

HOW THE U.S. STANDARDS AND CONFORMANCE SYSTEM IS DIFFERENT



Market-Driven Framework

The U.S. economy is supported by a market-driven, highly diversified society, and its standards and conformity assessment system encompasses and reflects this framework.



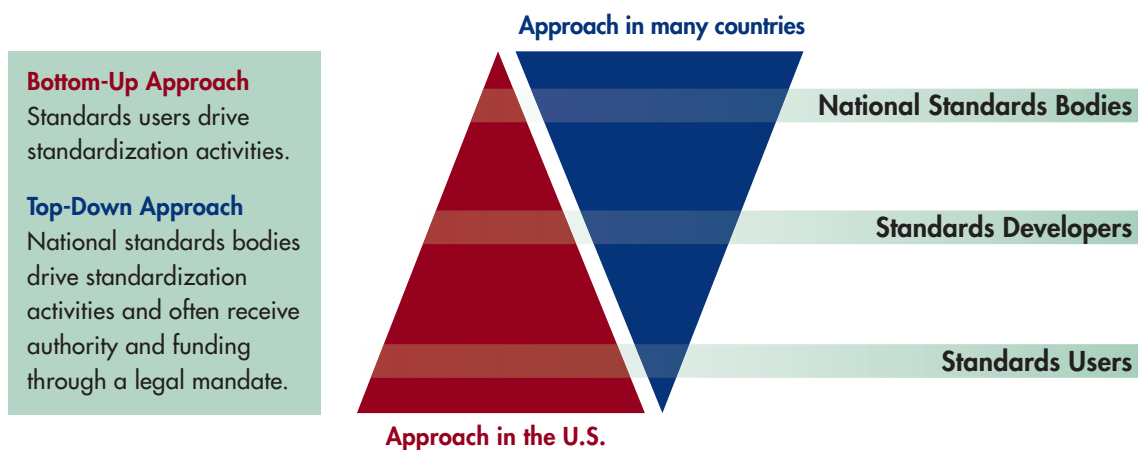
Private-Sector Access

The U.S. system emphasizes standards-based solutions developed with a private-sector lead, providing greater authority to standards users and stakeholders to facilitate trade, improve quality, promote interoperability, and protect health, safety, and the environment.



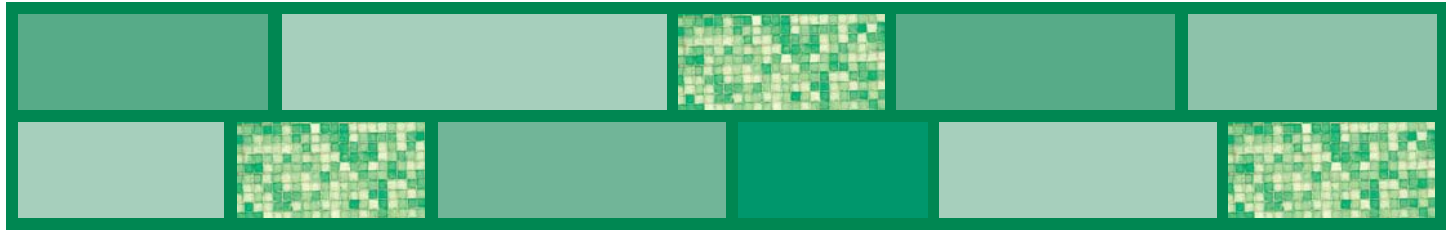
Bottom-Up Approach

In many countries, the standardization system is top down, where a single standards body – often a government agency – drives all national standardization activities. The U.S. system is bottom up, allowing standards users to drive standardization activities.



Speed and Flexibility

The bottom-up approach promotes the speed and flexibility of delivering and implementing solutions to market, encourages participation from a wide spectrum of stakeholders, accommodates input from all interested parties, and helps to prevent unnecessary or overly burdensome regulation.



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Voluntary Participation

In the U.S. system, standards users include industry, consumers, government regulators (who incorporate private sector standards into regulations as supported by U.S. law and policy), and government procurement agencies. These parties voluntarily participate in the development of standards and related policies and have the freedom to choose how they will participate and which standards they will use.



Immediate Responsiveness

Standards developing organizations (SDOs) serve as “immediate responders” to the needs of standards users, and have a considerable amount of influence in the U.S. system. These groups work cooperatively to develop voluntary national consensus standards and American National Standards (ANS) that meet the changing needs of business, industry, and society.



Independence and Collaboration

Most SDOs operate as independent, private-sector organizations under the ANSI umbrella. In this capacity, the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) serves as the coordinator of private-sector technical standardization activity, also coordinating and participating in U.S. policy development for private-sector standards and conformance.



Public-Private Partnership

Many countries have National Standards Bodies which are either a part of the government or otherwise granted authority by the government to represent the nation internationally and to steer standards-related technical and policy developments. The U.S., on the other hand, is private-sector led, represented by ANSI, a non-governmental, private-sector organization.



Diverse Representation

ANSI’s role is not to direct the U.S. system, but rather to coordinate the diverse actors and perspectives. With neither an explicit federal mandate nor dedicated subsidization from the U.S. government, ANSI’s strength comes through its effective representation of the interests of its members constituting the U.S. standards and conformity assessment systems.

Learn more at www.standardsportal.org/usa

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