

i-Care Programme

Introduction

The Bureau of Indian Standards, the National Standards Body of the country, is a statutory organization under the BIS Act, 1986. The BIS Act, 1986 provides for the establishment of a Bureau for the harmonious development of the activities of standardization, marking and quality certification of goods and for connected matters. The Vision of BIS is to be the leader in all matters concerning Standardization, Certification and Quality. BIS thereby plays a very important role in the economic development of the country.

Standards Formulation Activity

2. BIS has been guiding the Indian Industry for more than six decades by formulating National Standards for the industry and service sectors. Indian Standards are formulated keeping in view national priorities, programmes for industrial development, technical needs, export promotion, consumer welfare, health, safety, etc. So far over 19000 standards have been formulated in different technology areas. BIS works closely with various stakeholders in the country including the Central Ministries, Regulators, State Governments, Scientific and Research Institutions, Professional bodies, Technical experts, and Consumer Organizations, to put in place standards for implementation in the country. BIS is also participating in the international standardization activities and projecting India's view point at various stages of development of international standards. The main emphasis of BIS is to formulate need based user friendly standards expeditiously and to keep them updated in the context of latest technological developments.

3. However there is a need for increased interaction and enhanced participation of the consumer organizations for participation in the Standardization process so as to bring out implementable standards which take care of consumer interest. There is also a need for greater industry participation and interaction with the industry fora.

Certification Activities

4. BIS also operates Certification Schemes that assure quality, safety and reliability to the users. The BIS Product Certification Scheme is one of the largest in the world with over 26500 licences covering more than 900 products. The Scheme is basically a voluntary scheme wherein manufacturers are permitted to use the Standard Mark on their products after ascertaining their conformity to the relevant Indian Standards. The presence of Standard Mark on a product provides a third party guarantee to the common consumer about its quality. To provide greater thrust to consumer protection and ensure better consumer satisfaction, the Government of India has made BIS Certification mandatory for certain items of mass consumption and those affecting the health and safety of consumers. Currently 90 such consumer products are covered under mandatory certification.

5. BIS also operates a Hallmarking Scheme for gold and silver jewellery/artefacts to protect the consumer's interest against victimisation of irregular quality. Certification of purity of gold and silver jewellery/artefacts is done as per the laid down Indian Standard Specifications.

6. In the wake of international trends and competitiveness taking new dimensions, BIS is also operating Management Systems Certification Schemes. Through these schemes BIS provides quality services to the users.

Recent Initiatives in Certification Activity

7. For overall improvement in BIS functioning and meeting the expectations of the users, all BIS activities have been reviewed and directions given wherever required. In the activity of product certification, steps have been taken for expediting the cases for grant of licence and resumption of marking in time bound manner. Rewards Scheme for BIS licensees has been introduced with a view to encourage persons/consumers in identifying unscrupulous manufactures and traders. Tatkal Scheme for grant of licence is proposed to be introduced. With a view to facilitate the Users of BIS services some of the Regional Offices of BIS have also been restructured.

Consumer Protection Activities

8. BIS gives utmost thrust for safeguarding and protecting consumer interest. Presently, BIS has a Consumer Affairs Department its HQs for interacting with consumer organizations and common consumers. The Department organizes Consumer Awareness Programmes, Industry Awareness Programme & Educational Utilization of Standards Programme through its Regional and Branch Offices. BIS has well laid down mechanisms and procedures to address public grievances related to consumer complaints against BIS services and ISI marked products.

9. BIS also has an Enforcement Department and enforcement mechanisms to deal with cases pertaining to misuse of the standard mark.

10. To spread awareness of the BIS activities among consumers, BIS undertakes Publicity activities through electronic and print media and also participate in outdoor publicity and exhibitions.

11. BIS also publishes Standards India which is a bimonthly journal highlighting the latest progress in national and international standardization and important activities undertaken.

12. BIS sells Indian Standards and other publications through Sales Counters at its HQs and all ROs and BOs. BIS has also started online sale of standards.

13. Rajiv Gandhi National Quality Award is also celebrated by BIS to encourage Indian industry to make significant improvement in quality for maximizing consumer satisfaction and for successfully facing competition in the global market.

14. World Standards Day is celebrated by BIS to commemorate the establishment of International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and awareness about standards and standardization.

15. BIS proposes to celebrate the National Standards Day which would coincide with the day BIS first started its functioning.

