

**NISTIR 8148**

# **Nineteenth Annual Report on Federal Agency Use of Voluntary Consensus Standards and Conformity Assessment**

Nathalie Rioux

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**NIST**  
National Institute of  
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# Nineteenth Annual Report on Federal Agency Use of Voluntary Consensus Standards and Conformity Assessment

The U.S. Department of Commerce presents this summary report of Federal agency use of voluntary consensus standards (VCS) during fiscal year (FY) 2015, to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in compliance with OMB Circular A-119 and Public Law 104-113, the National Technology Transfer and Advancement Act (NTTAA). As required by Section 9 of the Circular, this report, prepared by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), describes activities related to the use of VCS reported by 24 Federal agencies during FY 2015. These Federal agencies, listed in Appendix A, fulfilled the reporting requirements of both the OMB Circular A-119 and Section 12 (d) (3) of the NTTAA by providing information on their activities related to the use of VCS in regulation and procurement. Individual agency reports may be found at <https://standards.gov/NTTAA/agency/index.cfm?fuseaction=agencyReports.main>.

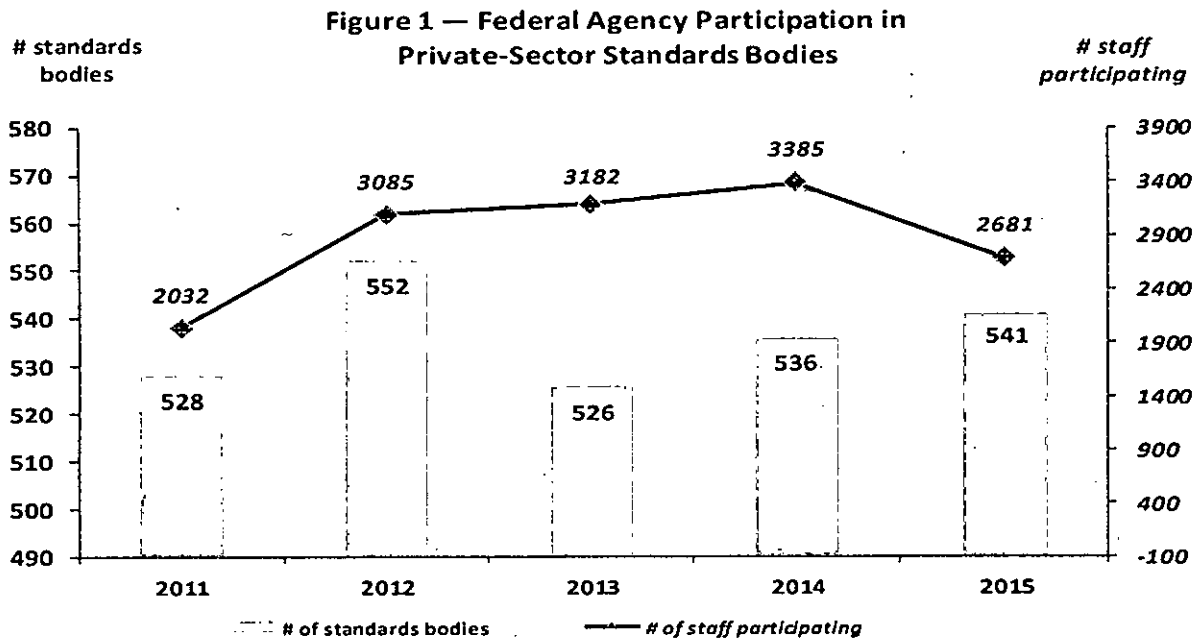
In FY 2015, Federal agencies reported five new government unique standards (GUS) used in lieu of VCS. All five were incorporated by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as noted below:

