



NATIONAL STANDARDS STRATEGY

Some thoughts

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INTRODUCTION

- Idea of National Standards Strategy first mooted in late 80s/early 90s in BIS
- Consequence of the BIS Act coming into effect and saying in its Preamble – “...establishment of a Bureau for the harmonious development of the activities of standardisation,...”
- Standards then meant voluntary and mandatory standards – standardization meant development and implementation of standards and included certification
- Did not make much headway



CHANGE IN RULES OF THE GAME

- WTO TBT Agreement in 1995 – defined standards and technical regulations differently from traditional ISO definition
- Explanatory note in TBT Agreement:

“The terms as defined in ISO/IEC Guide 2 cover products, processes and services. This Agreement deals only with technical regulations, standards and conformity assessment procedures related to products or processes and production methods. **Standards as defined by ISO/IEC Guide 2 may be mandatory or voluntary.** For the purpose of this Agreement **standards are defined as voluntary and technical regulations as mandatory documents.** Standards prepared by the international standardization community are based on consensus. This Agreement covers also **documents that are not based on consensus.**”
- Concept of mandatory standards dropped – standards are voluntary – if mandatory, called technical regulations – important to recognize this in our deliberations



WG ON QUALITY

- Planning Commission in 2006 set up for the first time horizontal working groups to prepare 11th Plan
- WG on Quality – chaired by Dr. R.A. Mashelkar, Secy, DSIR – also Chairman, QCI
- Recognized changed scenario – proposed National Standards System, National Conformity Assessment Policy and Good Regulatory Practices
- Some of the above found mention in the 11th Plan document under Consumer Protection



NATIONAL STANDARDS SYSTEM

2.1.1 NATIONAL STANDARDS SYSTEM – The following policy is recommended:

- BIS shall be the national standards body and repository of all voluntary national standards.
- Wherever standards are being formulated by other standards development organizations (SDOs) which are recognized as national (like IRC or Agmark), these shall be published as national standards by BIS while these bodies would continue to make these standards and published standards shall duly acknowledge this fact.
- BIS shall work out formal mutual understanding with all SDOs including revenue sharing model for income from sale of standards made by other SDOs in consultation with all stakeholders, if need be.
- All SDOs shall follow the code of good practice prescribed in the WTO TBT Agreement.
- There shall be a defined system of accreditation of the SDOs to be developed and operated by QCI and all SDOs shall take accreditation to be part of the national standards system.
- BIS shall endeavour to build formal linkages with Regulatory bodies to encourage them to rely on national standards thus developed for the regulations developed by them.
- The national standards shall be open for certification by any CB duly accredited by QCI.



HOW IT IS IN PLAN DOCUMENT

- (III) NATIONAL STANDARDS SYSTEM 11.16. The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) may be made the national standards body and repository of all voluntary national standards. Wherever voluntary standards are being formulated by other standards development organizations which are recognized as national (like Indian Roads Congress or Agmark), these may be published as national standards by BIS while these bodies continue to make these standards.
- Part of recommendation of WG on Quality

CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT POLICY

- (IV) POLICY ON CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT 11.17. The policy should be laid down for the government recognizing only one National Accreditation Body for conformity assessment for each area of activity. All conformity assessment bodies should be required to obtain accreditation either from national or international accreditation bodies within a reasonable period. As a general rule, functions of regulation, standardization and conformity assessment should be performed separately. Similarly, there is need to enlarge consumer choice in the matter of certification. Appropriate mechanism would need to be evolved for this purpose.



12TH PLAN DOCUMENT

- Addressed technical regulations, voluntary standards and conformity assessment
- Section titled “Improve Technical Standards, Voluntary Compliance and Conformity Assessment” – paras 13.55 to 13.62 in Chapter 13 on Industry
- Key recommendations:
 - Mandate Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) for all regulatory changes in the country
 - Develop Policy on technical regulations
 - Strengthen capabilities of – Standard developing organisations – Inspection bodies/certification agencies/regulators in the areas of Technical Standards



