

## **International Construction Measurement Standards (ICMS) - General FAQs**

[Download our technical questions](#)

### **What is ICMS?**

ICMS stands for International Construction Measurement Standards. It is a new, high level international standard which aims to provide greater global consistency in classifying, defining, measuring, analyzing and presenting construction costs at a project, regional, state, national or international level. ICMS is not a detailed method of measuring construction works. Instead, it is a high-level benchmarking and reporting framework for international cost classification, reporting and comparison.

### **What is the ICMS Coalition?**

The ICMS Coalition is a growing group of professional and not-for-profit organisations which are responsible for researching, developing, publicising and implementing the International Construction Measurement Standards for the construction sector. The Coalition was established in June 2015 after a meeting at the International Monetary Fund in Washington DC, USA.

The ICMS Coalition supports the creation, maintenance and use of high quality international standards, which have been developed using a transparent and inclusive standards setting process. Through the Board of Trustees, Coalition organisations have each signed a declaration of support and commitment to promote and implement ICMS and encourage world markets to accept and adopt it.

### **Who can join the ICMS Coalition?**

Any professional or not-for-profit organisation which has a role in developing cost measurement standards within the construction industry is welcome to participate in the Coalition. The full list of ICMS Coalition members can be found on the ICMS Coalition website.

### **What problem is ICMS trying to solve?**

Despite rapid globalization with investment funds flowing across borders and money pouring into constructed assets, the construction profession currently lacks a common language and framework for classifying and reporting construction costs.

When estimating construction project costs, this causes huge problems for cost consultants, quantity surveyors, construction economists and cost engineers around the world. The ICMS Coalition is tackling this problem head on.

For the first time at a global collaborative level, ICMS will introduce a standard structure and format that will lead to greater consistency in classifying and reporting of capital costs for construction projects.

### **What are the benefits of having ICMS?**

Broadly, ICMS will allow:

- construction costs to be consistently and transparently benchmarked;
- the causes of differences in costs between projects to be identified;
- more informed decision-making about the design and location of construction projects;

- data to be used with confidence for construction financing and investment, decision-making, and related purposes;
- Standardized, BIM-friendly classifications for cost data collection to inform subsequent cost prediction.

### **What is the Standards Setting Committee?**

The Standards Setting Committee (SSC) is a separate and independent entity appointed by the Trustees of ICMS Coalition to develop the international standard for construction cost reporting.

The SSC is an independent group comprised of 27 experts including academics, construction cost managers and consultants, project managers, civil engineers, quantity surveyors and information managers. The SSC meets (mostly through tele-conferencing), to discuss technical details relating to ICMS. The SSC review consultation feedback and agree on the final draft of ICMS for publication. The independent experts comprising the SSC are all listed on the ICMS website.

### **What is an international standard?**

In the context of the work being undertaken by the ICMS Coalition, an international standard is something which has been established and agreed at the international level and which is implemented and delivered locally. The standard itself is owned by the ICMS Coalition and not by any single organisation. ICMS organisations subscribe to the shared international standard and commit to its use and implementation through their membership.

### **How does an international standard work?**

ICMS is developed and agreed at a global level (by the ICMS Coalition).

ICMS sets out universal rules which provide consistency in classifying, defining, measuring, analysing and presenting construction costs at a project, regional, state, national or international level. Professional institutions will incorporate these high-level standards and rules within their guidance or local standard methods or rules of measurement.

All organisations which make up the ICMS Coalition will participate in the implementation of the shared international standard through their respective memberships.

### **What is an ICMS Partner?**

An ICMS Partner is a government, commercial or academic organisation which supports the collaborative approach to developing international standards and commits, in principle, to the adoption of ICMS. ICMS Partners can include but are not limited to the following types of organisation:

- construction and infrastructure consultancy firms
- construction industry service providers (e.g. measurement practices)
- construction companies (e.g. multinational firms with international construction portfolios)
- property investment firms
- developers, banks and lending institutions
- construction related software vendors
- construction cost data service providers, etc.

Prospective ICMS Partner organisations are asked to express their interest through any member of the ICMS Coalition Board of Trustees, or by emailing [info@icms-coalition.org](mailto:info@icms-coalition.org) for further information. To qualify as an ICMS Partner, organisations must provide a public statement of

support and offer an in-principle commitment to adopt ICMS. ICMS Partners are listed on the ICMS website.

### **Why not stick with the established methods for classifying and benchmarking construction costs?**

At present, the many 'standards' that exist have contributed to uncertainty and confusion in reporting construction and infrastructure costs. Research has shown that different approaches to presenting the costs of construction can vary significantly due to inconsistent methodology and standards. This is why an international standard such as ICMS is required to ensure global consistency in presenting the costs of construction projects.

### **How will ICMS be implemented?**

ICMS will be implemented by all organisations which are part of the ICMS Coalition. Many of the Coalition organisations will develop additional training and guidance for their members to use.

ICMS will be implemented around the world through proactive engagement by the ICMS Coalition members with the memberships, key accounts, and relevant national stakeholders (governments, banks, associations etc.) including ICMS Partners.

As with any major global initiative on this scale, it is anticipated that ICMS will initially be used alongside existing standards, but overtime ICMS will become established in construction markets and be used as the primary standard for reporting on construction cost both locally and globally.

### **Where will ICMS be used / adopted?**

ICMS will be used throughout the world. Each of the organisations in the ICMS Coalition has committed to its adoption throughout its own professional memberships.

### **When will ICMS take effect?**

ICMS will take effect from the date it is formally published, 24 July 2017.

### **Where can I find a copy of ICMS?**

ICMS documentation – including final published versions – will be available through the ICMS Coalition website.

### **Is ICMS available in other languages?**

ICMS will initially be published in English by the ICMS Coalition. Member organisations of the Coalition have indicated their desire to translate the standard into other languages and these are likely to be published over time.

### **Why are professional organisations leading this work?**

With the ICMS Coalition members covering construction markets throughout the world, professional organisations are well placed to understand the existing challenges brought about through multiple measurement standards. Professional organisations have the ability to come together to develop standards which are in the public interest and which represent international best practice. These organisations are also able to support and guide their members to deliver the new standard and thus ensure it is adopted widely and consistently.