EDITORIAL

Voluntary Standards, Accelerators of Impact

On 27 June 2017, I began my first three-year term as Chairman of AFNOR and discovered the workings of a dynamic and dedicated group of 1,250 employees. I would like to thank all the teams and their Managing Director, Olivier Peyrat, for their tireless efforts during these eventful six years. This activity report will be the last one I sign, leaving it to AFNOR’s General Assembly in 2023 to renew the Board of Directors, which will elect a new Chairman to succeed me.

What were we reading in the journal archives on 27 June 2017? Among other things was the opening of the 15th legislature in the National Assembly. The Palais Bourbon, a place of lawmaking... often confused with our voluntary standards! In my six years as Chairman of AFNOR, I’ve come to appreciate the extent to which the perception of legislative and regulatory overload, widely reported in the media, does not do justice to our 20,000 volunteer standardizers who come from all sectors of the economy to co-write predominately international or European documents... not because anyone is forcing them to do so, but because their organizations need it! Voluntary standards are a competitive weapon for companies and a lever for other organizations.

During my two terms, AFNOR and its partners have worked to demonstrate the numerous benefits that voluntary standards bring. The message was clear: if you’re looking to make a difference, standards act as an accelerator of impact. Getting involved in developing voluntary standards gives you a competitive edge in the marketplace. This is particularly true for disruptive technologies. It becomes evident when actors in the new digital economy forget to use them and stumble at the start. The false starts observed in the spring of 2023 in the development of metaverses and artificial intelligence robots show that it is imperative to go through the standardization process before entering the market unless one wants to face distrust from investors, customers, regulators, public opinion, and even potential talent to recruit.

All sectors, and not just those historically involved in standardization since AFNOR was founded in 1926, are entitled to expect the same benefits. The development of services, the ecological transition and the emergence of an actual circular economy pose major challenges that we must tackle with the utmost energy. Voluntary standardization is when stakeholders come together around a table to develop a consensual framework that benefits the most significant number. AFNOR has been doing this for nearly a hundred years. Let’s continue!

Marc Ventre
On 2 February 2022, the European Commission presented a standardization strategy with five objectives: anticipating and prioritizing standardization needs in strategic areas, improving the governance and integrity of the European standardization system, strengthening Europe’s leading role in global standards, stimulating innovation, and facilitating generational change among experts in standardization. Thierry Breton (centre in photo), the European Commissioner for the Internal Market, summarized this ambition during AFNOR’s PFUE event in Paris on 27 June stating, “We want to be a ‘standard-setter’, not a ‘standard-taker’”. In the Tribune, Olivier Peyrat, Managing Director of AFNOR, welcomed this momentum, emphasizing that voluntary standardization should remain an open process but “subject to conditions”, meaning that standards should be developed without the risk of dominant non-European interests.

In the field of artificial intelligence, AFNOR developed a road map after consulting with the AI ecosystem. Formulated within the framework of the French government’s Grand Défi IA (Big AI Challenge), it proposes a set of normative measures in alignment with the future European regulation on AI, focusing on six key areas:
- trust,
- governance and management of AI,
- supervision and reporting of AI systems,
- competencies of certification bodies,
- standardization of specific digital tools, and
- simplification of access to and use of standards.

Regarding gender equality, France successfully advocated in 2022 for the International Organization for Standardization to establish a committee to develop a voluntary standard listing practices to promote and implement gender equality and the empowerment of women in the workplace (ISO 53800), with AFNOR leading the development. AFNOR was responsible for coordinating this effort based on the foundation of the preliminary French document published in 2021, AFNOR Spec X30-020.

AT THE FRENCH PRESIDENCY OF THE EU

From 1st January to 30 June, France chaired the Council of the European Union. AFNOR and its members aimed to address three critical economic and social issues: gender equality, artificial intelligence and the European standardization strategy (see box below). The appointment; effective 1st January, of Olivier Peyrat, AFNOR’s Managing Director, as Vice-Chairman of the European Committee for Standardization (CEN) responsible for political matters, has supported this initiative.

