

## **Colombia**

### **Overview**

Decree 2153 of 1992 defined the Colombian standards regime's legal framework. Decree 2153 modified the structure of the Superintendent of Industry and Commerce (SIC), and along with Decree 2269 of 1993, created the National Standardization, Certification, and Metrology System (SNNCM). The latter decree designated the Colombian Technical Standards Institute (ICONTEC) as the main standards development organization and SIC as the national accreditation organization.

Colombia further revised its standards regime following its accession to the World Trade Organization (Law 170 of 1994). Colombia joined the Group of Three (G-3) Trade Agreement between Colombia, Mexico, and Venezuela (Law 172 of 1994), and enacted Andean Community Decision 376 of 1995, which created the Andean Standardization, Accreditation, Assays, Certification, Technical Regulations, and Metrology System.

On February 3, 2010, per Decree 323 of 2010, the accreditation role was transferred from SIC to the Colombian National Accreditation Organization (ONAC), created by Decree 4738 of 2008, and therefore, eliminated the provisions of Decree 2269 of 1993 and Decree 2153 of 1992.

### **Standards Organizations**

The Colombian Standards and Certification Institute (ICONTEC) is a private-sector organization created in 1963. The SIC has also accredited ICONTEC for product certification, quality assurance, and environmental systems certification. 2010 and it is in the implementation process. For additional information and the final texts of the CTPA agreement please visit: [http://www.ustr.gov/Trade\\_Agreements/Bilateral/Colombia\\_FTA/Final\\_Text/Section\\_Index.html](http://www.ustr.gov/Trade_Agreements/Bilateral/Colombia_FTA/Final_Text/Section_Index.html) Apart from the CTPA, Colombia has signed various free-trade agreements with individual countries or associations, which include the Central American Northern Triangle (El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras),, Canada, Mexico, Chile and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries (Switzerland, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein),. In March 2010 Colombia finalized FTA negotiations with the European Union and has begun negotiating with South Korea and Panama. Additional free trade agreements are scheduled to be negotiated with Japan, Singapore, Australia, and the Dominican Republic.

Additionally, to stimulate trade and investment, Colombia has Bilateral Investment Treaties (BITs) with several countries, including Switzerland, Peru and Spain; Colombia has included investment protection chapters in FTAs with Chile and Mexico. Additional BITs have been negotiated with China, India, South Korea, the United Kingdom, Finland, Belgium, Luxemburg and Chile, while negotiations are underway or about to begin with Japan, France, the Netherlands, the United Arab Emirates, Australia and the Dominican Republic. Colombia, along with Ecuador and Peru, benefits from the Andean Trade Preference and Drug Eradication Act. This U.S. unilateral tariff exemption program which expired in December 2010 and is currently awaiting renewal by the U.S. Congress, promotes economic development through private sector initiatives. ATPDEA encourages exports to create income sources that are alternatives to drug production.

ICONTEC's principal aim is to promote the development of technical standards, quality assurance, and product certification, and is Colombia's national standardization institute. They are members of the International Standards Organization (ISO) and the International Electro-Technical Commission (IEC). ICONTEC is a founding member of the Pan-American Technical Standards Commission (COPANT) and a member of the Pacific Area Standards Congress (PASC), the International Accreditation Forum (IAF), and IQNet, an international association of national quality assurance certification entities.

ICONTEC is also recognized by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), the German Accreditation Association (TGA), the Chilean National Standardization Institute (INN), and the Peruvian standardization institute (INDECOPI). ICONTEC has offices in Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Dominican Republic, and Peru.

ICONTEC's technical standards development committees cover a wide range of issues and topics on metrology, occupational health, air, soil and water quality, solid waste, bar codes, conformity assessment, geographic information, environmental assessments, food and vegetable standards, and construction products, among others. For a complete standards development committee list, please visit: [www.icontec.org.co/normalizacion.asp](http://www.icontec.org.co/normalizacion.asp) and click on "Ambitos Comités Técnicos".

### **NIST Notify U.S. Service**

Member countries of the World Trade Organization (WTO) are required under the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT Agreement) to report to the WTO all proposed technical regulations that could affect trade with other Member countries. Notify U.S. is a free, web-based e-mail subscription service that offers an opportunity to review and comment on proposed foreign technical regulations that can affect your access to international markets. Register online at Internet URL: <http://www.nist.gov/notifyus/>

### **Conformity Assessment**

On November 20, 2007, the Ministry of Foreign Trade and over 90 private entities including product certifiers, product inspectors, and accredited testing, calibration and assay laboratories, enacted the creation of Colombia's National Accreditation Organization (ONAC) as a public-private organization following the guidelines of the National Quality Policy and with the aim to allow international recognition of the country's conformity assessment certificates including laboratory testing, and calibration certificates in accordance with ISO/IEC 17011 standards. Per Decrees 4738 and 3257 of 2008, ONAC accredits and supervises the certification entities, as well as testing and calibration laboratories, a task previously assigned to the SIC, through the Delegated Superintendent for Consumer Protection (SDPC).

### **Product Certification**

Manufacturers and importers of products regulated by official mandatory technical standards or technical regulations need to register themselves in SIC's Mandatory Registry prior to selling products in Colombia. Products can be tested in accredited laboratories to obtain the certificate of conformity and SIC accepts certificates issued by accredited certification entities, such as members of the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) multilateral agreement.

The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism eliminated the mandatory status for the majority of products previously covered. SIC is working with other government agencies to develop technical regulations for products that present threats to health, safety, environment, or national security. Under WTO commitments, Colombia must submit draft technical regulations for comment prior to the new regulation's entry into force. More information on technical regulations including those under development (awaiting public comment), valid technical regulations, and on Colombian technical standards referenced in regulations is available at: [www.mincomercio.gov.co](http://www.mincomercio.gov.co) and click on "Vice Ministerio de Desarrollo Empresarial – Regulación Industrial y Comercial".

