

Project Plan for the CEN/CENELEC Workshop on Digital sovereignty - European perspective, general approach and implications on standardisation

WS number or WS Acronym: Digital sovereignty

**Workshop
(to be approved during the Kick-off meeting on 2021-07-08)**

1. Status of the Project Plan

This is a Project Plan to be discussed and approved during the kick-off meeting.

2. Background to the Workshop

2.1. The market environment

In the State of the Union Address by President von der Leyen at the European Parliament Plenary in September 2020, the European Commission launched its Digital Decade agenda to strengthen Europe's digital sovereignty.

In his statement in September 2020, Thierry Breton, European Commissioner for the Internal Market, notes that “Europe must now lay the foundations of its sovereignty for the next 20 years”. Since the current EU perspective on digital sovereignty is centred around technology, this has important implications for standardisation.

At the same time, digital sovereignty is rising on the agenda of other nations and trade blocks, too. Therefore, there will be a need for data governance and associated mechanisms that support global engagement through recognized and accepted standardisation deliverables. In addressing this concept from a European perspective, we provide an opportunity for the rest of the world to develop globally relevant, interoperable approaches while enabling local / regional contextualizable implementations.

There are currently many potential definitions and perceptions associated with digital sovereignty, and even though there is more and more common understanding of what is at stake, the concept and the associated terminology remain somewhat undefined.

For Europe, Digital Sovereignty is not synonym of protectionism but is more about protecting its values and principles and its ability to make sovereign decisions. Therefore, Digital Sovereignty

may cover many aspects, from cybersecurity, to trustworthiness, to strategic autonomy and to data jurisdiction and enforcement. Defining and recognizing Digital Sovereignty while promoting an open market leads to the need for interoperability standards.

2.2. Existing standards and standard related activities and documents

The topic of digital sovereignty has been identified by the CEN-CENELEC Artificial Intelligence Focus Group and mentioned in its roadmap produced in September 2020. It is a complex subject that spans the scope of regulators and standardisation organisations as it may have numerous standardisation requirements and consequences.

AFNOR, DKE and IEEE are three major standardisation organisation that have independently started to address digital sovereignty concerns with very complementary perspectives:

Digital identity and agency, as a precondition to sovereignty, are the subject of several IEEE ecosystems and projects (standards and certification), including Personal Sovereignty. This can be contextualized further to support the idea of sovereignty at the level of a full region, with proper governance, technology and socio mechanisms to support proper and aligned outcomes. The focus is both on personal and collective agency, as preconditions for democratic structures and societies. Territorial considerations are implicit to the implementation aims. Several IEEE projects start from within a concrete geographic context (so for example the standards project for age-appropriate digital services, which is inspired by UK law and regulation), but the potential for a universalist approach is always an important criterion.

On its side, AFNOR, the French National Standardisation Organisation, has been working on an exploratory concept of “digital territoriality”. The journey towards defining a “digital territory” concept started from a very simple observation followed by a very simple question: if there is a concept of “digital sovereignty”, on which most stakeholders seem to agree, then how would we define the “digital territory” over which such sovereignty applies?

In the physical space, a sovereign territory is defined by borders, constituents, governance with rules and enforcement, and eventually by means of protecting the integrity of the territory. To what extent and in what ways can those characteristics be replicated in the digital space?

In Germany, a conceptual analysis of technological sovereignty has recently been completed by VDE ITG together with the German National Committee DKE. VDE unites approximately 10000 IT specialists from academia and industry work on new issues. It provides an overview of challenges to be addressed spanning both hardware and software, and offers a perspective on how technological sovereignty relates to digital sovereignty. It also outlines ways in which degrees of sovereignty could be described in a semi-quantitative way and discusses examples from 5G, AI and data science.

2.3. Motivation for the creation of this Workshop -

The question of “how to build trust” in the digital space is still open. It starts being addressed by defining trust and trustworthiness while recognising that there might be “values and principles” regional specificities. It then has to be recognised as well that an ecosystem of trust is going to be protected by laws with regional enforcement mechanisms.

Sovereign nations are very much entitled to making sure that their founding values and principles are not by-passed through activities in the digital space. The rise of AI creates additional urgency for addressing digital sovereignty. Most nations, as well as the European Commission, have expressed their intention to regulate AI and are consulting SDOs in order to get the proper supporting standards, which need to assume at least a basic shared understanding of digital sovereignty.

