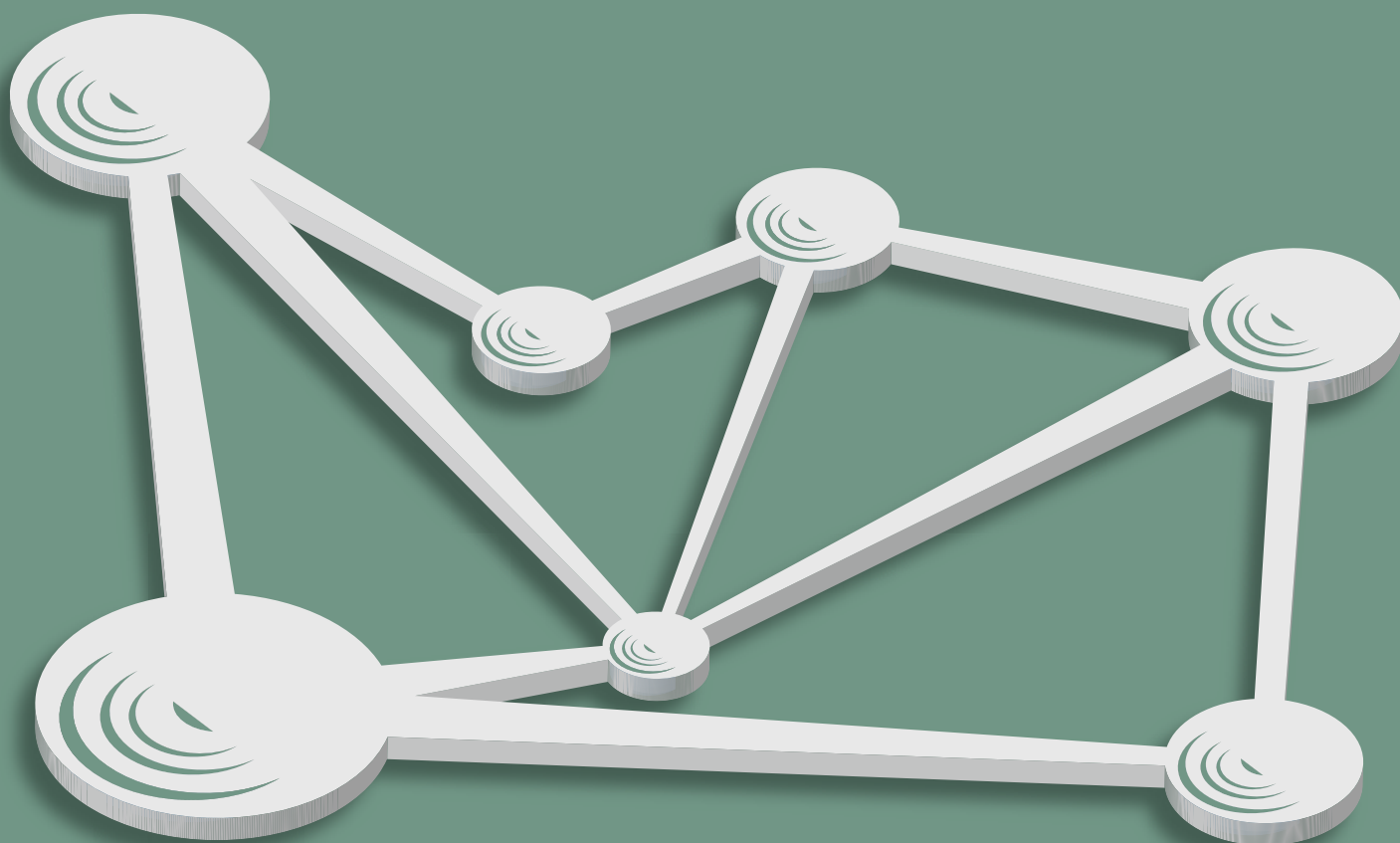


PAS 98:2011

Standards consortia – Part II:

Suitability assessment – A good practice guide



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Foreword

BSI PAS 98, providing guidance on the topic of standards consortia, has been developed under the aegis of the British Standards Institution by a group of experts with considerable experience in the working of consortia.

