

The Standards Alliance

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Introduction and Background

The Standards Alliance (<https://standardsalliance.ansi.org/>) was announced by the US Agency for International Development (USAID) in November 2012 as a new funding facility designed to provide capacity-building assistance to developing countries, specifically related to implementation of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Agreement. In May 2013, USAID and ANSI entered a public-private partnership, which coordinates subject-matter experts from the private-sector-led US standardization system to deliver training and other technical assistance to interested Standards Alliance countries.

The main objectives of the program include increased understanding of WTO TBT principles, encouraging transparency in the development and alteration of technical regulations, and improving implementation of the TBT Agreement's *Code of Good Practice for the Preparation, Adoption and Application of Standards*, with the larger goal of promoting trade and economic development. A key feature of the Standards Alliance is the public-private nature of the arrangement, leveraging the foremost expertise and experience from the private sector on standards and conformance. Organizations have the opportunity to propose areas of focus, including specific projects or activities for each country's work plan.

Standards Alliance

Standards and conformity assessment play a critical role in the economy for developing and developed countries alike, impacting ninety-three percent of global commodity trade. Globally relevant stan-

dards and conformity assessment promote technological interoperability, market access, and the competitiveness of all businesses; they are critical to priorities such as public health, access to clean water and energy, and safe products and systems.

Unique foreign, discriminatory, burdensome, non-science/risk-based, and non-transparent standards, regulations, and conformity assessment procedures represent growing obstacles to US exports. The proliferation of these problematic standards stems from proactive efforts by individual countries or regional organizations to promote their own standards at the exclusion of US-based global standards. In some countries, standards are even developed to limit access to imports and protect local players. These exclusionary standards increase the cost of US production and manufacturing exports to countries around the world, making US manufactured goods less competitive.

Foreign governments, such as the European Union (EU) and China, often challenge US competitiveness in the standards arena by providing extensive technical support to their trading partners. Conservative estimates place the EU's budget allocations on standards and conformity assessment matters at 13M Euros (about \$16M; nearly eleven percent of its trade budget) and some percentage of its 3B Euro "development budget" is applied to standards-related technical assistance. In each country where the ANSI-USAID Standards Alliance has operated since 2013, there is at least one European-funded project with a similar scope but larger budget, and in each case the European project has been operating years longer. It is imperative that the US address standards in its development work;

otherwise, the dollars we are investing now in countries around the world will only help to ensure that they become strong trading partners for America's biggest competitors.

Spotlight: Activities

Addressing Emerging Priorities in West Africa: Infrastructure, Water, and Energy

In September 2016, the Standards Alliance extended its reach, adding five African countries to the program: Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mozambique, Senegal, and Zambia. Serving as the flagship activity in the expansion, a West Africa roadshow occurred during March 31–April 5, 2017. The roadshow included three events across West Africa, including one-day workshops in Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, and Senegal. During each workshop, a group of US private-sector experts shared their expertise on standards-related topics relevant to three key sectors: transportation infrastructure, water, and energy.

The event provided an opportunity to share perspectives and increase engagement between US and participating West African economies. Approximately 150 participants attended the workshops collectively, which featured presentations by US speakers from the American Water Works Association (AWWA), ASTM International, and the Western Transportation Institute (WTI), as well as the national standards bodies from each of the participating countries: Association Sénégalaise de Normalisation (ASN, Senegal), CODINORM (Cote d'Ivoire), and the Ghana Standards Authority (GSA). The event also presented an opportunity for local participants from Kwame Nkrumah University (Accra, Ghana) to take part in the workshops in Ghana and Senegal.

Participating Countries/Regions

Central America (CAFTA-DR, Panama)	Columbia
Cote d'Ivoire	East African Community
Ghana	Indonesia
Jordan	Mexico
Mozambique	Peru
Senegal	Southern Africa Development Community
Vietnam	Zambia

During the workshop series, ASTM International signed two Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with CODINORM and ASN. These agreements grant CODINORM and ASN free access to ASTM's full library of more than 12,000 standards with permission to adopt, reference, consult, or use them as the basis of national standards. This agreement is particularly beneficial for ASN, which (before signing the MoU) maintained a standards library of approximately 2,000 standards. Free access to ASTM standards and consultation will allow ASN and its staff of less than twenty to decrease fiscal and temporal costs associated with the development of standards by benchmarking from existing ASTM models. Through benchmarking, ASN will also gain valuable technical expertise that may guide further standards activities.

Strengthening Sanitation Infrastructure:

From National Adoption to Quality Assurance and Competency

Standards Alliance engagement with Indonesia has addressed priorities related to regulatory and standards infrastructure, as well as critical public health issues such as access to clean water and sanitation. The third year of activity witnessed continued collaboration between the International Association for Plumbing and Mechanical Officials (IAPMO) and the National Standardization Agency of Indonesia (BSN) in the adoption, implementation, and enforcement of a uniform plumbing code (UPC) for Indonesia.