Therefore, in order for SDOs to better understand the concept and implications of the expression of sovereignty in the digital space and to anticipate future associated standardisation requirements, a Workshop is proposed and will contribute to develop a shared vision of “digital sovereignty” that enables local / regional contextualizable implementations and how it should be handled standardisation-wise. Digital sovereignty may apply in digital spheres / territories that are not only attached to physical territories or to nations. It may apply to digital spheres / territories attached to a person, to an organization (a company, a city, a region, a country) or to an object (a house, a car, a watch, etc.) that interact with each other. Interactions between digital spheres / territories create the need for the development of interoperability frameworks and standards.

3. Workshop proposers and Workshop participants

3.1. Original proposers of the Workshop

The proposal of this workshop resulted from exchanges between AFNOR, DKE and IEEE members.

The Workshop is proposed by:

- Association Française de Normalisation (AFNOR),
- Deutsche Kommission Elektrotechnik Elektronik Informationstechnik in DIN und VDE (DKE),
- IEEE Standards Association (IEEE SA).

3.2. CEN/CENELEC national member holding the Workshop secretariat

AFNOR, as CEN/CENELEC national member, volunteers to hold the Workshop Secretariat.

3.3. Workshop participants

The Workshop is open to any interested organisation that:

- supports the fundamental assumption that digital sovereignty is a key concept that needs to be understood and structured;
- expresses intention to actively participate in the drafting of the CWA by submitting concrete proposals and contributions within the scope and objectives of the Workshop;

- demonstrates interest or expertise on Digital Sovereignty;
- states its views on the subject and what it is willing to bring to the debate;
- states in which participant category it candidates (see below).

The Chair and the Secretariat shall ensure the balance in participation. Balance is achieved by not permitting any single interest category to comprise more than one-quarter of the total participation.

Categories of participants:

- Standards development organisations
- Government agencies
- Non-Governmental or non-profit organisations
- Corporations
- Academic institutions
- International organisations

Participation should be limited to one expert plus a substitute per organisation. An international corporation shall be considered as one organisation. A consultant affiliated with an organisation will be considered as a member of the organisation.

National SDOs from the same country should be counted as one participant with one voice even though they may send one representative per national SDO.

Liaisons with European Commission DG GROW, DG CNECT and DG JUST may be established. Such liaisons will be counted as participants in the Government agencies category.

Membership will be constituted during the kick-off meeting (registered participants). Expansion of participation should be controlled over time in order to stay on track of the approved work plan timeline and to meet the expected date of completion of the project. Any expansion of the membership is decided on by the Workshop Chair and the Secretariat, taking in consideration the following aspects:

- the expansion would not result in the Workshop taking longer to complete;
- the new Workshop participant would not address any new or complementary issues beyond the scope defined and approved in the project plan;
- the new Workshop participant would bring complementary expertise into the Workshop in order to incorporate the latest scientific findings and state-of-the-art knowledge;
- the new Workshop participant would ensure wider application of the CWA.

Each participating expert shall sign an Ethics and Fairness behaviour engagement letter.

4. Workshop scope and objectives

The workshop aims at developing the concept of digital sovereignty.

It is based on the fundamental assumption that digital sovereignty is a key concept that needs to be understood and structured: controversies around whether digital sovereignty is even relevant or necessary are therefore out of scope of this workshop.

The objectives of the workshop are:

- to develop a shared understanding and structure of the concept of “digital sovereignty”
- to analyse standardisation implications and identify possible standardisation actions
- to discuss the required interplay between standardisation and regulation
- to consolidate the views of multiple parties with respect to digital sovereignty
- to demonstrate how European digital sovereignty can be integrated and understood in the broader international context of local / regional contextualizable implementations of the concept

To reach these objectives, participants will work on concept definitions, an associated ecosystem of sovereignty and the connections between standardisation and regulation with a focus on the digital space.

In addition, the concept may prove to be scalable and apply to any organisation or even to individuals who may want to be sovereign over their own digital space.

5. Workshop programme

The CWA shall be drafted and published in English.

Work Plan

The work plan is composed of a series of items that are detailed in Annex A.