Consortia are playing a growing role in the development of standards, but the nature of their formation and management can sometimes give rise to misunderstanding amongst observers as to their objectives. This negativity can be particularly prevalent in business and industry sectors where consortia have not yet had the opportunity to demonstrate meaningful and beneficial influence.

In an attempt to correct such misconception, BSI convened a group of experts with experience in the world of consortia to capture current good practice in the formation and management of consortia. This is presented in a manner that will assist interested parties to understand how a consortium can best meet the needs of its members within the constraints placed upon it by the community in which it operates. The result is PAS 98, which offers guidance on the formation, management and understanding of consortia formed for standards-related purposes.

This guidance is presented in two parts, with both parts addressing the attributes of establishing, governing and operating consortia formed for standards-related purposes, but with Part I doing so from the perspective of those undertaking those roles and Part II considering the needs of members and potential members. Although the latter part is primarily intended to assist entities considering participation in consortia activity for the first time, the process described may well be useful to existing consortia members and be found to be of assistance to standards consortium management in assessing the functionality of their own consortium.

Acknowledgement is given to the following organizations that were consulted in the development of both PAS 98 documents:

- Adobe Systems Inc.
- BSI Consumer & Public Interest Network (CPIN)
- CEN (European Committee for Standardization)
- Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS)
- Gesmer Updegrove LLP
- IBM, Europe
- Sun Microsystems
- University of Reading
- ZFIB Conseil
- 79 Brinkburn Ltd

Comments from other parties were also sought by BSI. The expert contributions from all the organizations and individuals consulted in the development of both parts of this BSI PAS are gratefully acknowledged.

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The parts of this BSI PAS, either jointly or together, do not purport to include all the necessary provisions of a contract. Users are responsible for their correct application.

Attention is drawn to the fact that this BSI PAS is not intended to support compliance assessment processes and that following the guidance of either or both parts does not of itself confer immunity from legal obligations.

Neither part of this BSI PAS is to be regarded as a British Standard.

0 Introduction

0.1 General

Consortia are business tools that can be of considerable assistance in meeting specific business needs and providing a resolution to a range of business challenges. Unlike other forms of dedicated standards development organization (SDO), they often support many types of activities intended to supplement standards development activities, such as undertaking promotional activities, launching certification and branding campaigns, drafting white papers, conducting training programmes and supporting public advocacy. Any entity considering engagement with the world of standards consortia should first undertake a rigorous assessment of their reasons for doing so, and the likelihood of the consortium or other alternatives meeting its needs and expectations in that respect.

For the purposes of BSI PAS 98, any documented specification, test method, practice or procedure that promotes an agreed course of action, performance or behaviour to achieve a predetermined level of quality or attainment amongst an identified stakeholder group can be considered as a standard.

A significant number of standards (frequently identified as “formal standards”) are produced on a national, regional or worldwide basis by bodies operating rigorous procedures that embody the principles of diverse input and consensus. The standards developed by such bodies are generally intended for voluntary application, although they can become mandatory if taken up in legislation or regulation or cited in a contract.

Standards can also be developed privately or unilaterally, for example by a specific company or other commercial entity, government or regulatory body. Standards can also be developed by groups such as trade unions, trade associations or group of organizations agreeing formally or informally to work together for that purpose. It is to assist in the enhancement of recognition and credibility of these latter standards development groups (standards consortia) that BSI PAS 98 has been prepared.

Entities considering engagement with consortia, whether by becoming a member of an existing consortium or joining with others to establish a new consortium, would be well advised to consider the guidance of this PAS as the basis for undertaking the necessary assessment.

The principal stages of the recommended assessment process for interaction with consortia are:

- determination of what the nature and extent of the business needs/problems are;
- consideration of whether new or revised standards, or one of the other activities noted above, constitute all or part of the solution;
- clarification of whether engagement with a consortium/consortia will offer the most appropriate route to resolution;
- choosing the most appropriate form of engagement with a consortium/consortia (i.e. engagement with an existing consortium or participation in the establishment of a new consortium).