The first Indonesian National Standard for plumbing—SNI 8513:2015, *Plumbing Systems for Buildings*—was finalized in March 2015 and is based on IAPMO's Uniform Plumbing Code. Following the successful launch of the standard in 2015, significant progress has been made in its implementation. Efforts have focused on education and personnel training, outreach to make the new standard mandatory, establishing a laboratory in Indonesia, and a pilot project for building a public restroom following the standard. The Indonesian Ministry of Public Works continued work to mandate the newly developed UPC as an Indonesian National Standard (SNI), as all public health and safety standards are mandatory. The SNI was lauded by BSN's director of standards implementation,



Workshop participants in Accra, Ghana

Dr. Kukuh S. Ahmad, as a vehicle to protect the health and safety of the public and the environment while promoting the use of national products and enhancing the domestic market with international products.

In May of 2016, IAPMO officially opened a state-of-the-art product testing and certification laboratory in Lippo Cikarang-Bekasi (Jakarta), and on January 20, 2017, IAPMO Group announced that its laboratory received ISO/IEC 17025 (testing) and ISO/IEC 17065 (product certification) accreditations from Komite Akreditasi Nasional (KAN), Indonesia's national accreditation body. The lab is capable of testing to more than 400 standards as well as providing special services such as

research and development, training, quality assurance, failure analysis, and witness/field testing.

ISO/IEC 17025 is the single most important standard for calibration and testing laboratories around the world. Laboratories that are accredited to this international standard have demonstrated that they are technically competent and able to produce precise and accurate test and/or calibration data.



Addressing Safety and Environment Concerns in the Automotive Sector

Countries around the world are grappling with ongoing concerns related to protecting public safety and the environment in the automotive sphere, including high-profile global lapses as well as local-level issues. Technological advances such as crash avoidance, electric vehicles, and autonomous vehicles with related cybersecurity issues are bringing new opportunities and challenges to the automotive regulatory and standards arena. As regulators and standards organizations move to adopt new standards and develop regulations, the results can affect businesses and consumers and may present challenging barriers to trade if not developed or deployed properly.

Today, one of the biggest challenges facing the US automotive industry in foreign



IAPMO technical training for BSN

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markets is regulatory compliance and third-party certification. In the Americas region in particular, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) from the US are finding it hard to meet and prove compliance regulations due to incompatibilities in regulatory standards. If standards and compliance systems are not mutually recognized or accepted in foreign markets, fewer US-manufactured cars will be eligible for export to these markets. The US and other countries may also lose investment and supply chain integration opportunities, increasing prices and limiting consumer choice.

In an effort to improve understanding and coordination between differing standards systems, the Standards Alliance has addressed automotive standards and technical regulations through a number of regional activities, including an April 2016 workshop in Guayaquil, Ecuador, focused on *Automotive Standards and Regulations in the Americas*. The event provided a great platform for private- and public-sector participants from the Americas region to tackle issues related to standards compatibility, public safety, environment, and technology advances in the automotive industry. Organized by the Standards Alliance in collaboration with the US Department of Commerce (DoC) and the American Automotive Policy Council (AAPC), the event featured presentations by representatives of the US National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and government and industry representatives from Colombia and Mexico.

With over seventy participants (including forty standards and regulatory experts) from more than twenty countries in attendance, the workshop was designed to foster cooperative and integrated discussion on how to reduce the negative impacts of standard development and ensure that countries meet their legitimate regulatory and standards-related goals in the least trade-restrictive way. Representatives from the Colombian and Mexican governments presented overviews of their regulatory process, and discussed some of the chief automotive safety and emissions challenges being faced along with the regulatory/standards options being considered to address them. US Assistant Commerce Secretary Marcus Jadotte was able to use the opportunity to meet privately with his government counterparts



Workshop on automotive standards in Guayaquil, Ecuador

from Colombia and Ecuador and, as a result, the Colombian Transportation Ministry and Ecuadorian Ministry of Industry and Productivity requested further training on US automotive standards and regulations. Currently, the US automotive manufacturing industry supports more than seven million jobs—so this overall initiative has proved to be a high priority for the DoC, as well as US industry including Toyota and Navistar.

Accomplishments

Increasing Transparency: WTO TBT Notification Successes

The notification of pending regulations is a cornerstone of the WTO TBT Agreement. As governments seek to regulate, a transparent process of notification to a central location helps avoid unnecessary obstacles to trade. The WTO TBT Agreement requires members to notify other members and provide an opportunity for comment before adopting new measures that are likely to impact international trade. This process aids both the regulating government and bilateral trading partners by providing external perspectives before a regulation is finalized to ensure foreign businesses are not unfairly excluded from local markets.

