International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC)

Key features

Type of organisation: Private standard-setting organisation	**Headquarters:** Geneva (Switzerland)
Charter/Constitution: Report of IEC Preliminary Meeting: www.iec.ch/about/history/documents/pdf/IEC_Founding_Meeting_Report_1906.pdf	**Country offices**: Sydney (Australia), São Paulo (Brazil), Nairobi (Kenya), Singapore, Worcester (United States)
Membership:	**Secretariat staff:** ~120 (2017)
• Nature: National committees dedicated to the electrotechnical sector	**Total budget:approx.** EUR 23 million (2017)
• Number: 60 full members, 23 associate members, 87 affiliates	**Type of activity:** International Standards, Conformity Assessment Services, policy dialogue, information exchange, development of legal instruments
Year of establishment: 1906	**Sectors of activity:** All electrical, electronic and related technologies
	Webpage: www.iec.ch

Members

Full members have access to all technical and managerial activities and functions, at all levels of the IEC, including voting rights in Council. IEC has currently 60 full members: Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, , Kuwait Luxembourg, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States.

Associate members have full access to all working documents but limited voting rights in the technical work and no eligibility to managerial functions within the IEC. IEC has currently 23 associate members: Albania, Bahrain, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Estonia, , Georgia, Iceland, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, Morocco, Nigeria, Sri Lanka, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tunisia, Viet Nam.

Relationship with non-members (affiliates)

Eighty seven developing and newly industrialising countries participate in the free IEC Affiliate Country Programme (www.iec.ch/affiliates). The Programme gives them the opportunity to get involved with the IEC – at no cost and without the burden of membership. Countries participating in the Programme benefit from 200+ free IEC International Standards for national adoption. They receive support to become more aware of the benefits of using International Standards and verifying conformity. Affiliates learn how to monitor relevant working documents, taking a step to step approach to establishing an IEC National Electrotechnical Committee (NEC). NECs aim to bring together relevant public and private sector participants. Participants also receive training, mentoring and support to participate in the IEC Conformity Assessment activities.

Observers

To co-ordinate its technical work, the IEC has hundreds of liaisons with many organisations (www.iec.ch/standardsdev/how). In order to be effective, liaison operates in both directions, with suitable reciprocal arrangements.

Mandate

The mission of the IEC is to be globally recognised as the leading provider of Standards, conformity assessment systems and related services needed to facilitate international trade and enhance user value in the fields of electricity, electronics and associated technologies.

IRC processes taking place within the International Electrotechnical Commission

Exchange of information and experiences	Occasionally
Data Collection	Never
Research and policy analysis	Frequently
Discussion of good regulatory practices	Frequently
Development of rules, standards or good practices	Systematically
Negotiation of international agreements	Never
Enforcement: imposition of sanctions	Never
Dispute settlement	Never
Crisis management	Never

Categories of legal and policy instruments

	Is it taking place within the IO?	Approximate number
Treaties for ratification by States (excluding the funding one)		
Legally binding decisions (Decisions)		
Recommendations	√	~100
Political declarations		
Model treaties or law		
Production of technical standards	√	> 9 000
Non-binding guidance/best practices document	√	Many different categories of documents

Interactions with other international organisations active in the field

Mechanisms of interaction	Approximate number of IOs involved		Examples
Develop joint instruments	√	20	The IEC co-operates with several international
MoU or other agreements	√	190	and regional bodies with the aim of encouraging
Participate in co-ordinating institution	√	190	implementation of its International Standards and
Joint meetings that provide forum for co-ordination	√	10	to reduce work overlaps. Examples include:
Observe relevant actions of other bodies	√	190	UNECE, ISO, ITU, IEA, CIGRE, OIML, UIC,
Exchange information	√	190	CIRM, IAEA, ILAC, IAF, ICRP, IMDRF, IMO, , IOGP, ISSA, UITP, WTO/OMC, WHO

IEC history

The IEC was officially founded in June 1906, in London, England. By 1914 the IEC had formed four technical committees to deal with Nomenclature, Symbols, Rating of Electrical Machinery, and Prime Movers. In 1948, the IEC Central Office moved to Geneva, Switzerland. Throughout the following decades the IEC built up a global platform on which thousands of experts helped develop the technical foundation for the majority of electrical and electronic technologies that generate or use electricity. Those include for example, lamps and lighting, fibre optics, medical devices, electric vehicle charging, solar, wind and marine energy systems, energy storage, semiconductors, the universal charger for mobile phones, and much, much more. Today, IEC work contributes essentially to universal energy access, smart electrification, smarter more sustainable cities, all forms of transportation, smart manufacturing, and more. Billions of devices and components rely on IEC International Standards and the IEC Conformity Assessment Systems to work safely, with each other, everywhere in the world.