This Part of BSI PAS 98 highlights the benefits of the consortium in relation to standards setting and promotion, while also identifying the possible limitations. It provides helpful guidance on what to look for when reviewing consortia and outlines a practical process for assessing the relevance and functionality of consortia for entities considering engagement, and should be used in conjunction with BSI PAS 98, *Standards consortia – Part 1: Formation and management – A good practice guide*, to provide more comprehensive understanding.

0.2 How to use this document

This BSI PAS has been designed in such a way as to highlight (in blue boxes) the key issues that should be taken into account when considering participation in consortia. These key issues are then expanded upon in the form of concept notes that offer supplementary guidance on assessing the suitability of a consortium with a view to taking up membership.

Clause 2 of BSI PAS 98 provides a list of terms defined to aid understanding and use of this BSI PAS. Where these defined terms appear for the first time, they are distinguished from other text using a shaded typeface.

1 Scope

This part of BSI PAS 98 provides good practice guidance on what to look for when reviewing consortia from the user perspective and outlines a practical process for assessing the relevance and performance of consortia for entities considering engagement.

It is envisaged that awareness of the guidance in this BSI PAS will also be of assistance to consortia management when assessing the functionality of their consortia.

This BSI PAS is not a management system standard. Neither part is intended or appropriate for certification purposes or regulatory or contractual use. Any offer to certify, or claims to be certified, to BSI PAS 98 would be a misrepresentation of the intent and purpose of the PAS.

It is suggested that users of this part of BSI PAS 98 will benefit from doing so in conjunction with BSI PAS 98, *Standards consortia – Part 1: Formation and management – A good practice guide*.

2 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this BSI PAS, the following terms and definitions apply. Defined terms are shown in a shaded typeface when first used.

2.1 by-laws (also known as charter and constitution)

set of rules through the application of which a consortium is governed

2.2 consensus

general agreement, characterized by the absence of sustained opposition to substantial issues by any important part of the concerned interests, and by a process founded on seeking to take into account the views of all parties concerned and the reconciliation of conflict

NOTE Consensus need not imply unanimity.

[ISO/IEC Guide 2:2004, definition 1.7]

2.3 critical mass

minimum size or amount of **resources** required to launch or sustain an effective consortium

2.4 intellectual property rights (IPR) policy

policy that governs the treatment of intellectual property, including copyright, licensing terms and patent disclosure procedures, in the production of the consortium's deliverables

NOTE This declaration generally involves where and when patent claims are disclosed, and the licensing requirements involved, generally on at least reasonable and non-discriminatory terms.

2.5 interoperability

ability of consortia output to operate in conjunction with other standards

2.6 openness

generalized commitment to inclusive concepts and practices, such as **consensus (2.2)** or majority-driven procedures, appropriate **IPR** policy rules and operational transparency

2.7 output

end result of a consortium's activities

NOTE This could be a **standard**, **specification**, **best practice guide**, **report**, etc.

2.8 procurement policy

extensive guidelines on the standards and specifications required when an organization (usually in the public sector) commissions work from external providers

2.9 resources

supply of money, personnel, infrastructure and time available to a project

2.10 standards development organization (SDO)

organization whose primary activities are developing, coordinating, amending, supplying and maintaining standards under national, regional or international authority

NOTE SDOs are frequently recognized nationally and internationally for their documented and transparent standards development processes.

2.11 standard

document that establishes (commonly agreed), uniform specifications, criteria, methods, processes or practices for use in a specified context

2.12 standards consortium

entity formed by organizations functioning in cooperation to achieve objectives substantially focused on standards and standards-related activities

NOTE Where reference is made to **consortia** or a **consortium** in BSI PAS 98, this refers to **standards consortia** as defined in 2.12.

2.13 thought leadership

process of distilling innovative ideas and promoting or sharing them as actions that will benefit others*

NOTE *Either the audience at which the consortium is aimed or, in the case of a membership focus, the consortium as an organizational entity and its members.

2.14 transparent

not hidden, discoverable, traceable or examinable

2.15 transparency

state of being transparent

2.16 user

entity seeking benefit from interaction with a consortium or its **output (2.7)**

NOTE Users may also be consortium members.

