European public procurement of accessible ICT

A European accessibility standard for procurement processes and related support toolkit for public procurers

Scope of the activity

- This EC/EFTA co-funded work will produce:
  - technical requirements and test methods for eAccessibility which will apply to all ICT products and services sold to the European Public sector
  - details of conformity assessment related to these requirements
  - an on-line toolkit
- The technical work is being done by an ETSI Specialist Task Force and a CEN Project Team

Major assumptions

- In general, public bodies will not have specialist knowledge related to accessibility

- Non-specialists will be supported in:
  - selecting the correct requirements to include in the calls for tender
  - knowing whether, and to what degree, the requirements have been met

- This support will be provided by the toolkit

The standard (1)

- The core document will be a European Norm (EN) that:

  - provides a European-wide set of accessibility requirements for ICT products and services

  - builds upon best practice accessibility knowledge

  - contains methods for verifying that requirements have been met

The standard (2)

- For web accessibility, the globally recognised W3C WCAG 2.0 guidelines will be adopted

- Alignment will be sought with international accessibility requirements, to the extent that differing market conditions permit
  - this should help suppliers to minimise costs to their customers by reducing the need to produce different versions of their products to meet different accessibilty requirements in each market

Important outcomes of the work

- The requirements in the standard will be part of the technical specifications of calls for tenders across Europe

- Guidance for claiming conformance with the accessibility requirements will be provided

Why M 376 is important to procurers

- It will provide:
  - a European-wide common set of accessibility requirements for use in technical specifications
  - an on-line toolkit supporting the procurement process
    - guiding during the definition of technical specifications
    - providing additional guidance material
  - a template for conformance claims of accessibility, facilitating the comparison of tenders

Additional help for procurers (1)

- Reports will provided on:
  - "Guidelines on accessibility award criteria for ICT products and services"
    - giving guidance to procurers on evaluating tenders for the public procurement of ICT products and services:
  - "Documents relevant to European accessibility requirements"
    - identifying background documents related to the EN including any documents needed to implement the specified test procedures
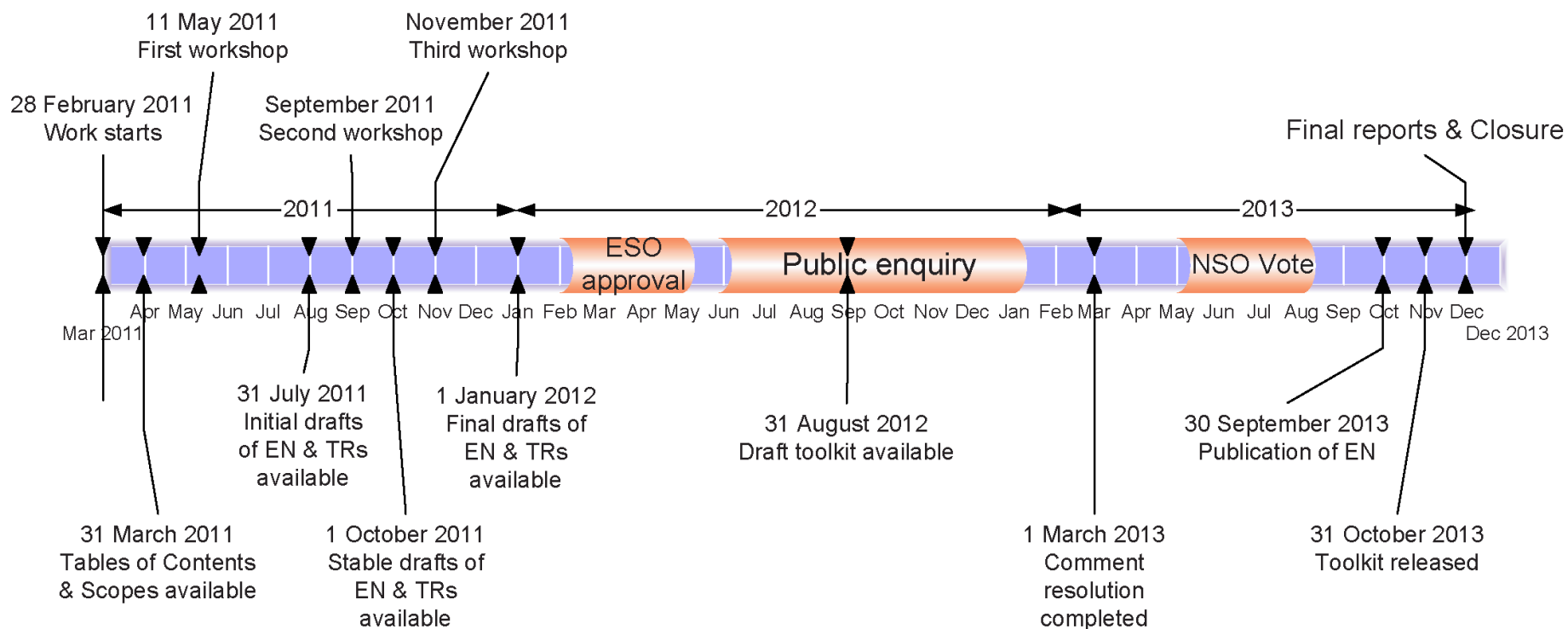
Additional help for procurers (2)

- A further report will be provided that:
  - contains advice on product and service conformity assessment methods, together with guidance on declaring or certifying conformity

Additional help for procurers (3)

- Guidance and support material on procurement and accessibility policy will be provided, giving:
    - a description of an ICT acquisition process
    - conformity assessment and declaration, compliant with ISO/IEC 17050
    - inventory of existing Accessibility support services
    - specification of suppliers' accessibility capacity and ability

M 376 Phase 2: Indicative Time Line

Issues that need further thought

- What procurement guidance documents are used and how are they used

  - we want to align as closely as possible with current practices!

- Specifying the context in which the product will be used could be important

  - as different accessibility issues can be more relevant in some contexts than in others

- Increasing involvement of public procurement people – how?

Guidance needed!

The toolkit

How to monitor or contribute to the work

- By commenting on the drafts – available from:

  http://www.ictsb.org/Working_Groups/DATSCG/M376_JWG/M376.htm

- Via your National Standards Bodies
- Via your trade association
  - Digital Europe for the European ICT sector
- Via user and consumer organisations
- Via your government procurement body
- By contacting the Joint Working Group directly
- accessibility@aenor.es