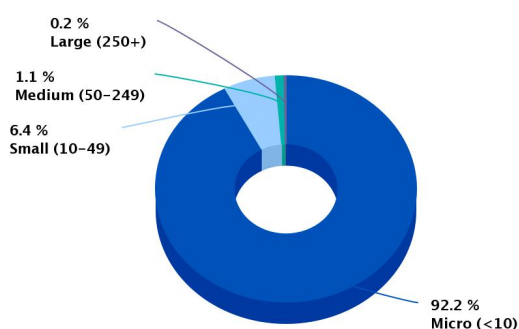# Article 6 of EU Regulation 1025/2012 annual report 2017
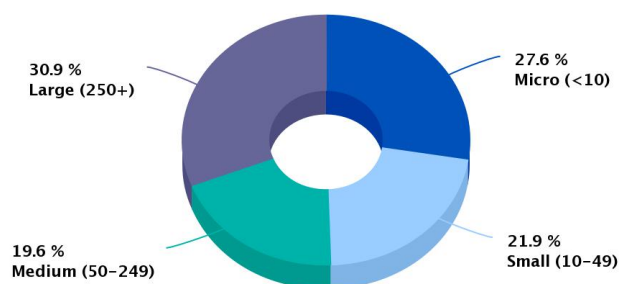
General

According to a Central Statistics Office (CSO) report[1] there were 248,842 businesses in operation in Ireland employing over 1.4 million workers. Of these businesses almost 99.8% were SMEs, with just over nine in ten being micro-enterprises employing less than 10 people. These statistics support NSAI's view that all standardisation activity carried out in Ireland is relevant for SMEs and over recent years NSAI continues to positive steps to engage with businesses about the work of NSAI, the European standardisation organisations CEN, CENELEC and ETSI, and international bodies ISO and IEC.

Figure 3.2 Number of active enterprises by size class for all sectors, 2015

0.2 %
Large (250+)

1.1 %
Medium (50–249)

6.4 %
Small (10–49)

92.2 %
Micro (<10)

Source: CSO Ireland

Figure 3.3 Number of persons engaged by size class for all sectors, 2015

30.9 %
Large (250+)

27.6 %
Micro (<10)

19.6 %
Medium (50–249)

21.9 %
Small (10–49)

Source: CSO Ireland

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[1] CSO Business in Ireland Report 2015

NSAI has established 237 technical committees (including subcommittees) dealing with the following sectors of interest to Irish businesses:

- Accessibility
- Advanced Manufacturing
- Building & Construction
- Biotechnology
- Chemicals, Chemical Engineering & Food Products
- Electrical Engineering
- Electronic Engineering
- Energy supply and distribution,
- Fundamental Measurement
- Information and Communications Technology
- Health, Cosmetics and Medical Equipment
- Management Systems
- Mechanical Engineering
- Metallic Materials
- Non-Metallic Materials
- Products for Household & Leisure Use
- Services
- Transport, Mechanical, Handling & Packaging

Awareness and Promotion Initiatives

In order to promote the use of standards and provide greater access to the standardisation development process NSAI has developed an awareness strategy focused on key stakeholders and invested in ICT solutions where possible so as to facilitate those already engaged and to grow the number of participants from small and medium size businesses, and the research and innovation communities. The measures taken in recent years include:

- A dedicated web page for SMEs, the NSAI SME Portal, provides information about aspects of NSAI's standardisation work including the annual work programme and an open invitation to get involved in activities through participating in NSAI's standards committees. Membership of committees is open to all those with relevant interest without charge.

- Launched in 2011 with the support of the Irish Small and Medium Enterprises Association - ISME and the Small Firms Association – SFA, NSAI's online Enquiry Portal 'Your Standards, Your Say' makes it easy for small and medium sized enterprises to engage in standardisation activities. This facility makes vital information on standards in development easily accessible and gives business and the public a chance to have their say on standards prior to them being finalised. A programme was put in place to significantly upgrade this facility and make it more user friendly.

- Through their work NSAI standard officers develop national stakeholder networks and provide information on standards development and the benefits of participation in relevant areas including the advantages that can accrued to businesses such as enhancing their competitiveness and creating the condition to be first in line to take advantage when market opportunities present.

- Standards sales are web-based making it easy for businesses to search and purchase standards online. Abstracts of standards are available to view without charge for the Irish standards catalogue from 2008. The pricing structure is competitive with tariff options for purchase of multiple standards. In addition, a tailoring update service is available where businesses can, by payment of an annual charge, receive updates on standard revisions for view or automatic purchase.

- All Irish, European and International standards can be viewed without charge by visiting our Head Office during working hours. In addition, the NSAI Standards Database has also been made available through 10 third level education institutes.

- NSAI hosted and participated in several business and government sponsored events. The levels of involvement ranged from hosting and providing speakers to providing an information desk supplying brochures and answering questions relating to standards and standardisation activities. The most significant events during 2017 were:

  > - Organisation/Participation in free seminars on draft/new standards across a wide range of sectors, of relevance to SMEs such as NSAI Fire Safety Seminar, Beauty Industry Event, Gas Installers Roadshow, Safe Electric Roadshow, ETSI seminar, Biocontamination Open Day, ISO 9001 and ISO 14001 Roadshows, Engineers Ireland Award Ceremony, NSAI Bio Banking Workshop
  > - Standards Presentations and Lectures e.g. on Standards and Medical Devices, H2020, Standards in RD&I, Third Level Institute Standards in Industry, Robotics in Advanced Manufacturing Symposium in Boston USA.
  > - Promotion of standards through focused and national events e.g. Meeting with Knowledge Transfer Ireland, WEST BIC (LEO) Midlands Engineering Cluster, Taking Care of Business, Enterprise Ireland Innovation Construction seminar.
  > - Programme of work with Local Enterprise Offices to raise awareness of benefits of standards and access/supports offered to SMEs by NSAI, including publication of targeted standards brochure "Understanding Standards"

- Ongoing media campaign on national radio and online newspapers during 2017 highlighting the benefits of industry participation in standardization and advocated the use of certification to standards.

- NSAI uses many IT tools and social media to promote standards. These include RSS feeds on the website which allow users to sign up to follow NSAI news and events; circulation of a quarterly e-zine to 14,000 registered interests; using the NSAI Linked-in social media webpage to disseminate information on NSAI activities.

- Participation in the CEN/CENELEC SME group – operating an SME helpdesk where SMEs can address queries directly to an NSAI staff member dealing with SME issues.
- In 2017 NSAI registered 380 new committee members. At least 44% of those new members represented micro and small businesses (up to 50 employees).

CEN – the European Committee for Standardisation
CENELEC – the European Committee for Electro technical Standardisation
ETSI – European Telecommunications Standards Institute
IEC – the International Electrotechnical Commission
ISO – the International Organisation for Standardisation