

**CEN/ISSS Focus Group on
“Best practices of practical
applications in the use of eBusiness
standards for European SMEs”
(FG/eSMEs)**

Terms of Reference (v. 1.1)

Date: 16 October 2009

Source: CEN and proposers

Status: adopted¹

1. Title

CEN/ISSS Focus Group on “Best practices of practical applications in the use of E-Business-standards for European SMEs” (FG/eSMEs)

2. Proposers

The CEN/ISSS Focus Group eSMEs was proposed by Prozeus², GS1 and University of Hagen.

3. Rationale/background to the Focus Group

The core task of this Focus Group is to support SMEs in integrating E-Business/ E-Business-standards. More than 90 % of all European companies are small and medium sized enterprises. SMEs very often have information about the existence and the content of some E-Business-standards, but lack the knowledge on how to use them and how to benefit from their adoption. In particular, the knowledge about existing ISO standards is not spread widely enough even if they form the foundation of many existing and upcoming product exchange methodologies and of many industry standards like eCI@ss.

Specific programmes at national level are supporting SMEs to enter the electronic business and benefit from an easier exchange of product data and business information. A core issue is the uptake and adoption of eBusiness standards.

In Germany, PROZEUS - supported since 2002 by the German Federal Ministry of Commerce and Technology (BMWi) – helps SMEs to adopt E-business and E-business-standards. PROZEUS promotes case studies on various eBusiness applications, so that SMEs can gain knowledge on implementation and integration of eBusiness processes into their daily business operations. Seventy SMEs have participated in these case studies by preparing their internal processes and their relationships with business partners to a level which enables them to take part in eBusiness processes and activities. By reporting their experiences, problems and benefits in an open and useful forum to PROZEUS, these SMEs help other SMEs to adopt eBusiness standards in their companies.

The lack of knowledge about eBusiness standards and their applicability in specific eBusiness scenarios is one of the most crucial difficulties for SMEs to participate in eBusiness. PROZEUS tries to eliminate these knowledge-barriers by disseminating brochures, check lists, and manuals. All information is available on the PROZEUS web site (in German only) and disseminated through various dissemination channels (for example SME associations) in

¹ Adopted at the Focus Group kick-off meeting on 2 April 2009. Correction in the description of content of deliverable and change of Chairman done on 16 October.

² www.prozeus.de

Germany. PROZEUS also provides consultancy advice to SMEs in implementing eBusiness standards in the field of the consumer goods industry.

There are similar initiatives in other European countries. These national activities often follow their own approaches and methodologies in engaging SMEs and frequently reflect the national practices of individual countries. In order to improve the effectiveness and competitiveness of such projects, the European Union set up the European e-Business Support Network (eBSN)³. eBSN is a virtual network of public policy experts, helping to connect the eBusiness initiatives throughout Europe. PROZEUS itself is taking part in the eBSN.

The proposed Focus Group will support the eBSN in strengthening the collaboration of e-Business initiatives from various countries in the area of information spreading to and training of SMEs to facilitate and speed up their uptake of e-Business methods and standards. Valuable know how and experiences from national projects of various countries (e.g. PROZEUS in Germany, ICT-SMEs 2010 in France, PME-Digital in Portugal or E-business to SMEs in Denmark) should be transferred to a European level. The Focus Group aims at incorporating these valuable experiences from the specific national initiatives and projects as well as newly developed tutorial material as additional information into the eBSN organisation to support SMEs in taking part in eBusiness and to support national and European eBusiness initiatives in their work with SMEs.

4. Focus Group objectives

The CEN/ISSS Focus Group eSMEs aims to help SMEs integrate eBusiness standards and procedures into their daily work.

The Focus Group will collect and disseminate practical knowledge, information and experiences as well as guidelines concerning the use of eBusiness and eBusiness standards. The Focus Group will also provide courses and tutorials targeted specifically to small and medium companies. Focus is on standards related to eBusiness for SMEs requirements. Technical development of standards is out of scope of this Focus Group.

The CEN/ISSS Focus Group will submit the above listed material to the European Commission for inclusion in the eBSN web site and dissemination through the eBSN members. It will complement what is already available on the eBSN web site.

5. Work plan and deliverables

A dedicated CEN/ISSS Focus Group is set up with a duration of 12 months.

