



# STANDARDIZATION

A FRAMEWORK  
FOR PROGRESS  
**FOR ALL**

**afnor**  
NORMALISATION



# STANDARDS, EVERYONE WINS

*Inconspicuous but omnipresent, voluntary standards are a promise of quality, safety and performance for the benefit of all.*

## **VOLUNTARY STANDARDS, WHAT ARE THEY?**

INITIATED BY MARKET PLAYERS, VOLUNTARY STANDARDS ARE THE REFERENCE FRAMEWORK INTENDED TO PROVIDE GUIDELINES, TECHNICAL OR QUALITY SPECIFICATIONS FOR PRODUCTS, SERVICES OR PRACTICES AND THEREBY SERVE THE GENERAL INTEREST. They are the outcome of consensual co-production by the professionals and users involved in their preparation. Any organization is free to refer to them or otherwise. This is why they are termed voluntary. ■

## **A common language, without barriers**

Rail track gauges, credit card formats, the composition of e-liquids for electronic cigarettes, toy safety, consumer opinions on forums... our daily life is enhanced by a series of voluntary standards which set benchmarks for quality, safety or performance for all products, services and practices that surround us. A genuine reference framework, voluntary standards facilitate compatibility and scalability, underpinned by continual improvement, in particular for the benefit of consumers. This common language cuts across geographical borders. It is a reliable and unbeatable benchmark solution with guaranteed legitimacy. Voluntary standards help users save time and money, while also saving resources.

## The outcome of consensus

A voluntary standard for a product or service results from proposals made by manufacturers, service providers, professional federations, consumer associations, NGOs, governmental bodies, etc. who share their experience, know-how and expertise to put together the best possible solution for all market players.

Voluntary standards provide an opportunity for discussion throughout the entire co-development process, which may last from a few months to three years. The creation of a standard is the result of an agreement between all the involved parties. *"For all companies, and especially for small organizations, this is a fantastic planning tool. It helps ensure that the choice we make today in our company will still be valid in one year, three years, five years..."*, explains the leader of the microbusiness Mobilead. Once a standard is created, any player can refer to it or not. A living, ever-evolving tool, each standard is examined and revised, if necessary, every five years, in constant pursuit of improvement and in order to reflect actual best practice.

## A means for innovation

Voluntary standards create favorable conditions for sharing and developing new products and services, and accelerate innovation. *"With voluntary standards, we are not afraid of adapting the market to an innovative economy,"* comments the General Director of the association Galvazinc. For companies, standards facilitate the dissemination of revolutionary ideas and leading-edge technologies. For



## BENEFITS FOR EVERYONE

### —For companies

voluntary standardization is synonymous with performance, competitiveness, quality, innovation and safety. A company ready to embrace voluntary standards can break away from the pack of its competitors.

### —For employees

For employees, they improve working and safety conditions.

—For local authorities they facilitate and simplify consultation and purchase processes.

—For consumers they increase confidence in products and services purchased.■

everyone, this unifying tool serving the general interest is the driving force for a more intelligible and safer world. ■



AROUND

# 33,600

voluntary standards exist today. They concern all sectors of the world economy.

# 90%

of standards are of European or international origin

# 65%

of standards published each year are revisions

# 35%

are new subjects



APPROXIMATELY

# 2,000

standards are published each year, and about the same number are withdrawn



# YOU TOO CAN TAKE PART IN STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT!

*Time saving, process optimization, cost cutting... Companies, public and private organizations... you have everything to gain from getting involved in standards development and influencing their content.*

---

## **Through the collective interest, benefits for your activity**

Application of voluntary standards offers advantages, and involvement in their development brings benefits too. Standards development is not reserved for specialists; it is also a strategic company management tool. In France, over 20,000 professionals have already chosen to get involved in standardization. In order to bring about a new standard, these voluntary players work to merge individual interests with those for the common good. *“When you participate in standards development, there is a real return on investment, because the people involved are the most responsive and*

*most qualified to offer their services,”* sums up a manager from the SME Tera Environnement. Whether you are from a company, a professional organization or a public organization, taking part in standardization committee meetings, during which voluntary standards are developed, offers concrete benefits for your own activity. This is a good way of meeting and interacting with key players in your sector, strategically monitoring your markets and anticipating changes in your industry or business sector. *“The collective mechanisms of standards development*


enable us to look ahead and influence changes to come, to benefit from discussion with experts in our field and to improve our competitive edge," according to the CEO of Évolution Énergie.