### **Accreditation**

By the end of 2009, ONAC had accredited 330 inspection entities, personnel certification entities, product certification entity, and calibration and assay laboratories, available in:

<http://www.onac.org.co/modulos/contenido/default.asp?idmodulo=2343>

INVIMA is the responsible organization regarding sanitary, medicines, biological products, food, beverage, cosmetics, and medical devices and products related to human health. For more information, please check: [www.invima.gov.co](http://www.invima.gov.co)

### **Publication of Technical Regulations**

MinComercio (Regulations Directorate) is the WTO point of contact for TBT draft technical regulations, and upcoming Colombian notifications on TBT and SPS regulations. This group verifies compliance (and coordinates) with the WTO TBT Agreement, the SPS Agreement, and compliance with conformity assessment procedures. They also maintain the national information system concerning national or foreign technical regulations, among other related matters. Interested firms can review draft technical regulations and comment on them before the review period expires. For more information, please visit: [www.mincomercio.gov.co](http://www.mincomercio.gov.co) and click on "Vice Ministerio de Desarrollo Empresarial – Regulación Industrial y Comercial".

### **Labeling and Marking**

Specific marks or labels are not required for products, except for food, pharmaceutical, and textiles products. Labels on processed food products must indicate: the specific name of the product, ingredients in order of predominance, name and address of manufacturer and importer, number of units, instructions for storage and usage (when required), expiration date, and other instructions as required by the Ministry of Social Protection or the Industry and Commerce Superintendent. Labels and illustrations cannot be inaccurate or misleading.

Labels on pharmaceutical products must indicate in Spanish: "for sale under medical, dental, or veterinary prescription," with the generic name, commercial name, net weight or volume, weight or quantity of active ingredients, license number, and the lot control number. For those products having limited shelf life, labels should include the date of

expiration. Insecticides and other toxic products should display the skull and crossbones, the word "poison" in Spanish, and information regarding usage and antidotes. Products for which there are no antidotes cannot be licensed and can only be used in programs under the direct control of public health authorities.

The SIC oversees compliance with labeling and marking requirements of all products (imported or produced locally), including displaying the unit of measure using the international system of measurements. ICONTEC has developed several Colombian technical standards on labeling and marking requirements for different products.

In addition, SIC develops metrological controls for measuring instruments to assure its calibration, following recommendations from the International Legal Metrology Organization (OIML). SIC operates a Metrology Laboratory which provides the national standard for the main physical properties (weight, volume, temperature, etc.) serves as reference to the Colombian industry.

## **Contacts**

The following contacts can assist companies with their inquiries and research on standards in Colombia:

Ministry of Foreign Trade, Industry and Tourism (MinComercio)

Mr. Daniel Rico, Point of Contact for Technical Barriers to Trade, Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (WTO/SPS)

Tel. (571) 606-76-76 ext. 1690 / 241-04-78

Fax: (571) 241-04-80 or 241-04-93

[www.mincomercio.gov.co](http://www.mincomercio.gov.co)

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ICONTEC

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Colombian National Accreditation Organization (ONAC)

Mr. Carlos Germán Caycedo, Director

Mr. Carlos Pacheco, Technical Director

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Bogotá DC, Colombia

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Bogotá DC, Colombia  
Tel. (571) 588-02-34  
[www.sic.gov.co](http://www.sic.gov.co)  
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### **Trade Agreements**

Since 1969, Colombia has been a member of the Andean Community, which constitutes a free trade agreement with Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru. Venezuela withdrew in 2006, but remains bound by its Andean Community commitments until April 2011. A new framework to facilitate commercial relations was still being worked on as of the first quarter of 2011. The Andean Community reached a free trade agreement with Mercosur countries (Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay) in 2005.

President Santos' Administration has energetically pursued measures to liberalize trade. The United States and Colombia signed the CTPA in November 2006 in Washington DC. Colombia has ratified the agreement. The US Congress ratified the agreement 2010 and it is in the implementation process.

For additional information and the final texts of the CTPA agreement please visit:  
[http://www.ustr.gov/Trade\\_Agreements/Bilateral/Colombia\\_FTA/Final\\_Text/Section\\_Index.html](http://www.ustr.gov/Trade_Agreements/Bilateral/Colombia_FTA/Final_Text/Section_Index.html)

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## Web Resources

USTR: [http://www.ustr.gov/Trade\\_Agreements/Bilateral/Colombia\\_FTA/Section\\_Index.html](http://www.ustr.gov/Trade_Agreements/Bilateral/Colombia_FTA/Section_Index.html)

Ministry of Foreign Trade: [www.mincomercio.gov.co](http://www.mincomercio.gov.co)

SIC: [www.sic.gov.co](http://www.sic.gov.co)

DIAN: [www.dian.gov.co](http://www.dian.gov.co)

Corporation Center for Technological Research and Development (CIDET):

<http://www.cidet.com.co/>

ICONTEC: [www.icontec.org.co](http://www.icontec.org.co)

INVIMA – equivalent to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA): [www.invima.gov.co](http://www.invima.gov.co)

Ministry of Social Protection (formerly Ministry of Health): [www.minproteccionsocial.gov.co](http://www.minproteccionsocial.gov.co)

Ministry of Communications: [www.mincomunicaciones.gov.co](http://www.mincomunicaciones.gov.co)

ICA: [www.ica.gov.co](http://www.ica.gov.co)

Colombia International Corporation: <http://www.cci.org.co>

Proexport Colombia: [www.proexport.com.co](http://www.proexport.com.co)