Beginning in March 2014, the Standards Alliance commissioned (SES member) Diane Thompson to serve as the principle standards advisor for National Notification Authorities (NNA) and National Enquiry Points (NEP) capacity-building projects. Since that time, Ms. Thompson

has worked with a variety of Standards Alliance members to improve the effectiveness of the NEPs and NNAs. Focused technical assistance has engaged the following twelve African nations: Burundi, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia. These events provided on-site training to aid the submission of notifications using the WTO TBT Notification Submission System as well as detailed training on the implementation of the transparency requirements of the TBT Agreement.

Between 2016 and 2017, seventeen Standards Alliance member countries increased their total number of notifications when compared with the previous year, representing more than triple the number of countries who reported in all previous

**17 COUNTRIES
INCREASED
TBT NOTIFICATIONS**

**21 NOTIFICATIONS
DOUBLED AVERAGE
TBT NOTIFICATIONS
PER YEAR**

years.¹ Even more impressively, the average number of notifications submitted by members over the past twelve months doubled, from ten to nearly twenty-one annual notifications per member.² Increased transparency presents a positive signal to US organizations that are either operating or investing in Standards Alliance countries.

Standards Alliance in Action: The Auto Sector

The automotive sector has been one of the key private-sector partners in the Standards Alliance, with strong participation most notably from American Automotive Policy Council (AAPC), Navistar, Daimler Trucks of North America, and Volvo Trucks. In its relatively short history, the Standards Alliance—and the public-private sector partnerships it has fostered—has led to several positive outcomes for the American automotive industry. Here are just a few examples:

- Last year, through a number of Standards Alliance-led activities, the auto sector was able to secure the acceptance of FMVSS-certified vehicles in Ecuador.
- During the past four years, the Standards Alliance has provided the auto sector and US trade officials with an expedient forum to help resolve numerous automotive TBTs that have arisen in various Middle East auto markets.
- AAPC is confident that recent Standards Alliance activities will soon lead to the acceptance of FMVSS- and EPA-certified vehicles in Vietnam, a critical market for American automakers in the growing ASEAN region.

Standards Alliance in Action: The Water and Sanitation Sector

IAPMO's work in Indonesia funded by the Standards Alliance and the US Department of Commerce has resulted in tremendous progress in Indonesian water infrastructure and market capacity. Following an agreement between IAPMO and Indonesia's national standards body in 2013 that laid out a roadmap for the development and implementation of a new national standard for plumbing, IAPMO facilitated the release of a comprehensive body of regulations in March 2015 which now serves as the technical basis for how Indonesia's

critical water/sanitation infrastructure will come together. Additionally, IAPMO has partnered with government ministries and universities to develop new curriculum so that the multiple levels of skilled labor required to design, install, and maintain these systems can be trained to this new advanced level. The impact of this work is already being seen: Since the new standard has gone into effect, US plumbing exports to Indonesia have grown by more than fifty percent! Through the Standards Alliance, IAPMO is also engaging with countries such as Vietnam and Jordan to provide similar assistance to the water and sanitation challenges faced by those countries.

What's Next?

The original period of performance for the Standards Alliance was intended to last from 2013-2018. The extension in 2016 to five new African countries allows for funding and programming in those countries to continue until 2021, but support for the other partner countries is nearing the end. ANSI is actively engaging USAID and other agencies to promote the value of the program and the benefits to US industry in funding these types of initiatives. Testimonials, expressions of support, or suggestions for new activities are always welcome. Please contact standardsalliance@ansi.org to discuss any of these opportunities!

About the Author

Leslie McDermott leads ANSI's international development activities, including advocacy and program development, to strengthen US market access in China, India, and other emerging economies. Ms. McDermott manages the implementation of projects such as the Standards Alliance. Ms. McDermott helps assure that projects affecting trade and infrastructure development in emerging economies have the most meaningful impact.

In addition, Ms. McDermott oversees the ANSI China Program which brings together technical, business, and policy leaders to find solutions to issues impacting the US-China trading relationship. The ANSI China Program has become recognized as a focal point in the standards and compliance space, and underpins numerous other programs such as ANSI's business facilitation services that offer customized solutions to



help companies prevent and resolve standards and compliance barriers in China.

Ms. McDermott holds a master's degree in International Relations from Royal Holloway, University of London, a bachelor's degree from Boston University, and is certified as a Project Management Professional (PMP).

- 1 Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Indonesia, Kenya, Mexico, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Peru, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda, Yemen, and Zambia all demonstrated increased annual notifications from 2016 to 2017. Source: <http://tbtims.wto.org/>
- 2 NEP, NNA, and notification data for all twenty-seven Standards Alliance members was retrieved from the WTO TBT and SPS online database at <http://www.epingalert.org/en>

A Guide To Standards

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