

COMMITTEE REPORT on SMEs for 2023

8.1.5 COMMITTEE REPORT on SMEs

Within SIST, the **Advisory Committee for Micro and Small Enterprises** operates, in which chambers and associations representing SMEs in Slovenia are involved. The committee carried out the following tasks in 2023:

- Monitored the state of technology,
- Provided extracts of new Slovenian standards,
- Monitored the work of SIST's expert councils in areas of interest to SMEs,
- Promoted the new online tool eSME (e-course for SMEs),
- Promoted the video "Standards: A Business Tool for SMEs",
- Promoted the participation of Slovenian experts in CEN and ETSI committees, representing SME interests in the standardization document development processes,
- Provided ongoing information on the activities of European organizations impacting micro and small enterprises,
- Distributed current circulars.
- Provided education and promoted SME collaboration in standardization and the benefits of use of standards for SMEs

At SIST, we recognize that SMEs are a crucial part of the economy. The representatives of these companies should use standards more and they should engage more actively in standardization processes. Therefore, we organize free training sessions for SME representatives. In 2023, under the SIST's Contact Point organized two seminars for SME representatives: seminar "The Importance of Standards for Companies" was held on April 6, 2023, and seminar "Success in the European Market" on December 13, 2023.

Area of Work of the SIST Contact Point for SMEs

Within SIST, the Contact Point operates in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2019/515 on mutual recognition and Regulation for construction products (EU) No. 305/2011, and the WTO/TBT agreement, where micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises can access free information on applicable standards and regulations, as well as other requirements to ensure that only safe and high-quality products are placed on the market.

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By December 31, 2023, SIST responded to 116 written requests from Slovenian users and also to 35 written requests from foreign users. The majority of inquiries related to existing standards and regulations, mutual recognition, and conformity assessment procedures.

By December 31, 2023, the Contact Point forwarded 48 written responses to inquiries regarding requirements for placing construction products on the EU market. Domestic entities predominated among the inquirers (33).

The SIST website <http://www.sist.si> has a section dedicated to SME representatives.

SMEs can access information about the activities of various organizations and associations influencing SMEs (CEN/CLC SME Helpdesk, SBS newsletter, European Small Business Portal, e-tool for SME learning) through links and articles on our website. Additionally, information about current SIST training sessions and other documents important for SMEs is available.

- We have updated the content on the website specifically for SMEs <http://www.sist.si/standardizacija/skrb-za-mala-in-srednjevelika-podjetja>.
- The SIST website features an interactive e-learning tool for SMEs, where interested parties can learn about standards and standardization processes in their language (the tool is available in 23 languages), understand the benefits of standard use, and engage in standardization. It also offers the option to print certificates of successfully completed modules. The link to the e-tool is <https://www.sist.si/standardizacija/skrb-za-mala-in-srednjevelika-podjetja/aktualne-novice-za-msp/spletno-orodje-za-spodbujanje-vkljucevanja-msp-v-standardizacijo.html>.
- We have added a video specifically for SMEs on the SIST website, where interested parties can learn about why and how to engage in standardization. <http://www.sist.si/standardizacija/skrb-za-mala-in-srednjevelika-podjetja/aktualne-novice-za-msp/oglejte-si-nas-video-standardi-poslovno-orodje-za-mikro-majhna-in-srednja-podjetja.html>.

Exploration of New Projects in International and European Standardization

During the reporting period, we published instructions on our website for finding information about new standardization projects in IEC, ISO, CEN, and CENELEC for all interested parties wishing to participate in the development of international and European standards for competitiveness. The information is intended for those needing information on new areas of standardization work in IEC, ISO, CEN, and CENELEC.

Notification of New Standard Proposals on the SIST Website

We also provide free access to draft standards under public consultation on the SIST website, inviting interested parties to submit their comments on the content of the standards.

Abstracts of Published Standards and Updates on Standards in Slovenian

We provide free access to summaries of Slovenian standards, also in the Slovenian language, issued in the current month on the SIST website. Descriptions of the scope of application of each standard are available for better understanding and use.

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SIST's Participation in International Projects for SMEs

- SIST participates in the European working group for SME (CEN/CENELEC SME WG).
- SIST also participates in the CEN/CENELEC working group for the implementation of the Joint Initiative for Standardization, which also addresses SME-related topics.
- SIST participates in the CEN/CENELEC working group for promoting the benefits of SME participation in standardization by presenting good practices of Slovenian experts published on the CEN CENELEC website under the SME tab.
- SIST collaborates with SBS (European Association for SMEs) in various promotional activities.
- SIST collaborates with SBS in joint international events. In 2023, SIST organized the RAST conference, which, in addition to rich content on current global challenges, featured also the presentation by Ms. Maitane Olabarria Uzquiano, Director-General of SBS.

SIST's Collaboration with Chambers

- SIST collaborates with the Chamber of Craft and Small Business of Slovenia (OZS). We publish promotional materials about standards and standardization on the Chamber's website. Additionally, we participated in a joint meeting with SBS-OZS-SIST, where we exchanged proposals for further cooperation.
- SIST actively engages with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia (GZS), through membership in the Chamber of Electronics and Electrical Industry. Members of GZS actively participate in the work of national technical committees.