2.17 vendor

entity making knowledge, goods or services available for sale

3 Determining business problems that might be resolved through consortia engagement

3.1 General

The user considering participation in or use of consortia, for whatever purpose, should ensure that all practicable options have been evaluated before membership commitment is made.

Concept notes to 3.1

A consortium is a powerful tool in the world of standards, but it is only one option. Every consortium operates alongside other consortia, national organizations, international bodies and standards development organizations (SDOs). In order to make an informed decision as to whether a consortium is the correct solution, the unique advantages and drawbacks of each of the standardization options should be fully assessed before resource commitment commences.

Historically, consortia were formed to allow for faster decision-making and greater member control over the process and end product of standardization, albeit sometimes at the expense of the wide-ranging review mechanisms and assurances of consensus that hallmark “traditional” standardization. Consortia are now regarded as major factors in ICT standardization and could gain even more traction in additional sectors, such as finance, supply chain management and healthcare.

3.2 Could your organization’s business/technical problem use standards as the answer?

The user considering participation in or use of consortia should identify and define the challenges and obstacles that it is looking to overcome and determine whether their resolution could be effected by a standard or a standards-related solution.

Concept notes to 3.2

If it is decided that standards or standards-related activities offer a possible solution, the organization should then conduct a review of what sort of activities it needs to engage in to meet these challenges (e.g. technological, marketing, e-business). Upon completion of this internal review, an examination of other relevant organizations, to identify whether similar challenges exist and how they are being met, should be undertaken. Often, there will be a number of organizations with very similar problem areas, and if standards have been utilized as a successful solution to these problems, these existing solutions should be examined.

4 What would be the most beneficial route to provision of standards or standards-related solutions?

4.1 General

The user considering participation in or use of consortia should examine whether there are current or past activities in the identified problem areas.

Concept notes to 4.1

Often, a very simple search can yield a wide variety of information on how the problem has been, or is being, dealt with by other organizations. Frequently, there will be a number of standards-setting organizations that are working in this or in similar areas, and an examination of their strengths and achievements will lead to an existing organization that provides the resources needed, or will help inform organizations investigating possible existing routes to standardization.

4.2 Would a consortium be the most effective solution?

The user considering participation in or use of consortia should categorize the providers of potential standards-based solutions and should examine in close detail the advantages and drawbacks inherent in each.

Concept notes to 4.2

By designing a general framework to help categorize the available providers, the potential user can gain a general understanding of the various advantages and drawbacks of consortia and SDOs. Such an exercise can help provide a better understanding of how an organization should proceed in order to achieve its standardization business goals. Table 1 is provided as a guide only and is not exhaustive, but it may help provide a framework that will focus further examination more easily.

Table 1 – Beneficial characteristics

Consortia	SDO
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow for greater control of process and output • Perceived as faster to market • Often offer more flexibility in resource commitment levels • Often have more focused activities designed to maximize member value (e.g. promotion, certification, branding, training) • May provide increased responsiveness to market needs in rapidly changing environments • Ability to tailor solutions to a precisely stated business problem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide greater guarantees of openness, consensus and public review • Governmental procurement policies often specify SDO-developed standards • International recognition and gravitas • Known and established rules common throughout the process