Normative sovereignty: AFNOR says yes
Cybersecurity, blockchain, the Internet of Things, quantum technologies, eco-designed digital solutions, etc. In 2022, AFNOR’s playing field for inviting stakeholders to develop new voluntary standards was decidedly digital. Digital technology is in dire need of trust (see p. 10)! In addition to this multi-sectoral project, AFNOR remains fully committed to environmental issues. The technical committee on biodiversity led by France at ISO is making progress. The voluntary standard ISO 17298, “Biodiversity: Strategic and operational approach for organizations - Requirements and guidelines”, is expected to be published in June 2024. In France, the fight against food waste has taken shape with the development of an AFNOR Spec standard serving as the basis for a label of the same name, provided for by the 2020 AGEC law.

Also, in 2022, the famous ISO 14001 standard, the benchmark for building and maintaining an environmental management system for more than twenty-five years, learned about its fate: it is to be revised! Furthermore, 2022 saw the creation of new national standardization commissions, such as those focusing on energy-efficient swimming pools, menstrual products, e-sports and naturopathy. Not to mention updating standard ISO 20121 on responsible events, with a horizon set for the Paris 2024 Olympic Games.

Tomorrow’s standards will be machine-readable

Since 2021, AFNOR has been undertaking a long-term project to enable direct reading of voluntary standards by machines and software by everyone. Advantages: fewer errors and misinterpretations, accelerated life cycle, easier updating. Entitled Smart standards and known in France under the acronym MARSS, this digital transformation project is massive, but AFNOR teams are fully committed to working alongside European and international organizations. France is positioned at the forefront with the goal of achieving significant progress by 2030.
The 2022 international standardization survey conducted by AFNOR unsurprisingly shows that the Franco-German duo maintains its position as the most involved countries in the work of the two European standardization bodies, CEN (general standardization) and CENELEC (electrotechnical standardization). Managing a quarter of the secretariats, France retains its second place at CEN, behind Germany and well ahead of the UK. France has also created two technical committees, one on quality in medical imaging (CEN/TC 470) and another on drones (CEN/TC 471). At CENELEC, France provides more than one committee secretariat out of five, securing second place behind Germany, which holds over a third of the secretariats, and surpassing the UK and Italy. On a global scale, France is still in 3rd place, behind Germany and the United States, and just ahead of Japan, the United Kingdom and China. This ranking is based on observing the secretariats held in both ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) and IEC (its counterpart in the field of electrotechnology). In 2022, France remains on an upward trend, taking on more committee leadership responsibilities, as it has done yearly since 2017. The country has increased its number of secretariats from 78 to 79 with the creation of a technical committee on natural gas refuelling stations (ISO/TC 340) in 2022.

As of 31 December 2022, the French Association for Standardization had 1,498 members, a slight increase compared to 2021. Eighty-eight percent of its members are enterprises – primarily medium-sized, small and very small enterprises. In 2022, the AFNOR Membership Club organized 20 web conferences, which attracted 4,700 registrant participants and received an average satisfaction rate of 91%. In February, March and June, three hybrid events were organized under the banner of the French Presidency of the European Union (see p. 3). As part of the events, members had the privilege of meeting numerous influential figures from the standardization field, including Thierry Breton, European Commissioner for the Internal Market. In 2021, membership launched its “microbusiness pack”, which brings together various services of the association at preferential rates: membership, participation in standardization commissions and a CObaz subscription providing access to standards and regulations. This offer has been successful, with over 40 contracts already signed! Additionally, the AFNOR Membership Club once again took advantage of World Standards Day on 14 October to present its prestigious ‘Or Normes’ trophies. These awards are bestowed upon various individuals and organizations involved in developing voluntary standards.
In 2022, the online solution ‘CObaz’ expanded its features and content, further facilitating the work of businesses in interpreting standards. Services to identify essential information within texts (Requirements) and changes between different versions of standards (Redlines) have been extended to include international collections such as ISO and IEC. The brand-new Interactive Pathways available on CObaz, such as the one for NF EN ISO 9001, have been launched. These pathways assist users of key standards in comprehending the documents and effectively implementing them through expert insight, practical resources and multimedia tools. In addition, the CObaz Horizon offering for key accounts has replaced the Webport service, leading to more than 100,000 users transitioning between the two options.

