ANNEX 3 OF THE AGREEMENT ON TECHNICAL BARRIERS TO TRADE

1.1 Text of Annex 3

Annex 3
CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE FOR THE PREPARATION, ADOPTION AND APPLICATION OF STANDARDS

General Provisions

A. For the purposes of this Code the definitions in Annex 1 of this Agreement shall apply.

B. This Code is open to acceptance by any standardizing body within the territory of a Member of the WTO, whether a central government body, a local government body, or a non-governmental body; to any governmental regional standardizing body one or more members of which are Members of the WTO; and to any non-governmental regional standardizing body one or more members of which are situated within the territory of a Member of the WTO (referred to in this Code collectively as "standardizing bodies" and individually as "the standardizing body").

C. Standardizing bodies that have accepted or withdrawn from this Code shall notify this fact to the ISO/IEC Information Centre in Geneva. The notification shall include the name and address of the body concerned and the scope of its current and expected standardization activities. The notification may be sent either directly to the ISO/IEC Information Centre, or through the national member body of ISO/IEC or, preferably, through the relevant national member or international affiliate of ISONET, as appropriate.

Substantive Provisions

D. In respect of standards, the standardizing body shall accord treatment to products originating in the territory of any other Member of the WTO no less favourable than that accorded to like products of national origin and to like products originating in any other country.

E. The standardizing body shall ensure that standards are not prepared, adopted or applied with a view to, or with the effect of, creating unnecessary obstacles to international trade.

F. Where international standards exist or their completion is imminent, the standardizing body shall use them, or the relevant parts of them, as a basis for the standards it develops, except where such international standards or relevant parts would be ineffective or inappropriate, for instance, because of an insufficient level of protection or fundamental climatic or geographical factors or fundamental technological problems.

G. With a view to harmonizing standards on as wide a basis as possible, the standardizing body shall, in an appropriate way, play a full part, within the limits of its resources, in the preparation by relevant international standardizing bodies of international standards regarding subject matter for which it either has adopted, or expects to adopt, standards. For standardizing bodies within the territory of a Member, participation in a particular international standardization activity shall, whenever possible, take place through one delegation representing all standardizing bodies in the territory that have adopted, or expect to adopt, standards for the subject matter to which the international standardization activity relates.

H. The standardizing body within the territory of a Member shall make every effort to avoid duplication of, or overlap with, the work of other standardizing bodies in the national territory or with the work of relevant international or regional standardizing bodies. They shall also make every
effort to achieve a national consensus on the standards they develop. Likewise the regional
standardizing body shall make every effort to avoid duplication of, or overlap with, the work of
relevant international standardizing bodies.

I. Wherever appropriate, the standardizing body shall specify standards based on product
requirements in terms of performance rather than design or descriptive characteristics.

J. At least once every six months, the standardizing body shall publish a work programme
containing its name and address, the standards it is currently preparing and the standards which it
has adopted in the preceding period. A standard is under preparation from the moment a decision
has been taken to develop a standard until that standard has been adopted. The titles of specific
draft standards shall, upon request, be provided in English, French or Spanish. A notice of the
existence of the work programme shall be published in a national or, as the case may be, regional
publication of standardization activities.

The work programme shall for each standard indicate, in accordance with any ISONET rules,
the classification relevant to the subject matter, the stage attained in the standard’s development,
and the references of any international standards taken as a basis. No later than at the time of
publication of its work programme, the standardizing body shall notify the existence thereof to the
ISO/IEC Information Centre in Geneva.

The notification shall contain the name and address of the standardizing body, the name and
issue of the publication in which the work programme is published, the period to which the work
programme applies, its price (if any), and how and where it can be obtained. The notification may
be sent directly to the ISO/IEC Information Centre, or, preferably, through the relevant national
member or international affiliate of ISONET, as appropriate.

K. The national member of ISO/IEC shall make every effort to become a member of ISONET or
to appoint another body to become a member as well as to acquire the most advanced membership
type possible for the ISONET member. Other standardizing bodies shall make every effort to
associate themselves with the ISONET member.

L. Before adopting a standard, the standardizing body shall allow a period of at least 60 days for
the submission of comments on the draft standard by interested parties within the territory of a
Member of the WTO. This period may, however, be shortened in cases where urgent problems of
safety, health or environment arise or threaten to arise. No later than at the start of the comment
period, the standardizing body shall publish a notice announcing the period for commenting in the
publication referred to in paragraph J. Such notification shall include, as far as practicable, whether
the draft standard deviates from relevant international standards.

M. On the request of any interested party within the territory of a Member of the WTO, the
standardizing body shall promptly provide, or arrange to provide, a copy of a draft standard which
it has submitted for comments. Any fees charged for this service shall, apart from the real cost of
delivery, be the same for foreign and domestic parties.

N. The standardizing body shall take into account, in the further processing of the standard, the
comments received during the period for commenting. Comments received through standardizing
bodies that have accepted this Code of Good Practice shall, if so requested, be replied to as promptly
as possible. The reply shall include an explanation why a deviation from relevant international
standards is necessary.

O. Once the standard has been adopted, it shall be promptly published.

P. On the request of any interested party within the territory of a Member of the WTO, the
standardizing body shall promptly provide, or arrange to provide, a copy of its most recent work
programme or of a standard which it produced. Any fees charged for this service shall, apart from
the real cost of delivery, be the same for foreign and domestic parties.

Q. The standardizing body shall afford sympathetic consideration to, and adequate opportunity
for, consultation regarding representations with respect to the operation of this Code presented by
standardizing bodies that have accepted this Code of Good Practice. It shall make an objective effort
to solve any complaints.
1.2 Related decisions and recommendations of the Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade


1. See the Decision of the Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT Committee) on principles for the development of international standards, guides and recommendations with relation to Articles 2 and 5 and Annex 3 of the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT Agreement).¹

¹ The text of the decision is contained in G/TBT/1/Rev.14, pp. 62-64.