

Product Data Guidelines



Advancing industry standards:

Sonepar's blueprint for next-level product data and digital excellence in B2B electrical distribution.



Principles

Sonepar has established these guidelines to meet the requirements of Sonepar's omnichannel platform and to uphold Customer Excellence.

This content, which will be incrementally enriched, provides a clear perspective on the level of product data quality Sonepar expects from stakeholders and contributors, aiming to ensure the optimal customer experience.

It is designed to facilitate the provision of different data sets, including descriptions and digital assets, that will serve as the basis for new validations and the development of KPIs.

These are the global guidelines that respond to a global view and usage of common cases, transversal through all Sonepar companies. Sonepar companies can have some additional or specific needs that are locally required.

Foundations of Excellence in Product Data Management:

- Customer first through delivering the best data quality.
- Focus on consistency through transparency.
- Get the right data per product category.
- Set the priorities within the product data area's.

The document will frequently be updated with new information, aiming to cover all the most important data for e-commerce requirements. This includes adding local dimensions of Sonepar companies to simplify your file submissions, and ultimately, to enhance performance on product data.

To ensure you always have the most recent version of the Sonepar Product Data Guidelines, please always open the document online through the URL you have received from Sonepar.

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Sonepar Product Data Guidelines is a Sonepar Group initiative with the collaboration of the following:

Olivier THIVENT - SVP Omnichannel Experience and Business Process Transformation,
Séverine TECHER - Product Data Experience Director (PDx),
Daniëlle HOEKSTRA - Product Data Experience Quality and Governance Lead,
Yosra DALLALI - Product Marketing & Communication Lead.
In collaboration with global suppliers and Sonepar companies.

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Product data directly impacts customer satisfaction

In today's digital-driven market, clear and detailed product information is crucial for customer satisfaction and efficient operations.

That is why, we proudly introduce the Sonepar product data guidelines, developed to enhance our Sonepar omnichannel platform.

With the publication of these guidelines, we establish a robust base for our product information and we commit to provide data that is not just accurate but also user-friendly and comprehensive, ensuring customers can make informed decisions with ease.

We outline a collective approach to crafting product descriptions optimized for search engines and user experience, supported by digital assets that clearly and accurately present our products.

This commitment to excellence defines the service level we aim for in every customer interaction with our Sonepar omnichannel platform.

We encourage our associates and partners to embrace these guidelines, aiming to forge product narratives that are clear and engaging.

Collaboratively, we will enhance our product data to be both informative and inspiring, streamlining the customer's purchasing journey.

These guidelines serve as a roadmap for our ongoing focus to always deliver product data excellence. Together, we will strengthen our online presence, setting a standard for data quality that reflects the innovation of our solutions.

Let's unite to ensure Sonepar's product data shines within the electrical industry.

Our partners and associates are essential in enriching our product data, directly impacting customer satisfaction.



Jérémie Profeta
Chief Transformation Officer Sonepar
President Sonepar International Services

1 | Delivering the best customer experience

By following Sonepar's Product Data Guidelines, you contribute to delivering a reliable and seamless experience to our customers and to advancing standards in the industry.

Accurate, complete and structured product information enables customers to quickly understand specifications, compare alternatives and purchase the right product for their project with confidence.

The following examples show what an ideal Product Detail Page looks like on the Sonepar webshops.

They illustrate how your data - from product identification and descriptions to digital assets, relations and categorisation - comes together to create a consistent, informative and high-quality purchasing experience, including the best suitable combination of products for their installation or project.

In this chapter:

- 1.1 Lighting example
- 1.2 Circuit breaker example



2 | Product identification

The first element that any actor wants in the full supply chain, from manufacturer to end-consumer, is to make sure that they have a form of product identification.

Without identification we run the risk of not having the right product. An identification is a necessity in every process and starts at the manufacturing process.

From there the product ID will be THE element to which any and all related product information is connected. And since this product information

is exchanged electronically in large quantities between multiple parties in the supply chain, it is absolutely essential that the identification is clearly defined and correctly used by all parties. This chapter holds the product identification attributes used within Sonepar.

 For each attribute we describe, we have added a definition and, where needed, listed additional quality rules.

In this chapter:

- 2.1 Identification attributes
 - 2.1.1 Manufacturer Product ID
 - 2.1.2 Supplier Product ID
 - 2.1.3 Global Trade Item Number (GTIN)
 - 2.1.4 Additional product ID's
- 2.2 Rules and requirements



2.1 | Identification attributes (product ID's)

We have focused on describing the product ID's needed for data exchange between suppliers and Sonepar and published through our omnichannel touch-points with customers.

2.1.1 | Manufacturer Product ID

The unique identification is given to the base/smallest product, i.e. the actual product, by the manufacturer.

This ID (or code) does not change per packaging level.

The product is often known in the market by this Manufacturer Product ID and the technical specifications are connected to this code.

 **Make sure the Manufacturer Product ID is available when this ID is well known by customers.**

In opposite situations, like a private label product, this ID should not be shown to customers.

Examples where we expect the Manufacturer Product ID are the single screw, the single light bulb, the 1m of cable.
The lowest level of the packaging hierarchy, mostly without the packaging.

2.1.2 | Supplier Product ID

The Supplier Product ID is given by the supplier of the product data and is a unique identification given to each level or unit of the packaging hierarchy of a product.

With a Supplier Product ID the (packaging) unit can be sold, logistically stored and/or transported.

The smallest unit in the hierarchy does not always have an actual packaging; it can be unpacked (e.g. a copper tube).

When supplier = manufacturer, the Supplier Product ID of the smallest unit in the packaging hierarchy = (often) the Manufacturer Product ID. There are many cases where a supplier is not the manufacturer but acts as an agent or intermediary.

In these situations, it is necessary to also store the GTIN and/or the Manufacturer Product ID next to the Supplier Product ID to make sure customers will get the right search results no matter which ID they search on.

E.g. when a Bosch or Siemens product is not supplied by Bosch or Siemens but through a local country agent, the local agent will have its own Supplier Product ID for its own transactional processes, but the customer will search on the Bosch or Siemens product ID's.



2.1.3 | Global Trade Item Number (GTIN)

Global Trade Item Number (GTIN) is a worldwide unique code based on the global GS1-standard.

A GTIN consists of max. 14 digits where the last digit is a “check digit” calculated according to the GTIN validation rule. Every IT-system that stores the GTIN attribute **MUST** always be able to process 14 digits and apply the check digit validation.

Each product and each package unit of the product within the packaging hierarchy needs to have a unique GTIN; so for the screw, the box, the pallet, etc.

 **A GTIN is the naming used for the code alone. When combined with a barcode, the naming for the symbol is either UPC or EAN.**

For more information, visit GS1:
<https://www.gs1.org/standards/id-keys/gtin>

2.1.4 | Additional product ID's

In some countries products are traded via a central sector database where the product is assigned a country or sector specific ID sometimes a sector is used to communicate an additional type of identification. In the following explanation we've used the terminology from the ETIM BMEcat version 5.0 standard:

Branch Number

(UDX.EDXF.COUNTRY_BRANCH_SUPPLIER_ID type=... country=...)
A unique identification code given by a central country branch or sector organisation. E.g. 'E-number' from STK in Finland or EI number from EFO in Norway.

In 2005 the organisations EAN and UCC merged their organisations into GS1.

 In a GTIN field the following codes (not symbols) can be stored:

- ↪ GTIN-12 (UPC-A): 12-digit number used primarily in North America.
- ↪ GTIN-8 (EAN/UCC-8): 8-digit number used predominately outside of North America.
- ↪ GTIN-13 (EAN/UCC-13): 13-digit number used predominately outside of North America.
- ↪ GTIN-14 (EAN/UCC-14 or ITF-14): 14-digit number used to identify trade items at various packaging levels.

Manufacturer Type Description (MANUFACTURER_TYPE_DESCR)

A unique name or code for the product which may be more widely-known than the correct product name. Often also published by the manufacturer in a more prominent way than other identifiers, and therefore used by customers. Applied in Germany.

Alternative Supplier Product ID (SUPPLIER_ALT_PID)

An additional identifier from the supplier used for the product. Is not the same as the Supplier Product ID. Only to be used when there is an additional necessary identification that cannot be exchanged through any of the previous described attributes.

For more information on ETIM or BMEcat, visit:
<https://www.etim-international.com>



2.2 | Rules and requirements

Identification is necessary to enable our business processes.

To make sure these processes run smoothly, we have noticed that there is a clear need to add some rules on how to handle product identifiers. Following these rules is also crucial in enabling global matching and global creation of profitability and data quality reports.

➡ Supplier Product ID is mandatory

Without a Supplier Product ID, Sonepar is unable to start any of the product data management processes: a product cannot be onboarded without.

When you do not have Supplier Product ID's but only work with GTIN's, please copy the GTIN in the Supplier Product ID field to enable our business processes.

➡ GTIN is preferred, sometimes mandatory

GTIN's enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of data exchange and publication, making products easily findable by customers.

The GTIN is mandatory when a supplier wants to engage their commerce connectors and/or configuraties on a Sonepar omnichannel platform.

➡ Every packaging level , e.g. a single piece, pack, crate, pallet, etc., must have a unique ID, preferably with GTIN's

Example:

- One piece, single unit GTIN 7630268410414
- ≠ Box of 10 pieces GTIN 7630268410421
- ≠ Pallet of 20 boxes GTIN 7630268410438

When you do not use GTIN's, the same rule applies to the application of the Supplier Product ID.

➡ Check for local regulations on additional mandatory product ID's

In some countries there are local regulations and needs. Make sure to check if there is an additional mandatory product ID. E.g. in Finland, Norway and Sweden it's mandatory to apply and communicate the Branch Number.

➡ No usage of group ID's

Sonepar does not recognize or use group IDs (or "dummy" products) in its eCommerce environment. Each product needs to be identified individually, where the customer can select the right product based on the product specifications, such as size or colour code.

➡ Consistent application of identification codes

Consistency ensures automatic matching of product ID's in different business processes (order, delivery, invoicing, scanning, marketing, online search, etc.).

When the code is without spaces: it always needs to be communicated without spaces.

If the code is with a special character, like a hyphen or a dot: this special character always needs to be present in every process.

❗ 123456 ≠ 123 456 ≠ 123-456 ≠ 12.34.56

➡ Do not exceed the allowed length of a product ID

Most standards have a max. length assigned to product ID attributes. Make sure to follow the right format to prevent possible mismatch due to a product ID being cut-off.

Example:

- GTIN max. 14
- Supplier Product ID max. 50
- Manufacturer Product ID max. 50

➡ Manufacturer Product ID is preferred

When product is sold by a reseller or agency, the Manufacturer Product ID is mandatory.

➡ Follow the GS1 identification rules

Sonepar expects its suppliers to follow the GS1-rules for applying and (re)using GTIN's on products, and to apply these rules in a similar way to the Manufacturer and Supplier Product ID.

