

United States Standards Strategy (Draft)

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The U.S. market-driven standards system combines strength with strategic flexibility. When U.S. companies, technical experts, consumer representatives, academics, and government representatives 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 and underpin 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.

There is growing recognition among U.S. stakeholders that standards are crucial enablers of innovation, global competitiveness, national security, and quality of life. Innovation built on the foundation of standards delivers powerful growth through rapid market adoption, seamless interoperability, increased investment confidence, broader market access, and smoother regulatory pathways.

The United States benefits from a robust domestic standards system that distinguishes itself globally through transparency, market responsiveness, and private-sector leadership. By enabling direct participation from technical experts, this system empowers businesses to accelerate innovation and commercialization—assuring that essential standards for new products and services keep pace with technological advancement. Government plays a vital complementary role, amplifying public interests and assuring small- and medium-sized enterprises have a meaningful voice in the process. The outcome is clear: cutting-edge solutions that reach markets faster and evolve seamlessly to meet real-world demands.

The U.S. standards system—voluntary, open, consensus-based, and market-driven—empowers every stakeholder to shape tomorrow's technical solutions. Small businesses contribute alongside global corporations, government agencies collaborate with consumer advocates, and academic researchers work hand-in-hand with industry practitioners to forge the standards that will enable breakthrough innovations.

The *United States Standards Strategy* channels the nation's longstanding public-private commitment to standards—a commitment enshrined in U.S. law—into coordinated action for the future. Updated every five years through collaborative effort among experts from industry, academia, consumer groups, and government, the strategy is stewarded by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) to ensure it reflects diverse stakeholder perspectives and evolving national priorities.

As economic pressures, security threats, and health challenges intensify worldwide, globally accepted standards become even more critical. The 2025 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 and scale. Countries are competing intensely for technological and business advantages, while shifting trade patterns and rising geopolitical tensions create market uncertainty. Supply chain vulnerabilities have been elevated from a business risk to a national security imperative. These changes are reshaping every sector of the economy from manufacturing, energy, and transportation to healthcare and digital services.

Standards development is expanding dramatically in response. Work now spans multiple venues— formal consensus bodies, treaty organizations, industry consortia, and through open-source communities. Industry standards, open data, and open-source software touch every aspect of the economy. Additionally, software and data now are integral to contemporary standards development and are essential inputs for creating and sustaining standards across all sectors.

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

Our Response

For the United States' voice to be influential in shaping standards that bridge markets and support fair competition, U.S. stakeholders must lead international standards and related policy discussions, promoting transparent, voluntary, open and consensus-based processes that yield effective market-relevant standards. 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.

U.S. stakeholders' ability to shape and influence international consensus standards has far-reaching implications for cutting-edge technology development and deployment, business competitiveness, national security, economic prosperity, and overall global standing. Targeted pre-standardization activities play a vital role in enhancing U.S. contributions to standards, informing the optimal timing for formal standardization in emerging technology areas.

Success requires informed participation and leadership focused on outcomes that benefit consumers, businesses, and national interests, while maintaining intellectual property protection for the resulting standards. Sustaining that success demands cultivating the next generation of standards leaders through effective transfer of institutional knowledge.

Our Commitment

The standards community is committed to advancing U.S. interests through global standardization that creates a balanced, barrier-free global trading system.

Through the *United States Standards Strategy*, the U.S. reaffirms its commitment to private sector-led, market-relevant international standards and to championing and protecting the integrity and fairness of the U.S. and global standards systems. We embrace a dynamic approach that leverages the advantages of multiple sources of international standards. This approach effectively addresses global challenges, supports international trade, and facilitates market expansion, all while remaining consistent with globally accepted principles for the development of international standards.

