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.

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

“Seizing Opportunities for the Support of Innovation through Committee Standards and Standardization: Insights from German Companies”

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