For more information, visit:

<https://www.gs1.org/1/gtinrules//en/>
or through your local GS1 organization.



3 | Brand, series, type

An important part of selling products is positioning products. Products are brought to the customers attention through marketing campaigns and often presented as part of a whole range of products.

The product will be connected with the existing corporate trade mark image by giving it a Brand. Within product data this is expressed via the Brand name and Brand Logo, and when applicable, a Series name to identify the range within the Brand and a Type to identify any subranges within the Series.

Online, for search engines like Google and within the Sonepar webshops, Brand, Series and Type are essential for customers to quickly find and get all the products belonging to a certain range of products. Within our Sonepar omnichannel platform, we will use these three elements to better display products within a Series or Type to help our customers.

Think of all the different products needed to install a new full working socket. Customers expects to see those products shown together to give them a complete solution.

In this chapter, we describe Brand, Series and Type.

In this chapter:

- 3.1 Brand
- 3.2 Series
- 3.3 Type
- 3.4 Products compliant to multiple Series/Types

3.1 | Brand

Delivery:

Mandatory.

Length:

Max. 30 characters.

What?

The official marketing name for a specified range of products.

Given by the Brand Owner to the product. Brand Owner could be manufacturer, supplier or Sonepar.

If a product has no brand, add the term "UNBRANDED" in the Brand attribute. The Brand given to a product should be the same as it's used on a potential existing Brand page.

 **When changing the Brand of a product the product ID must change too.**

Usage

Used in most product descriptions and within product searches and filtering.

Brands are assigned to the corresponding product records. Often stored as a supplier attribute to maintain better governance.

Other naming:

Trademark, label.

Multilingual

A Brand is commonly not multilingual. Suppliers should have different product ID's when the written Brand name or logo changes per language. Having the Brand in multiple languages only applies when it's mentioned in all languages on the product or packaging.

Examples

Schneider Electric, Philips, TRADEFORCE, 3M.

3.2 | Series

Delivery:

Mandatory, when applicable.

Length:

Max. 30 characters.

What?

The official marketing name for a specified subrange/ sub level of products within a Brand.

Given by the Brand Owner to the product. Brand Owner could be manufacturer, supplier or Sonepar.

Usage

Used in products descriptions and within product searches and filtering Series are assigned to the corresponding product records. Often stored as a supplier attribute to maintain better governance.

Other naming:

Model, range, product line.

Multilingual

A Serie is commonly not multilingual. Suppliers should have different product ID's when the written serie changes per language. Having the Serie in multiple languages only applies when it's mentioned in all languages on the product or packaging.

Examples

Philips: CoreLine or TrueForce; TRADEFORCE: Force Basic.

3.3 | Type

Delivery:

Mandatory, when applicable.

Length:

Max. 30 characters.

What?

The official marketing name for a subset within the series of a Brand, to differentiate one product type from the other within the same series (or product line).

Given by the Brand Owner to the product. Brand Owner could be manufacturer, supplier or Sonepar. Do not use this attribute for the technical type code or serial type code.

Usage

Used in products descriptions and within product searches and filtering.

Types are then assigned to the corresponding product records. Often stored as a supplier attribute in correlation with the Brands and Series to maintain better governance.

Other naming:

Submodel, subrange, product subline.

Examples

Philips/CoreLine: 2 or 2 Recessed or Trunking Gen2;

TRADEFORCE/Force Basic: 13G

Multilingual

A Type is commonly not multilingual. Suppliers should have different product ID's when the written Type changes per language. Having the Type in multiple languages only applies when it's mentioned in all languages on the product or packaging.

Type is not very well known within our sector. In some standards, like FabDis it doesn't even exist.

However, to enable better product selection for customers, we ask our partners to deliver correct and complete Brand and Serie information and to start preparing Type information.

Brand, Series and Type should be unique per Supplier Product ID and/or GTIN. This becomes a challenge in certain situations where Brands are managed differently per country. This is often caused by the different plannings after mergers, acquisitions, etc. There is no one-size-fits-all policy for all countries, considering several reasons, such as a Brand having more importance in one country than the other.

When these situations arise, we expect suppliers to work closely with local and global Sonepar teams.

Having different Brands, Series and Types can cause significant challenges in global data maintenance and in developing quality improvement roadmaps.

General advice

- ➡ Do not differentiate Brand/Series/Type per country/region per Supplier Product ID (and/or GTIN).
- ➡ If needed to stay connected with customer search:
 1. Extend the old Brand with the new Brand for a limited period of time, e.g. Merten by Schneider Electric or Van Geel by Legrand.
 2. Delete the old Brand from the Brand attribute and turn it into a Keyword for the product

3.4 | Products compliant to multiple Series/Types

Some products, like accessories, are not Series specific and can be used generically. In such cases we advise to not apply Series information. However, when a product is specifically designed for a limited set of Series, a supplier should deliver all applicable Series.

➡ In BMEcat this can be done by sending multiple instances of the Series attribute. Same approach goes for Type.



In this chapter:

- 4.1 Why the improvements?
Purpose and benefits
- 4.2 What product descriptions to provide?
 - 4.2.1 Short Description
 - 4.2.2 Long Description HTML
 - 4.2.3 Very Short Description
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 - 4.4.1 Supplier proposals
- 4.5 Matching exchange standards to Sonepar needs

4 | Product description

In refining the performance of our day-to-day processes, especially online search and customer experience, Sonepar has identified that product descriptions need improvement.

Within this chapter, we focus on setting the standard for product descriptions that exist in our product data environment and that are used on our Sonepar omnichannel platform.

4.1 | Why the improvements? Purpose and benefits



Visibility

SEO-optimized product descriptions help to improve visibility on search engines. Including keywords/features that potential customers are searching for can significantly increase the amount of organic traffic.



Click-through rate

SEO isn't just about including keywords. It's also about making the title compelling to potential customers. A well-crafted, enticing title can significantly improve the click-through rate from the search results page to the product page.



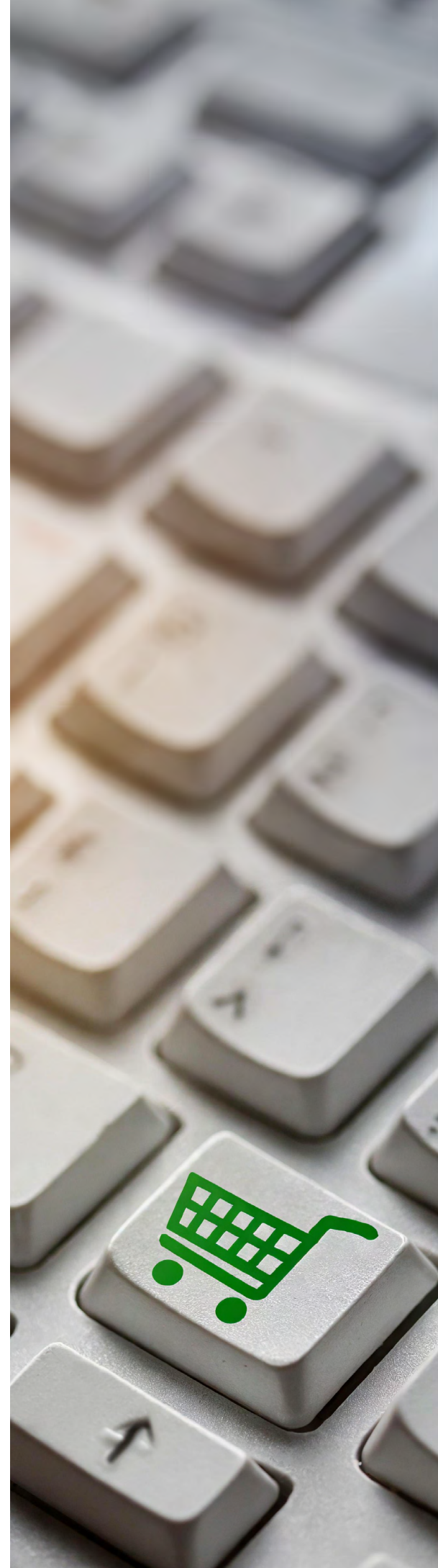
User experience

Optimized product descriptions help customers understand what the product is about before taking the next action. This can improve the user experience by setting accurate expectations.



Conversion

Ultimately, all of the above contribute to the main goal: conversion. By driving more relevant traffic to the product pages, we are likely to see an increase in conversions and sales.



4.2 | What product descriptions to provide?

We have several types of descriptions, each related to one or more specific processes, each having its own purpose. Improving the content of description and setting up rules, means that we have to start with a base level of standardisation.

Therefore, we focus on the descriptions types mentioned in this chapter. These descriptions are essential for the Sonepar processes to take advantage of all potential benefits and achieve better overall performances.

4.2.1 | Short description

Delivery:

Mandatory.

Length:

Max. 80 characters.

What?

Unique concise product description, as readable as possible.

Usage

For invoices, packing slip/delivery notice, system-2-system exchange (EDI).

Other naming:

N/A

Multilingual

Yes,

Deliver at least in all official country languages.

HTML:

No.

4.2.2 | Long description HTML

Delivery:

Essential.

Length:

Generally around 300 words, technically max. 64,000 characters.

What?

Unique engaging and informative description of the product, highlighting all its key features and Unique Selling Points (USP's).

Usage

Within Sonepar omnichannel platform on the Product Detail Page.

Other naming:

Marketing description, detailed description.

Multilingual

Yes,

Deliver at least in all official country languages.

HTML:

Yes.

4.2.3 | Very short description

Next to the two aforementioned descriptions, there is a third one that probably exists and is requested by most if not all of Sonepar Companies. However, due to its short length, we believe it's impossible to create a good qualitative description for a product.

Therefore, the usage of this description type should be avoided in any outbound channel towards our customers. Besides below explanation, the other paragraphs do not refer to this description.

Delivery:

Often mandatory.

Length:

Max. 40 characters.

What?

Unique very short product description which consists mostly out of technical abbreviations; even the Brand is shortened.

This needs to be this short due to (legacy) process limitations, e.g. printed labels, invoices, etc. only allowing limited space.

Usage

Often mandatory field used in ERP systems. Still used for invoices, product and shelf labels. Should be avoided to be used towards customers.

Other naming:

ERP description.

