

ISS and SMEs in 2019 – Providing business improvement for SMEs by implementing Serbian standards

(Report on ISS activities to facilitate SMEs participation in the standardization process)

Belgrade, January 2020

Introduction

This Report outlines how ISS, as the National Standards Body of the Republic of Serbia, has fulfilled the requirements of Article 6(3) of the EU Regulation on Standardization 1025/2012 during 2017. This Article requires all EU National Standards Bodies (NSBs) to provide annual reports on how they have “encouraged and facilitated the access of SMEs¹ to standards and standards development processes” and how they have exchanged best practices on SME participation with other EU NSBs.

Taking into consideration that the Republic of Serbia is in the accession process with EU, the provisions of the EU Regulation on Standardization 1025/2012 have been integrated in the Law on Standardization (“Official Gazette of RS”, No.36/2009 and 46/2015), Decision amending the Founding Act of the Institute for Standardization of Serbia (“Official Gazette of RS”, No. 27/2016), as well as the Statute of the Institute for Standardization of Serbia (“Official Gazette of RS”, No. 29/2017).

SMEs involvement in national standardization process

ISS recognizes that SMEs represent a huge and significant segment of Serbian industry and as such, provides a number of mechanisms for their involvement and participation in the standards development process, at the national, international and European level.

ISS are committed to further enhance the number of SMEs representatives as active NTC members and contribute to the standards development.

There is no charge to participate in ISS TCs and SMEs are not required to become a member of ISS in order to do so. ISS has 162 active NTCs that follow up on the work of CEN, CENELEC, ISO, IEC and ETSI TCs.

The largest number of experts participating in the national TCs (62,5%) originate from the industry. Taking into account the fact that SMEs represent more than 98% of all companies who take part in Serbian economy, it can be concluded that their representatives are the most represented in the national TC membership.

ISS established the following services for its stakeholders, including those from SMEs:

- the possibility of purchasing standards with 15% discount for NTC members;
- for SMEs that provide educational services in the field of standardization, ISS offers special discount for purchasing a number of copies of the same standard for the participants of the educational sessions;
- a possibility to subscribe on the one-year on-line access to the bulk of Serbian standards in a chosen standardization field or on the whole collection of Serbian standards;
- TC members, including those from SMEs, are able to participate in free of charge training courses that are relevant to standardization. These courses include understanding international, European and national standardization processes and procedures for the participation in the CEN/CENELEC committee meetings. On January 31st 2019, Czech Office for Standards, Metrology and Testing (UNMZ) and Institute for Standardization of

¹ Small and medium enterprises and entrepreneurs (SMEs) represent an important segment of Serbian industry: 99,8% of all active companies are SMEs, they employ nearly 2/3 employees in the non-financial sector and participate with 32% in the Serbian GDP.

Serbia (ISS) organized a one-day seminar for the ISS NTC Secretaries with more than 100 participants.

Open door for SMEs

Particularly for SMEs, ISS offers the free of charge service of providing information on the requirements stipulated in Serbian standards and related documents. This service is called “open door for SMEs” and it is provided by the NTC secretaries, according to the previously arranged schedule. Each free of charge session lasts 30 minutes and it stimulates SME representatives to better understand and thus more easily implement Serbian standards in their business.

All national regulations, directives and Serbian standards on ISS web page

Full texts of national regulations referencing Serbian standards are posted on ISS website. All users of the regulations and standards who wish to be kept informed about the current national regulations in force in the Republic of Serbia that contain references to Serbian standards, as well as their relation to directives, can browse up-to-date information on these documents, in a comprehensive and user-friendly way, on ISS website.

In addition, SMEs are encouraged to submit new standard projects and take part in their adoption as national standards, and thus help themselves to boost and improve their business and affirmation on the market.

Terminology database

The detailed information on the cross-reference between terms and definitions in English and Serbian language and their reference in Serbian standards is available via the Terminology Database link on ISS web page. At this time, this database consists of 24673 terms, and it is very useful means for better understanding of standards.

ISS Infocenter in six cities in Serbia

In order to meet the demands and expectations of PKS and RPK members, especially the ones originating from SMEs, PKS, GIZ and ISS (in the framework of one of the projects), ISS has established information centers in the offices of 6 regional chambers of commerce, i.e.: Subotica, Novi Sad, Valjevo, Zaječar, Kragujevac and Niš. RPK employees participated in a one-day training/workshop for the new activity they will perform. Each information center is equipped with IT equipment, separate reading room and all the necessary facilities. SMEs in Serbia, as well as other interested parties, are able to search and find standards from the relevant field, subsequently purchase and implement them, in order to develop more efficient business, increase productivity, reduce costs and, thus, be an active player with equal participating opportunities on the Serbian, and possibly global market.