Overview of i-Care Programme

i-Care Policy

16. Through its activities, BIS endeavour's to provide the benefits of standardization and certification to all stakeholders which include the Industry, Consumers, State Govts., other Govt. Departments, Educational Institutions etc. and to provide BIS services in time bound manner and to the satisfaction of BIS customers.

i-Care Policy is supported by the i-Care Objectives and i-Care Programme.

Objectives of i-Care Programme

17. The primary objectives of the i-Care Programme would include the following:

- To ensure that consumer interest is well represented in standards development activity of BIS so as to enable them to actively voice the concern of the consumer
- To satisfy the customer's need for quality and safety of goods and services through operation of Certification Schemes
- To generate awareness on standards, standard mark, and safety and quality of products through seminars, awareness programmes and publicity Campaigns
- To provide effective and timely services for grant of licence; suitable modifications in the standards to meet industry needs; keep the system industry friendly
- To work towards wider adoption of Indian Standards by the industry, organized purchasers, statutory bodies and universities
- To ensure greater implementation of Indian Standards by regular meetings of State Level Committees on Standardization and Quality Control
- To strengthen BIS licensees by taking action against unscrupulous manufacturers who are misusing the ISI mark

- To promote the sale and use of Indian Standards by various stake holders as well as the technology related educational institutions

22 i-Care Programme at BIS HQs

18. Efforts are also being made to make BIS a citizen and people friendly organization. To deal with consumer related activities in a more focused manner and for creating greater impact, Departments of BIS having direct interface with the public and consumers, which are Consumer Affairs Department, Enforcement Department, Public relations Department and Sales department at BIS Head Quarters have been placed under the common umbrella and overall supervision of DDG (i-Care). Besides, the activities of Standards Promotion, Consumer Affairs, Enforcement, Rajiv Gandhi National Quality Award and other such awards have been placed in the newly created i-Care Department by merging the existing Consumer Affairs and Enforcement Department and transferring work related to Rajiv Gandhi National Quality Award and other Awards to i-Care Department.

19. In addition to celebration of World Standards Day and organizing Rajiv Gandhi National Quality Award function the newly constituted i-Care Department will also celebrate National Standards Day every year.

20. Standards India, the official journal of BIS has been redesigned in line with the International journals. The contents have become more informative and educative so as to create interest among the stakeholders. The electronic version of the same is also hosted on BIS website.

21. BIS is also intensifying use of media to create awareness regarding standards and certified products. For popularizing various activities of BIS for the benefit of industry and consumers, new publicity guidelines have been prepared for implementation by Regional and Branch Offices of BIS.

. For facilitating the purchase of Indian Standards by the customers, the Sale of Indian Standards is now being done from all Branch Offices of BIS. With a view to bring out uniformity in the sale of Indian Standards, new Guidelines have been brought out for operation of Sales Counters.

23. For speedy recording and simplification of procedures, online or across the counter recording of applications has been introduced.

24. A new i-Care website is proposed to be launched shortly by providing a link from BIS website.

i-Care Programme at Regional Offices of BIS

25. An i-Care Programme is also being launched across the country for the important stakeholders of BIS which include industry, consumers, State Govt., educational institutions etc. The programme will be launched with the help of the 5 Regional Offices of BIS at Delhi, Chennai, Kolkata, Mumbai and Chandigarh and 34 Branch Offices of BIS which are at 24 locations in the country. A dedicated i-Care Programme Officer is being nominated in each regional office of BIS to deal with matters related to Consumers, Standards Promotion & Industry meets, Enforcement redressal of Public Complaints, Publicity and Sales activity by all the Branches under the region. For carrying out this work, the i-Care Programme Officer will receive the support of another officer DDPR under DDG of the respective region. The Branch Offices and all the Inspecting Officers shall be actively involved in this programme. The role of the i-Care Officer shall be to co-ordinate all such efforts. The functions and responsibilities of i-Care Programme Officer have been well defined so as to make the programme effective

i-Care Programme for various Stakeholders

26. The i-Care Programme envisages to pass on the benefits of standardization to the stakeholders of BIS which include Industry, Consumers, Regulators, State Govts., other Govt. Deptts and Educational Institutions. The main features of the i-Care programme for different stakeholders are as follows:

