



CEN approach on addressing environmental issues in standardization

Developed by SABE and CEN/Environmental Helpdesk

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1. Introduction

1.1 Scope

This document covers environmental issues within standardization. Standardization is the process of developing and implementing voluntary technical standards based on the consensus of different parties, including industry, societal stakeholders and public authorities. Standardization activities include standardization of products, services, test methods and processes.

CEN's Technical Board (BT), other stakeholders (see definition of stakeholder under sub-clause 3.4), and the European Commission have joined calls to develop a strategic document to ensure that environmental issues are adequately addressed in standardization. This is also needed in a political context where standards are increasingly used to support or complement EU legislation and policies, therefore acquiring more and more importance, e.g. under the New Approach.

Most standards are likely to have a direct or indirect impact on public interests, including on the environment, consumers, workers, SMEs. Yet, standardization is by nature a market and industry-led process. This is why a comprehensive and systematic approach based on harmonised tools and practices is needed from CEN to guarantee that environment is fully integrated in standardization.

In this context, the document:

- describes the procedures, tools, workflows, and general aspects, etc. that are required to better address environmental issues in European standardization activities; and
- identifies roles and responsibilities of the different parties involved in the process.

1.2 Purpose

This document:

- describes how environmental issues are currently included in standardization, noting that this is intended to be a living document;
- impacts all stakeholders and committees active in the environment sector within CEN, including
 - CEN-CENELEC's Strategic Advisory Body on Environment (CEN-CLC/SABE), its different teams and topic groups, CEN's Environmental Helpdesk;
 - CEN Technical Bodies, including CEN Technical Committees (TC) and CEN/TC Working Groups (WG);
 - National Standards Bodies (NSB); and
 - societal stakeholders (Annex III organisations: ECOS, ANEC, ETUC, SBS) and other interested stakeholders.
- targets and raises awareness on environmental issues primarily towards technical bodies whose sector or work programme bears significant environmental impacts.

1.3 Overall goal of addressing environmental issues in standardization

The overall goal of CEN activities relating to environment and standardization is to achieve a high environmental quality through standards in order to contribute to sustainable development. By systematically addressing environmental issues in standardization, direct and indirect environmental impacts can be mitigated, limited or reduced.

This can be achieved by:

- procedural measures and tools to ensure a mandatory and systematic consideration of the environment in technical bodies' work, e.g. by
 - raising awareness regarding environmental aspects among all involved parties;
 - making available supporting tools and solutions, e.g. dedicated training, presentation of existing guides, etc.;
 - facilitating the dialogue and sharing responsibilities between all involved parties to ensure that all needs with respect to the integration of environmental aspects in standards have been identified and made transparent;
- technical measures, e.g. by providing environmental expertise and recommendations for inclusion of environmental provisions in standards.

2. Elements for addressing environmental issues in standards

2.1 Priorities

Although the CEN Approach generally applies to all Technical Bodies within CEN, resources for implementing the approach are limited on all levels. Therefore, priorities have to be defined in order to use the limited resources in an efficient manner and target the most relevant environmental aspects and consequently the Technical Bodies having the most significant environmental impacts.

SABE will agree on these priorities, actively supported by EHD, involving the following steps:

1. Identification of priority environmental issues;
2. Identification of relevant TCs;
3. Identification of stakeholder needs;
4. Checking of improvement on a regular basis (at least every 3 years).

For identifying priority environmental issues, European environmental policy strategies and documents such as the Green Deal, the Circular Economy Package or the Plastics Strategy should serve as an appropriate basis.

The subsequent selection of relevant Technical Bodies will be based, e.g. on the sector, existing business plans, title and scope of the committees as well as their current work programme, and the relation of those to the identified priority environmental issues.

Having identified relevant Technical Bodies, SABE will decide on:

- selecting relevant new work items;
- selecting relevant draft standards; and
- whether to
 - instigate possible revisions of existing standards;
 - initiate new standardization work;
 - organize workshops; and/or
 - develop horizontal guidance documents.

As priorities may change over time, the detailed priority areas will have to be updated/revised periodically.

2.2 Environmental support

There are several ways in CEN of supporting Technical Bodies and Working Groups (WG) in addressing environmental issues - some are more generic, others are rather specific and tailored to the needs of particular committees.

