

ANSI Dimensional Stone Standard NSC Progress Report- June 2011



The following is an update of the current status of the NSC-funded development of a Sustainability Standard for dimensional Stone.

Standard Development Activities

Development of the standard has been underway, and continues in earnest. In the current phase, the stakeholders have been divided into work groups and sub groups focused on scoping issues relevant to the standard and then developing draft criteria around the various issues. Primary work groups have been established for both Processing and Quarry Operations. Sub groups have been formed around the topics of water, energy, social responsibility, and transportation to name a few.

Some of the issues currently being deliberated on the various groups include the following:

- Stakeholders in the energy subgroups are looking into the approach and criteria used in the US EPA Energy Star program are applicable and appropriate as guidance for the energy criteria in stone manufacturing. How best to include the energy consumption from corporate operations is also being considered
- The EPA SmartWay program has been under review as a possible model for the development of criteria around transportation. The program is a voluntary program that deals with the carbon footprint and other emissions resulting from air, land and water transport of goods. It is unclear how international transportation would be considered. The transportation group has not yet determined if it should be referenced in the standard.
- A variety of issues have been introduced and are being considered for social responsibility, including the concept of transparency in public reporting of key performance and safety data. Such reporting is being considered for an optional credit under the standard, though there is disagreement over whether such reporting is necessary. Strong social responsibility criteria will be necessary for the standard to adequately address the various conditions of international production.

The scoping and draft criteria development phase is often the most difficult phase due to the learning curve that new stakeholders unfamiliar with standard development must climb. This has also been made a bit more difficult for this standard due to the unique nature of the standard (standards are typically product-based, but this one is more process-based due to the natural origins of stone) and the difficulty of defining clear thresholds for criteria. Though currently the groups are struggling with many of these issues, the difficulty was not unexpected. The goals for all groups are to have a draft set of criteria for consideration at the upcoming in-person meeting in August. (see below for more details).

Scheduled Calls:

Primary work on the standard is being conducted through a series of teleconference calls organized around the various committees. While calls are typically scheduled on a month-to-month basis, the following calls have already been scheduled:

- Monday, July 25 – Joint Committee Meeting

Calls are open to anyone interested in participating with no prior notice of attendance required. Minutes from all work group and Joint Committee meetings are available upon request.

Overall Schedule

Development of the standard is anticipated to take 18-24 months based on the time taken for similar standards, and may vary depending on a variety of factors. Work on the standard began in earnest in November 2010, with the first draft of the standard expected by January, 2012. While the groups are struggling a bit to develop draft criteria in this phase, we will know much better how we are progressing after the meeting in August. As of now, we appear to be on track to meet our original schedule.

In-Person Stakeholder Meeting- Ann Arbor, MI, August 22-23 2011

Our next in-person meeting will be held on Aug 22-23 at the NSF Head Quarters in Ann Arbor Michigan. This meeting will be critical in the development process, as it will begin the process of pulling all of the criteria together into one cohesive document. Among the agenda items will be the following:

- Report out on the approach and language developed by the groups and to get both general and specific feedback from the larger stakeholder group;
- Review specific language in proposed criteria and provide guidance back to the workgroups on suggested changes
- Discuss the status of each criteria (e.g. required or optional) and any specific language modifications suggested by the group
- Gain alignment between various sections and criteria to begin to work towards consensus for the final framework of the standard.

It is also at this meeting that, if needed, any major adjustments to our approach will be made. Participation in the meeting is open, and anyone interested in attending and taking part in the discussions is encouraged to attend. Detailed information regarding the meeting will be sent out shortly after the Joint Committee phone conference in July.



Other Upcoming Events

NSC Standard related events scheduled for Spring 2011 are in the process of being planned or have already been confirmed. A few events on the calendar include:

- Marmomacc/Veronafierre Stone Show – Verona, Italy, Sep 21-24, 2011 -
A meeting will be held with international representatives of the world wide stone community to update them on the standard development process and to solicit their input on the current draft criteria under consideration for inclusion in the standard. Dates and times to be determined.
- GreenBuild – Toronto, October 4-7, 2011 -
Outreach will be conducted to groups in the Green Building industry to announce and build support for the developing Natural Stone Standard. Meetings will be one-on-one and will be conducted by Ecoform in conjunction with the NSC, both of which are attending the show. Dates and times to be determined.

In addition to the above events, development of the standard will continue through regularly scheduled stakeholder meetings of the various sub-groups. For more information about stakeholder meetings and how you might become involved, please contact Jack Geibig at Jgeibig@ecoform.com.