Multilingual

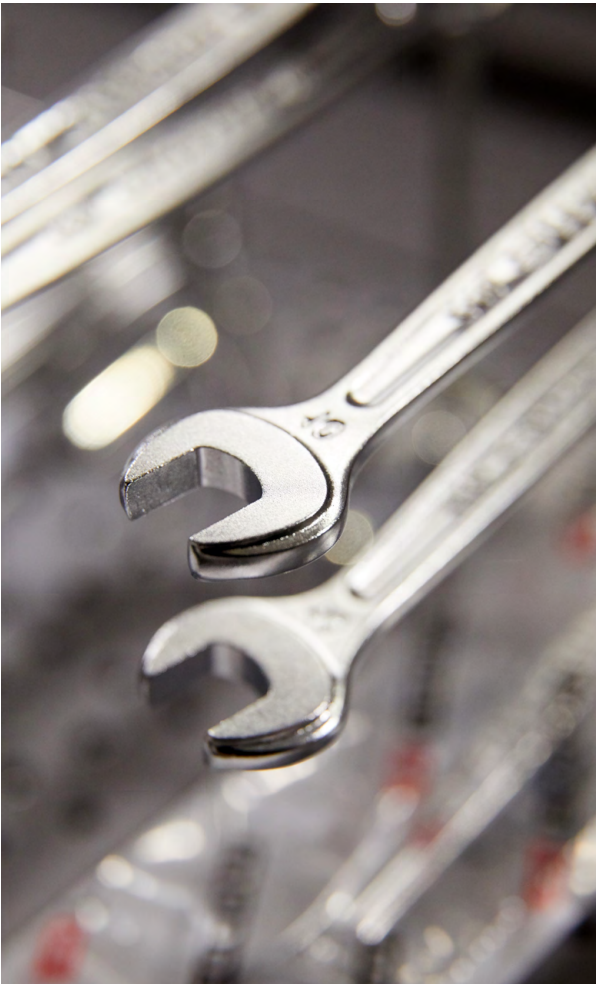
Yes,
Deliver at least in all official country languages.

HTML:

No.

4.2.4 | Sonepar Product title

The description for the online product title is explained in [section 4.4 "Sonepar Product title"](#).



4.3 | Rules and requirements

All product description fields need to fulfil below requirements to ensure best user experience and traffic (SEO) / conversion performance.

Please make sure you follow these rules as much as possible when creating each one of your product descriptions.

4.3.1 | General rules

→ Uniqueness

Any product description must be unique.

Relevance and keyword placement

- Include the product category (e.g.: product type, ETIM class: "hammer", "signal cable", "LED lamp").
- Include relevant keywords that accurately specify the product.
- Avoid keyword stuffing or unnatural repetition of keywords.

→ Abbreviations

Avoid using abbreviations as much as possible to not confuse customers, but:

- Use standard industry abbreviations when appropriate (e.g.: AC for "alternating current"),
- Use abbreviations for measurements, such as "cm", "oz", "in", and "kg",
- When using abbreviations and shortened names to make the content unique and fit the Very Short and Short Description, ensure consistency and that product remains identifiable (e.g.: "PH" for "PHILIPS", "MCB" for "Miniature Circuit Breaker", etc.).

→ Prepositions and conjunctions

Only use when necessary to describe accurately the product (at, of, and...).

→ Numerals

Use numerals instead of spelled-out numbers for measurements, quantities, or specific product attributes (e.g.: "8 mm").

→ Punctuation and special characters

- Based on user experience, we recommend to use commas to separate distinct elements within the Short and Very Short Description (e.g.: "LED Bulb, Energy Efficient, 60W Equivalent"), as long as it fits the maximum length of the field.
- Don't use non-language ASCII characters such as &, Æ, ©, or ®.

→ Clear and descriptive language

- Clearly describe the primary features, functionality, or purpose of the product.
- Use industry-specific terminology or keywords that are commonly used by target customers.
- Do not use superlatives or subjective commentaries that may compromise credibility: "Hot Item", "Best/Best Seller", "New", "Latest", etc.
- Do not include any price and/or quantity related information.

Examples (created by Sonepar)

- Philips GreenSpace Accent Downlight GD301B 2700 lm, 830 Warm White, PSU-E, MB CP
- Allen-Bradley Resid. Circuit Device 2 poles 100 mA Sensitivity 63 A delay option
- Busch-Jaeger Busch-Dynasty Socket Steplight LED Studio White Matt Thermoplastic

4.3.2 | Additional rules or exceptions

➡ Content and order for good identification

We expect almost the same order and content for the Short Description and the Long Description HTML, being:

1. Series (model or range) *
2. Type (submodel or -range) *
3. Type of product (e.g. consistent with product group or category, e.g. circuit breakers, screwdriver or signal cable).
4. Most important features/USP's (between 3 to 5 characteristics).

** Content to be added if applicable and when there is no separate attribute available in the data feed to Sonepar for Series or Type.*

Further Guidelines for Brand, Series and Type can be found in [Chapter 3 | Brand, Series and Type](#).

4.3.3 | Additional rules Long Description

➡ Readability

Large blocks of text can discourage users from reading.

Make descriptions easy to read and scan by using short paragraphs, bullet points or numbered lists. Accepted (HTML) formatting:

1. Special symbols like /, –, =, *, or > (to enhance readability).
2. Bold, Italic and Underlined (, <i> </i>, <u> </u>).
3. Importance or urgency ().
4. Emphasizing ().
5. Line breaks (
).
6. Bullet or ordered list (, ,).
7. Paragraph (<p> </p>).
8. Inline ().
9. Divisions or block-level (<div> </div>).
10. Heading (<h1> to <h6>).

➡ Features

Describe the features and highlight their benefits to the potential buyer. This can help to convince the customer of the value of the product, thereby encouraging conversion.

➡ Use of language

Ensure the text is clear and easy to understand for our target audience. Not all users will understand every term, acronym or Brand jargon; either explain or avoid.

4.3.4 | Example of a Long Description



Heat Radiator - Accessio Digital 2 Horizontal 1000W in White

Optimize heating efficiency with the Accessio Digital 2 Horizontal Radiator. This energy efficient radiator delivers consistent, inertial warmth, enhancing comfort while minimizing energy consumption.

• Key Features

- **Enhanced Performance:** the heating body is filled with thermo-conductive fluid for even heat distribution. The digital control unit allows for precise temperature control, and the performance coefficient of 0.1 indicates high efficiency.
- **Easier Installation:** Simplified mounting height and a wall bracket that serves as a template for quick installation.
- **Increased Comfort:** Delivers diffuse inertial warmth, perceptible for an extended period.
- **Greater Savings:** Designed to meet the needs of households with multiple bathrooms, helping to reduce energy consumption.
- **Enhanced Design:** Space-saving design, starting from 41cm in width. Available in horizontal format and white color (RAL 9016).
- **Additional Services:** Includes a 2-year parts warranty, express parts replacement, repair compensation, and customer service available 5 days a week in France.



HEAT RADIATOR - ACCESSIO DIGITAL 2 HORIZONTAL 1000W IN WHITE

- Heating body with thermo-conductive fluid.
- Digital control unit.
- Performance coefficient: 0.1.
- 2-year parts warranty.
- Express parts warranty.
- Repair compensation.
- Customer service available 5 days a week in France.
- Simplified mounting height.
- Wall bracket serves as a template for quick installation.
- Offers diffuse inertial warmth, perceptible for an extended period.
- Meets the needs of households equipped with a bathroom with both a bathtub and shower or two bathrooms.
- Space-saving: reduced footprint, starting from 41cm in width.
- Available in one format: Horizontal.
- Available in one color: White (RAL 9016).



Heat Radiator ACCESSIO DIGITAL 2 horizontal, 1000W white, heating body with thermo-conductive fluid, digital control unit, performance coefficient: 0.1, 2-year parts warranty, express parts warranty, repair compensation, customer service 5 days/week, simplified mounting height, wall bracket is template for quick installation, offers diffuse inertial warmth, perceptible for an extended period, for households with a bathroom with both a bathtub and shower or two bathrooms, space-saving: reduced footprint, starting from 41cm in width, available in one format: horizontal, available in one color: White (RAL 9016).

4.4 | Sonepar Product title

The primary leading information online for our customers is our Sonepar Product Title. This title is a unique product description, a more readable, extended version of the short description. It holds the same information as mentioned in [section 4.3.2](#), without any shortening of words.

This text can be found at multiple places within our Sonepar omnichannel platform. It is used on the Product Listing Page (PLP), on the Product Detail Page (PDP) and in the page URL's, meaning it's also one of the primary keys used in external search engines, like Google, to find the product.

The screenshot displays the Sonepar product detail page for an Emergency Light LED - Safetyline - Escape route signage. The product title is "Sonepar - Emergency Light LED - Safetyline - Escape route signage, Single-sided, 3 - 8 h, 23 m, IP54, L x W 245 x 138 mm". The page includes a search bar, navigation links, and a sidebar with product variants. The main content area shows the product image, a list of variants (Mounting method: Ceiling surface mounting, Type of indicator: Single-sided, Degree of protection (IP): IP54), and a pricing section with a price of 9,99 € by unit. The page also features a "Compare" button and a "My Cart" icon.

Example: Sonepar

Currently the Sonepar Product Title is not received from our suppliers, because it doesn't fit in the existing standards, meaning that each Sonepar company creates its own product title.

Therefore, Sonepar emphasize the importance of delivering complete and extensive data for the following attributes to give our Sonepar companies the right information to build high quality product titles. Most of these attributes are mentioned in this guideline.

- Brand Name.
- Series (model or range), if applicable.
- Type (submodel or -range), if applicable.
- Short Description.
- Long Description HTML.
- ETIM Class.
- ETIM Features.

4.4.1 | Supplier proposals

Due to the rework it requires to create a good Sonepar Product Title, Sonepar encourages its suppliers to work together with the Sonepar companies on delivering product title proposals in each language separately from the known standards.

When delivered, please follow the rules and requirements as described in section [4.3. “Rules and requirements”](#) with the following additions:

- No max. length, but preferably around max. 200 characters.
- Capitalize the first letter of each word (also called Camel case), except for prepositions (in, over, with) and conjunctions (and, or).
- No abbreviations unless it’s a standard industry abbreviation or for measurements.
- No HTML.



4.5 | Matching exchange standards to Sonepar needs

How we receive data from supplier is different per country due to the different local standards used; to name a few:

- ➡ Metel (Italy),
- ➡ FAB-DIS (France),
- ➡ STK (Finland).

Next to local standards, there are also international standards, like the well-known ETIM BMEcat Guideline. The ETIM BMEcat Guideline holds both global and country specific requirements.

Because most Sonepar company processes are based on local standards and systems, we have created a sort of mapping table. The first column holds the Sonepar description attributes with a preferred length based on current usage in the Sonepar companies and the other columns contain examples of standards used by Sonepar companies.

It's clear that none of these external standards have a complete 1-on-1 mapping. There are differences in all of them. However, it gives insight which and how supplier product descriptions can or will be used as input for the Sonepar descriptions.

The Sonepar description attributes are described in the previous paragraphs including the applicable rules and requirements.

The main challenge we face when aiming for high quality product descriptions is the different lengths between the Sonepar attributes and each of the standards.

Be aware that when the supplier descriptions are to be used 1-on-1 and at a Sonepar Company an attribute has a shorter length than the given input, this can result in the original data to be cut off.