27. i-Care Programme for Industry

- i) Organize minimum one State level Committee (SLC) meeting in each State every year for better implementation of standardization and quality control orders.
- ii) Organize licensees meets to solve the problems faced by the manufacturers, industry, chambers of commerce etc. to encourage more industries to come forward for taking licence. It is proposed to hold at least 4 such meetings in each state every year. Such meetings could be held at different industrial pockets in a state to facilitate better industry participation.
- iii) Interact with specific Industry Associations at the national level and other such bodies for better coordination regarding matters related to industry. Organize at least one such meeting with such bodies per year at the national level.
- iv) Promoting licensees of products granted on new/uncovered Indian Standards and thereafter ensuring publicity of All India First Licence granted by BIS through press and BIS website so as to attract more manufacturers of the same product to start manufacturing quality products.
- v) Organize Seminars on important standards published by BIS for awareness of the concerned industries, with concerned technical department of BIS.
- vi) Organize awareness campaign for the industry to apprise about the requirements and privileges of Rajiv Gandhi National Quality Award. Organize minimum one

Seminar and three Awareness Programmes in each of the States under jurisdiction.

- vii) Have effective networking with industry, market and consumer for collection of information regarding misuse of BIS Standard Mark and awareness campaigns.
- viii) Strengthen BIS licensees by launching prosecution against unscrupulous manufacturers misusing BIS Standard Mark.
- ix) Celebrating World Standards Day and National Standards Day and organizing technical seminars on important issues of concern to industry and other stakeholders.

i- Care Programme for Consumers

28. For Consumer Awareness

- i) Recognizing Consumer Organizations who would work in the interest of consumers and on behalf of BIS.
- ii) Enhancing interaction with consumer organizations of each state by organizing at least four such meetings every year.
- iii) Ensure aggressive consumer awareness campaign to provide information to the consumers about activities of BIS and welfare of consumers at regional, state and district levels as well as in rural areas. Conduct at least one such awareness programme in each district of every state under its jurisdiction.
- iv) Participation in Exhibitions to reach to the common consumer for providing information about BIS and its services.
- v) Making all Brochures available to common consumers in English as well as in regional languages and on BIS website. Bringing out new brochures as per needs of the consumer.
- vi) Making the consumer aware of cancelled/expired licences thru publicity of same & through BIS website.
- vii) Making the Indian Standards available for sale to common consumer at the reception counters of all the regional and branch offices of BIS.
- viii) Making the consumer organizations partners in celebration of World Standards Day, National Standards Day and Rajiv Gandhi National Quality Award.
- ix) Providing the latest information about various activities and important events of BIS through "Standards India", a bi-monthly journal available on BIS website.

29. For Consumer Protection

- i) Training the representatives of consumer organizations of the region on "Consumer protection activities of BIS" by organizing minimum two such programmes every year.
- ii) Providing financial support to the trained representatives, for organizing similar programmes for other Consumer Associations and consumers.
- iii) Empowering consumer to know about the important Search and Seizures conducted by BIS and the punishments imposed by Courts on such offenders by giving news in the local newspapers and hosting such information on BIS website.
- iv) Redressal of consumer complaints (online and offline) about misuse of Standard Mark, quality of ISI mark product, hallmarked jewellery and services of BIS, in a time bound manner.
- v) Empowering consumer to get the ISI marked product tested from BIS recognized labs and hallmarked jewellery from BIS referral lab to protect them from being cheated.
- vi) Helping consumers to get compensatory in case the quality of ISI marked product/purity of hallmarked jewellery found to be lower than that declared/marked on the product/jewellery.
- vii) To take action against the unscrupulous manufacturers misusing ISI mark/hallmark. Rewarding the informers as per the provisions contained in the "BIS Reward Scheme", for providing genuine information to BIS.
- viii) Encouraging more consumer organizations to represent on policy making.
- ix) Delivery of important services of BIS to all customers, as per time norms stipulated in the Citizen Charter hosted on BIS website.

30. i- Care Programme for Educational Institutions

- i) Conducting Educational Utilization of Standards (EUS) Programmes to educate students about the standardization and use of related standards in their curriculum by organizing such programmes in each of the Educational Institution of the region.
- ii) Providing discipline-wise material of EUS to the students. Developing material for those disciplines where such material does not exist.
- iii) Improving interaction with Standard forums of engineering/other colleges of the region for awareness of students and providing grant to such forums for

promoting Indian Standards. Organizing minimum of one such interactions with such forum every year.

- iv) Bringing out a brochure "BIS and students" in English and regional languages.

31. i-Care Programme for Sale of Indian Standards

- i) For facilitating the purchase of Indian Standards by the customers, the Sale of Indian Standards is now being done from all Regional and Branch Offices of BIS through the Reception Counters.
- ii) With a view to bring out uniformity in the sale of Indian Standards, new Guidelines have been brought out for operation of Sales Counters.