Regarding publications, a significant release emerged: *Processus et transversalité(s) – Vers un nouveau management.* (Processes and transversality - Towards a new management approach). This book compiles contributions from around twenty business leaders on the fundamental principles of the processes and cross-functionalities within organizations, enabling them to achieve performance objectives. It addresses current challenges, including establishing effective cyber-security policies, automating processes, regaining value chain control, and implementing CSR (see p. 11).

By acquiring Quaser Certificazioni, the AFNOR Group is expanding its range of services on the Italian market, particularly in management system and skills certification, inspection and training. Since it was created in Italy some twenty years ago, this major certification body has developed a portfolio of over 1,000 customers across Europe, including companies listed on the FTSE MIB (Milan stock market index), and several trade federations and consumer associations.

Its clientele mainly consists of professionals in the facilities management sector (cleaning, engineering services, lawyers, etc.), tax monitoring and inspection professionals (inspection of self-checkout systems), and the construction industry.

Thirty years ago, with the liberalization of the UK energy market, AFNOR UK Limited was born. In December, to celebrate this anniversary, the team brought together its customers, network of auditors and esteemed guests, including representatives from the Association of British Certification Bodies (ABCB) and the national accreditor UKAS (United Kingdom Accreditation Service). This was the opportunity to announce that, in addition to CE marking, AFNOR UK can now issue UKCA certification in the fields of gas, personal protective equipment, construction materials and fire safety.
The governance of AFNOR slightly changed in 2022. New organizations joined the association’s Board of Directors, whose general assembly was held on 27 June 2022, under the chairmanship of Marc Ventre.

Companies

RE-ELECTED
- ENEDIS: Gilles Nativel

NEW ORGANIZATIONS
- CEREMA: Erick Lajarge
- FFB: Éric Durand
- FFTÉLÉCOMS: Michel Combot
- LCIE BUREAU VERITAS: Marie-Elisabeth d’Ornano
- RTE: Gabriel Bareux
- SCHNEIDER ELECTRIC: Carine Glas

CHANGE OF PHYSICAL REPRESENTATIVE
- MICHELIN: Priscilla Kolodziejczyk (to take over from B. de Labareyre in June 2022)
- AIRBUS: Bruno Costes (to take over from Giovanni David in June 2022)

Consumer issues

- Confédération nationale des associations familiales catholiques (National Confederation of Catholic Family Associations) (CNAFC): Alain d’Anselme

NGOs

- AGENCIE DU DON EN NATURE (AGENCY FOR IN-KIND DONATION): Romain Canler

A new Chairman for the Standardization Coordination and Steering Committee

In October, Stéphane Dupré la Tour handed over to the Standardization Coordination and Steering Committee (CCPN) chairmanship to Bruno Costes (photo opposite). Bruno Costes is the Director of Institutional Relations and Standardization for Airbus France. The CCPN is responsible for preparing the French standardization strategy, shared by AFNOR and the sector-based standardization bureaux. It also defines the objectives and priorities of the strategic committees in line with national, European and international policies. Bruno Costes is no stranger to standardization as he previously held positions as Vice-Chairman and later Chairman of AFNOR’s Strategic Committee on Environment and Corporate Social Responsibility (see p. 11).

