



© Elabio101

Translation of State Council (SC) Document No. [2015] 13
Translated by USITO and Proof- Read by SESEC team
Distributed to: SESEC Partners,
EU standardization stakeholders
Date of issue: 2015-03-31

Introductions

In early 2014, China started the new round of Standardization Reform and the modification of **China Standardization Law**. This work was led by State Council and the plan work was mainly done by SAC (China Standardization Administration).

Since 2014, it is said that more than 50 different versions of such reform plan were made, discussed and modified by SAC and its relevant think-tank organizations. After several rounds of discussions, consultations and call for comments from other ministries, the main reform strategies were basically confirmed with 4-6 key points. Yet nobody can tell what would be the final or semi-final version of the Reform Plan or Standardization Law. General observation is that the main points will not be dramatically changed by this round of reform, but some texts or details will still need some time to complete.

On 20th March 2015, State Council of China issued No. 13 Documents of 2015. This official document confirmed 6 China standardization reform points and can be regarded as the official endorsement of SAC's recent proposals.

After the document was issued, several organizations made the translations. SESEC expert chose the best translation from them and made the proof-reading.

Below is the whole text translation of State Council (SC) Document No. [2015] 13, Plan for Deepening Standardization Reforms.





**Circular of the State Council on Distributing the
Plan for Deepening Standardization Reforms
State Council (SC) Document No. [2015] 13**

Plan for Deepening Standardization Reforms

This Reform Plan is developed with a view to implementing the requirements of the *Decisions of the CPC Central Committee on Major Issues on Comprehensively Deepening the Reforms*, the *Plan of the State Council for Organizational Reform and Transformation of Functions*, and the *Guidelines of the State Council for Promoting Fair Market Competition and Maintaining Normal Market Order* (SC Document No.: [2014] 20) for deepening standardization reforms and advancing the development of technical standards system.

I. Necessity and urgency of reform

The CPC Central Committee and the State Council has been paying high attention to the standardization work, and established the Standardization Administration of China in 2001, aiming to enhance harmonized management of the standardization efforts. Thanks to the concerted efforts of various departments and local governments, China has seen rapid development of the standardization cause. By now, the total number of national standards, industry standards and local standards reaches 100,000, and a standards system covering the primary, secondary and tertiary industries and various sectors of social undertakings has taken shape. China has become the permanent member state of ISO and IEC, and member state of ITU, while Chinese experts have held a number of key positions such as ISO chairman, IEC vice chairman and ITU general secretary, and the national standards whose development effort is led by China are on the rise year by year. Standardization is playing an increasingly important role in assuring product quality security, promoting the industry upgrade and transformation, boosting the quality and efficiency of Chinese economy and serving the diplomacy and foreign trade. However, in light of the increasing needs of the China's economic and social development, current standards system and standardization management system cannot adapt to the needs of the development of the socialist market economy, and to some extent, has hindered the development of the economy and society in China.

First, many standards are void, outdated and lag much behind, and are hard to meet the needs for boosting the quality, efficiency and upgrade of the economy. Standards for modern agriculture

and service industry are still few, and those for social management and public services are just in its early years, even in the industrial field where standards are well developed, the standards are yet to be full-ranging. In particular, the current demand for standards for energy efficiency and consumption reduction, new urbanization, integrating informatization with industrialization, electronic commerce, and commerce & trade and logistics remains very strong, and the development of standards lags much behind. In China, the cycle of developing standards is usually 3 years on average, far from satisfying the needs of rapidly growing industry. The standards are updated very slowly, the age of standards is usually more than double that of Germany, U.S., U.K. and Japan. Overall, the standards remain at low level, and hard to support the transformation and upgrade of the economy. China-led national standards only account for 0.5% of total, and Chinese standards are far from widely recognized around the globe.

Second, standards are seriously overlapped and conflicting, making it is hard to build a unified market system. Standards serve as the basis for production and business activities, and serve to important market rules, and have to be highly unified and authoritative.

Currently, among current national standards, industry standards and local standards, approximately 2000 standards have same name, while technical indexes in some standards are inconsistent even conflicting, generating great difficulties in enforcing them and leading to a grave waste of standardization resources in government departments and different enforcement criteria. Especially, mandatory standards concern health, security and environmental protection, but the developers of such standards are too many, reflected in the fact that in China, 28 departments and 31 provinces (autonomous regions and municipalities directly under central government) have powers to develop and release mandatory industry standards and local standards. Also the number of mandatory standards is massive, the mandatory national, industry and local standards total more than 10,000, and due to lack of effective coordination, their overlapping and conflicts are hard to avoid.