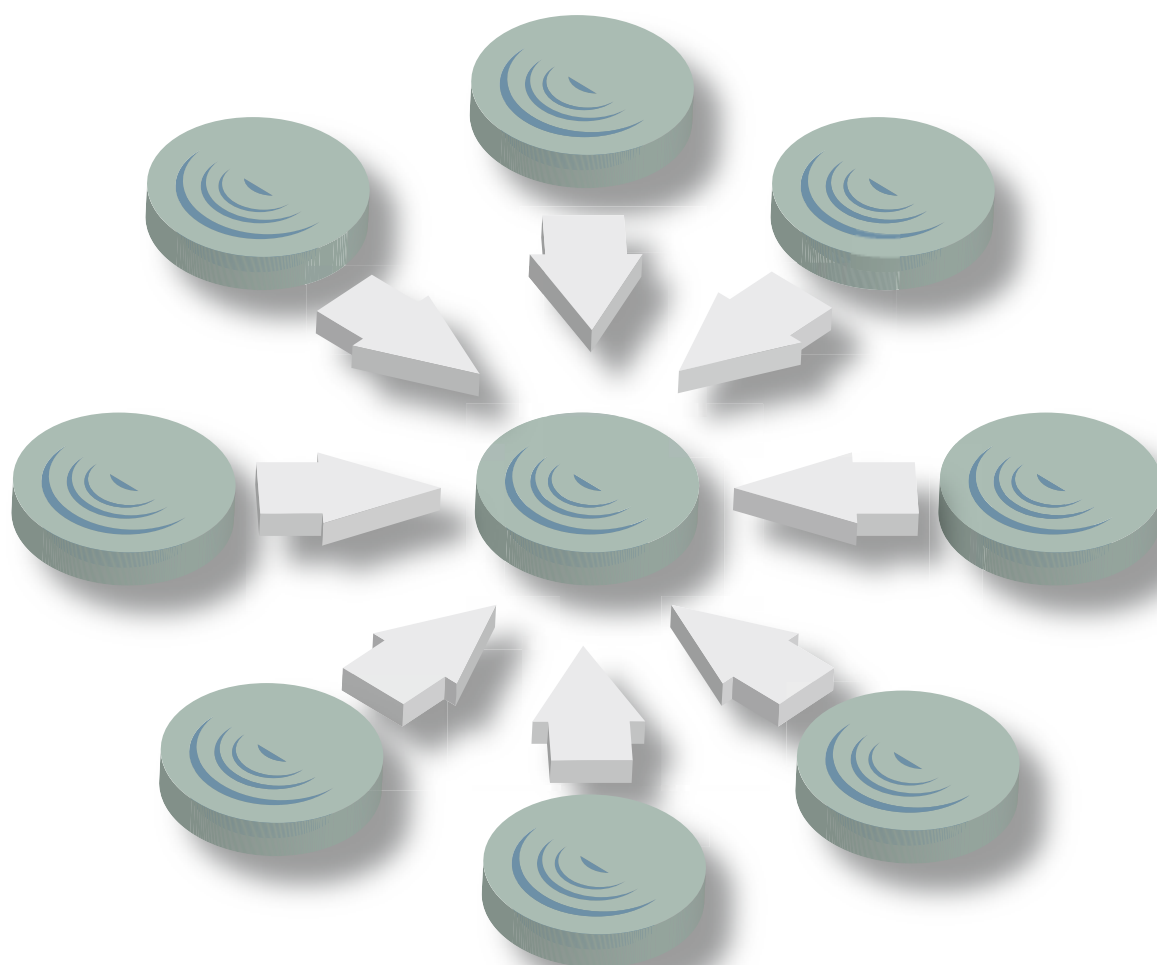
4.3 Will participation be sustainable and defensible?

The user considering participation in or use of consortia should, having determined that a consortium may hold the solution to a business problem, map out short, medium and long-range goals for their participation, together with a clear, sustainable plan for their involvement in the standardization effort. This plan should have clear milestones that can be regularly checked and modified if the need arises.

Concept notes to 4.3

While participation in a consortium or SDO need not be an unduly expensive undertaking, working towards the development and launching of a new standardization effort can be a costly undertaking, and one that can be vitally important for your organization. Therefore, before embarking on involvement, the short, medium and long-range goals for your organization's participation should be identified. These could be supported by information such as whether the organization will be able to limit their involvement to a single consortium, or whether there will be a need to join others? Will it be necessary to commit resources from other areas of the organization in order to maximize the potential benefits? Is there sufficient budget and/or personnel to make involvement worthwhile?

At times, it will be necessary to consult with others in the organization to ensure that a wide and external view is taken; one of the major issues with participation in consortia is that often organizations project their own goals into the consortium without realizing that they are doing so. This can lead either to false expectations for the consortium activity or to disappointment in the results of the activity.



5 Choosing a consortium

5.1 General

The user considering participation in or use of consortia should, having determined that a consortium may hold the solution to a business problem, undertake a thorough examination of the consortia that already exist in the target area (*Annex A provides a consortium checklist*).