From 2015 to 2020, Bruno Costes was Mayor of Pibrac, a commune in Haute-Garonne with a population of 9,000. He continues to serve as a municipal councillor and is the chairman of Road and Infrastructure Commission of Toulouse Metropole.
TWELVE MONTHS OF VOLUNTARY STANDARDS

JANUARY
Publication of standard XP CEN/TS 19103 on the design of timber-concrete composite structures for buildings
Publication of standard NF EN 203-2-4 on safety requirements for professional gas fryers

APRIL
Publication of XP ISO/TS 21357 on the assessment of the average size of nano-objects in liquid dispersions by static multiple light scattering
Publication of standard NF EN ISO 14083 on the quantification and reporting of greenhouse gas emissions from transport chain operations
Publication of standard NF X60-301 on the maintainability of durable goods for professional use

MAY
Publication of standard NF EN ISO 6346 on coding, identification and marking of freight containers
Publication of standard NF EN ISO 23418 on test methods for personal protective footwear

JUNE
Publication of ISO/IEC 23053 on artificial intelligence systems using machine learning
Publication of standard NF EN ISO 23418 on whole genome sequencing to characterize bacteria in foodstuffs
Publication of standard NF EN ISO 14015 on guidelines for the environmental due diligence assessment
Publication of standard NF EN ISO 24656 on cathodic protection of offshore wind turbine structures
OCTOBER

Publication of the 2022 version of the NF EN 16247 series on energy audits (buildings, processes, transport)

Publication of version 2022 of ISO/IEC 27001 on the management of security information, distributed in France under NF ISO/IEC 27001

Publication of standard NF EN 17687 on the integrity and responsibility in public purchasing

AUGUST

Publication of standard XP S52-900 on wave installations for surfing

Publication of standard NF EN 17645 on performance assessment, methodology and classification of private outdoor family pools

Publication of standard NF EN IEC 60335-2-89/A11 on the safety of commercial refrigeration appliances and ice makers

JULY

Publication of standard ISO/IEC 22989 on AI concepts and terminology

Publication of standard NF P45-500 on the diagnosis of gas installations inside residential buildings

AFNOR Spec, a popular format

In 2022, the accelerated development of pre-standardization documents in a restricted committee, with an initial level of consensus, continued to propel the AFNOR Spec format forward. Notably, several publications were released throughout the year, covering a range of topics such as socially responsible procurement (2202, September), digital inclusion (Z77-103-0, February), resilience in the face of cyber attacks (2208, November), renewable hydrogen-based ecosystems (M58-007, January), and eco-design of digital services (2201, April).
Electronic archiving, metaverse, blockchain, digital twins, quantum, etc. On these topics of digital trust, we need to take the time to agree on methods, foster dialogue among value chains, and promote interoperability. Work on artificial intelligence had already begun in 2021 (see p. 3).

In 2022, an AFNOR Spec was released on the eco-design of digital services, intended to become an IEC standard. Another AFNOR Spec was also published on cyber-resilience, providing operational recommendations to anticipate and respond to cyber-attacks. AFNOR Competencies has not been left behind, offering four ranges of training courses focusing on digital trust. The group presented all these solutions at the International Cyber Security Forum in June, in Lille. AFNOR Certification has stepped up its partnerships with the digital trust ecosystem, such as the Cyber Campus. Additionally, AFNOR Certification has developed a new certification for individuals: Ebios Risk Manager.

A best-selling standard for information security management, the voluntary standard ISO/IEC 27001, was released in a new standard in October, incorporating new aspects such as cloud security. Following the footsteps is its counterpart, ISO/IEC 27005, designed for risk managers. With almost twice as many certified organizations within the space of two years (351 in 2019, 606 in 2021), all the evidence shows that ISO/IEC 27001 is gaining significant traction in France. This trajectory aligns with the global trend, as the number of certificates worldwide has surged from 36,000 to 58,000 between 2019 and 2021. These certificates are now on display at close to 100,000 sites worldwide, including nearly 1,600 in France (source ISO Survey). In 2022, AFNOR International certified ASPEED Technology Limited in Taiwan, further expanding its international reach.