Main work items and milestones:

1. Kick-off meeting (T0)
2. Analyse existing documents, including, but not limited to, AFNOR Exploratory Concept for Digital Territoriality and VDE/DKE position paper on Technological Sovereignty
3. Development of Part 1: Concept, terminology and definitions
4. Development of Part 2: Implication of Digital Sovereignty on standardisation
5. Milestone: Approval of draft CWA (target date: T0 + 12 months)

6. Open commenting phase (60 days)
7. Comments resolution and final document development
8. Milestone: Approval of final CWA (target date: T0 + 16 months)

6. Workshop structure

The Workshop is subject to CEN-CENELEC Guide 29 - CEN/CENELEC Workshop Agreements.

The Workshop Chair shall be responsible for ensuring that the development of the CWA is in accordance with the agreed project plan and requirements of CEN-CENELEC Guide 29.

The Workshop Chair shall decide when the Workshop participants have reached agreement on the final text of the CWA, on the basis of the comments received and any further consultation that has taken place, at which point the CWA is approved.

The Workshop Chair and Secretariat shall ensure that the CWA reflects the European perspective on Digital Sovereignty.

AFNOR will provide the Workshop secretariat, subject to formal acceptance of the project plan at the kick-off meeting. The responsibilities of the secretariat cover the co-ordination of administrative duties involved in the organisation of the Workshop including:

- To maintain the meeting schedules and arrange the physical/virtual meeting locations;
- To distribute the agenda and other documents for the Plenary Sessions;
- To prepare draft minutes of the Plenary Sessions;
- To maintain the web site and ensure the timely availability of the working documents for meetings;
- To ensure that the CWA is available in time on the appropriate CEN/CENELEC format; and
- To interface with the CEN-CENELEC Management Centre (CCMC) regarding strategic issues, problems arising, external relationships, etc.
- To maintain a record of the participating organisations and individuals.

In order to ensure the transparency of the Workshop process, all Workshop documents shall be uploaded onto the electronic platform Livelink or Collaboration tool.

Meetings will primarily be held as virtual meetings.

7. Resource requirements

All costs related to the participation of interested parties in the Workshop's activities have to be borne by themselves. Use of electronic meetings will be encouraged as much as possible. All the documentation will be drafted and supplied electronically.

8. Related activities, liaisons, etc.

Liaisons will be established with:

- European Commission DG GROW, DG CNECT and DG JUST
- CEN-CENELEC/JTC 21 "Artificial Intelligence" (this Joint Technical Committee has replaced the CEN-CENELEC AI Focus Group)

9. Contact points

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Annexes

Annex A: Work plan details

Annex B: CWA self-assessment

Annex C: Analysis of the degree of interest in the subject in different European countries and amongst different stakeholders

Annex D: Draft Agenda for the kick-off meeting

Annex E: Participation registration form

Annex A: Work plan details

The work plan is broke-down into 9 items/phases:

Preparatory work

- Item 1. Review existing documents, including, but not limited to, AFNOR Exploratory Concept for Digital Territoriality and VDE/DKE position paper on Technological Sovereignty

Development of Part 1: Concept, terminology and definitions

- Item 2. Identification of relevant terms and concepts associated with “Digital sovereignty”

Potential terms and concepts that may support the “Digital sovereignty” concept and be used in subsequent work items will be identified. It may include entries like “Technological sovereignty”, “Trusted digital space”, “Digital sphere”, “Digital frontier”, “Digital jurisdiction”, “Digital territory”, “Digital infrastructure”, “Digital commons”

- Item 3. “Digital Sovereignty” principles and characterization

- Item 4. How to protect “Digital sovereignty” (and role of standards in supporting it)

Development of Part 2: Implication of Digital Sovereignty on standardisation

- Item 5. Identification of potential standardisation work items or requirements

- Item 6. Implication of “Digital Sovereignty” on SDOs

Commenting and approval

- Item 7. Approval of draft CWA (target date: T0 + 8 months)

- Item 8. Open commenting phase (60 days) and comments resolution phase

- Item 9. Approval of final CWA (target date: T0 + 12 months)

The comments resolution will be performed as follow:

- The chair, the editor and the secretariat will select the relevant comments and categorize them.
- The editor will then propose a draft document with resolution proposition.
- The draft document will be presented and discussed by the participants.
- In case of unresolvable issues between the objectives of the CWA and received comments, a specific side document will be produced listing the comments with their origin and categorizing the conflict.