The idea of establishing these Infocenters and thus providing the opportunity of accessing Serbian standards in their respective districts, proved to be time and expense saving for the SMEs existing and working in these districts. The most visited Infocenters were in Valjevo, Kragujevac, Novi Sad and Zaječar.

Publications

Each year ISS offers a number of new publications (some are free of charge) on CDs and in paper format, that are translated in Serbian language. Free of charge publications are available for download from ISS web site.

NEW standard collections available on ISS web site:

- Eurocode 2: Design of concrete structures
- Eurocode 4: Design of composite steel and concrete structures
- Eurocode 9: Design of aluminium constructions
- Eurocode 8: Design of structures for earthquake resistance
- Eurocode 7: Geotechnical design
- Environmental management systems
- Playground equipment and surfacing
- Low-voltage electrical installations

Standard collections are recognized as the best way to get all standards from the same standardization field in one place and at a much lower price than purchasing them individually.

Publications with free-of-charge access

NEW Within in the scope of the project "Support to the Improvement and Development of the Serbian Quality Infrastructure Sector" and in cooperation with the Czech Office for Standardization, Metrology and Testing (ÚNMZ), the Institute for Standardization of Serbia (ISS), realized various activities relevant for the construction sector. One of these activities is the development of the Study "**The Overview of the Serbian Construction Sector covered by the European Regulation (EU) 305/2011 and its expected impact on the industry**". The text of this Study is available free-of-charge on ISS web site.

The main objective of this study was to develop expertise on the state of capacity in Serbia in the field of construction products and strengthening them in the area of quality infrastructure and implementation of European legislation and standards, especially with the aim of expanding the market for the placement of these products.

The Study will be of great benefit to the SMEs, companies and entrepreneurs because it gives a clear picture of the construction sector in Serbia. It also identifies potential risks, opportunities and directions for the development of the construction sector in Serbia. In addition, the Study may be of interest to the conformity assessment bodies and, in general, to all those to whom this law and by-laws directly or indirectly refer to and apply.

NEW One more free-of-charge publication available is translation of **JRC Scientific and Policy reports – Eurocode 2: Background & applications – Design of concrete buildings – Worked examples**, made by ISS employees and printed with support of the above mentioned project.

Seminars, workshops, trainings, round tables

During 2019, ISS has developed several new seminars and other kinds of practical training and/or learning sessions in addition to the ones that are always popular (quality management system seminars).

In 2019, ISS organized 35 commercial seminars, workshops and round tables and 18 different free-of charge theoretic, promotional and practical training sessions. The commercial seminars were attended by more than 532 participants from more than 150 SMEs.

NEW In cooperation with Czech Office for Standards, Metrology and Testing (UNMZ) and Serbian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, ISS organized three free-of-charge two-day seminars in Belgrade, Novi Sad and Niš in the field of construction, titled: „Key issues on the subject of the

implementation and application of Eurocodes in the area of concrete and reinforced concrete constructions“.

NEW Round table „Circular economy and standards“ - aimed at informing relevant interested parties about standardization plans in this area at the international level. Also, this was the opportunity to design together a proposal for the development of standards in this area, which will be proposed for consideration at the plenary session of the new technical committee of the International Organization for Standardization - ISO/TC 323, Circular economy. Twenty participants from SMEs, the Ministry of Environmental Protection, the Serbian Chamber of Commerce and the Environmental Protection Agency were present at the round table.

NEW Round table „Risks - Facing future opportunities and threats“ - In cooperation with the Center for Risk Analysis and Crisis Management (CARUK), as well as the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Serbia, ISS organized a study visit of Mr Jason Brown, a leading expert of international risk management, who is the Chairman of the ISO/TC 262, Risk Management. As a part of the study visit, a workshop in the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Serbia was organized and attended by 30 representatives of economic organizations and state administration bodies. ISS also organized a round table with a lecture titled "Risks - Facing future opportunities and threats" which was held at the ISS premises, and attended by 31 participants, ISS NTC members mostly the representatives of SMEs.

NEW Panel discussion on the study “The Overview of the Serbian Construction Sector covered by the European Regulation (EU) 305/2011 and its expected impact on the industry” - presentation of the study “Overview of the Serbian Construction Industry Sector Covered by European Regulation (EU) 305/2011 and Expected Impact on Industry” as well as the panel discussion attended by 40 participants that followed, drew a lot of attention from representatives of the Ministry of Economy, Serbian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure, public companies in the field of construction, as well as small and medium-sized enterprises in this field.