

ANSI Dimensional Stone Standard NSC Progress Report- September 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. Over the past several months, 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. The groups have developed draft criteria for many of the important aspects of stone quarrying and production, with some additional work yet to do.

An in-person meeting of the Joint Committee for the Development of a Dimensional Natural Stone standard was held at NSF International on August 22-23, 2012 in Ann Arbor, Michigan to review the criteria developed in the subgroups and to consider the criteria as an entire body of work. Members of the JC as well as other interested parties participated both in-person and by phone. The group accomplished a great deal over the day and a half session including stepping through the entire body of work developed to-date, discussing details of the eventual certification and conformance scheme, and fleshing out remaining gaps in the criteria. Comprehensive notes from the meeting have been reported in the meeting minutes attached to this update.

Some specific issues of note requiring additional consideration by stakeholders over the next few months include the following:

- As written, many of the draft criteria have been developed in a manner specific to the US or North American markets, or cite U.S. specific references, regulations, or laws (e.g. EPA emissions regs). These criteria will have to be modified or otherwise qualified to specifically address the issues and conditions specific to the international production of dimensional stone.
- While boundaries specific to the actual quarrying and processing of dimensional stone have been defined by the workgroup, there remains a considerable lack of clarity around how those boundaries apply to support functions (e.g. vehicle repair) or shared resources (e.g. administrative buildings). Additional consideration by the workgroup is needed to align individual criteria with these as yet defined boundaries.
- Once developed, criteria must be classified as required or optional by the workgroup, and then weighted through the assignment of a point value for each to balance the various activities and achievements under the standard.

- As currently contemplated, quarry operators and stone processors would be individually certified under the standard, establishing a level of performance consistent with their level of achievement under the standard (e.g. a five point quarry). Stone produced under this system would achieve a score consistent with the accumulated points of the certified members involved with its production. While this system meets the needs of individual companies, additional work is needed to define in detail exactly how this system will work. For example, how will the point total be tracked on a per stone basis and in what form will it take at the point of sale.

Next steps in the standard development process involve the following upcoming actions and activities by stakeholders:

- Define remaining criteria and scrub the document for language and consistency across criterion. As written, many of the criteria will need rewriting to be specific and to facilitate effective conformance activities.
- Expand scope of standard to account for international production and processing of stone.
- Define each criterion as required or optional, and determine relative worth of each through the assignment of a point value to each.
- Assemble and circulate the draft standard for stakeholder review.

The remainder of the criteria development process will be done in the individual subgroups. Ecoform and NSF will work together to cleanse the document and rework the criteria developed by the workgroups into a form suitable for a product-based standard. Balancing the standard through the weighting of criteria would be best performed in an in-person meeting as this will involve considerable discussion. It is hoped that such a meeting can be held in November, though that may be optimistic given the work remaining (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. Calls are typically scheduled by the members of each sub-group on a month-to-month basis. 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 for download at the NSF Joint Committee on Dimensional Stone website

(http://standards.nsf.org/apps/group_public/documents.php?view=) or upon request.

In-Person Stakeholder Meeting- TBD (November)

Attendees of the Aug 22-23rd in-person meeting in Ann Arbor were able to accomplish quite a bit while moving the standard forward. As the meeting concluded, the group agreed that another in-person meeting prior to the end of year would be beneficial given the work remaining on the standard. Completing the draft criteria, reviewing the structure and organization of the standard, and resolving gaps and conflicts around such issues as the inclusion of criteria for international stakeholders as well as the final certification scheme are all topics that would benefit from in-person discussion. While no site has yet been identified, it is hoped

that the event can be scheduled for early to mid-November, provided the sub-groups can finish criteria development in-time. More details will be provided as the event planning proceeds.

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. Steady progress has been made by the workgroups on the development of a draft set of criteria and a conformance structure to the standard. We are very close to our expected timeline, with a draft standard expected to be available for review by stakeholders by the end of January or early February.

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/Veronafiere 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. Meeting will be held on Thurs Sep 22nd, from 4-6 pm in the Puccini Room- *Veronafiere Arena Congress Center*.
- 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.
- StonExpo 2012 – Las Vegas, January 24-26, 2012 -
An official in-person meeting of the Joint Committee for the Dimensional Stone standard will be held during the conference, but has not yet been scheduled. In addition, the current draft standard will be shared with members of the stone industry during a separate session. Interested people are invited to attend either session. The meeting will be held Weds January 25th at 1:30-3 pm at a location not yet 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.

