



## BUSINESS PLAN

### CEN/TC 261

### PACKAGING

## 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:*

#### **Scope of CEN/TC 261**

"CEN/TC261 is responsible for the elaboration of standards dealing with terminology, dimensions, capacities, marking, test methods, performance requirements and environmental aspects in the field of packaging and unit loads. The field covers primary, secondary and transport packaging and unit loads, whatever the materials, shapes, contents, distribution system adopted".

#### The context of the packaging sector

Packaging answers to a need: that of protecting goods and conserving available resources as much as possible. Packaging is essential to keep food and deliver it in safety conditions to consumer. Packaging is manufactured and designed with objective of assuring both safety of the product and the consumer together with minimising environmental impact

The range of packaging types and products is wide and highly diversified and in many cases tailored to the needs of the users.

Packaging concerns a variety of actors of the packaging chain: raw material producers, packaging manufacturers, users, transport, distribution, consumers, waste management activities and public authorities.

Packaging of consumer products has rapidly grown in all developed countries as a consequence of higher buying power and self-service distribution.

Therefore packaging waste represents a growing share of household waste. This has become a concern for the public and for local and national authorities. National regulations dealing with packaging waste have emerged in the early 90's.

Directive 94/62/EC on packaging and packaging waste aims to harmonise national measures in order to provide a high level of environmental protection and to ensure the functioning of the internal European market.

Packaging has a vital social and economic function and is subject to various legislative requirements related to the quality, safety and hygiene of packaged products as, for example:

- regulations concerning packaging in contact with foodstuffs
- requirements for the transport of dangerous goods

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Measures dealing with the environmental aspects of packaging and packaging waste as provided by directive 94/62/EC should apply without prejudice to such legislative requirements.

The adequate protection of the packaged product as well as the safety of the user will depend on the performance of packaging. There is therefore a need for precise specifications as to the characteristics and performances of packaging and packaging systems for a given application. European standards on performance requirements and associated test methods give the packaging industry and the many industrial and distribution sectors concerned tools and references which will help:

- setting up clear adequate specifications;
- ensuring and monitoring required quality level;
- reducing costs.

Some special features of packaging should also be standardised in order to provide clear and unambiguous recognition by consumer as for example the tactile danger warning, the Braille identification of product on the packaging or the easy of opening.

The collaboration between ISO/TC 122 and CEN/TC 261 is growing. All the standards elaborated in the field of packaging and environment have been taken by ISO/TC 122 with the aim to harmonise the functioning of the international market.

Packaging is changing over time to meet new requirements from the fillers and from the consumers and to take advantage of new opportunities offered by raw materials and converting technologies.

Standards should not therefore be an obstacle to the technical progress and to the development of new packaging types and systems, but on the contrary provides, whenever feasible, tools and/or methods for continuous improvement.

### **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 /TC261:*

In Europe, the turnover of the packaging industry represents around 2% of GDP. The food industry is the main user of packaging accounting for close to 60 % of total packaging production.

In some sectors of packaging (e.g. glass, paper, cardboard, metal cans) concentrations and internationalization have rapidly progressed over the past years. However, there is still a large number of small and medium size companies mainly operating at national level.

As a consequence the European leading companies only represent a few percent of the total European packaging production

## **2 BENEFITS EXPECTED FROM THE WORK OF THE CEN/TC**

Standardisation in the field of packaging will provide a positive economical impact throughout the packaging chain as it will give means and tools to better achieve some key permanent objectives:

- improvement of the design of packaging and packaging systems in relation to expected performances;
- harmonisation and clarification of cost effective test methods allowing for clear unambiguous technical specifications and for adequate quality monitoring;
- cost-efficient, legally safe way of demonstrating, though mandated harmonised standards, conformity with the essential requirements set by directive 94/62/EC;
- a single European harmonised reference document dealing with the management of hygiene in the manufacturing of food packaging;
- generally, contribution to the removal of possible obstacles to trade and to the improvement of the overall efficiency of the packaging chain.

### **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**

The main objectives of the CEN/TC 261 are the following:

1. Maintain a high level of quality and relevance of the collection of standards:
  - Maintenance of the present collection of standards,
  - Development of new work items within the present structure,
  - Study of new standardisation needs linked to evolutions in the filling technologies, the distribution chain and the consumers needs.
2. Welcome the new European countries and new CEN members.
3. Make all necessary efforts to respect work-programme and target dates.
4. Ensure adequate communication with concerned parties both within TC and outside.
5. Make all possible effort to secure the presence of experts in WG's and provide assistance to the convenors if needed.

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

The sub-committees have been holding regular meetings in order to monitor the progress made by the working groups and to favour exchange of information among the experts.

Since mid 1997, TC 261 has developed a systematic programme for the information of various stakeholders, especially as to the elaboration of mandated harmonised standards. Informal meetings have been held with DG Environment and DG Industry. This has been complemented by specific information sessions organised on a national basis with the national authorities concerned.

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Through the secretariat and/or through the sub-committees secretariat, TC 261 has been in contact with others CEN/TCs as well as ISO/TCs whenever called by agreements such as Vienna Agreement as well as in the case of common interest and therefore need for cooperation.

### **4.3 Environmental aspects**

Six mandated harmonised standards (EN 13427 to EN 13432) related to the essential requirements of directive 94/62/EC on "Packaging and packaging waste" and published in the Official Journal of the European Union can be used to assess and demonstrate conformity of packaging.

As any packaging has to fulfil these standards, it was considered not necessary to develop in each standard a specific article dealing with environmental aspects.

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

Most standards under the responsibility of SC5 have been elaborated on the basis of national and/or ISO standards dealing with identical or similar issues.

For standards related to environmental aspects of packaging there was no already existing standards and, in most cases, no pre-normative research. As a consequence the drafting of environment related standards has required a lot of efforts on the part of working groups.

Standards related to the environmental aspects of packaging and packaging waste apply to all types of packaging regardless raw materials and final application. Such a broad and diversified scope has raised some difficulties and, in some instances, has led the experts to propose management system standards instead of purely technical fail or pass standards.

This system approach has sometimes be criticised by some experts and by outside stakeholders. However, the management system approach should not be viewed as second best as compared to fail or pass standards.

As a matter of fact the management system approach is the only way to avoid that standards might become either obsolete or constitute an obstacle to technical progress. Waste management techniques (collecting, sorting, recycling...) are rather recent. They are changing fast and new technologies are being developed. A management system approach for standards in those areas is therefore the only way to take into consideration such new techniques. Furthermore, this provides an efficient methodology for assessing the opportunities to improve the environmental profile of packaging