Sonepar will aim for enabling in the near future the upcoming product data exchange standard "ETIM xChange", making sure this data can be processed in Sonepar's Product Data Experience Onboarding Portal. This means that the current preferred length can be subject to change.

Sonepar		ETIM BMEcat		FAB-DIS (France)		STK (Finland)		Metel (Italy)		DDS (US)		DICO (Netherlands)	
Attribute	Length*	Attribute	Length	Attribute	Length	Attribute	Length	Attribute	Length	Attribute	Length	Attribute	Length
Brand name	30	Brand name	50	Marque	50	TT110 Supplier's brand name	20	Marca	20	Brand	30	Brand	35
Series	30	Product series	50	Gamme	50	TT120 Product family	20	N/A, see ETIM BMEcat	-	Series	30	ProductModel	35
Type	30	Product variation	50	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A, see ETIM BMEcat	-	Type	30	ProductVariation	35
Very short description	40	Very short description	40	Libelle30	30	TT201 Technical name	30	Descriptione prodotto	43	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Short description	80	Short description	Technical: 150 Advised: 80	Libelle80	80	N/A, but combination 'TT200 General name' + 'TT201 Technical name' could be used	30+30	N/A, see ETIM BMEcat	-	US Core Short Description	128	Product Description	70
Long description HTML	64 000	Long description HTML	64 000	N/A	N/A	TT203 Long description	Unknown	N/A, see ETIM BMEcat	-	US Core Long Description	4 000	'Marketing Text' could be used	1 000
N/A	N/A	Tender text	64 000	-	-	-	-	-	-	Sub Brand	30	-	-
N/A	N/A	Manufacturer Type description	50	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

*This is Sonepar's preferred length to better match with all different standards and internal systems.

5 | Digital assets

With the digital world becoming or already being the central touch point in our communication with customers, a full set of product data needs to be available in our web shops including the necessary digital assets.

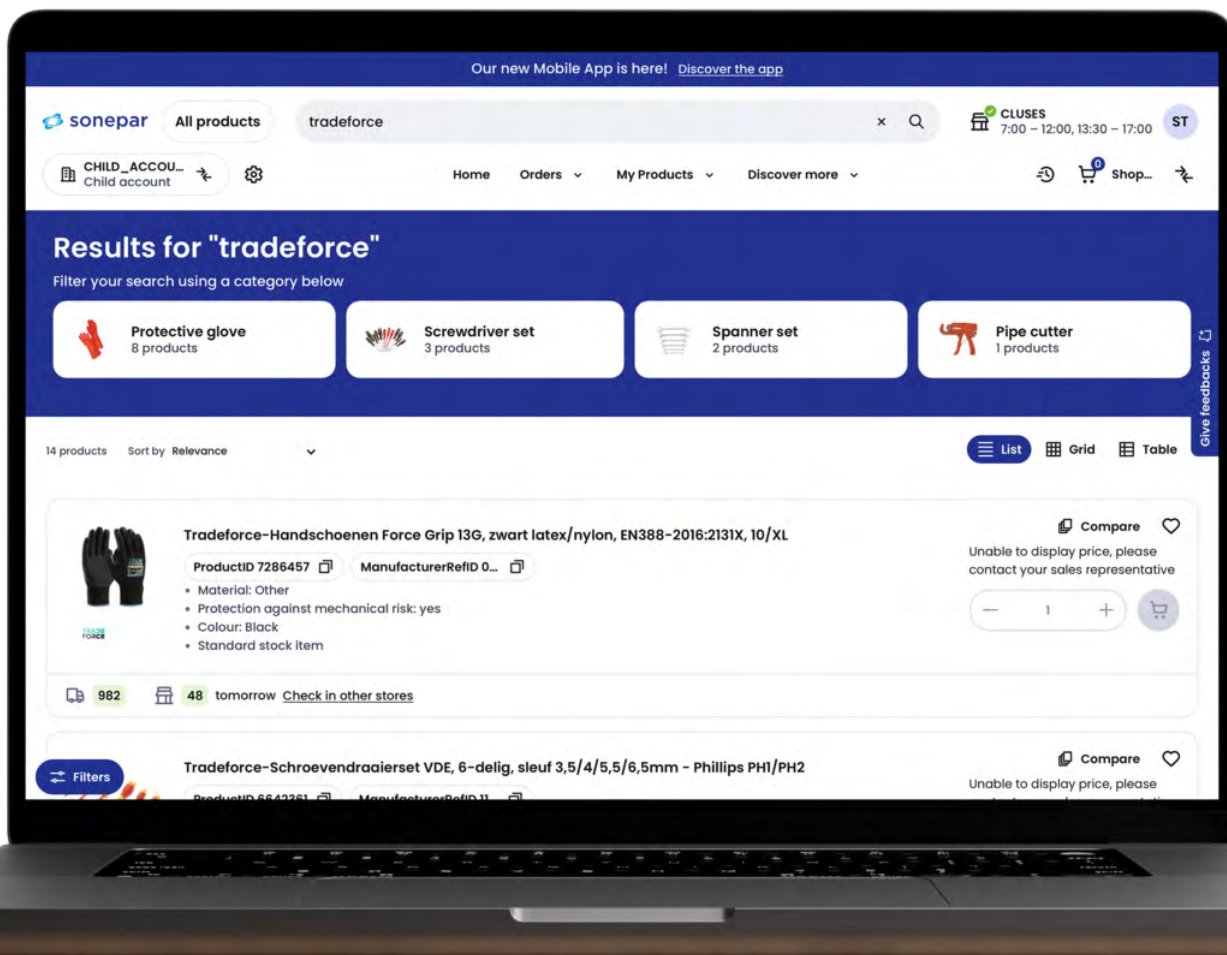
Digital assets, like images, videos and documentation play an important role in the recognition of a product and the confirmation of selecting the right product. Customers select those products where the product information fulfills their needs.

It is very important that the provided digital assets hold at least the same information as what is stated in the product descriptions and technical specifications. Preferably the assets complete the data by giving additional information that cannot be provided elsewhere.

To make sure that the digital assets are of high quality and that Sonepar can process, maintain, and publish them on webshops without any issues, we have created a set of guidelines on what and how to deliver these assets.

In this chapter:

- 5.1 Expected digital assets
 - 5.1.1 For all products
 - Must-have
 - 5.1.2 Minimally for core product/runners
 - Must-have
 - 5.1.3 Category specific requirements
- 5.2 Delivery requirements
- 5.3 Specifications and technical requirements
 - 5.3.1 Images
 - 5.3.2 Video
 - 5.3.3 Logo
 - 5.3.4 Documents
 - 5.3.5 Other asset types



5.1 | Expected digital assets

Sonepar expects its suppliers to provide digital assets for each product as specified in this chapter. For easier recognition we have added the MIME-code from the ETIM BMEcat guideline version 5.0.

Please check out the following chapters for detailed information on assets required for all product categories.

5.1.1 | For all products - Must-have

- Primary product image, MD01
- Product data sheet, MD22
- Environmental Product Declaration (EPD), MD54
- Compliance documents (when applicable)
 - Safety data sheet, MD03
 - CLP, Classification, Labelling and Packaging, MD43
 - Energy label, MD06
 - Product data sheet for energy label, MD07
 - RoHS declaration, MD49
 - CE declaration, MD52
 - Deeplink REACH, MD05
 - Construction Products Regulation, MD11
 - AVCP certificate, Assessment and Verification of Constancy of Performance, MD42
 - Declaration CoC, Certificate of Conformity, requested for CPR, MD50
 - Declaration DOP, Declaration of performance, MD51
 - Declaration ETA, European Technical Assessment, MD55
 - Calibration certificate, MD08
 - Declaration warranty (Warranty statement), MD56
 - Any other applicable legal compliance certificates or documents

- Customers want to see several images of the product, preferably in different angles and detailed zooms.
- Most people are visually orientated.

5.1.2 | Minimally for core product/runners - Must-have

Sonepar has received feedback from its customers that they want more pictures, videos and documents to help them identify and select the right products. The following type of assets have been commonly mentioned. Please deliver them for at least your runners/core products, when applicable or relevant.

- Manuals, instructions or any documentation for proper product usage
 - Instructions for use, MD14
 - Mounting instruction, MD21
 - Technical manual, MD32
 - Management, operation and maintenance document, MD38
- Video (1 or more from below options)
 - Instructional video, MD39
 - Product video, MD45
 - Application video, MD57
 - Question and Answer (Q&A video) (MD58)

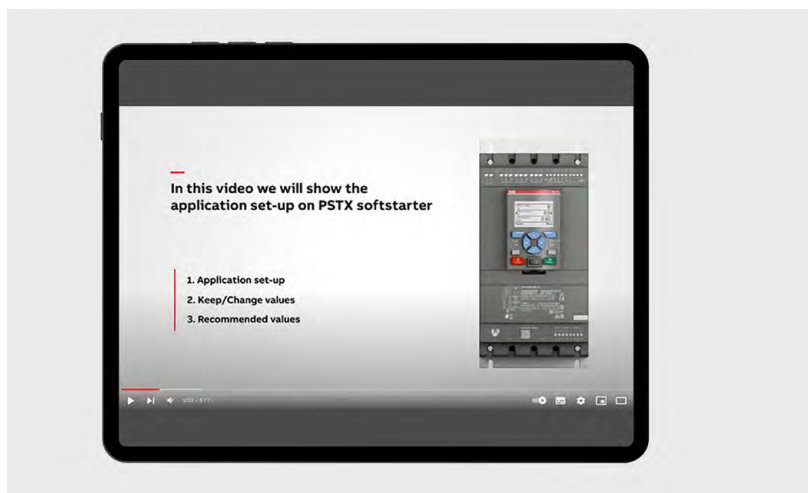


Illustration: Instructional video, MD39. From 'ABB Electrification' YouTube channel.

- Images and videos should complement product descriptions to give complete understanding of the product.
- A video helps in confirming customers' expectations when selecting and buying a product.
- Videos are easier for customers to consume than product specifications.

- Additional information
 - Certificate, MD09
 - 360° view, MD46



Illustration: product pictures from Signify.

5.1.3 | Category specific requirements

The following sections list on high level per product category which additional asset types are applicable and should be delivered to Sonepar. Please check the section(s) relevant to your product assortment.

Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) | Household & Appliances | Sanitary

● Must-have
 ◐ Must-have for core
 ⦿ When applicable
 ⊘ Not applicable

Digital Asset type	HVAC	Household & Appliances	Sanitary
Dimensioned drawing (MD12)	●	⦿	●
Ambient picture (MD20)	⦿	◐	◐
Product picture back view (MD23)	⦿	◐	◐
Product picture bottom view (MD24)	⦿	◐	◐
Product picture detailed view (MD25)	◐	◐	◐
Product picture front view (MD26)	⦿	◐	◐
Product picture sloping (MD27)	⦿	◐	◐
Product picture top view (MD28)	⦿	◐	◐
Product picture view from the left side (MD29)	⦿	◐	◐
Product picture view from the right side (MD30)	⦿	◐	◐
Wiring diagram (MD34)	◐	⦿	⦿
Exploded view drawing (MD60)	◐	⦿	◐

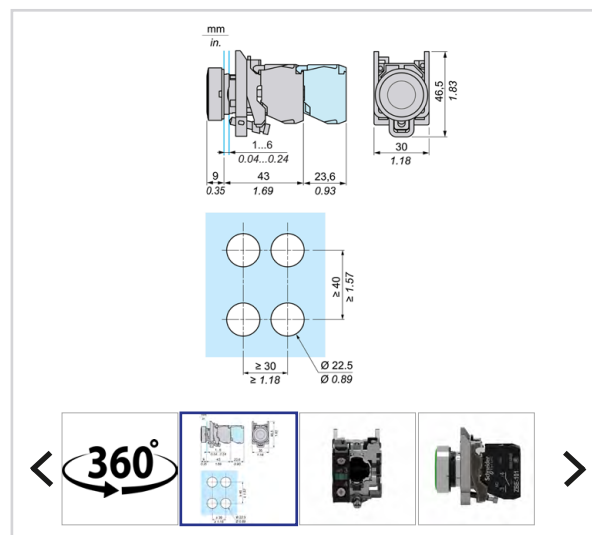


Illustration: Dimensional drawing, MD12. From Schneider Electric.

Adding drawing as a picture gives customers direct visibility and easy access to additional information at the top of the product page, where technical specifications and documents are otherwise positioned low on the product detail page.

Power & Automation

● Must-have

● Must-have for core

○ When applicable

⊘ Not applicable

Digital Asset type	Power Distribution	Industrial Controls & Automation		Building Automation & Construction
		Software	Industrial & Automation (excl. Software)	
Dimensioned drawing (MD12)	●	⊘	●	●
Ambient picture (MD20)	○	⊘	○	○
Product picture back view (MD23)	○	⊘	○	○
Product picture bottom view (MD24)	○	⊘	○	○
Product picture detailed view (MD25)	●	⊘	●	●
Product picture front view (MD26)	○	⊘	○	○
Product picture sloping (MD27)	○	⊘	○	○
Product picture top view (MD28)	○	⊘	○	○
Product picture view from the left side (MD29)	○	⊘	○	○
Product picture view from the right side (MD30)	○	⊘	○	○
Wiring diagram (MD34)	●	⊘	●	●
Exploded view drawing (MD60)	●	⊘	●	●

Renewable energy

● Must-have

● Must-have for core

○ When applicable

⊘ Not applicable

Digital Asset type	Photovoltaic	Inverters	Solar Energy storage	Other
Dimensioned drawing (MD12)	●	●	●	○
Ambient picture (MD20)	○	○	○	○
Product picture back view (MD23)	○	○	○	○
Product picture bottom view (MD24)	○	○	○	○
Product picture detailed view (MD25)	●	●	●	○
Product picture front view (MD26)	○	○	○	○
Product picture sloping (MD27)	○	○	○	○
Product picture top view (MD28)	○	○	○	○
Product picture view from the left side (MD29)	○	○	○	○
Product picture view from the right side (MD30)	○	○	○	○
Wiring diagram (MD34)	○	○	○	○
Exploded view drawing (MD60)	●	●	●	○

Lighting

● Must-have

● Must-have for core

○ When applicable

⊘ Not applicable

Digital Asset type	Luminaires	Lamps	Other
Dimensioned drawing (MD12)	●	●	○
Light cone diagram (MD15)	○	○	⊘
Light Distribution Curve (MD16)	○	●	⊘
Luminaire data (MD19)	○	○	⊘
Ambient picture (MD20)	●	●	○
Product picture back view (MD23)	●	●	○
Product picture bottom view (MD24)	●	●	○
Product picture detailed view (MD25)	●	●	○
Product picture front view (MD26)	●	●	○
Product picture sloping (MD27)	●	●	○
Product picture top view (MD28)	●	●	○
Product picture view from the left side (MD29)	●	●	○
Product picture view from the right side (MD30)	●	●	○
Wiring diagram (MD34)	●	○	○
Exploded view drawing (MD60)	●	○	○

Cables & Wires | Safety, Tools & Engineering Supplies | Any other product/service

● Must-have

● Must-have for core

○ When applicable

⊘ Not applicable

Digital Asset type	Cables & Wires	Safety, Tools & Engineering Supplies	Any other product/service
Dimensioned drawing (MD12)	○	●	○
Ambient picture (MD20)	○	●	○
Product picture back view (MD23)	○	●	○
Product picture bottom view (MD24)	○	●	○
Product picture detailed view (MD25)	●	●	○
Product picture front view (MD26)	○	●	○
Product picture sloping (MD27)	○	●	○
Product picture top view (MD28)	○	●	○
Product picture view from the left side (MD29)	○	●	○
Product picture view from the right side (MD30)	○	●	○
Wiring diagram (MD34)	⊘	○	○
Exploded view drawing (MD60)	○	○	○

5.2 | Delivery requirements

Beyond Sonepar specifying the expected and preferred digital assets, we explain here the method for delivering these assets.

- Preferably deliver a digital asset as a file. Delivery as a URL is acceptable when:
 - this results in a direct downloadable file;
 - it's a deeplink and it results in an active page;
 - it's a video and it results in directly opening and playing the video.
- Each file can only be delivered for 1 asset type and is not to be delivered with multiple asset types.
- Validation is done on the combination of a unique file name + file extension.
- Each product can only hold 1 primary image. Sending a second primary image will result in overwriting the previous image. The MIME code for primary image is in the ETIM BMEcat guideline version 5.0 is MD01.
- For all other asset types, each product can hold multiple files.
 - Therefore, deleting a file is only possible by sending it again with same name and extension and an expiry date.
- Each product should have its own unique image. Please limit the use of so-called symbol or group pictures for a multitude of products.
- Any asset containing readable text must be delivered in the official local country language(s) and preferably also in English.
Exclude images where the text is an integral part of the product, e.g. a push button with ON/OFF on it.



5.3 | Specifications & technical requirements

Quality, format, regulation, do's and don'ts, we explain it all in this subchapter.

5.3.1 | Images

- Colour mode RGB.
- Minimum dimension for online presentation is 1000x1000 pixels in 72 dpi (or ppi). Recommendation 2000x2000 pixels in 72 dpi (or ppi).
- Most images are not used for print, but when print is required, please align with the local Sonepar companies.
- 1:1 ratio is preferred (square format).
- Images must be accurate, clear and large enough for zooming in.

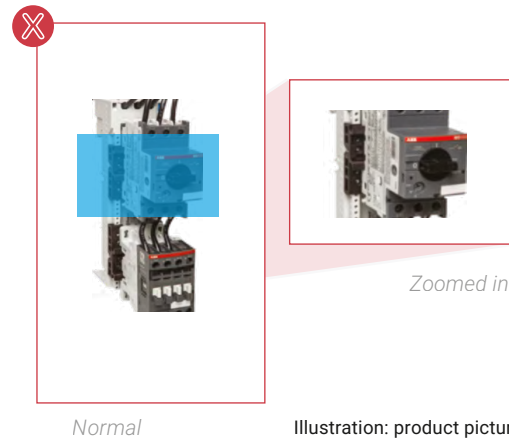
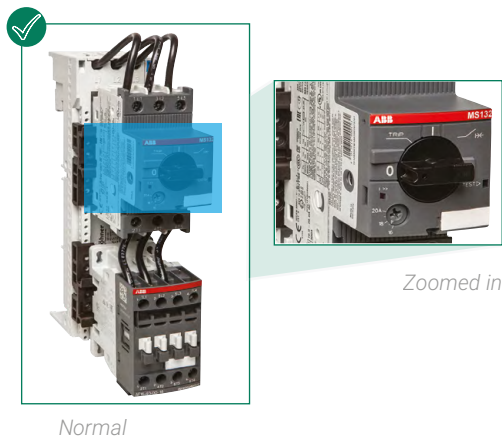
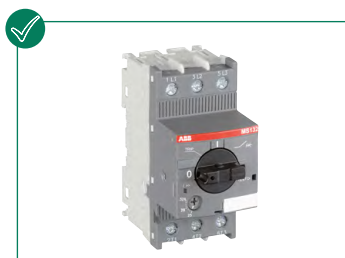


Illustration: product pictures from ABB.

Images (normal and zoomed) in take full screen, allowing users to easily see details and read information on the product.

Not enough zoom for users to check useful details on the product; additionally, the picture gets blurry.

- Without background.
- If this is not possible, then include its clipping path. The last and least preferred option is with white/transparent background. **This specific rule does not apply to ambient pictures.**



- An image without background will make it usable in all types of media and will ensure consistency among Product Detail Pages and Product Listing Pages.
- Online, these rules will ensure a display of clean and neat images with well-highlighted product details, giving the images professional and reliable impressions.

- Remove any information from the image that is not generic or of temporary nature. Examples are serial numbers, prices, best before dates, etc.

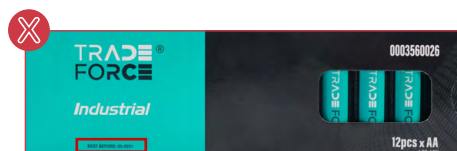
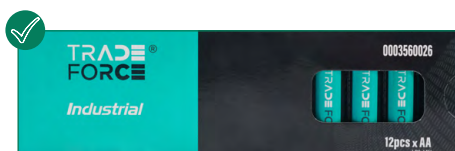


Illustration from Sonepar.

- The image should occupy at least 85% of the area with minimal blank margin.



Illustration: provided by ABB.

- Max. file size 10Mb.
- No watermark.
- No logo or supplier/manufacturer name as layer or background.
- Image assets have 1 of the following extensions:
 - .JPG/JPEG;
 - .TIF/TIFF;
 - .PNG;
 - .WEBP;
 - .BMP
- Only add embedded text to an image asset when this has high added value to the customer experience. This embedded information needs to be also available in the delivered general product data, e.g. in the product specifications so that it's accessible for those unable to use or look at the images.
- When the image holds embedded text, it must meet the contrast background to foreground ratio of 4,5 to 1, as in this example:



Good contrast



Bad contrast

- The following MIME codes from the ETIM BMEcat guideline version 5.0 are defined as image assets:

MD01	MD02	MD12
MD20	MD23	MD24
MD25	MD26	MD27
MD28	MD29	MD30
MD47	MD59	MD60
MD62	MD64	

5.3.2 | Video

- To be delivered as a direct playable URL.
- If captions/subtitles are used in the video, make sure they are embedded within the direct playable video. A user should be able to turn on/off the captions/subtitles while watching the video.
- Minimal resolution is 720p or higher.
- The following MIME codes from the ETIM BMEcat guideline version 5.0 are defined as video assets:

MD39	MD45	MD57	MD58
------	------	------	------

5.3.3 | Logo

- The allowed formats are .EPS; .JPG/JPEG and .PNG
- The following MIME codes from the ETIM BMEcat guideline version 5.0 are defined as Logo assets:

MD17	MD18
------	------

5.3.4 | Documents

- The allowed format is .PDF.
- Documents with readable text must be delivered in all official local country language(s).
- Documents with readable text should, next to the official local language, also be delivered in the English language.

