Proposal for ETHOS Technical Committee on Stove Testing Methods
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Background

- Engineers in Technical and Humanitarian Opportunities of Service (ETHOS) has attracted many committed experts in a wide variety of disciplines and at a wide range of technical levels relating to household energy.
- Sharing and evaluating the highest quality technical information in the field of household energy is a part of the ETHOS mission. ETHOS has engaged in information sharing through its annual conferences, and through participation of its members in other efforts such as the Partnership for Clean Indoor Air.
- Although ETHOS members have been individually engaged in providing general recommendations on technical issues, there is currently no mechanism for ETHOS to issue such guidelines as a body. The purpose of this document is to propose ETHOS Technical Committees as such a mechanism.
- Many ETHOS members are engaged in and have held discussions on cookstove performance testing. This is not the only technical issue of interest to ETHOS, but it is one of the most active and therefore a strong candidate for the first Technical Committee.

Proposal

We request that the ETHOS Board of Directors consider the formation of a Technical Committee on Stove Testing Methods. If they approve, a Task Group will produce a formal proposal for the mission statement, structure and bylaws of this Technical Committee by 15 July 2007.

Foundation

ETHOS Technical Committees were discussed at a meeting in Kirkland, Washington, on 26 January 2007. This meeting preceded the annual ETHOS conference and attracted many ETHOS members. The following sections summarize the ideas that arose from these conversations. The Task Group will build upon these ideas while soliciting input from as many stakeholders as possible.

Desired committee composition

Technical expertise: university professors, government employees, consultants, stove researchers, existing organizations with testing procedures
Process expertise: regulatory experts, representatives from standards bodies
Methods users: stove designers, international and local non-governmental organizations who do testing, manufacturers
Data users: funders, project managers, implementers
Desired technical expertise could include: health and safety, public health, economic development, natural resources, field experience in a variety of regions, user feedback

Positive aspects of a committee

Visionary: Shared vision; maintains focus on primary goals and stakeholders, positive outlook, considers aspects beyond technology

Credible: Technically proficient, members with professional affiliations and relevant expertise

Open: Process is transparent; provides a forum for communication; has feedback mechanisms for correction; acknowledges and listens to different perspectives

Balanced: Representatives from a variety of regions and backgrounds; people willing to acknowledge biases

Inclusive: Waits until everyone has felt heard to move toward an outcome

Efficient: Outcome oriented; willing to move forward in the face of conflicting evidence

Realistic: Field experience in a variety of regions

Facilitated: Administered well, allows issues to be aired and resolved; facilitator able to move beyond argument for its own sake; disagreements result in discussion rather than hostility

Committed: Engaged members who give enough time to complete tasks efficiently

Fostering geographic inclusivity

There was general agreement that any Technical Committee should include representatives from all regions. Below are some of the methods suggested for engaging people.

Good leadership and moderation to allow all voices to be heard

Partner with ongoing, funded efforts

Choose people with cross-cultural competence

Acknowledge difficulties of field work

Chain of communication, from local input to regional representative to committee

Add days to existing conferences

Regional consultative forums—one person going out rather than people coming in

Electronic communication

Committee structure

Technical committee structure from another organization (ASHRAE) was examined to determine what could work for ETHOS. Comments are tabulated below. Note that some of these comments were from single groups of about 5 people and may not represent consensus.

- Committee should have a specific purpose, and may be dissolved when it is over.
- There should be a board overseeing the Technical Committee. Because ETHOS is presently small, this board could be the ETHOS Board of Directors.
- Also because of the small membership, it is unwise to have too many subcommittees.
- Membership structure (~12 Voting Members and many corresponding members) seemed OK.
- Voting rules (record negative votes and reasons; 2/3 votes needed on standard issues) seemed OK. (Note—it is not even clear that Technical Committee would develop standards).

- Regardless of the voting rules chosen, methods to insure accountability were strongly supported.
- Representation needs further discussion. Should individuals represent their area of expertise, or should organizations be represented on the committee?
- Some of the times suggested (maximum 4 years for any single person) were thought to be too short. However, rotating membership was attractive.

Initial charges to the new committee

Tabulate testing methods that already exist (e.g. ARECOP)

Identify requirements (time and other resources) to support expert comment on WHO Catalog of Methods

Evaluate existing standards bodies as potential partners

Identify connections with Benchmarks effort led by Partnership for Clean Indoor Air

Hold open discussions on:

- whether the Technical Committee will engage in standard setting or only in technical guidelines
- potential purpose and uses of guidelines and/or standards
- how to ensure that committee recommendations are adopted
- resources to support testing and committee participation