## Develop your market

Anticipating needs and being an initiator of a voluntary standard gives you the opportunity to be among the first to express your expectations and thereby promote change in practices and know-how in your field, or even revolutionize your market. Involvement in standards development is therefore not simply a matter of enhancing the quality of a product or service, but also of positioning this product or service as a benchmark in your sector. "This means that we improve and optimize our practices, and this is both a marketing and sales argument with regard to certain calls for tender," stresses the President of Linguaphone France.

## Promote your interests internationally

Getting involved in standards development work in Europe or internationally gives you an additional showcase. It is a springboard for promoting French positions and championing French interests. Contributing to decision making gives you an excellent means of developing a network of influence and alliances and thereby giving



### TAX ASSISTANCE FOR YOUR STANDARDS-RELATED EXPENDITURE

CREATED TO MOTIVATE COMPANIES TO INVEST IN RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT and increase their competitiveness, the Research Tax Credit scheme offers a 50 % tax credit on standards-related expenses for companies (participating in French or international standards development work, travel costs for experts, etc.) on condition that they pertain to research and development activities. ■

prominence to your establishment among major world economic players. ■

Contributing to voluntary standards development means:

**20 %**  
**more growth**  
in companies' turnover

**19 %**  
**more turnover**  
for companies involved in export

**15**  
**billion euros**

The estimated annual contribution of the use of voluntary standards to the turnover of French companies

Source: Study on the Economic Impact of Standardization, January 2016 AFNOR.

**France's position among international standardization bodies:**

**2<sup>nd</sup>**  
in Europe (CEN\*/CENELEC\*\*)

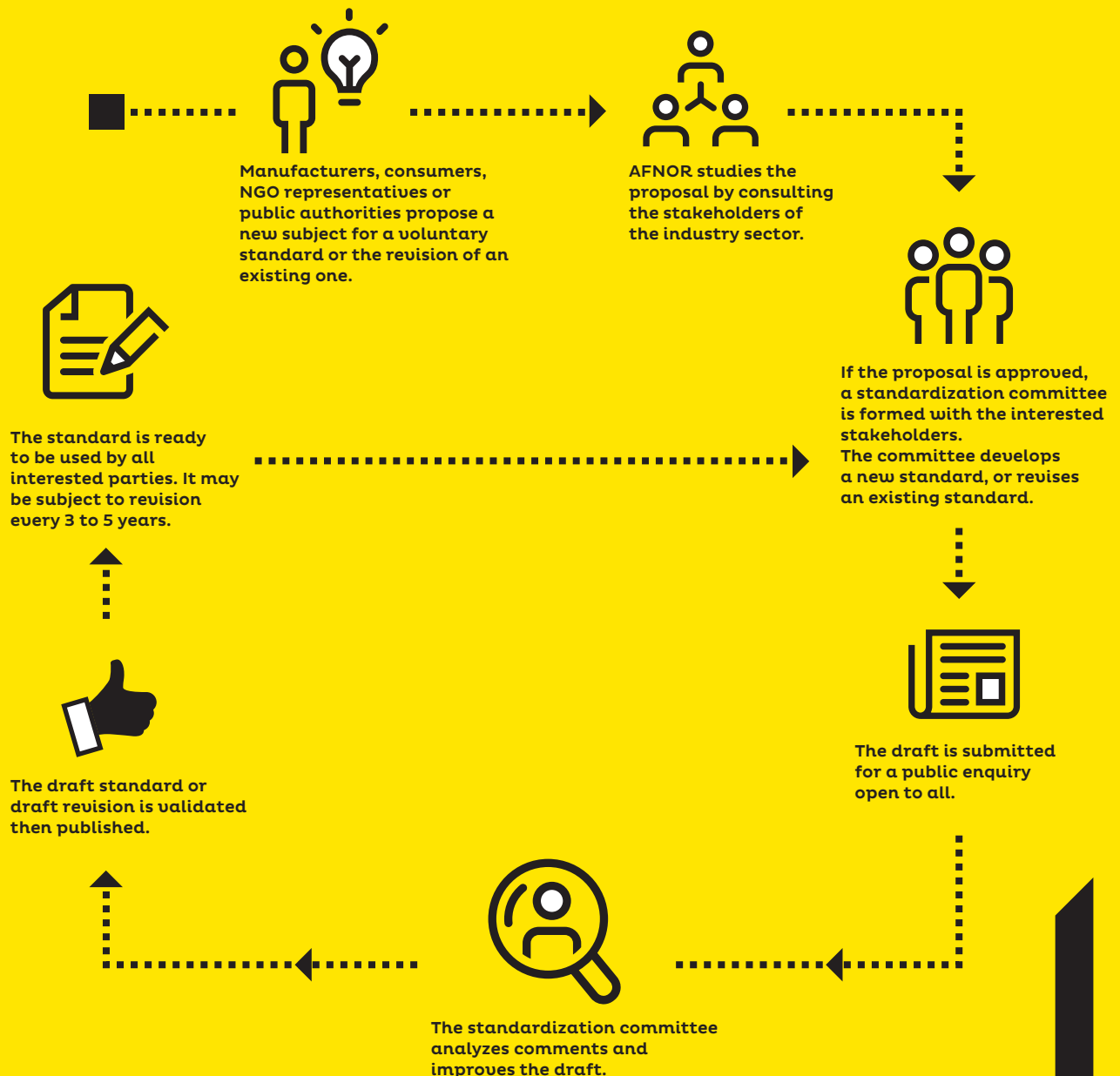
**4<sup>th</sup>**  
in the world (ISO\*/IEC\*\*)

