

**COLLABORATION WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS IN THE  
DEVELOPMENT OF OFFICIAL ATS DOCUMENTS**

Document developers frequently ask whether or not it is possible to develop their document in collaboration with other organizations. The ATS has two models for collaboration – co-sponsorship and endorsement, which are described herein.

**CO-SPONSORSHIP**

Co-sponsorship is a collaborative arrangement in which the organizations are considered equal partners in the development of an official document. Generally speaking, co-sponsorship involves each organization being mentioned in the title of the document, providing a co-chair, providing panelists, peer reviewing the document, approving the document, and posting the document on their website. There is also some degree of cost-sharing involved, which may range from the organizations covering their participants' travel costs to sharing the total cost of the project. Co-sponsorship requires a written Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to be established among all co-sponsors; the MOU must be completed by March 31<sup>st</sup> of a project's first year.

Specifics of the collaboration are negotiated among the organizations. However, the initial offer varies according to the document type:

- Guidelines, Statements, and Technical Standards – Each organization is listed in the title and provides a co-chair. The ATS' conflict of interest and methodological policies are followed. Each organization peer reviews (coordinated by the ATS Documents Editor) and approves the document. The publication site is negotiated on a case-by-case basis, with each organization allowed to develop derivatives and post the approved document on their website following publication. Meetings are allowed in conjunction with the organizations' annual meetings only; outside meetings are not permitted. There are two approaches to participation and cost-sharing: each organization appoints an equal number of panelists and shares the total cost of the project equally, alternatively each organization appoints a representative and pays the travel costs of its representative.

- Workshop Reports – The workshop is held at the ATS International Conference and paid for by the ATS. Each organization is listed in the title, provides a co-chair and up to five representatives (with the ATS being allowed to provide more as the host), and pays the travel costs of its representatives. In addition, each organization peer reviews (coordinated by the ATS Documents Editor) and approves the workshop report. The ATS publishes the workshop report in the Annals of the ATS, after which each organization can publish the workshop report on its website and develop derivatives.

Presumed benefits of co-sponsorship include increased credibility due to the participation of multiple organizations and appeal to a broader audience. However, it should also be anticipated that the time necessary for peer review and organizational approval will be longer for co-sponsored document since each organization needs to follow its own internal processes, which tend to be of variable rigor and duration.

## **ENDORSEMENT**

Endorsement is a collaborative arrangement in which a near-final ATS document is sent to another organization with a request that the organization consider endorsing the document. Some organizations will provide a yes or no decision regarding endorsement, whereas others will provide comments with the expectation that those comments need to be addressed to obtain endorsement. Not all organizations offer endorsements. If the document is endorsed by another organization, a statement similar to the following is typically in italicized fine print beneath the authors' names: "This guideline was endorsed by the <<organization name>> on <<date>>".

There is no requirement that an MOU be established during the first year of the project; there is also no addition of co-chairs or panelists, no cost-sharing, and no independent peer review and approval processes. Occasionally, if a project panel knows early during document development that they plan to seek another organization's endorsement, a representative from that organization will be added to the panel at the cost of the other organization; the purpose of the representative is to facilitate the request for endorsement later.