Third, the standards system is less than reasonable, and cannot serve the needs of the development of the socialist market economy. The development of national, industry and local standards has all been led by the government, 70% of which are standards for common products and services. Many of these standards should have been developed by market players per the law of market. The international standards-setting organizations have no legal status in China, and the standards developed by market players on their own for purpose of rapidly reflecting the actual needs have to undergo a long process before introduced. Even the internal enterprise standards developed by enterprises have to be registered with government departments, even for purpose of review. This inhibits the initiative of enterprises, which therefore lack innovative drive and competitiveness.

Fourth, the standardization coordination mechanism is far from sound, which slows the improvement of standardization management efficacy. Standards reflect the common interests of all the parties involved, and various types of standards shall work with and support each other. Many standards feature wide technology coverage and a long industry chain, especially some standards concern too any departments, which easily have disagreements over the standard, adding to coordination difficulty. As a result of lack of authoritative and efficient standardization coordina-

tion mechanism, the more important standards, the more difficult they are finalized. Some standards, when implemented, produce little results, and there are no supporting policy measures, and a model of jointly advancing the implementation of standards by all departments involved is yet to be established.

The root cause for these problems is that the current standards system and standardization regulatory system was established in the 1980s, the role of the government and market is wrongly positioned, and the market players stand little chance to bring their initiative into full play. This hinders the advances of standardization effort, and weakens the roles of standardization. So it is necessary to effectively change the function of government in administering the standardization effort, and deepen the standardization reforms.

II. Overall reform requirements

The standardization reform shall be focused on making the market play a decisive role in allocating resources and making the government better function, concentrating efforts on solving the problems of unsound standards system, ineffective management system and failure to adapt to the development of socialist economy, reforming the standards system and standardization management system, improving the mechanism for the standards development, enhancing the implementation and supervision over standards, giving better play to the fundamental and strategic roles of standardization in improving the national governance system and modernizing the governance capability, and promoting the sustained and healthy development of economy and all-round progress of the society.

The principles governing the reform efforts: first, streamline the administration and decentralize the powers, and combine tightened oversight with the practice of delegating powers. The unnecessary powers shall be thoroughly delegated to the market, cultivate and develop group standards, allow more room for developing enterprise standards, and arouse the enthusiasm of market players. Manage well the matters that fall under government supervision, tighten the management of mandatory standards, and ensure the sufficient supply of recommendatory standards for public interests. Second, align with international practices and make standards based on Chinese actual conditions. Use for reference the advanced experience and practices of developed countries in standardization management, and in light of China's actual conditions, build a China-specific standards system and standardization management system. Third, ensure the standardization effort is under overall management and each department is assuming its responsibility in the effort. The standardization regulator shall be responsible for comprehensive coordination, while other SC departments are responsible for developing, implementing and supervising the standards in their respective sectors. Fourth, make administration based on laws, and comprehensively advance standardization efforts. Accelerate the rule of law in the field of standardization, and make major standardization reforms in line with the revision and improvement of standardization laws and regulations. Give an overall consideration to the priorities, key links and specific steps of the standardization reform campaign, and rely on the increase of the standards developed by market players to drive the revision of current standards.

The overall objectives of the reform: Build a new-type standards system under which the government-developed standards and market-developed standards develop concurrently and coordinate with and support each other, and make the standardization management system more harmonious and coordinated and efficient, and based on government oversight and market supervision, and form a model that the standardization effort is led by government, driven by market, attended by the public and promoted by all the parties collaboratively, effectively support the development of a unified market system, and let standards be a “hard restraint” for quality, and push the Chinese economy to move towards higher levels.

III. Reform measures

Through the reform, transform the current standards system (under which all standards are developed by government departments) into a new-type standards system formed of both standards developed under government lead and those developed by market players. The standards developed under the government lead are streamlined from 6 categories to 4 categories, including mandatory national standards, recommendatory national standards, recommendatory industry standards and recommendatory local standards. The standards developed by market players fall into group standards and enterprise standards. The government-developed standards focus on essential matters, while the market-developed standards aim at improving the competitiveness. At the same time, build a sound standardization management system fitting the new-type standards system.

1. Build an effective and authoritative standardization coordination mechanism. Set up a state council standardization coordination promotion mechanism under which a state council leader as the convener and which is attended by the leaders of various relevant departments, comprehensively make plans for major reforms of standardization, and study key policies, and coordinate the development and implementation of much controversial standards spanning many departments and sectors. The coordination mechanism's routine matters are to be handled by the standardization regulator.
2. Consolidate and streamline mandatory standards. In terms of standards system, gradually integrate the current mandatory national standards, industry standards and local standards into mandatory national standards. In terms of scope of standards, the mandatory national standards are strictly confined to ensuring human health and safety of life and property, safeguarding national security and eco-environment safety and meeting the general requirements of social and economic management. In terms of standards management, all the relevant departments under the state council are responsible for proposing the mandatory national standards projects, organizing the drafting, soliciting for public opinions, technical review, leading the implementation and supervision. The standardization regulator under SC is responsible for approving the proposal of mandatory national standards and assigning a number, and informing the international organizations per the WTO rules. The mandatory national standards are approved by the SC for release, and approved by

entities authorized by SC. Enhance efforts to carry out inspection and administrative enforcement per the mandatory national standards. Unveil the texts of mandatory national standards free of charge. Build a statistical and reporting system in regard to the performance of mandatory national standards.

