The Standards Representative’s role

As a water industry professional you can use your expertise and broaden your experience, nationally and internationally, by representing the UK water industry in standards development. Representation on standards committees brings benefits to you and your organisation.

Standards reps from the water industry and the supply chain make major contributions to the drafting of standards, mainly through membership of British Standards Institution (BSI) committees and in Europe (CEN). Such standards are used every day in the purchasing of products and services throughout the water industry and are essential to the supply of good quality, cost-effective goods and services. Some specify requirements, compliance against which can be independently certified, providing enhanced organisational control and increased stakeholder confidence. Others provide good practice guidance against which an organisation, and its stakeholders, can compare its existing practices. Such comparisons can influence regulatory decision making.

The role of rep normally involves attendance at (increasingly virtual) committee meetings, the peer review of papers, exchange of ideas, and contributions to the development of standards.

UK representatives are highly valued in the international standards making process for their knowledge, consensus building approach and as native English speakers – since all CEN & ISO committee work is now conducted in English. Friendships and networks developed via committee work can last well beyond the life of individual standards’ development and provide great personal and professional satisfaction. The need for some meetings to take place physically may offer the opportunity for short duration international travel funded by your employer with the possibility of partial reimbursement from the UK government.

BSI runs a range of excellent, free, interactive training courses for standards committee members. Typically these are day-long courses with high quality course materials. They are run both virtually and physically (the latter at BSI’s Headquarters in Chiswick, West London). There is a specific course for new committee members. Many of the courses deal with the acquisition of softer skills that are transferable into everyday life. The current training programme is available at

<https://www.bsigroup.com/en-GB/about-bsi/uk-national-standards-body/how-to-get-involved-with-standards/become-a-standards-maker/committee-member-training-courses/>

Professional practice benefits

* Help steer the content of standards on which you work
* Have the satisfaction of seeing your knowledge, ideas and words documented nationally and internationally
* Develop experience working with others on standards committees
* Learn and practice soft skills that are widely transferable
* Constructively challenge unsatisfactory content and aid its refinement into good practice
* Experience the standards and industry working practices of other countries and compare them with UK practice
* Develop work that is recognised by many professional bodies as contributing to Continuing Professional Development

Information on how to become a standards representative

The Standards Board monitors Water UK’s representation on standards committees and nominates individuals to the British Standards Institution - UK National Standards Body - to represent the water sector’s interests.

Periodically vacancies arise in ranks of existing standards representatives or through changes in BSI standards committee structures. The Standards Board seeks to identify suitable candidates by encouraging awareness of the representative’s role and aligning the need to fill such vacancies with individuals’ knowledge and skills.

Some potential representatives can be hesitant over demands such a role may place on their existing workload and the attitude of their employer. Others may have been nominated by their employer as fulfilling an identified development need. Others again may seize the opportunity as part of their own career development planning.

Whatever uncertainties may exists these are best addressed by dialogue with a Standards Board representative who can provide further information about existing representation needs. The individual is likely to have significant personal experience of being a standards representative and can provide a comprehensive explanation of the duties and satisfaction to be gained.

In the first instance please contact

Water UK at:

0207 344 1844

webadmin@water.org.uk