The final deliverable will consist of:

1. Part 1 document on Digital sovereignty concept, terminology and definition
2. Part 2 document on Digital sovereignty implications on standardisation

Annex B: CWA self-assessment

Title of the proposed CWA:

Digital sovereignty - European perspective, general approach and implications on standardization

1. Does the proposed CWA conflict with an EN or an HD for CENELEC?

- NO
 YES → **WARNING:** Work on the proposed CWA shall not be initiated.

2. Does the proposed CWA intend to define requirements related to safety matters?

- NO
 YES Is the proposed CWA within the scope of
- CEN? → The CWA proposal shall be submitted to CEN/BT for decision.
- CENELEC? → **WARNING:** Work on the proposed CWA shall not be initiated.

3. Is the scope of the proposed CWA within the scope of an existing CEN/CENELEC technical body?

- NO
 YES → The relevant CEN/CENELEC technical body shall be consulted on the CWA proposal:

- If this technical body responds positively and sees no harm in the CWA being developed, the CWA proposal may be processed.
- If the technical body is opposed to a CWA being launched, the CWA proposal shall be submitted to the CEN/CENELEC BT(s) for decision.

4. Does the proposed CWA intend to define requirements related to management system aspects?

- NO
 YES → The CWA proposal shall be submitted to the CEN/CENELEC BT(s) for decision.

5. Does the proposed CWA intend to define requirements related to conformity assessment aspects?

NO

YES → CEN/CENELEC Internal Regulations - Part 3, 6.7 applies.

If all these questions are answered NO, the CWA proposal may be processed.
If not, special conditions apply as given above.

Annex C: Analysis of the degree of interest in the subject in different European countries and amongst different stakeholders

Title of the CWA: Digital sovereignty - European perspective, general approach and implications on standardization

Context assessment

This CWA is aiming at understanding the consequences on standardisation of an external high-level potential requirement which is being more and more referred to without being clearly defined: Digital sovereignty.

It can't be argued that given the impact of the digital transformation on our society, there is a trend toward a closer connection between regulation and standardisation. That has started to translate into a dedicated ISO/IEC JTC1/AG15 work on "Standards and regulation" which is promoting a better communication and exchanges between governments and standardisation organisations.

Still though, the ISO/IEC JTC1/AG15 is not addressing the Digital Sovereignty issue and it is believed that the ISO-IEC is not mature yet to address that topic. This doesn't mean that ISO-IEC will not at some point be ready for addressing regional sovereignty concept in the coming years.

In addition, Digital Sovereignty is very high in the EU agenda. Therefore, it makes perfect sense to have a CEN-CENELEC led activity to ensure that any further Digital Sovereignty related-standardisation is done according to European perspectives.

Interests for National standardisation bodies

National standardisation bodies, as well as European standardisation organisations, will have to address the consequences of Digital Sovereignty. It is in the standardisation organisations best interest to identify and anticipate the potential related implications of Digital Sovereignty.

Therefore, it is proposed to launch a European led preliminary work on "Digital Sovereignty implications on standardisation", open to all and specifically to European stakeholders. The outcomes of this CWA would be disseminated at a later stage. This approach would be similar to the one that has led to the GDPR where the EU has initiated the work and has set an international standard for individual data protection.

In addition, it is believed that this action would be better served by being proposed by European standardisation organisations that have already worked on digital/technological sovereignty concept and related concepts and have identified the issues. Specifically, AFNOR and DKE have started to explore the implications of Digital/Technological sovereignty and are ready to move forward.

IEEE contribution to the CEN-CENELEC CWA

The participation of IEEE as a proposer may be questioned, especially since IEEE did stop liaising with ISO-IEC/SC42.

As stated in the Rolling Plan 2020 on ICT standardisation, *“The professional association IEEE is also very active in investigating and proposing new standards for AI, particularly in the field of ethics of autonomous and intelligent systems”*.

In addition, the action 1 of the Rolling Plan mentions the need to *“Foster coordination and interaction of all stakeholders in providing European requirements for AI”* and to *“Encourage the development of shared visions as a basis for input and requirements to standardisation”*.