Where laws and regulations contain provisions on standards development, such current laws and regulations shall be followed. The mandatory national standards, mandatory industry standards and mandatory local standards for environmental protection, engineering projects, medical and health are managed under the current model. The standards for work safety, public security and taxation are temporarily managed under the current model. The defense industry standards for nuclear and aerospace vital to the national security and secrets are managed by the defense technology industry regulator.

3. Optimize and improve the recommendatory standards. In terms of standards system, further optimize the system of recommendatory national standards, industry standards and local standards, advance the transition to public-interests standards falling under government supervision, and gradually reduce the number and scale of existing recommendatory standards. In terms of scope of standards, reasonably define the scope of recommendatory standards of various levels in various sectors, the recommendatory national standards focus on developing basic and general-purpose standards supporting national standards, the recommendatory industry standards focus on developing the standards for important products, engineering, service and industry administration in its own sector, while the recommendatory local standards focus on developing special technical requirements suiting local natural conditions and customs of minority ethnic groups. In terms of standards management, the standardization regulator, various relevant departments involved and the standardization departments of local government are responsible for the development revision of the recommendatory national standard, industry standards and local standards. By fully utilizing informatization technology, set up a platform to enhance the information sharing, public supervision and self-inspection efforts during the development and revision process, so as to avoid the redundant efforts and conflicts of recommendatory national standards, industry standards and local standards during their project application and development process. Streamline the development and revision procedures, improve the efficiency of approval procedure, and shorten the period of development and revision. Advance the effort to unveil the text of public-interests recommendatory standards free of charge. Build a mechanism for feedback and assessment of standards implementation information, and ensure timely reexamination and updating of standards, and effectively address the problems of standards that are absent, outdated and lagging behind. Strengthen the management of standardization technical committees, and make such committees cover all sectors and better representative, to ensure standards are scientific and impartial.

4. Cultivate and develop group standards. In terms of developers, encourage social groups and industry alliances such as competent societies, associations, chambers of commerce and federations to coordinate the market players to jointly work out standards meeting

the needs of market and innovation, for market players to follow voluntarily, and increase the supply of standards. In terms of standards management, impose no administrative license on any group standards, they can be developed and released by social groups and industry alliances on their own, to ensure good performers prevail and bad performers fade away through market competition. The standardization regulator under SC works with the relevant departments under SC to develop the guidelines for the development of group standards and standardization best practices, and provide necessary guidance, regulation and supervision on the development of group standards.

In terms of promoting the efforts, choose the sectors which are more market-based, where technical innovation are thriving and product standards are many, to launch pilot work in regard to implementing group standards. Support the inclusion of patents in group standards so as to promote the technological progress.

5. Relax restrictions on and allow more room for enterprise standards. Enterprises may, basing on their actual needs, develop and implement enterprise standards on their own. Encourage enterprises to develop competitive enterprise standards higher than the national standards, industry standards and local standards. Build a system for self-declaration and supervision in regard to enterprise products and services, and gradually phase out the government registration management of enterprise products, and enable enterprises to assume major responsibility in standardization activities. Encourage specialized standardization institutions to compare and assess the standards unveiled by enterprises, and enhance social supervision.
6. Boost the internationalization levels of Chinese standards. Encourage social groups and industry alliances and enterprises to participate actively in international standardization activities, strive to get more domestic institutions designated as the technical committees of international standards organizations and hold more leadership positions, and increase China's say. Enhance efforts to keep track of, assess and translate international standards, enhance the efforts to translate and publish Chinese standards in foreign languages, and advance mutual recognition with major trade partner countries, and push forward the internationalization of standards we have advantages over and in special sectors, and create the brand of Chinese standards. Through leveraging overseas project contracts, export of major equipment and implementing construction projects in foreign countries, promote Chinese standards, and enable Chinese standards to “go out” to enable Chinese products, technologies, equipment and services to “go out”. Further relax restrictions on foreign enterprises to participate in Chinese standards.

