the work of IFAN WG 16 and relevant educational resources internally and externally.

Last but not least, IFAN WG 16 is mapping out a long term strategy to formulate future work items.

Chair: Muhammad Ali, SES

Update on IFAN European Group

The IFAN European Group continues to meet approximately four times a year. The group has a strong relationship with CEN-CENELEC and received a regular report on their activities as well as invitations to attend events. The Group's Chair is a member of the CEN SME Group.

Currently the group are reviewing IFAN Guide 3 Guidelines to assist members of standards committees in preparing user-friendly European standards (Revised 2018), with a view to including recommendations on gender responsive standards and use of gender, ability and age neutral language.

The Guide can be read [here](#) , the Chair welcome comments from users.

Chair: Andrea Beddard-Smith, BSS

Comments on any of our Working and Project Groups may be sent by email to Ifan@ifan.org

1. IFAN WG16 Education & Training, Monday 11 April, Virtual
2. IFAN European Group meeting, 8 June, Brussels, Belgium, TBC
3. CEN-CENELIC GA, 23 June, Prague, Czech Republic
4. 71st SES Annual Conference, Charlston, USA
5. ISO GA, 19-23 September, Abu Dhabi
6. 49th IFAN Members' Assembly, 18 October, Berlin, Germany
7. IEC GM, 31 October-4 November, San Francisco, USA

Recently, one of the UK Technical Committees on which I sit had a long discussion about the use of a word in a developing standard. At first it seemed pointless and frustrating. However as the discussion went on and increasing evidence was introduced, it became clear that using the word could lead to unintended consequences for the standard's future users.

How words and phrases are used matters deeply in standards. Sometimes, the dilemma is a matter of 'content in context', in other words whether the technical and general dictionary definitions can alone justify their use. Could they be misinterpreted or misunderstood when translated? And in use in a standard, could they be manipulated by the end user?

I have two examples to offer, not from our standards world. The first is from some years ago. An architectural team I was working in specified a steel cladding system. The client had a requirement that, on their large site, they would want in future to add to their building. It had to be capable of extension to a standard of appearance that was equivalent, and to a technical performance standard that was as a minimum equivalent, to the building when it was handed over to them. Their timescale for this requirement was 30 years. The draft performance specification was written and a system manufacturer was chosen. UK and German standards were heavily used. It was sent to the manufacturer to check that it was realistic and achievable, and came back as 99.9% acceptable. In fact, they changed only one word. But that word meant our team had to find another manufacturer. The word 'minimum' was changed to 'average', in the context of the system's protective coatings film thickness.

The second is much more recent, the Grenfell Tower fire Inquiry in England. Questions were put to a senior government official in the building regulations department at the time the relevant regulations' technical guidance was written. The questioning was long and I have quoted only a small part to illustrate my point.

Q: Turning to the [regulations technical guidance document] functional requirement, do you recall that was amended, because in 1992 the requirement

was that, "The external walls of the building shall resist the spread of fire over the walls " , but in 2000 that became, "The external walls of the building shall adequately resist the spread of fire over the walls"?

A: I can recall, and I believe it might have happened as part of a consolidation exercise of the regulations, that, in doing so, lawyers, departmental lawyers, looked over all parts of schedule 1 of the Building Regulations, all the technical parts, and it was at that point such words as "adequate" and "reasonable" were added, I believe, to most of the provisions, the [regulations technical guidance document] functional requirements B1 to B5, as that would bring them into line with the other extant functional requirements for the other technical parts of the building regs, where they are predicated.

After a short discussion, the Inquiry Counsel commented:

Do you accept that, taking the functional requirement as amended by the insertion of the word "adequately", there was a risk that the reader might not turn the page and think that the performance requirement had been diluted in some way, so that it went from an absolute requirement, by reference admittedly to the performance requirements, to a relative one?

Bias.

Recently I received BSI Committee Training on legal aspects of standards making, and Cultural awareness and inclusively. Both courses included learning and exercises on dealing with bias. Different viewpoints leading to a valuable update of and introduction of new thinking to my understanding. For UK standards makers, the forthcoming BSI Flex 236 v1.0 :2022-01, ' Enabling the development of inclusive standards -Understanding the role of data and data analysis -Guide' will have a short and very useful section about Behavioural biases supported by examples in contexts (for example algorithmic impact assessment, and data provenance assessment) and impact on decision-making and inclusively.

References:

Grenfell Tower Inquiry, Inquiry Transcript [Internet]. 24 February 2022. Available from [this link](#)

BSI Flex 236 v1.0. [Internet]. 2022-01. Available from [this link](#).