

CEN/CENELEC Guide 17

Guidance for writing standards taking into account micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) needs

by Sebastiano Toffaletti

“Making standards better for SMEs”



European Office of Crafts, Trades and Small and Medium sized Enterprises for Standardisation
Bureau Européen de l'Artisanat et des Petites et Moyennes Entreprises pour la Normalisation
Europäisches Büro des Handwerks und der Klein- und Mittelbetriebe für die Normung
Organizzazione Europea dell'Artigianato e delle Piccole e Medie Imprese per la Standardizzazione
Organización Europea del Artesanado y de las PYMES para la Estandarización
Europejskie Zrzeszenie Rzemiosła oraz Małych i Średnich Przedsiębiorstw dla Normalizacji



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Small Business Act

- SBA is the political will to recognise the central role of SMEs in the EU economy. It aims to improve the overall approach to entrepreneurship, permanently anchor the 'Think Small First' principle in policy making from regulation to public service, and to promote SMEs' growth by helping them tackle the problems which hamper their development.
- Europe's 2020 strategy and Europe's economy heavily rely on Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) achieving their potential. In the EU, some 23 million SMEs employ 67% of the private sector workforce. The Small Business Act (SBA) is the EU policy framework aimed at strengthening SMEs so that they can grow and create employment.
- Making full use of the Single Market: Revision of the European standardisation system making standards more SME-friendly and easily accessible.

Reform of the European Standardisation System

The **European Commission** addresses the problem of insufficient representation of SMEs in standardisation activities:

- Art. 5 : ESOs shall ensure an appropriate representation of SMEs;
- Art 7: principle of market relevance of new standards;
- Funding of European Association representing SMEs (ie so far NORMAPME).

Further SME friendly measures in the IMCO report at the **European Parliament**:

- available abstracts of standards free of charge on NSOs website;
- annual identification of the standardisation projects which are of particular interest for SMEs;
- access to standardisation activities for SMEs without obligation to become member of the National Standardisation Organisation;
- free access to draft standards for SMEs;
- special rates for the provision of standards to micro enterprises;
- free access or at least special rates for micro enterprises to participate in standardisation activities.

NORMAPME

- is the European organisation solely devoted to the interests of Crafts & SMEs in all sectors in standardisation with financial support of the EC
- represents over 12 million enterprises in Europe through its members
- supports SME experts in 59 Technical Committees (65 by the end of 2012) in in CEN, CENELEC, ETSI and ISO
- was the proposer and main driver of Guide 17 and is the author of SME manuals for the use of standards (eg ISO 26000)
- represents SME interests in the managing bodies of the European Standards Organisations (eg CEN BT and General Assembly)
- informs and trains SMEs about standards
- ...and much more!

Guide 17 on SME needs

- Developed by CEN/CLC BT WG 208 in 2009
- NORMAPME provided secretariat and appointed chairman
- More than 30 experts from 11 National Standards Bodies and 7 industry associations
- Approved by CEN and CENELEC BTs in June 2010
- Available in 23 languages at www.cen.eu and www.normapme.eu
- NORMAPME runs the SME Guide Contact Point and presented the Guide in more than 30 TCs

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Guide 17: Preparation of a New Work Item

- Check the relevance of the standard for European SMEs
- Check if there are special SMEs needs among the stakeholders

Guide 17: preparation of a standard

- **Consider the costs of investment and training required for the implementation of a standard**
- **Consider the availability of elements required**

Guide 17: Developing the content of the standard

- Improve understanding and use of the standard by adding examples and explanations
- Provide an introduction with supportive information
- Make standards precise and complete within their scope
- **Avoid imposing costly and complex testing regimes and consider the frequency of testing.**
- **Identify simple and cost-effective ways of verifying conformity with the requirements**

Guide 17: Structure and presentation of the content

- Standards should be as short as feasible
- Standards should be as clear, logical and easy to follow as possible
- Include supportive charts, graphs, drawings and representative examples of applications whenever possible
- Use language simple enough to be understood by all the expected standard users, not only experts.
- Reduce the need to acquire referenced standards.
- Ensure that clear information on the changes made to a previous version is provided in the new and revised standards

Guide 17: Final review

- **Assess the implications of changes resulting from new and revised standards and set the transition period accordingly**
- Investigate if assistance in implementation is necessary for standards that cannot be simplified

Guide 17: Guide Check-list

Preparation of the New Work Item	Preparation of a standard	Development of the content	Structure and presentation of the content	Final review
<input type="checkbox"/> (5.2.1) Have you checked the SME relevance of the standard? <input type="checkbox"/> (5.2.2) Have you checked among all the stakeholders if there are special SMEs needs? <input type="checkbox"/> (5.2.2) Did you evaluate if SMEs are among the target groups?	<input type="checkbox"/> (5.3.1) Did you evaluate the costs of investment (technology, equipment, testing)? <input type="checkbox"/> (5.3.1) Did you evaluate the cost of training (staff)? <input type="checkbox"/> (5.3.1) Did you evaluate the costs of implementation? <input type="checkbox"/> (5.3.2) Have you verified that all elements are available?	<input type="checkbox"/> (5.4.1) If the performance approach is used, is it understandable? <input type="checkbox"/> (5.4.2) Have you used descriptive explanations? <input type="checkbox"/> (5.4.3) Is the standard precise and complete within its scope? <input type="checkbox"/> (5.4.4) Did you avoid strict testing regimes? <input type="checkbox"/> (5.4.4) Did you evaluate the cost of testing? <input type="checkbox"/> (5.4.5) Have you identified simple and cost-effective ways of verifying conformity with the requirements?	<input type="checkbox"/> (5.5.1) Is the standard as short as possible? <input type="checkbox"/> (5.5.1) If the standard is long, did you evaluate the possibility of dividing it in shorter standards? <input type="checkbox"/> (5.5.2) Is the structure of the standard easy to follow? <input type="checkbox"/> (5.5.3) Have you included supportive graphs, charts, etc (when possible)? <input type="checkbox"/> (5.5.4) Have you used clear language understandable by all expected standard users? <input type="checkbox"/> (5.5.5) Did you minimise the number of referenced standards? <input type="checkbox"/> (5.5.6) Did you provide clear information on the changes from the previous versions of the standard?	<input type="checkbox"/> (5.6.1) Have you suggested a transition period reflecting the implications of changes? <input type="checkbox"/> (5.6.2) Have you made the evaluation on the need for an implementation manual?

Some ideas to conclude

- SMEs are often underrepresented in standardisation
- Sometimes standards do not reflect the needs of SMEs
- European institutions have great attention for SMEs in standardisation: **SBA** and **reform of ESS**
- Some concrete initiatives exist: eg **NORMAPME** and **Guide 17**
- Despite the above, standardisation is a **private** business. Thus, it is a **voluntary** and **market driven** process
- ...**So, it is up to SMEs to participate in standardisation and ensure that standards are adapted to their needs!**

Thank you for your attention ! Questions...?

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