PDF files must meet WCAG 2.1 level AA accessibility requirements. A second but less preferred option is the PDF UA standard.

- For Luminaire data assets, like in ETIM BMEcat guideline version 5.0 MIME code 'MD19', formats .IES and .LDT are also allowed.
- The following MIME codes from the ETIM BMEcat guideline version 5.0 are defined as document assets:

MD15	MD16	MD19	MD21	MD22	MD31	MD32	MD33	MD34	MD35
MD03	MD05	MD06	MD07	MD08	MD09	MD10	MD11	MD13	MD14
MD38	MD40	MD41	MD42	MD43	MD44	MD48	MD49	MD50	MD51
MD52	MD53	MD54	MD55	MD56	MD61	MD63	MD65		

5.3.5 | Other asset types

- 360 view asset to be delivered as a URL leading to a direct rendering of the 360 view (ETIM BMEcat guideline MIME code MD46).
- 3D/BIM asset to be delivered in formats .STEP/.DXF/.STP/.DWG/.RFA/.IFC/.RVT (ETIM BMEcat MIME code MD37);
- Deeplink product page to be delivered as a URL leading to an active product specific page (ETIM BMEcat guideline MIME code MD04).



In this chapter:

- 6.1 General requirements
- 6.2 Successor
- 6.3 Accessories
- 6.4 Similar
- 6.5 Spare parts
- 6.6 Prerequisites
- 6.7 Variants

6 | Product Relations

A product relation is a link between 2 or more products and there are multiple types of relations, each solving a specific need for customers.

Product relations answer customer's expectations to be correctly informed about which products could, or should be bought together to complete a full installation or working solution. And, in case of replacement, to lead them to the product's successor or right spare parts. Secondly, product relations can boost the conversion for products that otherwise might not have been sold.

This chapter explains the requirements for product relation types actively used within Sonepar, which suppliers can deliver.

For better recognition, we have added the connection to the ETIM BMEcat guidelines.

Please note that the different product relation types are not always fully available in each Sonepar webshop.

6.1 | General requirements



Product Relations requirements

Sonepar requires its suppliers to provide all possible and applicable relations, thereby adding value to the customer experience and meeting customer needs.



Product Data Integration

All products existing within a product relation have been or are delivered to Sonepar in data loads and are therefore known by Sonepar.



6.2 | Successor

Successor describes the relationship between a product being phased out and a new product replacing it.

The successor must have at least the same purpose and functions as the previous product but often is an improved, more advanced version of the previous product.

Sonepar expects the price of the successor to be similar to the price of the product it is replacing.

A successor is always a 1-on-1 relation, where the first product has an expiry date (inactive or to become inactive) and the other product must be active. In ETIM BMEcat, use reference type follow up.

6.3 | Accessories

An accessory is a relation between products where the child product (related or referred product) serves as an accessory to the parent or source product.

An accessory is considered to extend or enhance the functionality of the source product.

Examples of accessories include a wire cutter or straight-through cable joint for cables, a case, screen protector or power bank for a mobile phone, and a paintbrush for paint. Accessories are used for cross-selling. In ETIM BMEcat, use the reference type 'accessories'.

Parent product: Nexans
Mobiway MOB (cable drum)



Child products:
2 different Nexans cables



Illustration from Nexans.

6.4 | Similar

A similar relation connects products which are similar or comparable in purpose and functions to the source product and can possibly be used as substitutes. Similarity is based on technical specifications, and should be a 100% comparable replacement, although it is not strictly necessary.

Related products can offer customers an alternative when the first product is out of stock or can be proposed as a better solution (upsell). In ETIM BMEcat, use the reference type 'similar'.

6.5 | Spare parts

Spare part relations connect a main product with the various elements in its constructed from, which can be individually replaced during maintenance and repair activities.

For example, a central heating system has many spare parts, such as flowmeters, valves, thermostats, lever handles, and heat exchangers.

If available, add a digital asset type 'Exploded view drawing' to the main product. In ETIM BMEcat, use the reference type 'spare part'.

6.6 | Prerequisites

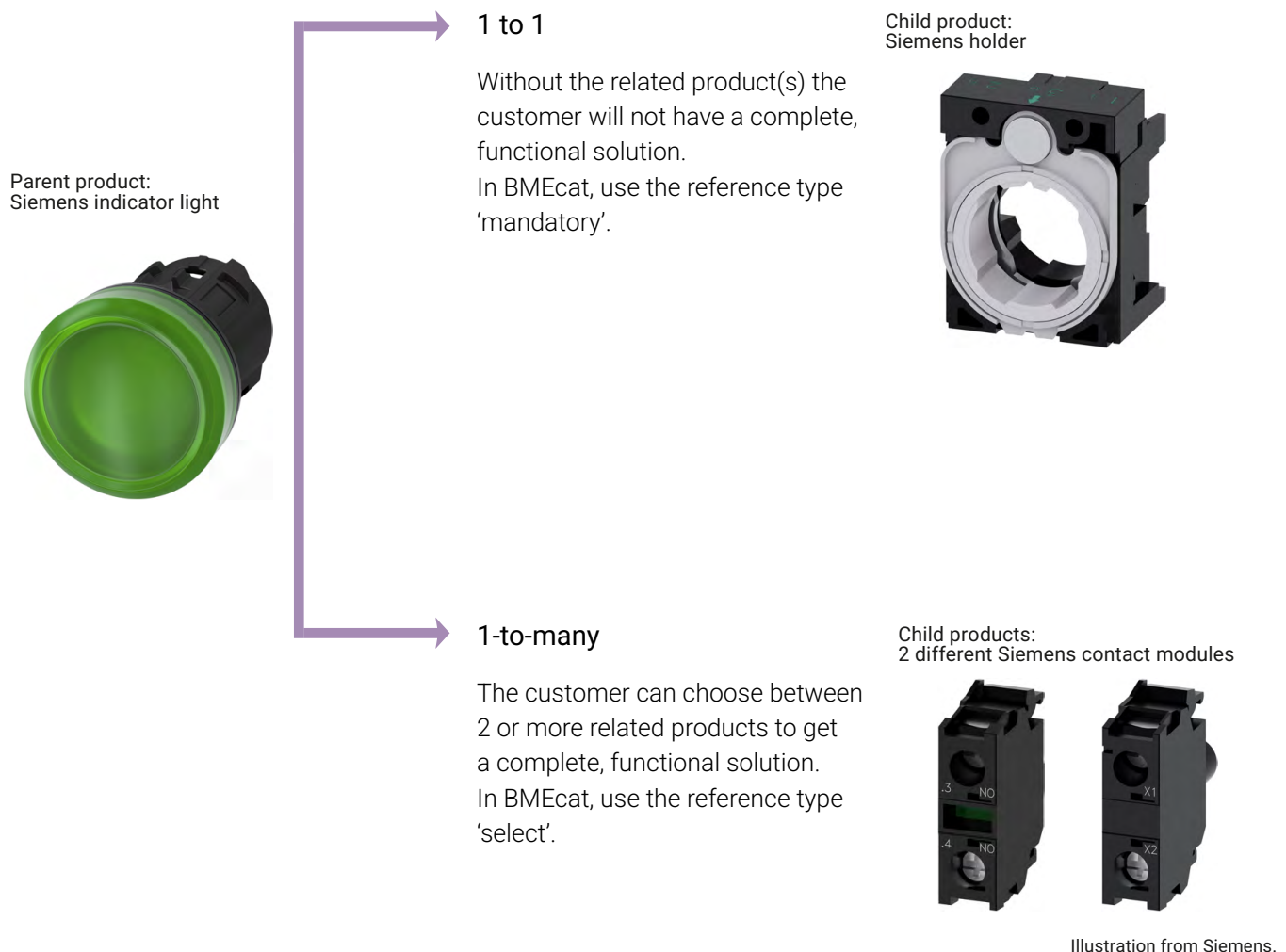
A prerequisite is a relation between different products that are a must to combine together to give a working solution, there is an operational dependency from one to the other.

Like a tabletop needs table legs to become a table, a wheel barrel a wheel to be wheeled around, or a Safety Module that needs a license to operate.

Even though the products belong together, the supplier has chosen to identify and sell the items separate from each other. For instance to give customers options in how to compose the complete solution or to better support future replacements of specific parts.

With this relation type Sonepar can give customers a strong recommendation to buy the products together.

Sonepar recognises two sorts of Prerequisite Relations:



Sonepar deviates from the ETIM BMEcat definition for mandatory and select, which states that the products 'must be bought together'. Instead, Sonepar applies these relations only as a strong recommendation, because the customer might already have one of the elements in stock or needs to replace just one part of the solution.

6.7 | Variants



Illustration from Schneider.

A variant is a relation between two or more products that are mostly similar but have a distinct difference on a specific ETIM feature.

A group of Variants can only exist for products with the same:

- ↳ ETIM Class,
- ↳ Brand Name and Series (Model/Range),
- ↳ maybe even the same Type (Submodel/-range) when available.

When selecting the ETIM Feature for a Variant group, it is possible that some closely related features will also be of different content.

For example, a LED lamp of 2300K will not only differ from the same LED lamp with 3000K in the ETIM feature 'Colour temperature', but also in the ETIM feature 'Colour of light according to EN 12464-1'.

Sonepar publishes maximum 3 to 4 different Variant groups per product. It means you need to choose which ETIM Feature is more known to be used for filtering by the customer. Select the Variant Groups that meet customer expectations and only use existing ETIM Feature Codes.

Some examples of used ETIM Features for Variants groups:

Class name	Class code	Feature name	Feature code
Miniature circuit breaker (MCB)	EC000042	Number of poles (total)	EF008618
Ceiling-/wall luminaire	EC002892	Housing colour	EF000136
Footwear	EC002104	Model	EF000010
Footwear	EC002104	Shoe size (Europe)	EF018155
Footwear	EC002104	Colour	EF000007

Sonepar needs Variant relations in an omni-directional way for correct publication.

Meaning: with 3 products (A+B+C) in a Variant group for ETIM feature Colour, a supplier must send 6 relations.