As for the Rolling Plan action 3, it says that *« SDOs should establish coordinated linkages with, and consider European requirements from, initiatives, including policy initiatives, and organisations contributing to the discourse on AI standardisation. This in particular includes the results of the EU HLEG on AI and also the European Parliament, Member States' initiatives, Council of Europe, and others »*.

Considering that IEEE is largely contributing to the work on AI standardisation, is a member of the Multi Stake holder platforms aiming at building the EU ICT standardisation rolling plan and has strong connections with other international organisations, specifically with OECD, or the UN... a joint work with IEEE on Digital Sovereignty development would perfectly fit into the requested actions.

In addition, IEEE, as one of the precursors in AI standardisation, has some advances that we could benefit from. Therefore, it is important to explore ways of partnering with IEEE in order to speed up the process of having the much-needed AI standards supporting an EU ecosystem of trust. This CWA is a mean to explore one way of partnering. The alternative would be to either to start from scratch or to just approve IEEE standards through the European Multi-Stakeholders Platform on ICT standardisation (MSP).

As a consequence, having IEEE SA as an active participant, makes perfectly sense as it would not only be aligned with the 2020 ICT standardisation Rolling Plan requested actions, but also would bring the perspective of a major international standardisation organisation, experiment a new way of cooperation between standardisation organisations, help bring on-board other major stakeholders and furthermore would contribute to a broader global dissemination of the CWA outputs.

IEEE interests

IEEE is an international organization of which more than 50 percent of the members are from outside the United States, including over 55,000 members in Europe. For several years, IEEE has stepped up efforts to increase its cooperation with European bodies. Part of these efforts has been the establishment of the IEEE office in Vienna, and the creation of the IEEE European Public Policy Committee (EPPC) with the aim at expanding the dialogue between the European

engineering community and European public authorities to enable technologists to more easily share their expertise and concerns and to enable European Union (EU) institutions and other policy stakeholders to more easily obtain technologists' input in matters relating to IEEE's fields of interest. Excellent relations with the European Commission have been developed and many participants from Europe are involved in IEEE SA working groups particularly in the field of AI and ethics. IEEE participation in the European Multi Stakeholder Platform on ICT Standardisation has been recognized as shown in the 2020 Rolling Plan on ICT Standardisation drafted by the European Commission.

Continuing to develop this collaboration by working more closely with CEN/CENELEC in the field of standardisation is fully in line with the IEEE Standards Association goals. IEEE SA is eager to receive the European perspectives and CEN/CENELEC inputs for its future standard developments.

Digital Sovereignty has a place in the work of the IEEE SA. The need to work on Digital Inclusion/Trust in Agency has emerged when Personal Sovereignty and agency appeared in relation to one's relation to their rights in accordance with their proxy technologies; and the implications on them directly. In addition, relevant standardisation projects emerged on the socio-technical and technical fronts and similarly in the IEEE Global Initiative on Ethics of AI Systems - where such considerations elevated to the delivery of the Ethically Aligned Design document and standards projects.

Now, the question is how these efforts on Personal Sovereignty can be contextualized further to support the idea of sovereignty at the level of a full region, with proper governance, technology and socio mechanisms to support proper and aligned outcomes. Together with the respective expertise from CEN/CENELEC and key stakeholders, IEEE looks at developing a high level concept that could be the base of further standardisation activities aligned with European values and principles.

CEN-CENELEC interests

Digital Sovereignty is more and more mentioned by many European stakeholders, starting by the European Commission. It is very much likely that Digital Sovereignty future requirements will have indirect impacts on standardization activities and on national and European standardization organizations. CEN-CENELEC, as well as National bodies, have therefore a clear interest in understanding and anticipating this paradigm shift.

Exploratory discussions have been initiated with some concerned stakeholders: ETUC, ANEC, Council of Europe, OECD, UNESCO, EESC, the European Commission.

From those exchanges, it appears that the topic is deemed very important and a participation of those organisations can be anticipated.