IV. Specific reform agenda

Persist in combining overall promotion with phased implementation, and following the principle of “gradual adjustment plus continuous improvement”, advance the reform tasks in a collaborative and orderly fashion. The standardization reform campaign falls into three phases:

1. First phase (2015-2016), actively advance the pilot reform effort.

--Accelerate the effort to revise the Standardization Law of the People's Republic of China, propose the amendment, and ensure the reform is based on law. Revise and improve relevant regulations and rules. (Complete before the end of June, 2016)

--The standardization regulator under the State Council will work with the relevant departments under SC and the standardization departments of local governments to comprehensively clean up the current national standards, industry standards and local standards, and focus on reexamination and revision of the lagged and outdated standards, solving the problems of standards that are absent, overlapped and conflicting (complete before the end of December, 2016)

--Optimize the procedures for approval of standards proposals, shorten the period for standards development. Improve the system for registration of recommendatory industry and local standards, and enhance assessment efforts after the development and implementation of standards. (Complete before the end of December 2016)

--In light of the principles and scope for the development of mandatory standards, the mandatory standards that are no longer applicable will be annulled, and those standards whose mandatory status is no longer suitable will be transformed into recommendatory ones. (Complete before the end of December 2015)

--Conduct an assessment of the implementation results of standards, and set up a system for statistics and reporting with regard to the standards implementation results. Enhance supervision and inspection efforts and administrative enforcement, and subject any violations to investigation and punishment. (Complete before the end of December 2016)

--Choose the social groups and industry alliances having sufficient standardization capability to carry out pilot group standards programs in the sectors which are more market-based, and where technical innovations are thriving and product standards are many, and develop the guidelines for the development of group standards and standardization best practices. (Complete before the end of December 2015)

--Launch pilot reform programs with regard to the system for self-declaration and supervision of the enterprise product and service standards. When enterprises declare unveiling of enterprise standards, such enterprises are considered to have completed registration procedures. (Complete before the end of December 2015)

--Build a State Council-led standardization coordination mechanism, and develop relevant regulatory documents. Set up a platform for the unveiling and sharing of information on the development and revision of standards. (Complete before the end of December 2015)

--The number of international standards whose development is led and joined by Chinese experts will account for 50% of total each year. (Complete in 2016)

2. Second phase (2017-2018), stably advance the transition to a new-type standards

system

--For those current mandatory industry standards and local standards whose mandatory status is justified, they will be gradually upgraded into mandatory national standards through integration. (Complete in 2017)

-- Further clarify the scope of recommendatory standards to be developed and make clear the relationship between various types of standards. Gradually move toward the public-interests standards falling under government jurisdiction. (Complete in 2018)

--Cultivate a number of group standards-setting organizations with wide reputation and influence, and develop a number of group standards meeting the needs of market and innovation. Build a mechanism for assessment and supervision of group standards. (Complete in 2017)

-- The system for self-declaration and supervision of enterprise product and service standards will greatly improve and be implemented widely. (Complete in 2017)

--Visibly increased consistency between international and domestic standards, and the consistency degree will reach over 95% in the consumer products sector. (Complete in 2018)

3. Third phase (2019-2020), a well-structured, mutually-supporting, full-ranging new-type standards system meeting the needs of the economic and social development will take shape.

--Straighten out and build a collaborative and authoritative mandatory national standards management system. (Complete in 2020)

--The recommendatory standards developed under the government lead will be confined to public-interests standards, and form a well-coordinated, streamlined and efficient recommendatory standards management system. (Complete in 2020)

--The group standards and enterprise standards developed by market players on their own will grow mature, better meeting the needs of market competition, innovation and development. (Complete in 2020)

--The capability of participating in international standardization management activities will be further increased, and number of domestic institutions designed as technical institutions for international standards organizations and the number of leadership positions held by Chinese experts will be increased remarkably. The number of Chinese standards obtaining recognition of major trade partner countries will be increased dramatically. Chinese standards' international influence keeps growing, making China one of the world's standards power. (Complete in 2020)

(End of the Document)

Introduction of SESEC Project



The Seconded European Standardization Expert in China (SESEC) is a visibility project co-financed by the European Commission (EC), the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) secretariat and the three European Standardization Organizations (CEN, CENELEC and ETSI).



Since 2006, there has been two SESEC projects in China, SESEC I (2006-2009) and SESEC II (2009-2012). In Dec 2014, SESEC III was officially launched in Beijing, China. Dr. Betty XU was nominated as the SESEC expert and will spend the next 36 months on promoting EU-China standardization information exchange and EU-China standardization cooperation.

The SESEC project supports the strategic objectives of the European Union, EFTA and the European Standardization Organizations (ESOs). The purpose of SESEC project is to

- Promote European and international standards in China;
- Improve contacts with different levels of the Chinese administration, industry and standardization bodies;
- Improve the visibility and understanding of the European Standardization System (ESS) in China;
- Gather regulatory and standardization intelligence.

Acknowledge of USITO

This document was translated by USITO and proof-read by SESEC team.