Supplier Product ID	Relation to Supplier Product ID
A	B
A	C
B	A
B	C
C	A
C	B

Schneider Residential – PrismaSeT XS – surface-mounted – 3 rows – 13M – transparent door – white

Schneider Electric

Ref Cebeo LV5XM313  Cebeo ID 7391295 

[Go to documentation](#)

Choose a variant

Mounting method: Surface mounted

☒ Surface mounted ☐ Flush-mounted

Number of rows: 3

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☒ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6

Width in number of modular spacings: 13

☒ 13 ☐ 18 ☐ 24

Transparent cover/door: yes

☐ no ☒ yes




Schneider Residential – PrismaSeT XS – flush-mounted – 3 rows – 18M – transparent door – white

Schneider Electric

Ref Cebeo LV5XH318  Cebeo ID 7391292 

[Go to documentation](#)

Choose a variant

Mounting method: Flush-mounted

☐ Surface mounted ☒ Flush-mounted

Number of rows: 3

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☒ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6

Width in number of modular spacings: 18

☐ 13 ☒ 18 ☐ 24

Transparent cover/door: yes

☐ no ☒ yes




Schneider Residential – PrismaSeT XS – surface-mounted – 4 rows – 18M – transparent door – white

Schneider Electric

Ref Cebeo LV5XM418  Cebeo ID 7170490 

[Go to documentation](#)

Choose a variant

Mounting method: Surface mounted

☒ Surface mounted ☐ Flush-mounted

Number of rows: 4

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☒ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6

Width in number of modular spacings: 18

☐ 13 ☒ 18 ☐ 24

Transparent cover/door: yes

☐ no ☒ yes




Illustration from Sonepar.

Please note:

- Only apply ETIM features of the ETIM version currently active within Sonepar.
- Variant relations are not active within all Sonepar webshops. In some situations the choice of Variants features are limited on category level.
Please check with the local Sonepar company if you can deliver Variants and if there is a preference for features to select for the categories (ETIM classes) that apply to your assortment.
- Variant relations cannot be exchanged via BMEcat but only via the Sonepar Product Relation Template Excel and in France via FABDIS.
- When the ETIM standard is not (yet) applied at local country level, replace ETIM Class for lowest level of a product category, and ETIM Feature for a unique product specification

7 | Product Categorisation

Product Categorisation is the grouping and/or organisation of all products in a company's assortment in a uniform manner, making the onboarding, management and selling of products, and their data, more efficient. Secondly, it provides a basis for any kind of reporting, financial or otherwise. Categorisation is also referred to as classification.

For Sonepar, categorisation is essential and various categorisation systems are used. In this chapter we will explain the most important international and regional categorisation systems more in detail.

- ➔ ETIM
- ➔ UNSPSC
- ➔ Product segmentation
- ➔ Customs tariff number
- ➔ Discount groups
- ➔ ECLASS

In this chapter:

- 7.1 ETIM
- 7.2 UNSPSC
- 7.3 Product segmentation
- 7.4 Customs Tariff Number
- 7.5 Discount groups
- 7.6 ECLASS



7.1 | ETIM

ETIM, the Electro Technical Information Model, is an open multi-sector international standard for technical products that groups and specifies product data through a uniform classification system. It consists of 2 levels: groups and classes. At the class level, a product can be further defined by features and values.

As ETIM is widely used at international level by manufacturers, suppliers, wholesalers and customers within the sector(s) in which Sonepar operates, it has been defined as Sonepar’s leading classification system when exchanging and processing data from suppliers.

7.1.1 | Version usage

To keep up with the evolution of the sector and the technical specifications of the products, Sonepar always applies the latest version of ETIM, and aims to update to a new ETIM model within 6 months of its release.

7.1.2 | ETIM class and features are mandatory

Check below one example of an ETIM Class. When supplying product data to Sonepar, we expect each product to have an ETIM class and all ETIM features within the class to be completed.

ETIM class EC000158	Screwdriver for slot head screws
Blade width	3 mm
Blade thickness	0,5 mm
Blade length	100 mm
Blade diameter	3,5 mm
Size	3
Total length	205 mm
Model	Straight
Insulated	Yes
Insulation protection 1000 V	Yes
Material handle	Other
Grip design	Other
Square drive/hexagon drive	None
Type of shaft	Round
With anti-roll protection	Yes
Cap rotatable	No
With striking cap	No
Blade material	Chrome-vanadium molybdenum (CVM)
Surface protection blade	Other
Surface treatment blade	Other
Continuous blade	No
Weight	45 g



7.1.3 | Additional preferred data

Many ETIM classes have a feature for colour. Often this feature is linked to a pre-set value list.

On some occasions, a supplier also has a marketing colour name.

For example, the pre-set colour is white, and the marketing colour is polar white.

➡ In these situations, Sonepar requests suppliers to also add this marketing colour name to the attribute FVALUE_DETAILS.

Example for colour variations:

ETIM code	Clear name
EF000007	Colour
EV000202	white
FVALUE_DETAILS	polar white

Please note:

- Since FVALUE_DETAILS is a text field, it is crucial to take care of identical spelling throughout the whole catalogue.
- Do not mix "polar white" with "Polarwhite" and similar.
- Even when adding FVALUE_DETAILS, the supplier must still select a value for standard colour feature.

7.1.4 | Exceptions to feature completeness

ETIM contains indicators when features are not applicable, unknown or when the actual value for the feature does not (yet) exist in ETIM.

➡ In these situations, the value for the feature must be a minus sign "-".

In addition, the attribute FVALUE_DETAILS must be supplied with 1 of the following 3 values:

- ➡ NA – To be used when this feature is "Not Applicable" to the product. This helps Sonepar to understand that the feature will not be filled and can be used to improve the Product Data Quality KPI's.
- ➡ MV – To be used when the specific value does not (yet) exist in the ETIM model, "Missing Value". Please inform Sonepar what value it should be. Depending on the situation, Sonepar can add the information itself directly into its system. Secondly, reach out to the ETIM organisation to have this value added into the standard.
- ➡ UN – To be used when the feature is applicable, but the value is "Unknown". The supplier is still working on collecting the information, e.g. with new products that have been announced but where the product data is still under development.

Sonepar does not yet make use of these indicators but is thinking about applying them. Therefore, we like to ask our suppliers to start their own preparations for future data exchange.



Sonepar is a Global Industry Member

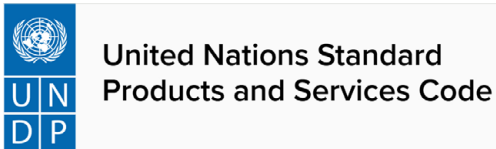


ETIM
Global Industry Member

For more information on this standard go to: etim-international.com

7.2 | UNSPSC

UNSPSC, the United Nations Standard Products and Services Code, is an open, global, multi-sector standard for classifying products and services. It consists of a 4-level hierarchical structure resulting in an 8-digit-number.



Large customers (mostly those that are North America based or have a strong focus on the American markets) but also other special groups of customers like in the Dutch healthcare sector or various governments often use UNSPSC as a classification model for ordering and reporting or even declaration purposes. To do business with them, they must have a valid UNSPSC code for every product.

7.2.1 | Version usage

UNSPSC releases a new version almost every year. However, since UNSPSC covers many sectors not related to Sonepar, not all releases include updates that are of interest to Sonepar. That's why Sonepar only migrates to a new version when this is needed. Sonepar applies currently UNSPSC version 26.0801.

7.2.2 | UNSPSC is preferred

Sonepar selects the right UNSPSC code based on an automated mapping with ETIM to ensure that customers always have a UNSPSC for each product. As there is not always a 1:1 mapping available for each ETIM class, suppliers are requested to always provide the UNSPSC code for their products, applying the version that is in use at Sonepar.

Example for a screwdriver, classified according to UNSPSC Version 26.0801:

Level 1 (Segment)	27000000	Tools and General Machinery
Level 2 (Family)	27110000	Hand tools
Level 3 (Class)	27111700	Wrenches and drivers
Level 4 (Commodity)	27111701	Screwdrivers

For more information on this standard go to: undp.org/unspsc

7.3 | Product segmentation

Sonepar and its suppliers both divide their product assortments into segments to differentiate the levels of importance that determine the procedures and processes related to each segment.

Sonepar applies two segmentations to help identify the product quality requirements for a product.

Standard Stock indicator	Assortment Segment indicator
Stock Products	Core / Standard Assortment
Non-Stock Products	Longtail / Non-standard Assortment
	Specials / non-assortment

7.3.1 | Standard Stock Indicator

Stock Product

A Sonepar stock product is the product that is (or should be) in stock in the CDC, warehouses or branches, regardless of whether there are orders for the product or not. Stock products are part of Sonepar's core/standard assortment.

The selection of stock products is mostly based on strategic agreements with suppliers, availability or lead-times and/or (expected) turnover rates

Non-stock Product

A Sonepar non-stock product is a product that is ordered with the supplier upon receipt of a customer order and cannot be delivered directly from Sonepar's stock. Non-stock products can be part of either Sonepar's core or longtail assortment.

➡ **A standard stock indicator is preferred.**

Sharing this type of information assists Sonepar in deciding if a product should become part of Sonepar's standard stock. In the ETIM BMEcat standard suppliers can use the attribute PRODUCT_TO_STOCK.



7.3.2 | Assortment Segment indicator

Core / Standard Assortment

The Sonepar core or standard assortment consists of products that are:

- ↪ selected by the Sonepar Category Manager as the primary focus of a product category to best meet customer needs;
- ↪ most promoted by suppliers;
- ↪ a successor to an existing core product or has high turnover expectation;
- ↪ sold at least once in the last 12 months;
- ↪ either stock or non-stock products.

For the core assortment, Sonepar expects the highest product data quality. The product data is complete, consistent, up to date, standardised and correct, as well as fully compliant with legal requirements.

This means that a core product has at least:

- ↪ A good short and long description;
- ↪ Several product images;
- ↪ Full ETIM classification information;
- ↪ 1 or more product relations;
- ↪ All (legally) required documentation.

Longtail / Non-standard Assortment

Any product that Sonepar onboards, not identified as a core product or special, automatically falls within the category longtail. The longtail assortment is published online with the aim of giving customers access to complete assortments and enabling complete solutions. Longtail products are uniquely registered in ERP and PIM, usually as non-stock products.

Although longtail products are less promoted or not promoted at all and receive less focus from suppliers on product data quality, Sonepar expects suppliers to deliver the same product data as for core products:

- ↪ A good short and long description;
- ↪ At least 1 product image;
- ↪ Full ETIM classification information;
- ↪ Preferably 1 or more product relations;
- ↪ All (legally) required documentation.

An assortment segment indicator is preferred

Knowing if a product is core or not, helps Sonepar to build the right core assortment for its customers.

- ☞ In the ETIM BMEcat standard suppliers can use the attribute `PRODUCT_STATUS` type="core_product" for the core assortment. **Products without this attribute will be seen as Longtail.**

Specials / non-assortment

This product assortment category includes all products that are not part of a standard Sonepar Companies' product portfolio but are required to meet a specific customer request. Examples are made-to-order products, customized products or specific product requests for customer projects.

