

## United States Standards Strategy Draft

### August 2025

*The U.S. market-driven standards system combines strength with strategic flexibility. When U.S. companies, technical experts, consumer representatives, academics, and government collaborate on standards, the results deliver practical outcomes that drive economic growth, strengthen national security, support public health and safety, and maintain U.S. technological leadership.*

Standards power every aspect of daily life. Every Wi-Fi connection, secure credit card transaction, and life-saving medical device depends on standards that assure safety, security, and compatibility across countless products and services worldwide.

Historically, the United States has recognized that standards play a crucial role as enablers of innovation, global competitiveness, national security, and quality of life. Innovation built on the foundation of standards delivers powerful, exponential growth through rapid market adoption, seamless interoperability, increased investment confidence, broader market access, and smoother regulatory pathways.

The longstanding commitment to standards by both the public and private sectors in the United States is backed by U.S. law, and since 2000 has been guided by the *United States Standards Strategy (USSS)*. This strategy, updated every five years, represents collaboration among experts from industry, academia, consumer groups, and the government under the auspices of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI).

What makes the U.S. approach stand out globally is that it is transparent, market-driven, and private-sector-led. Direct participation by technical experts enables businesses to innovate and commercialize rapidly, as standards essential for new products and services are developed and delivered in a timely fashion. The result: cutting-edge solutions that emerge faster and adapt readily to real-world needs.

As economic pressures, security threats, and health challenges intensify worldwide, globally accepted standards become even more critical. An open, rules-based, market-driven standards system gives all stakeholders—small businesses, large corporations, government agencies, consumer advocates, and academia—a voice in creating the technical solutions for tomorrow's innovations.

The 2025 *United States Standards Strategy* provides a roadmap for U.S. engagement and leadership in developing international standards used globally and advancing vital U.S. interests.

## Imperatives for Action: Meeting Today's Standards Challenges

### The New Standards Landscape

Technology is evolving at unprecedented speed. Countries are competing intensely for technological and business advantages, while shifting trade patterns and rising geopolitical tensions are creating market uncertainty. These changes are reshaping everything from manufacturing and digital services to healthcare.

Standards development has expanded dramatically in response. Work now spans multiple venues—formal consensus bodies, treaty organizations, industry consortia, and through open-source communities. Open collaboration on standards, open data, and open-source software have penetrated many layers of technology and industry, including telecommunications, energy, banking, and financial

services. Additionally, software and data have become integral to contemporary standards development and are essential inputs for creating and evolving international standards across industries.

More global players—both government and private sector—are actively shaping standards, which benefits the system. However, apparent attempts to exploit standards processes for geopolitical gain threaten the system's integrity. Ethical and social concerns, regulatory uncertainty, and workforce shortages create additional challenges for both standards development and implementation.

### **Our Response**

For standards to continue bridging markets and supporting fair competition, U.S. stakeholders must actively engage in and lead international standards development and related policy discussions. This engagement is crucial to maintaining U.S. leadership in technologies that will define the 21st century. The absence of robust U.S. engagement will lead to standards that disadvantage American innovation and industry.

The U.S. ability to shape and influence international standards has far-reaching implications for cutting-edge technology development and deployment, business competitiveness, national security, economic prosperity, and overall global standing. Success requires informed participation and leadership focused on outcomes that benefit consumers, businesses, and national interests. Sustaining that success demands cultivating the next generation of standards leaders through effective transfer of institutional knowledge.

### **Our Commitment**

Through the *United States Standards Strategy*, the U.S. reaffirms its commitment to private sector-led, market-driven international standards and to championing and protecting the integrity and fairness of the standards system. We embrace a dynamic approach that leverages the advantages of multiple sources of international standards. This flexibility addresses global challenges, supports international trade, and opens markets while adhering to globally accepted principles for international standards development.

This strategy also commits to increasing awareness of the value of voluntary consensus standards and effective engagement, streamlining development processes, enabling impactful U.S. participation, and addressing both opportunities and risks to the standards system.

## **Our Strategic Vision: Building Tomorrow's Standards Together**

Working from the principles upon which our system is built, and which have been adopted by the World Trade Organization (WTO), the U.S. private-sector-led standards community is committed to:

### **An International Standards Ecosystem Where:**

- Technical excellence and market needs—not geopolitics—drive standards development worldwide
- WTO principles are consistently applied, preventing standards from becoming trade barriers
- Standards development is timely and flexible, and features a balance of interests
- Investments are strategically directed to meet emerging standards needs across all sectors
- Laws and policies protecting copyright, trademarks, and other intellectual property inherent in standards are applied rigorously

- Intellectual property rights policies for the development of standards balance the rights of licensors and licensees of standard essential patents.
- Education and capacity-building programs bring a wide variety of voices to the standards table

#### **A U.S. Standards Framework That Assures:**

- All stakeholders—from startups to established companies, from consumers to government agencies—can participate
- Multiple approaches to standards development are supported, from traditional consensus bodies, to industry consortia and similar collaboration models, to open-source communities
- Private sector innovation is strengthened by targeted government research investments
- Policy makers respect the integrity and impartiality of standards processes
- Standards needs for stakeholder priorities and national interests are proactively addressed
- Rapid adoption of private-sector standards that fuel innovation and global trade while protecting national security
- A standards-savvy workforce is fostered through increased awareness and education programs

#### **A Private-Sector-Led U.S. Standards System That Is:**

- Responsive to market needs and quick to adapt to technological change and evolving market needs
- A cornerstone of U.S. technological leadership—connecting research, real-world implementation, workforce development, consumer benefits, and increased exports
- Home to standards development approaches that fit different industry needs
- A level playing field focused on technical quality and practical utility, not geopolitical considerations
- Continuously improving through cutting-edge development tools, enhanced collaboration between standards bodies, and sustainable funding models
- Positioned to address emerging challenges in cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, quantum and other transformative technologies

### **Strategic Objectives: Taking Action for U.S. Standards Leadership**

To achieve our vision, the U.S. private-sector-led standards community will focus on four key priorities:

#### **1. STRENGTHEN OUR COMMITMENT TO INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS**

**Why it matters:** Internationally accepted standards open global markets and reduce technical barriers to trade while protecting safety, security, and the environment. They define what makes products and services acceptable worldwide. The universally accepted system that has evolved over a century and a half must be protected against forces that would undermine its effectiveness.

