



Brussels, 15 November 2024
(OR. en)

15731/24

MI 933
COMPET 1114
ENT 209
INTER-REP 120

COVER NOTE

From:	Presidency
To:	Delegations
Subject:	High-Level Forum Workstream 3 : Report on NSBs peer-review and recommendations on national inclusiveness - Presentation at the Working Party on Technical Harmonisation on 14 November 2024

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HIGH-LEVEL FORUM WORKSTREAM 3

Report on NSBs peer-review and recommendations on national inclusiveness

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14 November 2024



HLF WORKSTREAM 3

NSBs peer-review (including SMEs and civil society inclusiveness)

Co-leaders	SBS; CEN-CENELEC	
Supporting HLF members	Belgium	ETSI
	Germany	ANEC
	Ireland	DigitalEurope
	Italy	ECOS
	Lithuania	ETUC
	Luxembourg	European Digital SME
	Netherlands	Alliance
	Slovenia	Orgalim
	Sweden	SMEunited
		T&D Europe



WORKSTREAM GOAL AND SCOPE

- Increase access and effective participation of all stakeholders (particularly SMEs, societal stakeholders and academia) in standardisation at national level
- Identify and evaluate current measures by NSBs to ensure entry conditions and involvement of stakeholders
- Identify initiatives by Member States to encourage participation in standardisation and provide guidance for standards use by stakeholders
- Gather and disseminate existing best practices by NSBs and Member States
- Draft a Report and Recommendations on state of the art and avenues for improvement



WORKSTREAM ACTIVITIES TIMELINE

- **July 2023** – Launch of the workstream
- **Q4 2023** – Distribution of three questionnaires (aimed respectively at Member States, NSBs and stakeholders) – Around 220 total replies
- **Q1 2024** – 20 follow-up qualitative interviews
- **June 2024** – Validation workshop, with presentation of findings
- **Q3 2024** – Drafting of [Report](#) and [Recommendations](#) (lead drafters SBS – collegiate contribution, support and approval by all workstream members)
- **September 2024** – Final endorsement by HLF members and publication of the deliverables





HLF WORKSTREAM 3 –

Report of analysis of questionnaires and interviews



STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

- Conditions and measures for stakeholder access
- Conditions and measures for effective and balanced stakeholder participation
- Obstacles and proposals for access and participation
- Existing best practices
- Conclusions



CONDITIONS AND MEASURES FOR ACCESS

- Importance for stakeholders of a clear and defined point of contact within NSB and government authorities (54% NSBs; 43% MSs)
- Particular importance, highlighted both by stakeholders and a number of NSBs, of setting up stakeholder groups within NSBs to provide consistent feedback and interaction with stakeholder representatives
- Stark awareness gap between the measures implemented by NSBs and government authorities and their knowledge by SMEs
- Sporadic knowledge by stakeholders of different measures, no prevalent reply; Clear plurality (35%) not aware of ANY specific measure
- Generally adequate level of contact between Member States and NSBs



CONDITIONS AND MEASURES FOR BALANCED PARTICIPATION

- Direct participation by stakeholders in technical bodies primarily via an in-house expert (time resources issues for smaller entities); less common (30%) participation via an external expert and/or via membership in stakeholder organisation.
- Positive amount of general information by NSBs on stakeholder participation, but inconclusive results on balance and composition of individual technical bodies. Several NSBs carry out annual/ad-hoc monitoring, but this is not a widely established practice.
- Incentives to stakeholders for the purchase of standards are mostly discounts either via subscriptions or agreements with stakeholder associations.
- Measures to favour implementation mostly consist of trainings/webinars. Implementation guides and other written documents are less common – Mostly focusing on “popular” ISO standards (ISO 9001; ISO 27001...)



IDENTIFIED OBSTACLES

- Lack of financial resources are identified as main obstacles by a majority of stakeholders. Other issues and barriers can be addressed second-hand by improving funding.
- NSBs and Member States, on the other hand, overwhelmingly point to lack of time and HR resources as the main obstacle that they encounter
- Discrepancies between the perceptions of the obstacles by the different communities:
 - Lack of technical expertise from stakeholders is highlighted as an obstacle by a strong majority of NSBs (67%) but only by a small minority of stakeholders (8%)
 - Lack of interest in standardisation from stakeholders is pointed out as a strong obstacle to engagement from both NSBs and MSs, but it's virtually absent from stakeholder replies
- Stronger oversight by NSBs over work of technical bodies required by stakeholders to ensure balance and address issues of lack of influence by “weaker” stakeholders



PROPOSALS PROVIDED

- Do more to make stakeholders understand the importance and economic benefits of standards;
- Give more financial support to stakeholders and directly to their experts to participate in standardisation;
- Nominate dedicated contact persons within the NSBs for the different underrepresented stakeholders' categories;
- Higher discounts on the sale of standards packages for some stakeholders, as part of an annual subscription;
- Creation of a centralised platform to access and monitor existing best practices in standardisation in other Member States;
- No participation fees to join standardisation work for societal stakeholders, SMEs and academia;



EXISTING BEST PRACTICES

Best practices identified in NSBs:

- Existence of well-established and well-functioning stakeholder groups and advisory bodies within NSBs.
- No fees and free access to technical work for SMEs and/or societal stakeholders (IE; CY; AT....)
- Monitoring tools to allow stakeholders to identify relevant standards (eg: [DIN-Media Monitoring tool](#); [ASI MeinNormen Radar](#); [CEI Catalogo Guidato](#)) and stay up to date with their development
- Widely available in-person consultation of standards, also in collaboration with chambers of commerce and universities (AT; IT; EL....)
- Teaching material and individual on-boarding trainings to introduce new stakeholders to technical work (DK; IE; SE....)

Best Practices identified in Member States:

- France - "[Credit d'Impot Recherche](#)" provides tax rebates for enterprises that participate in activity linked to research, innovation and development, including standardisation;
- Germany – WIPANO partially reimburses costs linked to standardisation work; financing streams for SMEs and for academia and research community.
- Belgium - [Antenne-Normes](#). Contact points (38 total, covering 9 main sectors) for companies to receive support and guidance on standardisation-related matters, particularly on implementation
- Several countries have created coordination groups including government authorities, NSBs and (in some cases) stakeholders to improve coordination on standardisation





HLF WORKSTREAM 3 –

Recommendations on national inclusiveness



RECOMMENDATIONS

EC:

- Create a repository to submit, review and share national best practices; annual workshop highlighting best practices implemented by NSBs and Member States.

NSBs:

- Create advisory bodies for different stakeholders communities.
- Ensure favourable entry conditions to technical work and to the national enquiry process.
- Ensure balanced representation in technical bodies and proactively address imbalances.
- Establish user friendly monitoring tools.

Member States:

- Promote education in standardisation in national university and vocational education curricula.
- Establish a dedicated contact person for standardisation-related matters vis-à-vis stakeholders.
- Provide funding and tax incentives to participation in standardisation work.

Stakeholder organisations:

- Promote awareness campaigns focusing on “business case for standardisation” (SMEs) and on importance of standards to promote public interest (societal stakeholders).
- Guide and support their membership in participating in technical work and in national enquiries.



Thank you!

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Financed by the European Union and
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