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ENTERPRISE DIRECTORATE-GENERAL

Environmental aspects of enterprise policy, resource-based & specific industries
Environmental aspects of enterprise policy

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**STANDARDISATION MANDATE TO CEN AND CENELEC
FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN EN GUIDANCE STANDARD CONCERNING A STAGED
IMPLEMENTATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS (EMS)**

I. MOTIVATION

1. One goal of the Commission is to encourage public and private organisations, in particular enterprises in all economic sectors, including small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), to improve their environmental performance and increase their regulatory compliance rate. Environmental management system approaches (EMS) can help enterprises to achieve such objectives. In addition they may also entail a number of economic advantages. As such, they are an essential tool to achieve more sustainable production patterns.
2. There are two types of formal EMSs: the international standard EN ISO 14001 and the EU's Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) established by EU Regulation EC 761/2001 of 19 March 2001. Both types, which have many features in common, set out the specific requirements that an EMS must fulfil. EMAS builds on the requirements of EN ISO 14001:1996, but is a more ambitious scheme in a number of respects¹.
3. In the Commission's Directive proposal establishing a framework for the setting of eco-design requirements for Energy-using Products² (EuP), EMS are indicated as a possible tool for demonstrating that such products comply with the requirements of the implementing measures, which will be established following the adoption of the framework Directive.

¹ Some of the major differences are that EMAS requires legal compliance, an involvement of employees and the publication of an environmental statement (including information about the organisation and its environmental impacts). Moreover, EMAS is a public system under the control of the Member States (see COM (2004) 130 final of 25 February 2004) and the Commission, through the Art 14 Committee of EMAS which is continuously informed about its implementation.

² COM (2003) 453 final of 1 August 2003

4. The Commission's Communication on the Integration of Environmental Aspects into European Standardisation³ foresees, in particular, issuing specific standardisation mandates to the European Standardisation Organisations.
5. The Commission's Communication on Integrated Product Policy⁴ explicitly mentions EMS and standardisation among the tools for creating favourable conditions to improving the environmental performance of products and services.
6. Despite the potential of EMS to help improve companies' environmental and economic performance and the Commission's attempts to promote their further uptake, the number of European enterprises having implemented a formal and certified EMS (i.e. in accordance with EN ISO 14001:1996 and/or EMAS) is still very modest (well below 0.5 per cent in almost all EU Member States). For SMEs this share is even lower. However, European enterprises are world wide leading with EN ISO 14001 certifications.
7. With a view to achieve a significantly higher uptake of EMS, including EMAS, among companies, particularly SMEs, DG Enterprise carried out a Best Procedure project which reviews good practices in public policies in this field and, on the basis of these, makes a number of recommendations for future policy initiatives. One of these recommendations relates to the possible adoption, at European level, of a standard concerning the staged implementation of EMS, as a means to provide companies with an entry-level tool to a formal environmental management system⁵.

II. DESCRIPTION OF THE MANDATED WORK

8. Against the background of the above, CEN and CENELEC are asked to draw up a comprehensive standardisation work plan with a view to producing and adopting an EN guidance standard for a staged (step-by-step) approach to implementing an EMS in accordance with the most recent version of the EMAS Regulation and of the EN ISO 14001 standard.

The standardisation work will result in:

- a) An EN guidance standard concerning a staged implementation of the requirements established by EMAS and EN ISO 14001. The intermediate stages below EMAS and EN ISO 14001 will not be certifiable.
- b) An accompanying informative annex on how to implement the EN guidance standard, taking particular account of the needs of SMEs, unless it is contained within the standard itself.

³ COM (2004) 130 final of 25 February 2004

⁴ COM (2003) 302 final of 18 June 2003

⁵ In this respect, the report recommends inter alia that: "Recognition should be given to the fact that the large and increasing variety of less formal EMSs reflects both a need amongst SMEs for entry-level tools to environmental management and a demand by customers in the supply chain for evidence of environmental actions by their suppliers, often SMEs [...]. At the same time, consideration should be given to concerns about possible confusion in the market as a result of this proliferation and to questions in relation to the credibility of less formal EMSs. Taking account of these concerns, consideration must be given to the possibility of standardising less formal EMSs at EU level (e.g. within CEN) in particular in relation to a staged approach to EMS implementation. [...]. Source: BEST Project final report

The standardisation work shall consider:

- Existing staged approaches to formal EMS implementation (e.g. British Standard BS8555, the EMAS SME toolkit, etc.);
- Existing national (e.g. France) and international guides for the implementation of EMAS and EN ISO 14001;
- Existing less formal EMS approaches, in particular those identified as good practices in the Best project report⁶;
- Incorporating environmental performance indicators into the EN guidance standard (e.g. along the lines of BS 8555, EMAS and EN ISO guidelines);
- Describing the requirements of the several stages leading to EN ISO 14001 and EMAS certification/registration.

III. ORGANISATIONS TO BE ASSOCIATED

9. The elaboration of the work programme shall be undertaken in co-operation with the broadest possible range of interested and relevant parties. Those should include representatives of: enterprises, in particular SMEs; national standardisation bodies; the Article 14 Committee of EMAS; European industry associations including UNICE and UEAPME; EUROCHAMBRES, the IMPEL network, non governmental organisations and the European Commission. They should be actively associated with the standardisation work through the access to regular progress reports and, when appropriate, participation in the CEN and CENELEC Technical Committees. In particular, co-operation with representatives of NORMAPME and ECOS is regarded as essential.

IV. EXECUTION OF THE REQUEST AND TIMETABLE

10. The standardisation work shall be carried out in accordance with the requirements stated in point 8 above. CEN and, if appropriate CENELEC, will provide the Commission within 3 months after the acceptance of the mandate, a detailed work programme.
11. The standardisation work timetable should be in line with the current practices of the European Standardisation Organisations. By mid-2006 the Standard shall have reached the Enquiry stage (prEN) and, if applicable, a draft of the Informative Annex shall be available. By the end of 2007 the standard (EN) and the annex will be delivered.
12. From the date of adoption by the standardisation organisation of its work programme, the standstill clause of Article 7.1 of the Directive 98/34/EC (OJ L204 of 21.7.1998 p.37) shall be applicable.

⁶ The BEST Project final report is available at http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/environment/events/sme_conference/presentations/best_report.pdf