

Script – Committee expert training – Module 4a

Position of Chair

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Hello, my name is Annette and welcome to module another module in the NSAI Expert training series. In this module 4a we will cover the role of Committee Chair, and explain the responsibilities and expectations associated with this position. **Next Slide.**

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Committee Chairs play a crucial role in the world of standards. A proactive, diplomatic, and knowledgeable Chair will help maintain focus on the objectives, ensure all committee members' viewpoints are heard and considered, and ultimately guide a committee to consensus. The Chair is a key role and working in conjunction with the national mirror committee secretary provide a focus for the work of national standard committees. The position of Chair is a role that requires an increase in commitment but, in equal measure, provides an increase in reward. A successful Chair has a chance to contribute in a real and positive way to their sector. **Next Slide**

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A typical technical committee will consist of between 5 and 20 members including the Chair and Secretary. The Chair of a Technical Committee or the Convenor of a working group can be nominated by either NSAI or from within the committee and is usually approved by the parent committee if there is one. The final appointment of new chairs must be approved by NSAI Standards management. The normal term is for a period of three years with the possibility of re-appointment. Committees can be involved in national or international work, or both. **Next Slide**

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Matters within the Committee shall, as far as possible, be decided by consensus.

“Consensus” is defined, by ISO/IEC, as general agreement characterised by the absence of sustained opposition to substantial issues by any important part of the concerned interests, and by a process that involves seeking to take into consideration the views of all parties concerned and to reconcile any conflicting arguments.

Consensus need not imply a unanimous decision and does not mean that all committee members agree with all the content. If there are any objections they will be recorded in the meeting decisions.

In the absence of consensus, the issue may be reported as necessary to NSAI Standards management by the Secretary for direction on the matter.

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National work often involves the drafting of indigenous standards, national annexes, national forewords, or standard recommendations etc. The Chair, working with the secretary, will ensure all deliverables follow relevant procedures and all stages of the development process.

Ensuring consensus is achieved is key during the development of any national standard and the Chair’s main role is to ensure this is achieved. This may require resolution of opposing viewpoints and working with all stakeholders to achieve an agreed outcome. Following publication, the chair can play a key role in promotional aspects for any new national standard. **Next Slide**

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International or European work can involve participating in the drafting of international or European standards through committees or working groups. National experts can be nominated for participation in international work by NSAI and should be agreed by the national committee.

It is important to note that where there is more than one Irish delegate attending an ISO or CEN technical committee meeting a 'Head of Delegation' or H.O.D. must be appointed. This person represents NSAI at the meeting and they must be aware of any national position, along with all delegates. This position should be agreed prior to the international meeting,

The Chair and secretary seek agreement on a national position, taking all inputs into consideration. A national position is not needed for attendees of working groups, however, if a National position is available attendees at working groups should be aware of it and make it known to others on that working group.

Even if there are no experts directly involved, national committees and experts can submit comments on international draft standards as part of the development process. Resolution of conflicting inputs on international ballots may be required. The secretary can work with the Chair of a committee to agree a national position on a ballot with relevant stakeholders. **Next Slide**

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For the national committee meetings, the secretary prepares all meeting documents in advance and agrees agenda items with the chair. The

secretary will record meeting attendance and minutes, and is responsible for all other files, records, and correspondence.

The Chair is responsible for leading the meeting and should conduct the meetings in an impartial manner guiding and controlling the meeting in order to reach balanced and prompt decisions.

For topics of interest the Chair should ensure that all material points of view are heard and considered in a timely manner. The aim is to reach consensus on the issue however it should be noted that consensus does not mean unanimity.

Following discussions by the committee, the chair should conclude by clearly summarising points agreed, and checking if sustained opposition still remains. It is important to facilitate stakeholder discussions in order to reach consensus and to avoid misunderstandings and the possibility of reopening debate at a later stage. Therefore, it is important to ensure that all committee decisions are clearly formulated and recorded.

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The Chair must continue to follow the core responsibilities associated with being a member of NSAI technical bodies, as detailed in NSAI procedures including, but not limited, to the following:

Chairs and members...

- Are expected to use the NSAI online platform for accessing documents related to the NSAI Committees.
- May make reference to their membership when writing articles or giving lectures or papers. However, they may not state views

purporting (or implying) to be those of the NSAI Committee unless those views have been approved by the NSAI or NSAI Committee.

- Shall maintain the confidentiality of the committee's work.
- Shall reveal any potential conflict of interest or intellectual Property Rights to the other members of the committee.
- Shall not communicate with the media on matters concerning the internal affairs of a committee without the expressed permission of NSAI.

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There are also roles and responsibilities specific to the position of Chair.

The Chair shall....

- operate in an impartial manner which is independent of sectoral commercial interests.
- ensure a fair and balanced opportunity for the expression of all viewpoints present.
- endeavour to obtain unanimity on decisions, failing which they shall endeavour to achieve consensus.
- on request, present a report to the NSAI Board on the activities of the Committee.

The Chair...

- should attend all meetings and deliver on any agreed work programme, in conjunction with the secretary
- ensure delivery of agreed work programmes by coordination of the work of the committee and any sub-committee or working groups,

<https://www.n Sai.ie/standards/standards-committees/nsai-committee-member-faqs/>

reporting on progress, and proposed actions required, e.g. in the event of target dates not being met.

- actively support the diversity, continuity and viability of the committee by working with the secretary to ensure that all stakeholders are represented, and membership is regularly reviewed.
- should identify and recruit new members as required, and help to retain existing members

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The Committee Chairs within NSAI are among the most important players in the standards division. A Chair that has strong expertise, leadership, and dedication will invariably lead to a successful and dedicated committee. NSAI, through its associated secretary and management, will endeavour to assist all Chairs in all the ways we can. **Next Slide**

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For more information on standards and for other training modules on standardization please see our Learning Centre on the NSAI website www.n Sai.ie.

END OF MODULE 4A