

What is an expert?

When we talk about “experts” in the context of industry standards, we are referring to a person that has an in depth technical understanding of a subject, whether it be a product or a service standard.

Experts are a vital part of the standards development process as they often bring a practical element to the table. Their expertise in the subject matter enables other participants to understand how the standard will impact on the industry / sector concerned.

It also provides linkage to other areas of expertise that may be needed to see the “big picture” and create a harmonised standard, something we often see in the International and European standards development areas.

Most experts are recruited from the BSIA technical committees, which provide an excellent opportunity to discuss standards with like-minded industry experts.

What's in it for my company?

Feedback from companies that have provided experts to sit on the working groups, have outlined the advantage of knowing how standards will impact on their business, especially at the early stages of development. It has proved to be a useful marketing tool in having such knowledge, using this to impress clients and potential new business opportunities. The company can also benefit by stimulating the employee's need to advance and excel in new areas and opportunities this brings.

Why should I do it?

People become experts for various reasons. It can be a way of raising your profile within the industry sector, and perhaps it will be of benefit to your company? Many people see it as a way of networking with their peers and discussing current and future technologies and service techniques.

As a UK expert, BSI offer free training to develop members knowledge and understanding of standards, committee work, legal aspects, influencing people... The list goes on. Most of the training offers a CPD certificate.

What will it cost?

Becoming an expert will require a commitment to attend various working group meetings. Which standards body is developing a standard determines where meetings are likely to take place, e.g. British Standards would normally take place at BSI, Chiswick, near London. Cenelec European working group meetings could take place within Europe, whereas IEC standards working groups are world-wide, resulting in the need to travel anywhere across the globe.

For the UK experts enlisted onto European and / or International working groups, there is always a nominated Principal expert, who is normally able to claim funding to assist with travel and accommodation arrangements for overseas meetings. Other experts would not have this ability to claim.

The UK “experts” are also expected to attend the appointed National Committee meetings responsible for the standards under development. In our case the UK standards body is BSI, based in Chiswick, London.

It is difficult to determine exactly how much it would cost to participate on a specific standard as this would depend on the above factors. It would also depend on the how the working group wishes to meet, i.e. face to face or a combination of conference calls to limited actual meetings. A lot of the development work can be done off-line.

How do I enquire about becoming an expert?

As a member of BSIA, you have the advantage of knowing that we, as a recognised trade association, are at the forefront of knowing where and when development is underway and planned to start. We always offer opportunities to our members to participate in the working groups and have a significant success rate in appointing members on the various working groups. We do this through BSI.

We do ask that as part of your commitment to being a UK expert, you attend our technical committee meetings, where we decide on our direction and ensure development of standards is beneficial to our member companies and the UK at large.

If you wish to be considered as a UK expert, but there has not been a calling notice in your area of expertise, you can drop us a line and we will keep your name in readiness for such an opportunity. You can of course join one of our BSIA technical committees, which are key to ensuring the technical needs of our industry are being addressed.

Member testimonials

“ A year or so ago I joined Cenelec TC/79 WG11, which had been reconvened after a period of several years’ inactivity to conduct a review of EN50131-5-3, the wireless intruder alarm standard. I had been working with the published standard for some years and was puzzled by some of its clauses and test procedures, the reasoning behind them obscure to me and my colleagues.

The experience of discussing the content of the standard in depth with a group of engineers and others, some of whom had worked previously on the published standard, was very useful in improving my understanding of why certain clauses

were written the way they were and gave us the opportunity to suggest improvements where we felt that these were necessary. The opportunity to share ideas with others and the improved insight into the thinking behind the standard is of commercial value to our company as it helps in the efficient development of compliant products and reduces the time and cost involved in third-party compliance testing.

Stewart Taylor
Cooper Security Ltd



“ Being a WG expert gives me the opportunity to networking in a co-operative, non-competitive environment with other experts from the whole spectrum of the industry, inspectorates, police and government. I have the opportunity to use my expertise and experience to shape standards for the UK which is useful for my own professional development.

Having knowledge of what standards are likely to contain

allows me to advise my company of areas where products or practices may be non-compliant. This allows us to take the necessary corrective actions in advance of the publication of those standards.

Mark Wherrett
Synectics Systems Group Ltd



Need more information?

If you want to know more, give us a call!

Useful contacts

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Useful links

British Standards Institute (BSI): www.bsigroup.co.uk/en-GB/about-bsi/uk-national-standards-body/

CENELEC standards: www.cenelec.eu/standardsdevelopment/ourproducts/europeanstandards.html

IEC standards: www.iec.ch/standardsdev/