

Message from the President

Dear Colleagues,

We have entered 2026 with strong energy and clear momentum. IFAN continues to expand its activities, strengthen its global presence, and deepen engagement with the standards community. The start of this year reflects what makes IFAN unique: an active, committed network of standards users who contribute their expertise, share their perspectives, and help shape the future of standardization.

One of our key new initiatives is the launch of the **IFAN - The Voice of Standard Users Podcast**. We are excited about this new channel, which allows us to bring the voices of leading International standards users closer to the community. This platform will highlight how standards are used in practice, the challenges users face, and the value they create across industries

Our **International Women's Day webinar** and a special **podcast** episode were another strong milestone. The discussions reinforced a key message that is increasingly recognized across the standards community: inclusion improves outcomes. Bringing more women into standardization leads to more relevant, practical, and trusted standards.

IFAN also begins 2026 with a newly elected board. We are pleased to welcome new board members **Gabriela Ehrlich**, **Emerlye**



IFAN President, Vered Oren

Itoua, **Lois Ngonyamo**, and **Matthew Sexton**, alongside our continuing leadership. In addition, **Weijia Xia** and **Nicolas Fleury** have taken on the roles of Vice Presidents. This leadership team reflects the diversity and global nature of our community and positions IFAN well for the year ahead.

I encourage each of you to stay engaged, share these initiatives within your networks, connect with us through our growing LinkedIn presence, and continue contributing to our shared work. Together, we ensure that standards remain practical, relevant, and shaped by those who use them every day.

Warm regards,



Vered Oren
President, IFAN



Meet the New IFAN Board Members

Matthew Sexton

Matthew works at the sharp end of standards. As Technical and Compliance Director at BMI UK which is part of the world's largest manufacturer of roofing and waterproofing systems, he deals daily with the real-world application of construction product and test standards across the UK and European markets.

He is also Deputy Chair of the British Standards Users Network, where he represents the interests of organisations that rely on standards to design, manufacture, and build safely. Matthew is not only a user of standards, he actively contributes to writing and revising them, serving on technical panels where industry experience directly shapes outcomes.



Lois Ngonyamo

Based in Zimbabwe, Lois is a Quality Assurance and Sustainability leader with more than 27 years of experience across quality management, food safety, agriculture, and ESG reporting. She currently serves as Quality Assurance Executive at Irvine's Zimbabwe, where she has spent nearly three decades building and sustaining a strong quality culture across the poultry value chain.

Beyond her corporate role, Lois chairs the NATIONAL STANDARDS USERS SOCIETY ZIMBABWE (NSUSZ), where she advocates for the effective use of standards, supports organizations in improving competitiveness and market access, and channels the voice of users to the national standards body.

Emeryle Itoua

Based in Congo-Brazzaville, Emeryle leads a management consultancy supporting organizations across Africa with ISO certification and quality management. Her journey began in science, with a background in genetics in Paris, before a strong desire to return to Africa and contribute locally led her toward entrepreneurship and an MBA.

With more than 15 years of experience in quality, safety, health, and environment across the food and oil industries, Emeryle is highly motivated to increasing awareness and adoption of standards across Africa. Beyond her professional work, she is also actively involved in supporting local entrepreneurship and small business development.



Gabriela Ehrlich

Gabriela is the Chief Representative for the international development of Global Energy Interconnection Standards at GEIDCO - the Global Energy Interconnection Development and Cooperation Organization, a non-profit headquartered in Beijing, China. She is also the founder of Ehrlich Consulting, a venture that builds on over four decades of international experience in communications, public affairs, and advocacy, helping organizations and people enhance their visibility, impact, influence, and business outcomes.

Before founding Ehrlich Consulting, Gabriela spent 15 years as Director of Communications, Outreach, and Advocacy at the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC)



Celebrating Women in Standards: IFAN Marks International Women's Day



Webinar

Each year, IFAN proudly marks International Women's Day by highlighting the contributions of women in the global standards community.

To celebrate this year, we hosted a special webinar bringing together women members of the IFAN Board for an open conversation about their journeys in standardization and the importance of diverse voices in shaping the standards that guide our industries and societies.

The webinar, held under the theme "Give to Gain," explored how volunteering in the standards system allows professionals to contribute their knowledge while also gaining valuable insights, networks, and leadership experience. Participants

reflected on how the landscape of standardization has evolved over the years with more women taking leadership roles and bringing new perspectives. Beyond celebrating progress, the discussion also emphasized a key message: **standards are stronger when more voices are represented.** Greater diversity helps ensure that standards remain relevant, practical, and responsive to the needs of society.