2.2.1 Generic environmental support for Technical Bodies

Offered materials include, e.g.:

- environmental guides and checklists;
- webinars, generic training courses, an e-learning module and EHD workshops, including information on environmental issues in general, existing tools and approaches, etc.; and
- examples of standards that already cover environmental aspects.

These tools and approaches help in raising awareness within Technical Bodies for the importance of environmental issues and, even more importantly, offer possible solutions and various ways forward to Technical Bodies willing to develop an environmental approach.

These tools are included in the Environmental Framework. The Environmental Framework is a toolbox managed by the EHD and available on the CEN website at:

<https://www.cen.eu/about/helpdesks/environmental/Pages/default.aspx>.

It includes information, training, examples and guidance on generic, sector- and product-related issues for Technical Bodies who wish to consider environmental issues in European Standards.

2.2.2 Tailored environmental programmes for Technical Bodies

Tailored environmental programmes are targeted at Technical Bodies who wish to work on a particular environmental subject or develop a deeper understanding of environmental issues. They are developed by the EHD in consultation with ENIS.

Objectives of tailored environmental programmes are multiple:

- to help Technical Bodies better understand how their sector and products/services covered in standards interact with the environment and how standards could help limiting the associated adverse environmental impacts;
- to provide adequate support according to Technical Bodies' needs, e.g. specific environmental expertise from external sources;
- to empower Technical Bodies and develop internal knowledge when it comes to initiating environmental thinking for upcoming projects, i.e. new work items;
- to provide drafting guidance on the integration of environmental aspects in TC Business Plans, New Work Item forms, etc. (see sub-clause 2.3); and
- to develop horizontal guidance and best practice on horizontal topics, e.g. how to address greenhouse gas emissions in a specific sector or hazardous waste in the healthcare sector.

There are various offers of tailored environmental guidance within CEN, for example:

- tailored workshops offered by the EHD, where Technical Bodies will have the opportunity to evaluate the environmental performance of their standards and address their specific environmental issues. In this context, Technical Bodies will be invited to identify those standards which are candidates for assessment and further integration of environmental aspects;
- open environmental workshops could establish a platform to share good practice and experience from, e.g. Technical Bodies, stakeholders or NSBs. They could be initiated by EHD or stakeholders and should be organised as open workshops involving, e.g. representatives of environmental and consumer interests. This would also include workshops for different target groups, e.g. CEN sectors, one or more Technical Bodies or NSBs and could cover different subjects, e.g. the coverage of chemical requirements, emissions, labelling, etc.;
- tailored training courses or webinars on environmental issues for specific target groups, e.g. specific CEN Sectors, specific Technical Bodies, their secretaries, or CEN members.

2.2.3 External support

In cases in which the necessary knowledge for a certain project is not available within CEN (Technical Bodies, EHD, participating stakeholders, etc.), the use of paid external consultants for certain priority areas may have to be considered, provided that funding is available. This would include, e.g. the screening of draft standards, the preparation of horizontal guidance documents on certain issues, literature search or the planning of environmental workshops.

2.3 Mandatory elements in the standardization process

Mandatory elements are generally useful for introducing systematic processes. In European standardization, mandatory elements have been introduced to allow for a more systematic approach for addressing environmental issues in the work of Technical Bodies.

The current mandatory elements aim at raising environmental awareness within Technical Bodies and progressing in systematically addressing environmental issues in standards while keeping the additional workload to a minimum.

2.3.1 CEN/TC Business Plans (CEN/BT Resolution C091/2008)

An additional sub-clause on environmental issues shall be included into the Business Plans of TCs. The objective of this step is to initiate the discussion on environmental issues on a broader level within the Technical Body. Technical Bodies should become aware of the environmental aspects of their products, services, test methods, processes, etc. and systematically plan how to address them.

According to the business plan template, which is provided in CEN BOSS, the environmental information shall be placed in a sub-clause in section 4 on “Objectives of the CEN/TC and strategies for their achievements”.

The business plan template also contains drafting instructions on which information to provide. This includes:

1. A review of the key environmental issues associated with the scope of the work covered by the CEN/TC;
2. How these will be reflected in all New Work Item Proposals (NWIPs) and formatted decisions when new work items are adopted by the CEN/TC;
3. Objectives regarding addressing environmental issues and consideration of how to assess progress in achieving those objectives.

