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Your schematics are coherent in and of themselves, but look a mess when viewed as a whole? Then it's high time to standardise them. We explain how supplier guidelines can help and what things you should include in them.

Typically, supplier guidelines handle areas of responsibility and include agreements on the scope of delivery and project procedures. But there can be more to them than that: supplier guidelines can also help you to agree on in-house standards and on standardising your electrotechnical documentation overall. In addition, they can ensure smooth and effective data transfers, prevent unnecessary errors and save unnecessary costs related to poor data quality.

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Codes and Standards

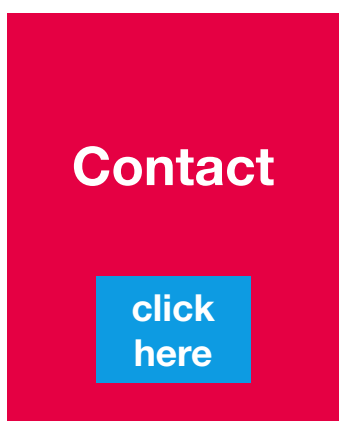
Good electrotechnical documentation is consistent and ensures that users can quickly understand the presented information. That's why you should specify the codes and standards suppliers must use for their technical documentation. For instance, EN IEC 81346-1 provides clear instructions on structuring, while EN IEC 81346-2 creates a uniform reference identifier system. This way the codes and standards provide the framework, while your guidelines defines the framework's structure.

Simplifying via standardisation: specify which EPLAN version your suppliers must use and supply details about project processing. For instance, specify the structure for drawing numbers and designate the positioning of comprehensive potential references. If users are paging through the schematics at some later date, they benefit from always being able to find certain information in the exact same place.



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Structure and Language

Some choose to organise by page, others by document type, but you prefer a thematic structure according to system components. You can define the project structure you want in the supplier guidelines and specify typography conventions. This way you ensure that all the documentation looks the same and you don't have to familiarise yourself with it anew every time.

You can also standardise the contents of the electrotechnical documentation in the supplier guidelines: What is included in the master data? What is a basic project? Define and explain important and recurring terms so that everyone is speaking the same language. Describe your function and location codes and be explicit about which ones are permitted. If you also depict both of these in EPLAN's structure identifier management, then everything should turn out correctly.



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Basic Projects and Sample Projects

Support your suppliers by providing them with a basic project. This is a project file that doesn't necessarily include pages, but already includes all the required settings for languages, evaluations and test runs. This basic project (zw9 file) ensures that all participants use evaluations such as bills of materials, cable plans, terminal diagrams and connector diagrams in the same, pre-approved form.

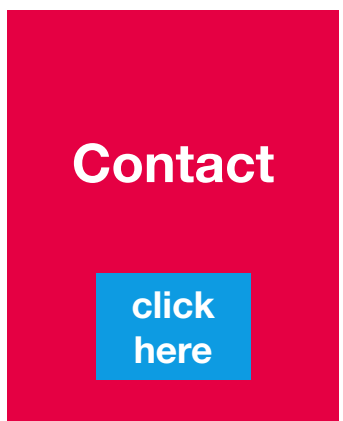
So you know, the EPLAN Engineering Standard already includes basic projects with default settings, which you can download after logging into www.eplan.com.

Along with the basic project, it is also worth the effort of providing your suppliers with a sample project to use as a template. It shows what the schematics are supposed to look like in the end. You can also share a macro library that contains components for schematics as a tried-and-tested modular toolkit.



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Device Information and Bills of Materials

Missing device information is a time sink. In your supplier guidelines, specify that your suppliers use components from the EPLAN Data Portal wherever possible. That's because the EPLAN Data Portal offers standardised data for an enormous number of components from well-known manufacturers.

You can make device management even easier if you set up device master data in EPLAN and make this mandatory for suppliers. You can then share your device database, or sections of it, with your suppliers in a controlled manner via the cloud using EPLAN eSTOCK. The advantage is that you no longer have to send individual files via e-mail. At the same time, your suppliers are always working with the most current version of your device database – even if you've made changes to it.



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