

Department of Business, Innovation and Skills
1 Victoria Street
London SW1H 0ET
balanceofcompetences@bis.gsi.gov.uk

29th July 2013

Dear Sir/Madam,

Review of the balance of competences: Call For Evidence: Research & Development

BSI (British Standards Institution) has read with interest the review of the balance of competences call for evidence with regard to research and development. We would like to make some general points about R&D and EU action in this area. This response is that of BSI as the UK's National Standards Body.

Standards can play a significant role as a means of commercializing publicly-funded research, whether at national or European level. BSI, as UK's National Standards Body and also as a member of the European Committee for Standardization, CEN, is ready to develop standards at the appropriate level to meet the needs of industry and other stakeholders. This could be national, European or international.

For this reason, it is important that the public research funding programmes, such as Horizon 2020, need to recognize the role of standards at the appropriate time in the research phase. The development of standardization strategies sufficiently early is essential to avoid delays and maximize impact.

While the recognition of the importance of standards in UK has improved (we note here the report of Michael Heseltine 'No Stone Unturned'), this also needs to be achieved at EU level (this relates to Question 6).

Background on BSI

BSI is the UK's National Standards Body, incorporated by Royal Charter and responsible independently for preparing British Standards and related publications. BSI has 112 years of experience in serving the interest of a wide range of stakeholders including government, business and society.

BSI presents the UK view on standards in Europe (to CEN and CENELEC) and internationally (to ISO and IEC). BSI has a globally recognized reputation for independence, integrity and innovation ensuring standards are useful, relevant and authoritative.

A BSI (as well as CEN/CENELEC, ISO/IEC) standard is a document defining best practice, established by consensus. Each standard is kept current through a process of maintenance and reviewed whereby it is updated, revised or withdrawn as necessary.

Standards are designed to set out clear and unambiguous provisions and objectives. Although standards are voluntary and separate from legal and regulatory systems, they can be used to support or complement legislation.

Standards are developed when there is a defined market need through consultation with stakeholders and a rigorous development process. National committee members represent their communities in order to develop standards and related documents. They include representatives from a range of bodies, including government, business, consumers, academic institutions, social interests, regulators and trade unions.

I would be pleased to discuss the BSI response contained in this letter should you so wish.

Yours faithfully,



The British Standards Institution