Watch the webinar recording [here](#).

Podcast

As part of the International Women's Day activities, IFAN also highlighted a special episode from the newly launched **IFAN Podcast**, featuring **Sonya Bird**, Vice President of International Standards at **UL Standards & Engagement** and an active member of IFAN.

In the conversation, Sonya shares her personal journey in standardization, reflects on the progress made in gender representation, and explains why user participation is essential to building better and more inclusive standards.

Listen to the podcast episode



with Sonya Bird [here](#).

Celebrating International Women's Day each year is one of the many ways IFAN continues to highlight the importance of inclusion and engagement in shaping the standards of tomorrow.



The Importance of Standardization Education for Adolescents

NTSO as IFAN's Best Practice

By Wijia Xia, Vice-President of IFAN

As the only international organization representing standards users, IFAN has long regarded standardization education for standards users - especially adolescents, the future core force of standards users - as a key part of its work. Concrete global data highlights the irreplaceable importance of such education. A randomized evaluation covering 25,000 pupils in Kenya showed that those receiving standardization education gained the equivalent of 0.89 extra years of schooling in primary grades and 1.48 extra years in pre-primary grades after two years, far outperforming peers in non-standardized education environments. Additionally, global statistics on youth standardized literacy show that adolescents who receive systematic standardization education are 3.2 times more likely to develop rigorous thinking, a key quality for future standards users. For adolescents, who are not only the inheritors of global standardization causes but also the potential main body of future standards application and promotion, standardization education is crucial for nurturing their standardized literacy, practical application abilities and sense of responsibility.

The National Teenagers Standardization Olympiad (NTSO), launched in 2020, serves as the best practice of this work in action, vividly demonstrating the value of standardization education and IFAN's commitment to this cause. Initiated by SAC and CAS, NTSO is held each year nationwide to promote and popularise standardization knowledge among adolescents, foster their awareness of how standardization can serve society and life, improve their ability to apply standards in practice, and also select outstanding talents for international standardization competitions. Divided into Preliminary, Semi-final and Final, the competition is open to middle and high school students (aged 13-18 years old), with each team consisting of 3 students and 1 teacher. In each year, standardized training and unified competition tasks are given to students to guide adolescents to master standardization knowledge, to develop rigorous thinking, and lay a solid foundation for becoming qualified standards users in the future. From 2020 to 2025, NTSO topics covers aerospace technology, low-carbon schools, electronic guide dogs, cultural relic restoration, etc., combining standardization with real-life scenarios, further enhancing this effect.

The scale of NTSO has been expanding year by year,

clearly reflecting the rising influence of adolescent standardization education: from 11 teams in 7 provinces in 2020 to 144 teams in 11 provinces in 2025, with a 10-fold increase in participating teams and expanded its coverage by 57% in just five years. Since 2018, with IFAN's guidance, China has participated in the International Standards Olympiad with increasing teams and remarkable achievements, winning 23 awards in total as of 2025, including the top Platinum Award, and NTSO, as a domestic incubation platform, has further expanded the reach of standardization education, benefiting more young standards users.



NTSO perfectly aligns with IFAN's mission of promoting standardization among standards users. The competition has become an important carrier for IFAN to carry out standardization education for young standards users. NTSO's standardized design also mirrors the core value of IFAN's standardization education for standards users - equity, systematical and practicality. The introduction of IFAN Special Award into NTSO has been a transformative milestone, acting as a powerful catalyst for both the growth of the event and the personal ambition of the students. By lending its prestigious name to the award, IFAN provides a "global gateway" for participants, elevating the competition from a regional academic exercise to an internationally recognized platform. As these award-winning teams move on to representatives in the International Standards Olympiad, the IFAN Special Award remains a testament to their

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The Importance of Standardization Education for Adolescents

Continued

readiness. It ensures that the global standardization cause has a steady reservoir of high-quality talent, turning IFAN's long-term vision into a tangible reality through the inspired efforts of the world's youth.

As IFAN's best practice, NTSO also bridges the gap between adolescent education and the needs of standards users, with data proving its practical effect. This relationship creates a powerful feedback loop where IFAN's professional expertise shapes the competition, and the competition, in turn, enriches understanding of future standards users. The NTSO ensures that students are not working in an academic vacuum. Instead, they are trained to address the same real-world challenges faced by professional standards users today. This high-level alignment ensures that the "standardization literacy" cultivated in these adolescents is directly transferable to the global workforce in the future. By recognizing excellence at the adolescent level, IFAN is essentially "pre-registering" high-quality talent for the global standardization cause.