2.3.2 New work item proposal forms (Forms A & N) (CEN/BT Resolution 27/2008)

Questions on environmental issues shall be included in the new work item proposal forms. The objective of this step is to initiate the discussion on environmental issues of a specific project within the Technical Body before the adoption of the NWIP (see next step) of the respective project.

Two questions have to be addressed:

1. Which environmental aspects are likely to be relevant to the work item (e.g. use of materials and energy, emissions to air, waste)?
2. How do you plan to address these environmental aspects (e.g. contact EHD, use environmental checklist, bring environmental expertise to the committee)?

2.3.3 Formatted decisions on adoption of NWIP (CEN/BT Resolution C092/2008)

Environmental issues shall be included in the formatted decisions sent to CCMC by means of including similar mandatory questions like in the New Work Item Proposal forms in a new section called “Environmental aspects” in the New Work Item.

2.3.4 Standing item on the meeting agenda (CEN/BT Resolution 27/2008)

All Technical Bodies shall include the item “Environmental aspects” in their meeting agendas to regularly review their environmental strategy and actions, assess progress and gaps. The meeting agenda template provided in CEN BOSS contains a corresponding agenda item.

It is also considered good practice for WGs to include a similar item in their agendas.

2.3.5 Review of title and scope of Technical Committees or Project Committees

In view of not excluding environmental issues from the work of Technical Bodies, they shall regularly review their titles and scopes.

This particularly applies to committees the titles and scopes of which are currently limited to a specific aspect, e.g. safety.

2.4 Data collection and report

Information on environmental actions in a specific sector or on a specific topic will be gathered whenever there is a specific need, e.g. in order to support the process of prioritization (see 2.1) or in relation to activities of a topic group (see 3.3). Such information shall be provided by the relevant Technical Bodies upon request from the EHD and should include a short (typically 1-2 pages) and meaningful synopsis of environmental activities of the Technical Body which may be complemented, where relevant, by a documentation covering relevant sections of:

- Revised/new Business Plans;
- NWIP forms;
- Formatted decisions on the adoption of NWIs (TCs delegated decisions);
- Drafts of standards, technical specifications or technical reports;
- TC decisions;
- TC meeting reports.

EHD shall support the Technical Bodies in preparing the reports, e.g. by clarifying what kind of information is needed and/or by providing a corresponding template.

2.5 Communication

In order to ensure that the CEN community and in particular the Technical Bodies continue to be aware of environmental aspects of standardization and also to make activities of CEN strategic environmental committees transparent and visible, it is important to maintain a continuous communication. This communication shall be ensured by SABE, supported by its teams and topic groups, e.g. in the form of webinars, events, newsletters (dedicated SABE newsletters and/or articles in general CEN/CENELEC newsletters) or publications on the CEN/CENELEC website and in particular the Environmental Framework.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Technical Committees and Working Groups (Technical Bodies)

Technical Bodies have a key role in the process of addressing environmental issues in standardization activities. It is the task of CEN strategic environmental committees (see sub-clause 3.2) to provide Technical Bodies with the information and the tools they need. However, it is the task of the Technical Bodies to develop environmental awareness and to address environmental issues in their standardization projects. They are the ones responsible for the content and the quality of their standards.

Technical Bodies should:

- systematically address environmental issues using the supporting tools available, e.g. CEN Guide 4, Environmental checklist or other CEN and/or CENELEC Guides provided in the Environmental Framework;
- indicate in their Business Plans how they plan to tackle environmental issues in their work;
- review their title and scope in view of not excluding environmental issues;
- include environmental criteria in new work item proposal and when these are adopted by the TC (formatted decisions);
- review existing standards to improve environmental performance;
- complete the e-learning package available in the Environmental Framework;
- participate in EHD events to develop their environmental awareness, e.g. training, workshops;
- be open for a dialogue with stakeholders facilitated by EHD;
- provide reports on environmental actions whenever requested by EHD (see 2.4);
- participate in SABE topic groups, if relevant (see 3.3.); and
- report on their achievements.

Within Technical Bodies it might be useful to share some of those tasks between chairmen/convenors, delegates, experts and secretaries.

While the secretaries might be responsible for, e.g. making available existing guides and supervising the use of the environmental checklist, the development of the environmental section in the Business Plan and the actual completion of the environmental checklist might be a joint action of the whole Technical Body.