This strategy commits to increasing awareness of the value of voluntary consensus standards and effective engagement, streamlining development processes, enabling impactful engagement of U.S. stakeholders in the development of international standards, 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 standards system is built, and which have been adopted by the World Trade Organization (WTO), the U.S. private-sector-led standards community commits to:

An International Standards System Where:

- Technical excellence and market needs 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
- Standards organizations establish and maintain robust standards governance practices
- Public and private sector investments are directed strategically to meet emerging standards needs across all sectors
- Laws and policies protecting copyright, trademarks, and other intellectual property incorporated 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
- Support for multiple approaches to standards development, from traditional consensus bodies, to industry consortia and similar collaboration models, to open-source communities
- Targeted government research investments, including pre-standardization efforts, support private sector innovation
- Policymakers respect the integrity and impartiality of standards development processes
- Standards proactively address stakeholder priorities and national interests
- Standards are accessible to those who use and benefit from them while recognizing the significant investments made by standards developers
- Rapid adoption of private-sector standards that fuel innovation and global trade while protecting national security
- Increased awareness, education and training programs foster a standards-savvy workforce

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
- Accessible to consumers, especially when standards are referenced in law or regulation, while protecting the underlying intellectual property
- 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 and resource capacity
- A level playing field focused on technical quality and practical utility
- Continuously improving through cutting-edge development tools, enhanced collaboration between standards bodies, and sustainable funding solutions

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: International standards, developed via processes that adhere to WTO principles, open markets and reduce technical barriers to trade while protecting safety, security, and the environment. Standards define what makes products and services acceptable worldwide. It is in the U.S. interest to ensure the continued success of the international system that has served us well for more than a century

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
- Lead by example, leveraging and defending fair standards development practices and good standards governance 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, participation and engagement in international forums
- Ensure consistent application of internationally recognized standards principles

Intended outcome: A healthy, globally recognized system where technical merit determines accepted standards.

2. DEMONSTRATE THE BROAD VALUE OF STANDARDS

Why it matters: The U.S. voluntary, private-sector-led, market-driven approach delivers standards that fuel economic vitality and enhance nearly every aspect of human life, helping products, processes, systems, and people work safely, efficiently, and reliably. Because stakeholders often fail to appreciate the value of standards, these contributions must 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 agencies to identify where voluntary standards can meet public needs

Intended outcome: An environment that fosters appreciation and sustained support for standards as essential tools for economic growth and security, innovations across business sectors, and public health and safety.

3. MAKE STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT MORE EFFICIENT

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

Our approach:

- Leverage targeted pre-standardization activities to accelerate standards development
- Embrace innovation in standards development processes
- Leverage artificial intelligence tools to improve the efficiency of the standards development process and the useability of published standards
- Implement state-of-the-art development tools
- Train standards professionals in effective and responsible technology use to find, evaluate, create, and communicate standards information in a digital environment
- Provide new participants with targeted education and mentoring
- Train and engage students and young professionals so that they have a seamless entrance to standards development

Intended outcome: Efficient, 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 U.S. experts and stakeholders. Rapid technological change creates opportunities for our flexible system, but geopolitical forces can disrupt acceptance of applicable standards, harming U.S. market access and economic leadership.

Our approach:

- Strengthen the U.S. standards system by advocating for continued investment by industry, government and academia
- Maintain active standards participation in high-impact technology areas, and those foundational areas that support their success, such as fundamental materials and other building blocks for new technologies
- Build a more informed and capable standards workforce by expanding education for all stakeholders
- Increase policymakers' awareness of the benefits of private sector-led, open, consensus-based standards
- Foster ongoing dialogue between the standards community and policymakers
- Protect the standards community from copyright and other intellectual property theft
- Recognize that software and data are shaping the future of standardization and advocate for policies that foster their continued contribution
- Ensure that our innovative approach adapts to a changing global landscape

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

Moving Forward Together

This strategy challenges everyone involved in the U.S. standards system—and those affected by it—to help make our vision reality. At stake is 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.

We will measure success by achieving these strategic objectives through collaborative action across industry, government agencies, and technical communities. Together, we must 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. These principles have informed the development of and are consistent with WTO Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Committee principles:¹

GLOBAL STANDARDS PRINCIPLES

Transparency

Everyone can access essential information about standards 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. 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.

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