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ISO/IEC 27001 certification: for our customers and us

Charity begins at home! In November 2022, eighteen months after a major cyber-attack paralyzed its information system, AFNOR Group obtained ISO/IEC 27001 certification for its web services provided to its customers. The audit only identified four minor nonconformities. This recognition demonstrates that AFNOR is aware of the risks associated with sensitive data, takes them into account and protects them. This will reassure partners, customers and suppliers, increase resilience and help you to position yourself better when bidding for contracts.
In 2022, the group continued its efforts to encourage businesses to adopt solutions that inspire trust in corporate social responsibility. The foundation of our offering in this area remains the voluntary standard ISO 26000, which is supported by training programmes and recognition initiatives such as the Committed to CSR Label (held by 410 organizations as of 31 December). Additionally, AFNOR Group introduced a coaching and consulting service called CSR Impact. A significant development that reinforced the group’s focus on CSR was the adoption of the European CSRD (Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive) on 28 November.

The text organizes the information that 50,000 European companies will have to include in a sustainability report starting in 2025 to provide a comprehensive, standardized, and verified account of their non-financial performance in the areas of E (environment), S (social), and G (governance). “Non-financial reporting is becoming a data science and a verification industry”, writes Alain Jounot, Head of the AFNOR CSR department, in an op-ed published on lemond.fr. AFNOR Certification is already preparing to operate in this future verification market, provided that the public authorities open it up to independent third-party organizations. Together with the Filiance union, the group’s subsidiary is advocating for this to happen with proper accreditation, firmly believing that beyond numbers, ESG practices need to evolve. And thus, be audited regularly.

In 2022, AFNOR also took action to raise awareness that the standardized sustainability reporting indicators outlined in the directive would benefit from drawing inspiration from existing ISO voluntary standards, particularly those related to climate.

CSRD: ON THE ROAD TO SUSTAINABILITY

Award of the Committed to CSR label in Rennes in May 2022

A new offering for carbon reduction

Marion Ripaux, Development Manager

In 2022, under its umbrella brand AFNOR Energies, the group expanded its range of low-carbon solutions and decarbonization support, the third pillar of its energy offering alongside energy efficiency and renewables. The range will further expand in 2023, focusing on verifying greenhouse gas emissions and carbon footprint, demand response, awareness of resource efficiency, and training in low-carbon buildings, including the RE2020 and the adapted certification for energy assessors (DPE diagnosticians).
In 2022, AFNOR was keen to be represented as a trusted supplier at major national and international events. The aim is to raise awareness of voluntary standards and associated solutions among audiences who may be unfamiliar with this tool, confuse it with regulations, or don’t always consider it when developing innovations. This was the case at BIG, the innovation trade show organized on 6 October by BPI France at the Accor Arena in Paris-Bercy.

Present at Major Events

AFNOR's regional delegations have effectively fulfilled their role in disseminating information on the group’s voluntary standards and solutions. Innovative topics have also emerged, such as sustainable health in New Aquitaine. In December, a notable event focusing on new quality trends brought together over 150 participants in Toulouse. Two new regional delegates assumed their roles in 2022: Solène Guillet in Bourgogne - Franche-Comté and François Berthaud in Pays-de-la-Loire. Also of note within the regional network is the appointment of Fabrice Fauroux as innovation project manager, with the task of strengthening the promotion of voluntary standardization among public and private decision-makers in the regions, particularly through the FrenchTech network.

Effective Regional Relays

AFNOR's educational efforts also took the form of a communication campaign targeting decision-makers, highlighting the “voluntary” aspect of voluntary standards and the positive impact their implementation generates on the economy. Lastly, the decision by Brussels to make a single charger model mandatory for electronic equipment marketed in the European Union in autumn 2024 provided a significant promotion for standardization and the interoperability it enables: the chosen model, USB Type C, is at the heart of the NF EN IEC 62680 series of standards.
Our relationship with work has changed profoundly over the last three years. AFNOR Competencies accompanies this change in the business world by considering the hybridization of work modes in its QWL range. Structured QWL approach, comfort and working conditions, support for individual career transitions... AFNOR Competencies offers training on new managerial practices and assistance with ecological (developing a CSR approach, energy efficiency, etc.) and digital transformations (securing information systems, introducing cybersecurity, etc.). This offer has proved popular, as evidenced by the record attendance in digital training modules (see p. 10). In 2022, half of the training courses were conducted remotely.