3.2 CEN Strategic environmental committees

The strategic environmental committees within CEN, notably CEN-CENELEC/SABE, ENIS and EHD, shall ensure that adequate processes are put in place to:

- raise environmental awareness in CEN and CENELEC;
- provide environmental expertise and recommendations for the inclusion of environmental provisions in standards. This might come from external sources to ensure a high quality of environmental advice (external consultants, NGOs, etc.);

- develop and make available supporting tools and solutions;
- facilitate a dialogue between all stakeholders and Technical Bodies to ensure that all stakeholder needs with respect to the integration of environmental issues in standards have been identified and addressed in a transparent process; and
- review the progress made.

There are particular tasks for some of the groups mentioned:

- For the ENIS Team: The ENIS team is SABE's team for covering environmental issues in product and service standards. ENIS plays an active role in all coordinating activities. ENIS is a forum for CEN, NSBs and stakeholders to exchange views and to discuss and develop tools and strategies on environmental issues in standards.

ENIS continuously monitors and evaluates the activities of EHD and reviews EHD's strategic planning, priority setting and work plans. ENIS, most notably NSB members in ENIS, should give regular feedback to EHD.

- For the EHD: The EHD is responsible for establishing and maintaining the dialogue with Technical Bodies. It offers several types of workshops, promotes tools and approaches via the environmental framework (see sub-clause 2.2.1) and serves as an information hub between the Technical Bodies and the stakeholders via the strategic committees.

The EHD should regularly discuss its work and its strategy in the strategic environmental committees to align work and strategy with the needs of the stakeholders, e.g. NGOs or NSBs.

3.3 Strategic committees on specific topics related to environment

Certain topics related to environment require additional attention and/or coordination. For such topics CEN and/or CENELEC BTs can establish specific strategic groups as additional separate committees, e.g. sector forum or coordination group, or, alternatively, ask SABE to take care of the topic. SABE can then decide to set up a "Topic Group" within SABE to deal with the topic.

SABE Topic Groups have the task to coordinate ongoing or initiate new work on the specific subject in the environmental field. Their focus and topics would be derived largely from the Green Deal. The Topic Groups strongly rely on the participation of representatives of all relevant Technical Bodies.

SABE shall maintain a continuous information exchange with all other relevant strategic committees, in particular with regard to topics related to the Green Deal.

3.4 Stakeholders

In the CEN system, stakeholders relating to environmental issues in standards are those represented in SABE and ENIS. These include, e.g. NSBs, consumer and environmental NGOs, environmental authorities, industry federations or the European Commission.

The main task of stakeholders is to clearly and consistently express their opinions regarding the inclusion of environmental issues in standards in the relevant committees and within the relevant processes.

3.5 NSBs

With the objective to develop environmental awareness and ensure broad stakeholder involvement on all levels, the NSBs are invited to implement an approach at national level, which is similar to the approach at CEN level. NSBs should particularly:

- promote the Environmental Framework and the use of supporting tools for addressing environmental aspects;
- consider including mandatory elements in their national standardization process descriptions;
- organize environmental training courses for experts and employees or workshops for selected Technical Bodies;
- report on environmental activities in order to share best practice among CEN members (via national environmental focal points);
- participate in CEN-CENELEC/SABE and ENIS; and
- ensure balanced stakeholder participation in the national mirror groups and preferably also when nominating experts/delegates for European committees.

3.6 Cooperation

Cooperation between involved parties is of utmost importance to promote mutual learning, to share best practice and to solve problems that become very complex when various stakeholders, diverse interests and all levels of standardization are involved.

- Liaisons for developing consistent tools

Active liaisons and close cooperation are necessary between all committees that are developing or offering tools and guidance to standards writers on environmental issues in standardization. As this guidance is developed on all levels and both in general and electrotechnical standardization, liaisons are needed to ensure consistency of the toolbox. The development of tools should also involve the users of these tools, notably the Technical Bodies.

- Taking into account the views of stakeholders

A dialogue between all stakeholders and Technical Bodies has to be facilitated to ensure that all stakeholder needs with respect to the integration of environmental issues in standards have been identified and made transparent (e.g. stakeholder's position on strategies, tools and generic approaches, but also on specific work items).

- Work in the NSBs

Much work on environmental issues in standardization is going on in the NSBs. However, these practices are often not shared. NSBs are encouraged to use the strategic environmental committees CEN-CENELEC/SABE and ENIS to get involved in discussions, to report about their national environmental strategies, activities and experiences and to learn from others.