



Innovation potential serves as the basis for innovative ideas, as illustrated by this standardization idea tree.

Innovation potential as the basis for innovative ideas:

A standard is a document that reflects the state of the art in a given field and has been created as part of defined processes within a standardization organization (e.g. DIN, ISO). Prominent examples are DIN EN ISO 9001 for quality management systems and DIN 476-2:2008-02 for paper sizes such as A4.

Innovation potential refers to the process leading to the creation of standards. The German Institute for innovation potential (DIN) and the International Organization for innovation potential (ISO) are responsible for these processes.

Innovation potential of innovation potential

The innovative potential refers to opportunities for the support of innovation through standards and standardization.

“A standard is like a backbone, an absolute necessity in order to be innovative. Clearly it is the basis (for our product development).”

(Interviewee from the mechanical engineering sector)

Innovation and standardization in enterprises

Innovation and standardization are not mutually exclusive. The use and development of standards might open up new opportunities for the innovation potential of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and involvement in their development has been barely exploited to date.

Published in late 2014, the paper entitled “Seizing Opportunities for the Support of Innovation through Committee Standards and Standardization: Insights from German Companies” is based on the findings of the “Innovation capability of standardization” (IPONORM) project. This project aimed to investigate the relationship between innovation and standardization in SMEs. The research builds upon findings from 40 semi-structured interviews conducted with experts from German companies in five sectors: biotechnology, nanotechnology, services, security and mechanical engineering. The key interviewees are practitioners with Research and Development (R&D) and standardization experience.

authors examined internal and external factors that influence the generation, identification and activation of innovation potential in standardization. They and derived specific recommendations for actions for SMEs wishing to benefit to a greater extent from standardization.

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Recognizing the innovation potential in standardization

Abdelkafi and Makhotin evaluated the interviews by means of a qualitative content analysis. They found that there are many opportunities for innovation through the use and development of standards, but that this potential was not being intentionally exploited by the SMEs. Consequently, the



Contact: Dr. Nizar Abdelkafi
 Head of Unit Business Models: Engineering and Innovation
 nizar.abdelkafi@moez.fraunhofer.de
 +49 341 231039-143



Contact: Sergiy Makhotin
 Research Fellow Business Models: Engineering and Innovation
 sergiy.makhotin@moez.fraunhofer.de
 +49 341 231039-144