However, in-person events remained relevant for current affairs conferences, allowing participants to engage with timely topics such as medical devices and the annual QSE (Quality, Safety, and Environment) community conference.

Economic players need to have their good practices recognized, which was reflected in the certification activity in 2022, which grew by 2.7% in revenue compared to 2021. The digital trust range has been successful, driven by a demanding market (see p. 10) and relaying operations such as the one by France Num in collaboration with BPI France. The subsidiary’s employees have donned their eye wear frames, with the certification for Optical Service Quality Commitment, and their pedal-powered frames by becoming operators of the Pro’Vélo Employer Objective label, set up by the Federation of Bicycle Users in partnership with Ademe.

A damaged bicycle? Here is where Qualirépar comes into play, another label for which AFNOR Certification became an operator in 2022 on behalf of accredited eco-organizations. A fall from a bicycle on the way to work? Occupational health & safety were also in the spotlight, with the accreditation obtained to conduct audits according to the ISO 45001 standard (Cofrac accreditation no. 4-0001, scope available at www.cofrac.fr). An exercise bike for your grandmother in a nursing home? AFNOR Certification has been authorized to conduct the required quality evaluation for social and medico-social establishments and services according to the new guidelines issued by the French health authority (Haute autorité de santé). Also worth noting in 2022 is the accreditation according to ISO 19443 in the nuclear sector and the success of the Club des labellisés Diversité et Égalité (Diversity and Equality Labelled Club), whose December session was attended by several ministers.
ENERGY EFFICIENCY: ORGANIZATION AND RESULTS

Energy consumption - the focus of our attention
The AFNOR Group has demonstrated its commitment to the government road map for energy efficiency, one of the main objectives of which is to reduce energy consumption by 10% by 2024 compared to 2019.

A year of significant change requiring everyone’s effort
Boiler control, lowering and zoning of heating settings. The actions we have taken have enabled us to reverse the trend on our consumption curves, resulting in a noticeable reduction compared with the reference year, to the point that the objectives targets have been exceeded: A reduction of 18% in 2022 compared to 2019.

- 7 April: launch of the plan to achieve energy efficiency and reduce consumption.
- 16 April: patio building closed on Fridays.
- 5 November: signature of the AFNOR Group’s energy efficiency plan.
- 5 December: signature of the EcoWatt Charter, formalizing the Group’s commitments.
- 23 December: first partial closure of the Atrium building.
- 26 December: site closed for a week.

To sustain their progress, the AFNOR Group has invested in more energy-efficient equipment, further expanding the gap in energy consumption compared to 2019, mainly by reducing the baseline consumption. The current baseline consumption stands at 25%.

The plan’s success has required the involvement of all employees and the establishment of new working habits, showcasing their adaptability and commitment to the initiative.

CSR RESPONSIBLE TOGETHER

ETHICS AND GOVERNANCE
- Establishment of a unique alert system to be implemented in 2023.
- Implementation of two major initiatives to promote transparency and loyalty in practices:
  > strengthen the balance of representation on the Board of Directors, with six recommendations communicated to voting members and the presentation of a report to the Board,
  > and prevention of conflicts of interest within the Board, including conducting a comprehensive overview of the declarations of interests provided by administrators.

EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING
- Funding of health assessments (211 blood tests, 200 ECGs) and flu vaccinations (130).
- Allocation of 3.84% of our salary mass to training initiatives.
Expansion of the occasional remote teleworking (TOAD) programme: 80 individuals benefited from the therapeutic TOAD program and 7 from assistance TOAD.

**ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE**
- Reduction of our energy consumption by 18% and water consumption by 28% between 2019 and 2022, achieved through our efforts to streamline energy and water resources during this period.

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**
- 22 employees sponsored a young person to support local employment (partnership with the “Nos quartiers ont du talent” association).
- Over 15.84% of our employees live in Seine-Saint-Denis, thereby contributing to the local dynamics.

Publication of our greenhouse gas emissions report on the ADEME website.