Source: International barometer 2019, AFNOR.

\* General sphere of competence

\*\*Electrotechnologies

# STANDARDS STEP BY STEP



## ➔ AFNOR, COORDINATOR OF NATIONAL STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT AND A PILLAR OF STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT WORLDWIDE

Whether anticipating the voluntary standards of tomorrow or contributing to their creation and development today at the French, European and international levels, AFNOR acts as the coordinator of the standardization system in France and has a clear goal: to contribute to

the dissemination of good practices and effective solutions, for the benefit of all. In France, we ensure coherence in the planning of standards development work undertaken within AFNOR and by sector based standardization organizations.

To address growth in trade and the globalization of the economy, AFNOR has developed one of the largest standardization networks, thereby establishing France as one of the top three countries contributing to worldwide standards development. ■



# AFNOR, WORKING WITH YOU TO DEVELOP FUTURE STANDARDS

*Our objective: to co-create voluntary standards for your activities.*

## **We provide the framework...**

As the official standards development body in France, AFNOR informs and guides all parties who, through their involvement in preparation of voluntary standards, wish to see a project, activity or segment develop and prosper under the best possible conditions and thereby build the foundations of our future economy and society. We support you in definition of your standardization strategy and lead and coordinate the standards related work, from identification of needs through to feedback based on experience. At all stages of the work, we share with you our knowledge of the French, European and international standards development mechanisms.

## **...you formulate the standard!**

On your side, once the project is approved, you become a party involved in the standard development work, contributing your technical competencies and your knowledge of segment-specific issues. This involvement enables you to defend the positions of your company, organization or local authority. You therefore participate in all stages of decision making up to and including validation of the text. And, as well as taking part in the standard preparation work, you can also represent France in European and international standardization bodies, and put forward French positions. ■

### **OUR COMMITMENT:**

- Successfully complete standard development work in time frames compatible with your challenges and those of your markets
- Support you in the standard development process
- Defend the interests of the French economy and of its players



**afnor**

NORMALISATION

11, rue Francis de Pressensé  
93571 La Plaine Saint-Denis Cedex  
Tel.: +33 (0)1 41 62 80 00  
Fax: +33 (0)1 49 17 90 00  
[www.afnor.org](http://www.afnor.org)  
[www.norminfo.afnor.org](http://www.norminfo.afnor.org)

