

CEN and CENELEC Guidelines for effective Technical Body meetings

Upholding the principles of transparency, fairness, inclusiveness, accessibility, privacy, and responsible use of technology in all meeting formats

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 'CEN and CENELEC Guidelines for effective Technical Body meetings', approved by decisions BT C079/2026 and D184/C016, set out practical, principle-based guidance to ensure meetings – whether face-to-face (F2F), virtual or hybrid – are transparent, fair, inclusive, accessible and respect privacy. They apply to (Joint) Technical Body ((J)TC/SC) and Working Group meetings only.

This document should be used to:

- Select the right meeting mode and plan with accessibility and participation in mind;
- Run meetings that give equal opportunity to remote and in-room participants;
- Protect personal and meeting data and apply responsible AI practices.

Key principles:

- **Hybrid meetings:** Every effort made to give equal opportunity to remote and in-room participants
- **Accessibility:** Planned from the start, embedded at every stage
- **Privacy and security:** Record and store only what is necessary and inform participants
- **Responsible use of AI:** Assist, do not replace human intervention – always review outputs

1. PRINCIPLES

The way CEN and CENELEC conduct meetings has evolved significantly in recent years, creating new opportunities for collaboration and efficiency. Meetings can now take place in three primary modes which apply to all committees or plenaries, working groups, project teams, ad hoc groups, advisory groups, etc.

- **Face-to-Face meeting (F2F):** participants are encouraged to attend physically;
- **Virtual meeting:** all participants are attending remotely;
- **Hybrid meeting:** a combination of some participants attending physically and other participants attending remotely.

Each mode offers unique advantages depending on the purpose, participants and context of the meeting. Selecting the most appropriate meeting mode is therefore a critical decision that directly influences both the effectiveness of discussions and the quality of outcomes.

Each mode should be selected not only for efficiency but also for fairness, accessibility and inclusivity.

While virtual and hybrid meetings offer significant flexibility and cost-effectiveness, they may lack some of the informal dynamics which are naturally present in F2F meetings, e.g. side discussions and networking breaks. To address this, leadership is encouraged to use various techniques that promote engagement.

This document explains the characteristics of each meeting mode, highlights their respective benefits, and provides practical advice for an effective and inclusive meeting to:

- **meeting hosts**, in charge of the meeting venue and technical solutions
- **leadership**, such as Chairpersons, Secretaries and Convenors
- **participants** i.e. everyone attending the meeting (incl. team leaders)

2. PLANNING A MEETING

2.1 Selecting a meeting mode

Choosing the right meeting mode not only enhances participation and engagement but also supports inclusivity and cost-effectiveness. Environmental sustainability should also be considered when deciding on the meeting mode.

The way meetings are organized can accelerate consensus-building and improve transparency of the standardization system. Choosing the meeting mode should be done in discussion with the concerned group (including (J)TC members/observers/WG experts as relevant).

Leadership should select the most appropriate meeting mode based on the preferences of the group in question and taking into account the meeting goal, technical equipment, etc.

Leadership should inform participants of the selected meeting mode in line with clause 2.2.3 and with the deadline for circulation of the draft agenda as mentioned in [CEN-CENELEC Internal Regulations – Part 2](#), section 12.4.1.

2.2 Scheduling meetings

2.2.1 Recommendations for face-to-face meetings (F2F)

The group may find it crucial to schedule a F2F meeting when it is important for the group members to meet in person, e.g. the first meeting of a new group or to resolve controversial technical comments.

In selecting the meeting venue, attention should be paid to accessibility of the venue, tools and technology.

When a meeting is designated as F2F, participants are normally expected to attend in person.

Remote participation should always be offered for F2F meetings, bearing in mind that online attendance does not ensure the same level of inclusivity as in-person participation.

However, where the ability to provide effective remote access is impacted by local conditions, costs, technical capacity, and other practical constraints related to organizing the meeting, it should be offered on a best-effort basis. Where remote participation is not possible and a participant is unable to attend the F2F meeting due to unforeseen circumstances, comments may be submitted by correspondence. In case remote participation is denied, the Group leadership shall justify this decision.

