



Office of the Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor
Kaitohutohu Mātanga Pūtaiao Matua ki te Pirimia

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REVIEW: External review of unsettled or new science in standards development projects

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External review of unsettled or new science in standards development projects

What is involved in a standards development process?

Standards are agreed specifications for products, processes, services, and performance and are generally voluntary, but can be mandatory when cited in Acts, regulations, or other legislative instruments. Under the Standards and Accreditation Act 2015 (the Act), standards are developed by a balanced and representative standards development committee approved by the Standards Approval Board and appointed by the New Zealand Standards Executive.

The content in the standards is the responsibility of the standards development committee. A standards development committee consensus is required for a standard to be approved by the Standards Approval Board, and published.

There can be times when the standards may incorporate unsettled or new science that could have significant impact on key stakeholders, such as consumers, users and the industry. In these instances, a review of the draft standards, accompanying/related standards-related documents, and supporting evidence will be requested from the [Chief Science Advisors | He Rauhinga Tohu Putaiao \(CSA\) Forum](#), led by the Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor.

Standards New Zealand will, in the first instance, work with the Chief Science Advisor, at the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE), to prepare a request that will be sent to the CSA Forum. The Chief Science Advisor at MBIE will act as a conduit into the Forum and this role will assist Standards New Zealand to get the Forum to provide advice on new or unsettled science in the draft standards or standards-related publications.

When can unsettled or new science become apparent in a standards development process?

During a standards development project, new or unsettled science can become apparent at:

- a. the starting up a project phase (via a project commissioning brief) by the commissioner and/or Standards New Zealand,
- b. during the drafting process but before public consultation by the standards development committee and/or Standards New Zealand, and
- c. after public consultation and before balloting by the public and/or the committee and/or Standards New Zealand.

What happens when unsettled or new science becomes apparent in a standards development process?

The New Zealand Standards Executive will request the CSA Forum, led by Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor, to carry out an external review independently.

The roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders are as listed below. The flow of the tasks is as shown in the process map at the end of this document.



What happens in exceptional situations where in the course of the CSA Forum’s review of matters related to new or unsettled science, the CSA Forum becomes aware of an issue that lies outside the ambit of the New Zealand Standards Executive (NZSE) and/or Standards Approval Board (SAB)?

When the CSA Forum becomes aware of an issue that lies outside the ambit of the NZSE and SAB, the CSA Forum needs to consider the appropriate next steps to address the issue concerned.

The CSA Forum should consider whether it would be appropriate to inform the NZSE and/or SAB about the issue, depending on the issue itself and taking into account the NZSE’s and SAB’s independent statutory functions as provided for in the Act.

The CSA Forum should provide the advice on matters related to new or unsettled science to the NZSE given the request for review has come from the NZSE and given the NZSE’s functions.

The CSA Forum should discuss with the NZSE and/or SAB as to who else should receive a copy of the advice in relation to the issue that lies outside the ambit of the NZSE and SAB. The advice can be provided to third parties as a result of this discussion.

1. Standards New Zealand (as the delivery arm of the New Zealand Standards Executive)

- a. Work with the commissioner(s) and the committee to identify the new or unsettled science.
- b. Liaise with the Standards Approval Board to demonstrate that all advice from the CSA Forum has been incorporated through memo to Board on committee membership/approval of standard.
- c. Work with the committee/chair to request the CSA Forum to undertake the review of new or unsettled science.
- d. Inform the committee/chair of the advice received from CSA Forum.

2. CSA Forum

- a. Review request from Standards New Zealand on matters related to new or unsettled science.
- b. Provide advice on matters related to new or unsettled science.
- c. Initiate external and/or independent review of the appropriate document containing matters related to new or unsettled science.
- d. Provide advice on the composition of the standards development committee if the new or unsettled science is discovered at the project commissioning stage of the standards development process.
- e. Consider the appropriate next steps to address an issue that lies outside the ambit of the NZSE and SAB and is discovered in the course of the CSA Forum’s review of matters related to new or unsettled science, and whether it is appropriate to inform the NZSE and/or SAB on the issue.
- f. Decide who, including third parties, should receive a copy of the advice in relation to the issue that lies outside the ambit of the NZSE and SAB, following discussion with the NZSE.



3. Standards Approval Board

- a. Ensure that when there is new or unsettled science involved, discuss with Standards New Zealand the need to liaise with the CSA Forum.

4. Committee/Chair

- a. Help identify matters related to new or unsettled science in a standards development project.
- b. Consider and incorporate where appropriate all advice from the CSA Forum.
- c. Provide a technical reason to not incorporate any advice from the CSA Forum.

External review of unsettled/new science in the standards development projects