Standardization education is an important part of IFAN's work, while NTSO has effectively demonstrated its importance. To adolescents, standardization education is more than just one subject, it is an essential bridge between today's classroom and tomorrow's global challenges. As these young "standards ambassadors" graduate from the competition to the professional arena, they carry with them the core values of IFAN—equity, practicality, and systematic excellence, as well as their ingrained standardization mindset, which will empower them to translate these principles into tangible, impactful outcomes. Through the continued promotion of such best practices, IFAN is not just observing the future of standardization, it is actively and successfully shaping it.

2026 National Teenagers Standardization Olympiad to Launch in March

The 2026 National Teenagers Standardization Olympiad (NTSO) is set to officially kick off in March 2026, building on the remarkable achievements of last year's event and continuing its strategic cooperation with the International Federation of Standards Users (IFAN).

Last year's Olympiad marked a significant milestone, attracting around 500 outstanding young participants with strong enthusiasm and in standardization. Teams selected to attend the 20th International Standards Olympiad won highest Platinum Prize and Gold Prize among 39 teams participating, highly commended by ISO and IEC officials.

NTSO has provided a valuable platform for teenagers to showcase their talents, exchange ideas and deepen their understanding of international standards, winning high recognition from IFAN and all sectors of society. With the professional guidance and rich global resources of IFAN, the organizing committee will further optimize the competition system for 2026, aiming to offer young participants broader international perspectives and more valuable learning opportunities.



Join IFAN's Working Group 17

"IP, Standards Use, and Commercial Policies"

From the Chair OF WG17, Nicolas Fleury

IFAN is reactivating its Working Group 17 and is looking for motivated members to join!

Copyright, licensing, and intellectual property policies continue to be among the most significant pain points for standards users worldwide. IFAN's 2025 International Standards Users Survey found that more than half of organizations struggle with copyright and licensing terms, and over 40% cite restrictive policies such as DRM protections as a material barrier to their daily work. WG 17 is at the heart of IFAN's response to these challenges.

What will WG 17 do?

Under the co-leadership of Chair Nicolas Fleury (IFAN Vice-President) and Co-Chair Martin Conrads (IFAN Board Member, Audi), WG 17 is tasked with:

- Examining how copyright and licensing models of standards bodies affect users' ability to effectively use, integrate, and manage standards content in their business processes and digital workflows.
- Analysing the impact of intellectual property, including patents and copyright, on the practical use of standards.

- Developing IFAN policy positions and recommendations that balance standards bodies' commercial interests with users' need for clarity, flexibility, and legal certainty.
- Promoting harmonization and simplification of copyright and licensing policies across ISO, IEC, CEN, CENELEC, and other standards bodies.
- Supporting standards bodies in understanding and implementing IFAN's recommendations.

Why join?

This is a unique opportunity to influence the future of copyright and licensing frameworks in the standards ecosystem, directly contributing to IFAN's ongoing dialogue with major standards bodies. Whether your organization has faced challenges with multi-user licensing, digital content integration, or DRM, your experience and expertise are exactly what WG 17 needs.

Interested?

Contact the IFAN Secretariat to express your interest in joining WG 17, by 15 May 2026. We welcome representatives from IFAN member organisations who are committed to improving the standards user experience.





We are pleased to announce the launch of the IFAN Podcast, a new platform dedicated to highlighting the voice of standards users and their critical role in the standardization process.

Through conversations with industry leaders, experts, and members of the standards community, the podcast shares real experiences on how standards are used, implemented, and improved in practice. The podcast strengthens the collective voice of standards users, ensuring that their perspectives and experiences are heard more clearly within the standardization system.

The first episodes have already received excellent reviews and very positive feedback from listeners across the standards community

We invite you to listen to the podcast and share it with your networks. If you would like to be interviewed in a future episode, [please contact us](#)

[Link to IFAN Podcast on Spotify](#)

[Link to IFAN podcast on Apple](#)

Dates for your Diary

- 18 May, 58th IFAN European Group Meeting. For details please contact the IFAN Secretariat [here](#).
- 18 & 19 June CEN-CENELEC General Meeting, Cyprus.
- 28 Sept-2 Oct ISO General Meeting, Paris, France
- 2 October IFAN members' Assembly, Paris, France
- 16-21 November IEC General Meeting, Hamburg, Germany



For further information on IFAN:

IFAN Publications: www.ifan.org/ifan-publications

Contact IFAN: ifan@ifan.org