Participants can also be invited to participate remotely for specific agenda items.

2.2.2 Recommendations for virtual and hybrid meetings

Meetings that include remote participants should generally be kept shorter than F2F meetings: not more than 7 hours including sufficient time for breaks.

For hybrid meetings, the needs of both physical and virtual participants should be carefully considered to manage the meeting in a fair and equitable manner.

The following considerations are recommended:

- the host should have the necessary technical equipment to conduct a hybrid meeting;
- at least one person of the leadership (chair, convenor or secretary) shall participate at the physical location of the hybrid meeting;
- leadership and meeting hosts should ensure that the same rules are applied to remote participants and physical participants;
- the starting time and the duration of the meeting, including breaks, should be organized to accommodate both virtual and physical participants' needs;
- opening the meeting link early so people can have an informal chat before the start of the meeting.

2.2.3 Issuance of meeting notices, agendas and working documents

The rules defined in [CEN-CENELEC Internal Regulations – Part 2](#), section 12.4.1 concerning the deadlines for circulation of documents are applicable to (Joint) Technical Body meetings.

The following deadlines for setting up and notifying participants of a meeting (incl. logistical details) are recommended but not mandatory:

- F2F or hybrid meetings: minimum 12 weeks before the meeting;
- Remote meetings: minimum 8 weeks before the meeting.

2.2.4 Cancellation of meetings

Every possible effort shall be made to avoid cancellation or postponement of a meeting once it has been convened. Nevertheless, if documents are not made available on time or under any other exceptional circumstances (such as sickness), the (J)TC/WG Leadership has the right to cancel the meeting.

2.3 Ensuring accessibility

Accessibility is a cornerstone of effective and inclusive meetings. It ensures that all participants, regardless of physical ability, sensory needs, or technical capacity, can contribute fully. Accessibility must be considered in all meeting formats, starting from planning to follow up. Accessibility is the shared responsibility of meeting organizers, leadership, and participants. It applies to both physical environments and digital tools.

When planning a meeting, attention should be given to:

- **Venue accessibility:** when meetings are held F2F or in hybrid format, the chosen venue should be accessible for all participants;
- **Accessible tools and technology:** the digital tools and technologies shall be accessible to all users.

3. DURING THE MEETING

3.1 General considerations

Whether a meeting takes place face-to-face or online, there are good practices that help ensure it runs smoothly and productively.

It is in the interest of all meeting attendants to live up to the [CEN](#) and [CENELEC](#) Code of Conducts which sets the standard for behaviour expected from CEN and CENELEC delegates, experts and observers participating in technical work. It is recommended to remind participants of the Code of Conduct at the start of the meeting.

The leadership shall ensure that all participants, remote or at venue are given the opportunity to participate by sharing or speaking. A successful meeting is inclusive and ensures that all voices are heard and duly considered, with the objective of reaching the broadest possible consensus across all parties.

3.2 Ensuring accessibility

Accessibility ensures that all participants, regardless of physical ability, sensory needs, or technical capacity, can contribute fully.

Examples on how a meeting can ensure accessibility:

- Ensuring participants speak clearly and provide captions when possible;
- Encouraging presenters to describe visual content verbally;
- Provide live captioning, transcripts and screen reader compatible documents when possible;
- An accessible meeting relies on respectful and inclusive behaviour from participants;
- For better audio, keep microphones muted when not speaking.

3.3 Safeguard and transparency of participant data

The audio and/or video recording of meetings by the Secretary is acceptable provided that at the outset of the meeting, all participants are made aware that the meeting will be recorded and there are no objections. Only the leadership is allowed to record meetings. Any meeting transcription shall be deleted after use and may only serve as temporary support for leadership in summarizing discussions - not as a record to attribute specific statements to individuals, as this may inhibit open and candid participation. Individual participants shall have the right to require that the means of recording are switched off during a particular intervention if they so desire and the leadership shall remind everyone at the beginning of each meeting.