The Focus Groups will produce the following deliverables:

- Interim Report (by September 2009) which will cover:
 - an overview of existing methods for enhancing the knowledge of SMEs on eBusiness in Europe;

³ http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/ict/policy/e-bus-snfsme/e-bus-snfsme_en.htm

- a map of eBusiness applications and standards including related courses and tutorial materials;
 - draft gap analysis and proposals for activities to fill these gaps and develop relevant methodologies.
 - plan of tutorials to be organized and material to be produced for eBSN web site
 - draft tutorial material describing the concepts and elements of the PLIB standard (ISO 13584 series) and its application in classification systems like eClass and its relationship to exchange formats like BMEcat, GPC, etc.
- Final Report (by April 2010) which will cover:
 - Final overview of existing methods for enhancing the knowledge of SMEs about eBusiness in different countries;
 - Final version of the map of eBusiness applications and standards including related courses and tutorial materials – to allow a categorization of information material;
 - Final gap analysis and proposals for activities to fill these gaps and develop relevant methodologies;.
 - Produced material on how to use specific eBusiness solutions and standards in the daily business to fill the critical gaps. This includes all tutorial produced during the project, including tutorials about product and catalogue exchange (e.g. PLIB, eClass, GPC, etc.) as well as tutorials about transactional eBusiness standards and solutions (ebXML, EANCOM, etc.);
 - Experience reports on conducted tutorials and seminars; Report on integration of material into the eBSN web site.

Focus Group timetable

Activity	Milestone	Who
Set up Focus Group	k.o. meeting April 2, 2009, Brussels	CEN and proposers
Research and analysis phase	May-August 2009	PT
draft report v1 containing overview of eBusiness activities, map of eBusiness application and standards plus planning of tutorial/awareness material	End August 2009	PT
Comments on draft report v1	September 2009(2 nd FG mtg)	FG members
Revised draft report (v2) (interim report to EC)	End September 2009	PT
draft report v3 including tutorial material, gap analysis plus draft material for eBSN web site and flyer	November 2009	PT
Reuse of existing material to adapt to different country situation; production material for eSBN web site	Dec 09- Feb 2010	PT+ Chair and Secretary

Final draft report containing awareness material and feedback on tutorial - comments from FG members	March 2010 (3 rd FG meeting)	PT and FG members
Final report to EC	April 2010	CEN

Participation to the Focus Group is open to any company/organization/association with an interest free of charge.

Working language is English. The report will be published in English on the CEN web site.

6. Resources

The Focus Group will have a Chair, a Secretary and a Team of experts.

The Focus Group Chair has the following tasks:

- To steer the Focus Group to ensure that it delivers in line with this Terms of Reference;
 - To chair Focus Group meetings
 - To coordinate with FG Secretary and CEN CMC regarding strategic directions, problems arising, liaisons, etc.
- The Chair will work on a voluntary basis.

The FG Secretariat will support the FG with

- FG and FG Project Team meetings reports
- Electronic repository of documents
- Helping the Chair to steer the FG
- Etc.

Mr Andreas Fischer, G+F Verlags- und Beratungs GmbH, vice Chair PIM SMEs, was elected Focus Group Chair. After his resignation in September 2009, Mr Jan Goossenaerts, Pragmeta Knowledge clout was nominated Chairman at the second Focus Group meeting on 24 September 2009.

AFNOR, the French Standards Body, will support the Focus Group Secretariat.

The Project Team will be appointed after an open call according to CEN rules. EU/EFTA funding for a total of 180 man/days are available for the Project Team, provided that the Focus Group reaches a sufficient level of participation.

7. Liaisons

The Focus Group eSMEs will liaise with:

- CEN/ISSS eBusiness Interoperability Forum (eBIF)⁴
- CEN/ISSS Workshop eCAT⁵

⁴ <http://www.cen.eu/cenorm/businessdomains/businessdomains/iss/activity/ebif.asp>

- CEN/ISSS Workshop eInvoicing 2⁶
- ISO-ITU-UN/ECE/IEC Memorandum of Understanding on eBusiness Management Group⁷.
- CEN TC 310 Advanced automation technologies and their application

The Focus Group eSMEs will take due account of results of relevant European projects like Depuis.

8. Contacts

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⁵ http://www.cen.eu/cenorm/businessdomains/businessdomains/iss/activity/wsecat_epps.asp

⁶ http://www.cen.eu/cenorm/sectors/sectors/iss/activity/einvoicing_2.asp

⁷ <http://www.cen.eu/cenorm/businessdomains/businessdomains/iss/links/mou.asp>