

**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

This document contains a presentation by an external stakeholder and the views expressed therein are solely those of the third party it originates from. This document cannot be regarded as stating an official position of the Council. It does not reflect the views of the Council or of its members.

A photograph of three business professionals (two women and one man) sitting around a table with laptops, smiling and engaged in a meeting. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter.

HIGH-LEVEL FORUM WORKSTREAM 3

Report on NSBs peer-review and
recommendations on national
inclusiveness

Andrea Raffaelli, Small Business Standards

Council of the European Union - Working
party on technical harmonization

14 November 2024



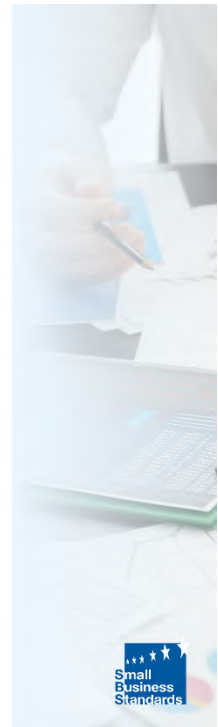
HLF WORKSTREAM 3
NSBs peer-review (including SMEs and civil society inclusiveness)

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





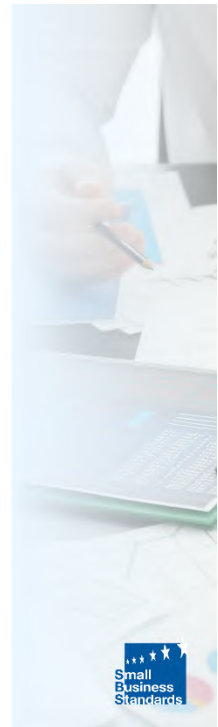
HLF WORKSTREAM 3 –

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!

a.raffaelli@sbs-sme.eu
www.sbs-sme.eu

Rue Jacques de Lalaing 4
B-1040 Brussels, Belgium



Financed by the European Union and EFTA