Specials are non-stock products, and the product ID is often created specifically upon receipt of the customer order request. There are minimal data quality requirements to support sales with a fast order process, unless the product should be published online or indicated to become a longtail or core product.

Therefore, specials are usually not found in Sonepar's web shops. If they are found online, this is mostly at a later stage to support specific customer processes or because of the expectation that the product could become a core or longtail product.

7.4 | Customs Tariff Number

Customs Tariff Numbers provide all countries with a common basis for classifying products for import and export and are used by national customs authorities to apply the correct cross-border taxes. The Customs Tariff Number is also often used for national statistical information on sales volumes. Depending on the destination country and jurisdiction, it may be referred to differently. Terms include HS-code (Harmonised System), Commodity Code, CN-code (Combined Nomenclature), Intrastat, etc.

➔ **Customs Tariff Number is mandatory.**

Sonepar uses the Customs Tariff Number based on the Harmonised System, with a maximum length of 10 digits.

Examples



10-digit HS Code: 8538909999 –
Sealing set S.1 IP44 with flange
1gang (Hager)



10-digit HS Code: 8205400000
– Screwdrivers, hand-operated
(Tradeforce)

7.5 | Discount groups

A discount group is a code that defines a specific discount granted by the supplier to Sonepar. The discount group is used in combination with the gross price to calculate the actual price to be paid.

The complete overview of discount groups, with factors and descriptions, is agreed and communicated separately between the supplier and Sonepar.

➔ **Discount Group is mandatory.**

- No fixed discount group (e.g. all products have the same discount)?
➔ Enter "no_discount_group" as the discount group.
- No discount group applicable to the product, it's sold at a net price?
➔ Enter "net_price" as the discount group.

Example



Hager EG010 – Digital time switch
Discount group in GER: H440
Discount group in BEL: E20
Discount group in FRA: C

7.6 | ECLASS

ECLASS is an international cross-industry product and services classification standard, fully compliant with ISO and IEC. ECLASS consists of 4 levels and at the class level a product can be further defined by features and values.



Large customers (mostly those that are Europe based or that act with a focus on the European markets) often use ECLASS as their internal classification model for ordering and reporting. These customers require a valid ECLASS code for every product.

 ECLASS is preferred for Europe

Sonepar selects the right ECLASS code based on an automated mapping with ETIM to ensure that customers always have an ECLASS for each product. Since there is not always a 1:1 mapping available for each ETIM class, suppliers are requested to always provide the ECLASS code for their products to Sonepar Companies based in Europe.

Sonepar does not apply ECLASS features and values.

Example for a slot screwdriver, classified according to ECLASS Version 15.0 BASIC

Level 1	21	Plant equipment, tool
Level 2	2104	Hand tool
Level 3	210404	Screwdriver, Screwdriver insert
Level 4	21040407	Slot screwdriver

For more information on this standard go to: eclass.eu/en/





In this chapter:

- 8.1 A must-have for Sonepar's Supply Chain
- 8.2 A must-have for our customers
- 8.3 Net dimensions & weights
- 8.4 Gross dimensions & weights
- 8.5 Packaging content & hierarchy
- 8.6 Allowed units of measure
- 8.7 Warranty and Lead-time
- 8.8 Allowed packaging type

8 | Logistic data

Each partner in the supply chain needs certain packaging information to answer a multitude of questions. Think of:

- ☐ Can I select products per piece or also in a larger pack?
- ☐ How many items of this product can I store in my warehouse or service wagon?
- ☐ Does the product need special handling (size/weight)?

This chapter explains the data needed to support Sonepar and its customers, to give the right answers to such questions.

8.1 | A must-have for Sonepar's Supply Chain

Accurate packaging information is essential for operational efficiency. It allows Sonepar to allocate the right storage locations within our warehouses, and organize inbound handling before goods arrive. Knowing carton sizes, pallet configurations, and labeling details also helps streamline order picking, decanting and improve load planning for cost-effective outbound shipments, thus reducing errors.

Secondly, the information is a must-have to arrange the shelf-planning in our physical shops.

And lastly, the information provided supports Sonepar answering several mandatory legal requirements.

8.2 | A must-have for our customers

➡ Providing Sonepar with the correct packaging information ensures the end-customers can also have access to this information.

- ↪ For well-informed product selections on our web shops;
- ↪ To prepare their own product handling, storage and transport;

- ↪ To decide on direct on-site delivery;
- ↪ To choose the right number of products in their preferred package.

8.3 | Net dimensions & weights

➡ The exact measurement and weight of the unpacked product, a single item out-of-the-box.

Attributes are:

- ↪ Net Height (also called Net length);
- ↪ Net Width;
- ↪ Net Depth;
- ↪ Net Weight;
- ↪ Net Volume;
- ↪ Net Diameter.

8.4 | Gross dimensions & weights

➡ The exact measurement and weight of the packaged item, including the packaging and/or carrier.

The product can be delivered as a single packed item, in a bag of 10, a box of 20, a pallet with 40 boxes, a reel of 500 meters, etc.

The dimensions and weight information are different for each packaging item in a product packaging hierarchy. And Sonepar needs this information for each level of this packaging hierarchy.

i If a single item or product is delivered unpacked, the measurements are equal to the net dimensions and weight.

Attributes are:

- ↪ Height (also called Length);
- ↪ Width;
- ↪ Depth;
- ↪ Gross Weight;
- ↪ Volume;
- ↪ Diameter.

8.5 | Packaging content & hierarchy

This information is needed to determine how many single items are in each level of a packaging hierarchy, how the items are packed for each level, and how it should be handled.

Attributes are:

☞ GTIN (or Packaging GTIN)

The GTIN of the packaging item or level within the packaging hierarchy.

☞ Packaging Type

The type of packaging in which the unit is delivered. When a product has no packaging, select the packaging type code for “unpacked”.

↪ In ETIM BMEcat it's called Packing unit code. Please see [8.8 | Allowed packaging types](#) for the allowed packaging type codes.

☞ Packaging Quantity Maximum

Maximum number of (order) units in this packaging item when purchasing/ordering.

↪ When the Packaging Quantity Max is equal to Packaging Quantity Min, there is an exact number of units in the package.

☞ Packaging Quantity Minimum

Minimum number of (order) units contained in this packaging item when purchasing/ordering.

↪ When the Packaging Quantity Min is equal to Packaging Quantity Max, there is an exact number of units in the package.

☞ Indicator Pack can be broken up

A flag indicating whether a package may be broken up to sell or implement the underlying unit.

↪ When packages containing multiple units should go unbroken through the value chain from manufacturer to store, the value should be FALSE.

☞ Number Of Packaging Parts

Number of packaging parts in which a product will be delivered.

↪ In ETIM BMEcat it's called Packing parts.

8.6 | Allowed units of measure

Even though we share several options that can be used at Sonepar, at country level there is often only one specific Unit of Measure (UoM) allowed. Please check first what the local country's standard dictates to prevent sending incorrect UoM's.

Allowed units of measure for dimensions:

CMT (= Centimeter)	MMT (= Millimeter)	MTR (= Meter)	KTM (= Kilometer)
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Allowed units of measure for weight:

GRM (= Gram)	KGM (= Kilogram)	MGM (= Milligram)
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Allowed units of measure for volume:

CMQ (= Cubic centimeter)	MMQ (= Cubic millimeter)	MTQ (= Cubic meter)
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8.7 | Warranty and Lead time

Warranty and lead-time details provide clarity on product reliability and availability.

Lead time affects inventory planning and customer delivery commitments, while warranty terms define risk management in case of product failures.

Together, they support accurate forecasting, service level agreements, and end-customer satisfaction. In distribution, customer satisfaction depends on a reliable delivery promise. Accurate lead-time communication is key to consistently meeting - and even surpassing - customer expectations.

➡ Average Lead Time

The average or standard lead time in days (preferably calendar days) between order confirmation and delivery of the product. 'Average' because the supplier can only give the actual lead time when this is exchanged directly to each Sonepar Company on a real-time basis. In ETIM BMEcat it's called Delivery time.

➡ Warranty Period Business (Months)

Warranty given to Sonepar in months, beginning with the date of sale.

➡ Warranty Period Consumer (Months)

Warranty given to the end-consumers in months, beginning with the date of sale.

i When either the business or consumer warranty is supplied, Sonepar expects to also receive a digital asset with a warranty document or statement, specifying the terms of the warranty (in ETIM BMEcat Declaration warranty - MD56).

8.8 | Allowed packaging types

Packaging Type	
Code	Value
BE	Bundle
BG	Bag
BO	Bottle
BX	Box
C62	One (piece/unit)
CA	Can
CL	Coil
CQ	Cartridge
CR	Crate
CS	Case
CT	Carton
CY	Cylinder
D99	Sleeve
DR	Drum
EV	Envelope
KG	Keg
NE	Unpacked
PA	Packet
PF	Pallet (lift)

Packaging Type	
Code	Value
PK	Pack
PL	Pail
PR	Pair
PU	Tray / tray pack
RG	Ring
RL	Reel
RO	Roll
SA	Sack
SET	Set
TN	Tin
TU	Tube
WR	Wrap
Z2	Chest
Z3	Cask

Product Data Guidelines changelog

Sonepar Product Data Guidelines, release 2, January 2025.

Includes the following changes in comparison to the first release of March 2024.

- Adjusted the rule on GTIN (see 1.2).
- Changed the additional rules for descriptions and specified use cases (see 3.3.2).
- Changed the "good" example of a Long Description (see 3.3.4).
- Replaced "title" with "text" when defining the "Sonepar Product Title" (see 3.4).
- Added a new chapter on Product Relations (see 5).
- Included another asset type code for user manuals (see 4.1.2).
- Improved several sentences to be clearer.

Sonepar Product Data Guidelines, release 3, December 2025.

Includes the following changes in comparison to the second release of January 2025.

- New chapters:
 - Delivering the best customer experience;
 - Product Categorisation;
 - Logistic Data.
- Adjustment of chapter Digital assets:
 - Expected assets are now made category specific;
 - Related MD-codes in chapter 5.3 have been updated;
 - Requirements added for 360 images.
- Adjustment of chapter Brand, series, type:
 - Corrected 'Other naming' under Type;
 - Addition of paragraph 3.4.
- Minor edits on the content to ensure better understanding on Sonepar expectations.

Sonepar Product Data Guidelines, release 3.1, April 2026.

Includes the following changes in comparison to the second release of December 2025.

- Minor edits on the content to better reflect the ecommerce experience.



Sonepar Product Data Guidelines are delivered by PDx - Product Data Experience Program - in collaboration with suppliers and Sonepar companies.

Thank you for your dedication and adherence to these guidelines which are essential for our shared success and future innovation.

We look forward to working together towards delivering the best data quality and user experience; we are aiming for the highest customer satisfaction.

Contact us: product-data-experience@sonepar.com