

1 BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT OF THE CEN/TC

1.1 Description of the Business Environment

The following political, economic, technical, regulatory, legal, societal and/or international dynamics describe the business environment of the industry sector, products, materials, disciplines or practices related to the scope of this CEN/TC, and they may significantly influence how the relevant standards development processes are conducted and the content of the resulting standards:

Traditionally, there were single/few large meter purchasers in each country with long established relationships with manufacturers. Situations are beginning to change due to energy liberalization throughout Europe, which is changing the pattern of meter ownership and meter manufacturers are becoming more competitive. This has increased the level of cross border trade. The emergence of the "Meter Asset Manager" in some Member States has led to new market entrants, competing for work against the traditional Utilities.

Interested parties in the standardization process include manufacturers, notified bodies, gas suppliers, shippers and transporters, Meter Asset Managers and European Trade Associations. They see the main benefits of the standardization as follows:

- abolition of technical obstacles to trade which arise from mutually contradictory national guidelines;
- improvements of the quality and compatibility of products;
- further enhancement of the industry's image;
- using harmonized standards to claim conformity/compliance to appropriate Directives;
- export and import of gas meters in, out and across the European territory.

The standard represents a compromise between the cost of the instrument and its accuracy and durability.

The over-riding issue of the Measuring Instruments Directive (MID) is metrological accuracy, whereas the over-riding issue for the Pressure Equipment Directive (PED) is pressure containment and safety. The harmonization of these standards to the MID and PED have to take into account the necessary changes in manufacturing.

1.2 Quantitative Indicators of the Business Environment

The following list of quantitative indicators describes the business environment in order to provide adequate information to support actions of the CEN /TC:

- it is estimated there are in excess of 80 million gas meters installed in domestic, commercial and industrial premises within the European Union. The majority of these are installed in domestic properties. The revenue generated within the gas market is billions of Euros (€) per annum;
- it is estimated there are approximately 10 manufacturers providing products into the European Community;
- CEN/TC 237 European Standards are cited in National regulations;

- gas Suppliers employing the services of Meter Asset Managers are requiring gas meters that meet the appropriate European Standard.

2 BENEFITS EXPECTED FROM THE WORK OF THE CEN/TC

The expected benefits from the work of CEN/TC 237 are as follows:

- consumers benefit from accurate and equitable billing;
- assures safety of product;
- provides presumption of conformity to manufacturers against appropriate Directives;
- facilitates free-movement of products across Member States by restricting barriers to trade;
- reducing cost of product.

3 PARTICIPATION IN THE CEN/TC

All the CEN national members are entitled to nominate delegates to CEN Technical Committees and experts to Working Groups, ensuring a balance of all interested parties. Participation as observers of recognized European or international organizations is also possible under certain conditions. To participate in the activities of this CEN/TC, please contact the national standards organization in your country.

4 OBJECTIVES OF THE CEN/TC AND STRATEGIES FOR THEIR ACHIEVEMENT

4.1 Defined objectives of the CEN/TC

To develop and maintain European Standards for gas meters, particularly for:

- EN 1359, Diaphragm gas meters;
- EN 12480, Rotary displacement gas meters;
- EN 12261, Turbine meters;
- prEN 12405-1, Gas-volume electronic conversion devices;
- ENV 14236, Ultrasonic domestic gas meters.

Draft harmonized standards that meet the relevant Essential Requirements of the adopted Measuring Instruments Directive (MID), and where applicable, the Pressure Equipment Directive (PED).

The adoption of the Measuring Instruments Directive (MID 2004/22/EC) and the inclusion of CEN/TC 237 under mandate M/347 require that the standards within the remit of CEN/TC 237 be harmonized to the Essential Requirements of the Directive. The Directive will become law in the Member States in 2006-05-01 and will come into force on 2006-11-01. CEN/TC 237 will draft harmonized standards prior to the Directive coming into force.

As part of the harmonization of ultrasonic domestic gas meters, it will require the existing ENV 14236:2002 to be converted to an EN. A work item is being progressed for this work.

A work programme is in place to extend the Scope of EN 12405:2002 (Gas volume conversion devices) to cover other conversion devices and data logging equipment being developed or used within the gas industry.

It has been identified that EN 12261:2002 (Turbine gas meters) and EN 12480:2002 (Rotary displacement gas meters) should be harmonized under the Pressure Equipment Directive (97/23/EC) and these standards are being amended accordingly.

4.2 Identified strategies to achieve the CEN/TC.s defined objectives.

CEN/TC 237 has approved a work programme for the standardization of gas meters.

In accordance with the work programme of CEN/TC 237, 6 working groups have been created for the main areas of standardization of gas meters. Each working group has a scope of work, which is a logical sub-division of the scope of the Technical Committee. CEN/TC 237 WG 5 is providing the role of co-ordinating harmonization against relevant Directives.

Working group experts meet to discuss and resolve technical issues. All final drafts are submitted to the Technical Committee prior to formal vote. The Technical Committee is responsible for ensuring that the national standpoints communicated by delegations from different countries are taken into consideration. It endeavours to reach consensus where viewpoints differ. Wherever possible, national exceptions should be avoided.

CEN/TC 237's active participants are delegates and experts from Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Spain and United Kingdom. CEN/TC 237 plenary meetings are normally held twice a year. The meetings are conducted in English. The Technical Committee periodically reviews priorities and its work programme to meet market conditions. Use of the Internet should increase in future.

The working groups are responsible for producing the draft standards for their defined product areas and presenting results to the TC for approval. The working groups organise their work and the necessary meetings themselves. Use of the Internet should also increase in this area in future.

CEN/TC 237 has a Resolutions Committee, which sits during the plenary sessions. The actual translation work and its checking is carried out by the Editing Committee.

Liaisons

At present CEN/TC 237 maintains liaisons with OIML, MARCOGAZ and FACOGAZ.

5 FACTORS AFFECTING COMPLETION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CEN/TC WORK PROGRAMME

There is a lack of specific expertise on the PED, which is making the drafting of the appropriate harmonized standards slow. This is being addressed.

CEN/TC 237 has imposed an aggressive time scale for drafting harmonized standards to the MID and any issues requiring extensive debate may lead to a delay. This could affect the currently high commitment of members should unresolved issues become protracted. In addition, it is imperative that a CEN Consultant be appointed before the end of 2004.

Bearing in mind the urgency for having the harmonized standards available when the MID comes into force, CEN/TC 237 are considering the Unique Acceptance Procedure (UAP) route for approval of their standards. This imposes an element of risk. However, using the "three-year time frame" to its maximum would mean that the standards will miss the MID "coming into force date" and the standards may be unnecessary, because manufacturers will use the "Essential Requirements Route" to obtain a "CE" mark for their products. The result of this could be a lot of work with limited benefit.