It is also the leadership's responsibility to ensure that all participants know who is at the meeting. It is mandatory for all participants to indicate their name and who they represent (including their sponsor) in the participation list or through the display name if participating virtually.

The list of participants, whether F2F, virtual or hybrid meetings, must be collected and used solely for purposes directly related to the organization and conduct of the meeting (e.g. confirming attendance, distributing meeting material, or facilitating follow-up actions agreed during the meeting). The list may be shared internally only. All handling of the participant list must comply with applicable data protection and privacy regulations.

3.4 Tools and Technology

3.4.1 Monitoring chat activity

In principle, the chat should be primarily used to ask for the floor. However, it may be agreed that the chat serves additional purposes (such as vote, suggestions to rephrase), keeping in mind that the chat conversation should not evolve into a 'meeting within a meeting' with side conversations running in parallel.

3.4.2 Using technology to encourage discussion

Consider using break-out rooms, meeting polls, raising hand functions etc. to secure consensus and to facilitate side discussions.

Using in-room camera and having remote participants keeping their camera on should be encouraged to boost interactivity.

3.4.3 Using Artificial Intelligence (AI) in meetings

As the adoption of AI accelerates, its thoughtful integration into the meeting lifecycle can significantly enhance planning, participation and follow up.

The below guidelines intend to ensure the responsible, ethical and transparent use of AI in meetings, including notifying participants and defining permitted use cases.

Only the leadership is allowed to use AI for recording purposes.

To check beforehand:

AI tools used shall be secure and licensed and comply with applicable data protection and privacy regulations. When AI is used, you shall:

- Inform participants and let them know in which case AI is used;
- Review and verify AI outputs before sharing any information.

Encouraged AI use includes:

- Using AI for support tasks: transcription, captions, translation, drafting notes, drafting reports and agendas;
- Using AI features (live captions, translation) to enhance participation for people with different needs or languages, while ensuring those features are accessible to all.

Be aware that:

- AI bots to replace human presence, discussion, or decision-making are not allowed and will be removed from the meeting;
- AI-generated notes without human validation shall not be distributed;
- Free or unverified non-licensed versions of AI tools are not allowed.

3.4.4 Using IT tools

The CEN and CENELEC meeting platforms are recommended as they support handling registrations from Members across all meeting formats. A meeting link is included for virtual or hybrid meetings and a physical meeting place is noted when applicable. It is easy for the secretariat to update how an attendee joined before exporting an attendance list.

The chosen meeting platform should be reliable, secure and accessible to all participants. Features such as screen sharing, breakout rooms, live captioning and chat can significantly enhance collaboration but should be used consistently and explained clearly. The choice of platform is less important than the way it is managed to support inclusivity, efficiency and clear communication.

If a participant loses their connection, they should rejoin as soon as possible, however a lost connection will not justify a re-opening of the discussions. Should the host or leadership suffer a technical failure, the meeting may have to be re-scheduled, and a decision taken may be postponed if these connectivity issues remain or are not resolved.

4. AFTER THE MEETING

The leadership collects the relevant materials used during the meeting and shares them in accessible format with all participants. The deadlines for circulation of documents as specified in [CEN-CENELEC Internal Regulations – Part 2](#), section 12.4.1 are applicable to Technical Body meetings.

The leadership is encouraged to evaluate the meeting.

5. IN BETWEEN MEETINGS

The work of developing European Standards does not take place only during formal meetings. Much of the progress should be made in the periods between meetings, when experts and working group members draft, review, and refine the technical content of the standards. The time between meetings is essential for transforming discussions into tangible draft standards, keeping the overall process efficient and moving forward.

Using virtual sessions to resolve specific issues between scheduled meetings or within sub-groups are encouraged provided that these sessions are open to the whole group. While no formal decisions should be taken, this approach could lead to more effective meetings with the full group and clarify outstanding questions prior to a scheduled meeting.