Concept notes to 5.1

There are many factors to consider when examining consortia. The majority of factors examined in Part I of PAS 98 would be extremely relevant to this research. Some of the vital points to consider when examining a consortium include determining whether the consortium has:

- a publicly available set of by-laws, regulations and membership requirements (*PAS 98 Part I, Clause 6, Governance*);
- an established legal basis for existence, no matter the industry (*PAS 98 Part I, Clause 7, Legal requirements*);
- an appropriate and effective policy governing intellectual property rights (*PAS 98 Part I, Clause 6.11, Intellectual property policy*);
- a successful track record of achievement in the industry (*PAS 98 Part I, Clause 10, Influence*);
- an appropriate set of confidentiality regulations;
- financial soundness and a lack of pending or actual litigation involving the consortium;
- a reputation in respect of consensus quality and perceived neutrality.

Most consortia make public their ongoing industry involvements, activities and other policies and operational data. This information should be reviewed if available.

When looking at a consortium, it is important to examine the following key factors (MOSI):

- Membership;
- Openness;
- Success;
- Influence;

together with its provision of services (*PAS 98 Part I: 5.3b*).

NOTE There are a number of resources that provide information on standards consortia and fora, some of which are listed in Appendix B.

5.2 Membership

The user considering participation in or use of consortia should, having identified a potential consortium to participate in, undertake an examination of the current membership roster, fees, management and activities of that consortium.



Concept notes to 5.2

This examination will illuminate a number of important factors to consider, including:

- Are the major players from the relevant industry already involved with the consortium?
 - If they are, then at what level are they engaged?
 - If they are not, then why have they chosen not to involve themselves with this consortium?
- Are there any groups that are seriously under-represented in the membership? (**PAS 98 Part I, 5.3 and 6.4**)
 - Will this under-representation impact the desired outcome for the organization's involvement with the consortium?
 - Can this under-representation signal a significant market advantage to your involvement in the consortium?

In addition to the current membership roster, there are other factors to consider when reviewing the membership of a consortium. Some of these factors that should be taken into account include:

- What are the joining options/fees/resource commitments? (**PAS 98 Part I, Clauses 5.1 and 5.2**)
 - A consortium should offer membership influence commensurate with resource commitment.
- Is the consortium vital and growing?
 - Many consortia issue press releases announcing and welcoming new members and significant events. It is worthwhile to examine the press releases issued by the consortium.
- Are there any members of the consortium who would seek to limit your success?
 - Are the participants there to cooperate or to impede the progress of their competitors?

To maximize an organization's value from its involvement in a consortium, the consortium should have a membership structure and mix that supports the successful prosecution of its business goals.

5.3 Openness

The user considering participation in or use of consortia should, having identified a potential consortium to participate in, examine the policies the consortium has established about openness and the perception of openness.



Concept notes to 5.3

Many consortia have very well-defined policies, including publicly available development processes, public review mechanisms, and public membership and work group rosters. Other consortia choose to closet these factors, not making them public. When examining a consortium's openness, some factors to consider include:

- Does the consortium have a well-defined and clear set of policies about voting, IPR, confidentiality and other policies? (*PAS 98 Part I, Clauses 6.2, 6.6 and 6.11*)
- What is the availability of the output of the consortium? (*PAS 98 Part I, Clauses 6.7 and 6.8*)
- How effective is the consortium at communicating both externally to the industry and internally to its membership?

An organization should examine the established parameters of openness of a consortium in the context of how they support and further the execution of the organization's planned interaction and involvement with the consortium.

5.4 Success and influence

The user considering participation in or use of consortia should, having identified a potential consortium to participate in, examine as many potential factors indicating success and influence as possible when choosing how best to participate in a consortium.

The success and influence of a consortium can be measured in many ways. Some of the factors to consider in determining how successful and influential a consortium has been can include:

- the amount of standards and other output generated by the consortium;
- the amount of products incorporating the consortium's output;
- the extent of the market adoption of the consortium's standards or other outputs;
- the presence of agreements, liaisons and collaborations with other groups;
- any significant thought leadership campaigns that have been championed by the consortium;
- whether the consortium has been involved in any significant, industry-changing marketing efforts.