DoC's STANDARDS CONCLAVES

- Recognition in DoC that standards and conformity assessment major barriers to trade
- Linkage to domestic regulations/standards - differential standards would not work
- Need for holistic look at the issues – first Standards Conclave in May 2014 – DoC deserves to be congratulated
- Recommendations in the pervious Conclaves – provide excellent basis for national strategy - need to compile under different heads – standards, technical regulations, conformity assessment and accreditation



FUTURE ISSUES IN WORLD TRADE

- Study of trade concerns in TBT Committee
- 30% concerns on standards related issues – understandable – as countries adopt international standards in regulations, less issues
- 70% concerns on conformity assessment procedures – would grow in future since there would be no single model of conformity assessment unlike single international standards
- Value of international standards as tools for commerce



SO WHAT DO WE WANT NOW

- National Standards Strategy – or more?
- As base paper identifies – much more – technical regulations, conformity assessment including accreditation besides voluntary standards
- Should we rename – National Strategy on Standards, Technical Regulations, Conformity Assessment and Accreditation
- Maybe yes



QUALITY INFRASTRUCTURE?

- Another term which needs debate
- Typically means standards, conformity assessment, accreditation and metrology
- Pushed by international funding bodies
- Valid if we realize that quality can not be regulated in WTO regime – its only about voluntary regime
- Leaves out technical regulation – which is about public interest
- Also leaves out consulting/training infrastructure



NOT SO GOOD CONSEQUENCES

- Led to a situation where standards bodies became hub of technical regulations in less developed countries (Africa, SAARC) contrary to the model practised in developed economies where there was and is clear separation between technical regulations and standards – do not sit together in the same organization – South Africa a good example – separated regulations from NSB as it developed
- National standards bodies generally industry driven and private in developed economies – governmental in developing economies
- While ABs/ CBs/Labs set up, no one to provide training/handholding to industry to comply with standards – nor to conformity assessment bodies to upgrade to international standards – ABs/CBs barred from consulting as per international norms
- Some call it **Technical Infrastructure**



INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS SETTING

- Intensify participation
- Continuity of participation – 10-15 years time horizon for an expert to participate - Seasoned experts – no place for training
- National duty – funding experts identified through a robust mechanism
- Important standards like ISO 9001/ISO 14001 – little participation – needed foreign experts to explain changes in 2015
- When would we nurture our own experts
- NABCB able to reverse the trend – continued participation in revisions of ISO 17021 and ISO 17011 – created expertise – being now sought by international bodies and foreign countries
- Need to replicate



WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY

- Excellent body of work already available on these issues
- But who is responsible for implementation
- No single Ministry
- TPD good example of creating expertise within Ministries – all Ministries need to follow – to deal with standards related issues in one Division
- Need for a single place in govt to implement – having sufficient authority to advise various Ministries – expertise in standards/technical regulations/ conformity assessment



INTEGRATING STATES

- Even if some understanding in Central Govt, woefully inadequate in states
- Need to build capacity of states'
- Mission mode
- Suggestion of National Mission on Standards etc – recent article by former CS – worth pursuing



SERVICES

- Remember that previous discussion relates to manufacturing and goods
- Services a different ball game
- Yet many principles apply – separation of regulation and voluntary certification/accreditation – e.g. in education and healthcare, Use of 3rd party agencies in regulation, adoption of international or internationally accepted standards where they exist
- Important to answer the models practised elsewhere – necessary for international acceptance



SKILLS

- Even more complicated than services
- Several sectors identified in Sector Skill Councils typically regulated elsewhere
- No single model applicable across sectors
- Sector by sector study of international or internationally acceptable models and development of Indian models
- Where no international model, free to design our own
- Especially in areas of India's traditional knowledge – Yoga teacher certification a good example – being pushed onto other countries



TO SUM UP

- Comprehensive strategy
- Compile the available body of work – esp in goods, sufficient material available
- Identify components:
 - Goods - technical regulations (refer only to goods), standards, conformity assessment, accreditation
 - Services
 - Skills
 - Identify basic principles across sectors – separation of regulation and voluntary standards/certification; responsibility of govt (regulations) and what is not its responsibility (voluntary space, conformity assessment)
 - Recommend an implementation structure – across Ministries and sectors
- India could set an example of a comprehensive strategy



INFORMATION

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**THANK YOU
FOR YOUR ATTENTION!**

Any Questions ?