#### **Our approach:**

- Foster strategic collaboration among our highly competent standards organizations to tackle cross-cutting technology challenges more efficiently
- Focus on solutions with global impact rather than regional fixes

- Lead by example, defending fair standards practices to prevent manipulation of the system
- Recognize the contributions of all forms of standards development, including by consortia and open-source development communities
- Build stronger public-private coordination in international forums
- Ensure consistent application of internationally recognized standards principles

**Expected outcome:** A globally recognized ecosystem where technical merit determines accepted standards.

## 2. DEMONSTRATE THE BROAD VALUE OF STANDARDS

**Why it matters:** The U.S. private-sector-led, market-driven approach has delivered standards that impact nearly every aspect of human life, helping products, processes, systems, and people work safely, efficiently, and reliably. These contributions should be leveraged and communicated widely.

**Our approach:**

- Expand education about standards' importance across sectors
- Highlight how standards drive innovation, safety, and market access
- Demonstrate how standards respond directly to stakeholder needs
- Help businesses understand how standards support their competitiveness
- Work with government to identify where voluntary standards can meet public needs

**Expected outcome:** A system that fosters appreciation and sustained support for standards as essential tools for economic growth, innovations across business sectors, and public health and safety.

## 3. MAKE STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT MORE EFFICIENT

**Why it matters:** Standards processes must evolve with technology. Flexible, iterative, and adaptive approaches can help assure standards remain relevant and effective. Consistent with the ingenuity the U.S. is known for, our standards system thrives on innovations that make standards development timely and relevant, while upholding core principles.

**Our approach:**

- Embrace innovation in standards development
- Implement state-of-the-art development tools that enable global participation
- Train standards professionals to effectively and responsibly use technology to find, evaluate, create, and communicate standards information in a digital environment
- Welcome new participants with targeted education and mentoring

**Expected outcome:** Effective, responsive development models for high-quality standards that keep pace with societal and technological changes.

## 4. ADDRESS BOTH OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES HEAD-ON

**Why it matters:** Consistent and adequate financial support of our standards system is crucial for driving innovation, facilitating the development of new standards, and ensuring the continued participation of key U.S. experts and stakeholders. Rapid technological change creates opportunities for our flexible system, but geopolitical forces could fragment international standards, harming U.S. market access and

economic leadership.

#### **Our approach:**

- Maintain active standards participation in high-impact technology areas like AI, quantum computing, and cybersecurity
- Continue to lead the world in developing standards for established technologies, fundamental materials, and other building blocks for new technologies
- Advocate for continued investment to strengthen the U.S. standards ecosystem
- Expand education for all stakeholders to build a more informed standards workforce
- Increase policymakers' awareness of the benefits of open, consensus-based standards
- Foster ongoing dialogue between the standards community and policymakers
- Recognize that software and data are shaping the future of standardization and advocate for policies that foster their continued contribution
- Showcase how our innovative approach can adapt to a changing global landscape

**Expected outcome:** A stronger U.S. position in international standards development, particularly in emerging markets and technologies that will shape the future.

### **Moving Forward Together**

The U.S. standards system—open, accessible, and innovative—has contributed enormously to high-quality international standards practices and to societies worldwide. We are committed not just to U.S. interests but to global standardization that creates a balanced, barrier-free global trading system.

This strategy challenges everyone involved in the U.S. standards system—and those affected by it—to help make our vision reality. What's at stake? Nothing less than U.S. industrial competitiveness, economic and national security, fair global trade, and the health, safety, and well-being of citizens at home and abroad.

Success will be measured by achieving these strategic objectives through collaborative action across industry, government, and technical communities. Together, we will enhance U.S. standards leadership to drive innovation and prosperity for generations to come.

### **Our Principles: The Foundation of the United States' Standards Approach**

It is well established in the community of nations that standards should meet societal and market needs and should not be developed to act as barriers to trade. The U.S. standards system is based upon the following set of globally accepted principles for standards development.<sup>1</sup> These principles have informed the development of and are consistent with WTO Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Committee principles:

#### **GLOBAL STANDARDS PRINCIPLES**

##### **Transparency**

Everyone can access essential information about standards activities.

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<sup>1</sup> Adherence to these core principles can also mitigate antitrust risk for those engaging in standards development activities.

**Openness**

Anyone affected by a standard can participate in its development. From consumers to small businesses to large corporations, all voices matter.

**Impartiality**

No single interest group dominates the process or is favored over another. Rules ensure all views receive fair consideration and participants can appeal decisions.

**Consensus**

Decisions reflect agreement among those affected, not just majority votes. Solutions work for everyone.

**Effectiveness and Relevance**

Standards address real market, regulatory, and technological needs. They solve actual problems. Where possible, standards specify what must be achieved rather than dictating designs. This approach encourages innovation.

**Coherence**

The process encourages coherence to avoid overlapping or conflicting standards.

**Technical Assistance**

Developing countries receive help with standards creation and implementation. Everyone benefits when standards are truly global.