**Draft Agenda for the kick-off meeting of
CEN/CENELEC WS Digital sovereignty - European
perspective, general approach and implications on
standardisation**

*8th July 2021
14:00-17:00*

Venue

Virtual location:

<https://afnor.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJckc-mhrDMiHtDoUzQPmFI-jojn-w53K6>

Meeting ID: 939 4092 8844

Password: 511217

Agenda	Timing
1. Opening of the meeting	14:00
2. Roll call of participants	
3. Adoption of the agenda	
4. Introduction on CEN and CENELEC and on the concept of CEN Workshop Agreement	
5. General presentation of the concept of digital sovereignty	
6. Confirmation of Workshop Chair and Secretariat	
7. Project Plan	
a. Discussion and review of comments received	
b. Adoption of the Project Plan	
8. Organisation of the technical work	
9. Any other business	

10. Next meeting, future actions and their assignment

11. Closure of the meeting

17h00

Annex E: Participation registration form

To be returned to AFNOR by e-mail (caroline.deconde@afnor.org)

CEN/CENELEC Workshop on Digital sovereignty - European perspective, general approach and implications on standardisation

Participation registration form

Registering for a CEN/CENELEC Workshop is intended to be a lightweight-process. The obligations and commitments on yourself and your organisation are kept to a minimum in order to make registration easy.

By signing this membership registration, you accept the following conditions:

Assignment of Exploitation Rights

In order to secure the legal protection of the documents elaborated by the participants to this CEN/CENELEC Workshop, in the framework of the Berne Convention for the protection of literary and artistic works you are asked to accept the following terms and conditions for the assignment of the exploitation rights of your contributions to European standardization:

- (a) Unless otherwise stated, you assign solely, exclusively and irrevocably to the European Committee for Standardization (CEN) or the European electrotechnical Committee for Standardization (CENELEC) for the benefit of its national Members the exploitation rights of your intellectual contributions, as are reproduced in the Publications resulting from the technical work of this CEN/CENELEC Workshop, as defined in paragraph 1.2 of CEN/CENELEC Internal Regulations Part 2.
- (b) You accept that the exploitation of the publication related to this CEN/CENELEC Workshop, containing all or part of your contributions, will take place without mention of your/your company name, unless your explicit statement to that effect
- (c) You accept however that you/your company/organisation name is included in the list of parties having agreed a CEN/CENELEC Workshop Agreement and provided by CEN and CENELEC to those requesting this information.
- (d) You agree that the assigned exploitation rights are granted free of charge worldwide and cover all languages and all forms of exploitation known at present, in particular and non-restrictively: publication, reproduction and adaptation by all means and all graphical support systems, by print, press, photocopy, microfilms, and via all magnetic, electronic and numerical support systems, memory cards, CD-ROMs, DVDs, Blu-Rays, films, photographs, slides, teledistribution, cable, satellite, web applications and on-line document servers and networks, distribution, sub-distribution, translation, derive revenue from duplication, communication to the public in total or in part, in summary or with comments, transfers of exploitation licences to third parties.

- (e) Should you offer intellectual contributions for which you do not personally hold the copyright, you undertake to declare this as early as possible and to name the holder of the copyright if known to you, with a view to securing the assignment of its exploitation rights to CEN and CENELEC .

Whereas:

- The exploitation of the CWA will be free of charge worldwide
- The participation to the Workshop is free of charge
- The assignment of the exploitation rights to CEN and CENELEC does not preclude any participant from continuing to exploit its own copyrightable contribution for its own purpose.

Patent declaration

You acknowledge the provisions regarding declarations of patents as in the CEN-CENELEC Guide 8 'Guidelines for Implementation of Common IPR Policy'.

You declare you have no patent in relation to the development of the present CEN/CENELEC Workshop Agreement that can constitute a barrier to its development.

Working rules

You subscribe to the objectives of the work, as outlined in the Workshop's Business Plan.

You agree to offer your expertise in the consensus building process, and to contribute by electronic contributions or by participation in meetings to this process.

Membership information and contacts

- 1) Background information on your company/organisation and its interest in the Workshop
(50-80 words)

- 2) Company/organisation to be recorded as a Registered Participant:

Organisation name (please give the official name of the Company/Organisation):

Address:

Please indicate what kind of company/organisation you belong to:

[Please choose from following list: Industry, Administration, Consumer, Consultants, Academia, Standard Bodies, Other (in which case you will have to specify)]

3) Name and contact details of the participant(s) representing your company/organisation
(It is possible to register several participants)

Mr or Mrs (please indicate)

Last Name:

First Name:

Function:

(Telephone:)

(Fax:)

E-mail:

I have read and agree with the above conditions, and I wish to register myself and my company/organisation as participant in this Workshop.

Date and Signature: ...