In general, the more successful and influential a consortium is will give some indication of its ability to achieve the goals necessary to ensure success for an organization's involvement.

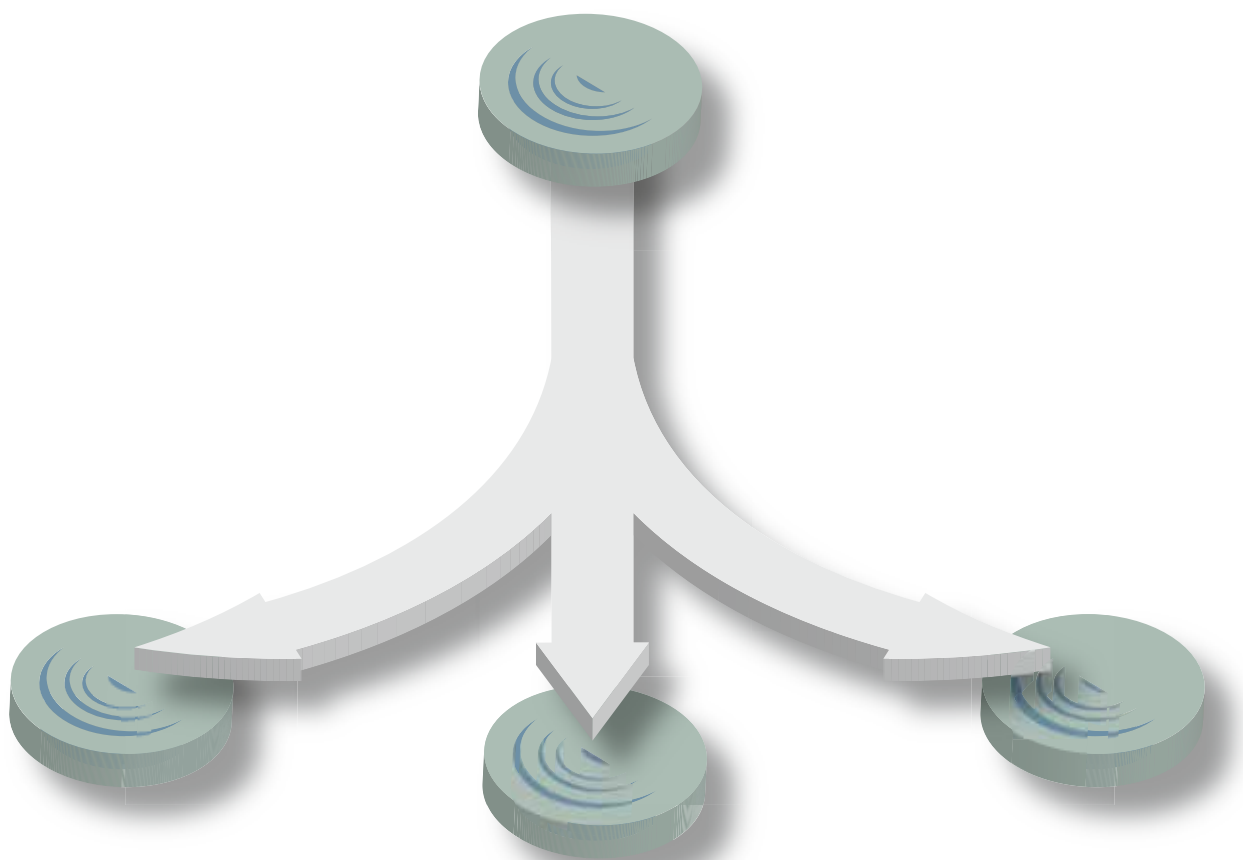
6 Drawing conclusions

6.1 General

The most important single factor involved in choosing a consortium is to have framed your organization's needs and goals correctly. If your organization has determined that a consortium-based, standards-driven approach will provide the necessary solution to your business problem, then a thorough examination of the consortia available should be undertaken. There are a number of factors to consider when evaluating a consortium, from its membership make-up to its openness and how successful and influential it is, and it has been the objective of this part of BSI PAS 98 to advise on this.

There are many consortia out there, and the ability to map an organization's objectives to its abilities is key.

If, however, there is no consortium that fits closely enough with the objectives of the organization to justify its involvement, then it may be worthwhile considering starting a consortium that does fit your business needs, utilizing Part I of this guide and sourcing assistance where appropriate (see Annex B).



Annex A (informative) – The consortium checklist

The following checklist is intended to provide an overview to BSI PAS 98 and a quick reference source for the themes and guidelines it provides. It should not therefore be used other than in conjunction with BSI PAS 98.

BSI PAS 98 Clause	Questions or Actions	YES	NO	
Part II Stage 1	1 Determination of the relevance of a technical/business problem that could constitute a work area for a consortium			
1.1	Can the current problem best be solved by the application of a standards-based solution?			
1.2	Are there other organizations with problems similar to those identified by our organization?			
1.3	Is a standards-based solution the best solution to the problem?			If NO see note
Part II Stage 2	2 What is the most beneficial route to addressing the problem?			
2.1	Are there current or past activities in this problem area?			
	Are there one or more existing consortia or SDOs that are already addressing this problem? If so, would participating in their activities be useful?			
	If no existing organization is addressing the problem, is an existing organization likely to be interested in doing so?			
2.2	If no existing organization is available or interested, would forming a new consortium be the most effective way to engage the problem?			
2.3	Will participation in a consortium/consortia be sustainable and defensible by my organization?			If NO see note
Part I	3 Consider establishment of new consortia			
3.1	Is it possible for a new consortium to be established to meet our strategic goals? (i.e. is there sufficient interest among other potential members?)			
3.2	Is the purpose of the consortium clearly defined and agreed?			
3.3	Could agreement be achieved on the preferred management structure of the new consortium?			

Part I	4	Formation and incubation of a new consortium		
	4.1	If managed consortium preferred, determine management organization		
	4.2	Establishment of consortium as legally required		
	4.3	Agree Charter; By-laws and Constitution to address at least:		
	4.3.1	Location of principal office and tax status		
	4.3.2	The purpose of the consortium		
	4.3.3	The constitution of the board		
	4.3.4	Membership types (including rights, responsibilities, fees, liability, transference, termination issues.)		
	4.3.5	Sub-structures (committees), e.g. executive, technical, marketing		
	4.3.6	Voting procedures and rights		
	4.3.7	Activity programme (meetings/events coordination, etc.)		
	4.3.8	Fiscal responsibilities		
	4.3.9	Corporate reports, records and seal (if necessary)		
	4.4	Establish governance structures		
	4.4.1	Management and membership structures		
	4.4.2	IPR, licensing, confidentiality, antitrust policies		
	4.4.3	Output development processes/availability		
	4.4.4	Liaisons, events and initiatives plan		
Part II	5	Evaluation of consortia		
	5.1	Each of the following criteria should be examined in respect of the characteristics identified:		
	5.1.1	Membership	<i>Relevance, diversity, growth, value</i>	
	5.1.2	Openness	<i>Transparency, output availability, communications</i>	
	5.1.3	Success and influence	<i>Number of standards generated, frequency of external referencing, thought leadership, marketing efforts</i>	

Note to checklist: 1.3 and 2.3 are critical issues. Negative response to either is likely to make further consideration of consortium membership inappropriate.

Annex B (informative) – Resources

Some external resources dealing with consortia and other standardization issues are listed below:

General information

BSI Group: <http://www.bsigroup.com>

Forming and Managing an SSO, <http://www.consortiuminfo.org/essentialguide/index.php#part2>

OpenStandards.net: <http://www.openstandards.net>

Participating in an SSO, <http://www.consortiuminfo.org/essentialguide/index.php#part1>

The Essential Guide to Consortia, <http://www.consortiuminfo.org/essentialguide>

Lists of consortia

One of the most comprehensive lists of consortia may be found at:

<http://www.consortiuminfo.org/links>

A Eurocentric list of many ICT standards organizations may be found at:

<http://www.cen.eu/cen/Sectors/Sectors/ISSS/Consortia/Pages/default.aspx>

The above information is repeated from PAS 98 Part I, Annex A.

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