- EPA Method 29 “for the determination of the concentration of Hg (mercury)”– this standard replaces the voluntary standard ASTM D6784-02 (2008), “Standard Test Method for Elemental, Oxidized, Particle-Bound and Total Mercury in Flue Gas Generated from Coal-Fired Stationary Sources (Ontario Hydro Method).” Using the VCS would be more expensive and would provide results that are inconsistent with the final Hg standard that was determined using EPA Method 29 data.
- EPA Method 311 “Analysis of Hazardous Air Pollutant Compounds in Paints and Coatings by Direct Injection Into a Gas Chromatograph” – this standard replaces the voluntary standard ASTM D6438 (1999), “Standard Test Method for Acetone, Methyl Acetate, and Parachlorobenzotrifluoride Content of Paints and Coatings by Solid Phase Microextraction-Gas Chromatography.” The ASTM method is impractical as an alternative to EPA Method 311 because it targets chemicals that are Volatile Organic Compounds and not Hazardous Air Pollutants.
- The following three Methods are being used in lieu of similar VCS since the voluntary standards are not practical with applicable law due to a lack of equivalency, documentation, validation data, and other important technical and policy considerations.
  - EPA Method 5 “Determination of Particulate Matter Emissions from Stationary Sources”– used in lieu of ASME B133.9-1994 (2001), ISO 9096:1992 (2003), ANSI/ASME PTC-38-1980 (1985), ASTM D3685/D3685M-98 (2005), CAN/CSA Z223.1-M1977.
  - EPA Method 7E “Determination of Nitrogen Oxides Emissions from Stationary Sources (Instrumental Analyzer Procedure)”– used in lieu of ANSI/ASME PTC

19-10-1981—Part 10, ISO 10396:1993 (2007), ASTM D5835-95 (2007), CAN/CSA Z223.2-M86 (1999).

- EPA Method 10 “Determination of Carbon Monoxide Emissions from Stationary Sources (Instrumental Analyzer Procedure)”– used in lieu of ANSI/ASME PTC 19-10-1981—Part 10, ISO 10396:1993 (2007), ISO 12039:2001, ASTM D5835-95 (2007), ASTM D6522-00 (2005), CAN/CSA Z223.2-M86 (1999), CAN/CSA Z223.21-M1978, ASTM D3162-94 (2005).

A total of 57 GUS used in lieu of VCS remain on record since reporting began in 1997. As noted in Appendix A, Federal agencies reported 320 new uses of VCS, up from the 221 new uses reported in FY 2014. The Department of Energy accounts for the majority (50%) of the reported new uses, with the Department of Defense and Department of Homeland Security next, at 14 % and 13% respectively. As illustrated by Figure 1, agencies reported 2,681 personnel participating in 541 standards developing organizations (SDOs), representing an increase in number of SDOs and a decrease in number of staff reported from the previous fiscal year.



Several trends over the past 19 years point to the effectiveness of the NTTAA and Circular A-119 in encouraging an enhanced awareness and acceptance of private sector standards by Federal agencies:

1. continued adoption of VCS;
2. repeated review of opportunities to replace existing GUS with VCS;
3. sustained participation in the VCS development process;
4. decreased development of new GUS in lieu of VCS.

These trends suggest that Federal agencies are more apt to consider using standards developed by the private sector to meet their regulatory and procurement needs.

### *Summary*

This report fulfills the annual reporting requirements of both the NTTAA and OMB Circular A-119. Since the inception of this report over 19 years ago, Federal agencies report an overall low use of GUS (57) in lieu of existing VCS. This reflects the success of the NTTAA in encouraging agencies to use VCS in lieu of GUS and to engage with the private sector standards system to address government needs.

In accordance to its coordination role as defined in the NTTAA and OMB A-119, NIST continues to assist Federal agencies and their stakeholders with standards and conformity assessment information, program support, guidance, and policy concerns. NIST hosts <http://standards.gov>, which offers ongoing practical guidance and information needed by agencies to implement the NTTAA successfully as well as a means to report standards activities as required by the NTTAA and OMB Circular A-119.

**Appendix A: FY 2015 Federal Agency Information on Participation/Adoption of  
Voluntary Consensus Standards Activities per OMB Circular A-119**

Agency <sup>1</sup>	GUS used in lieu of VCS	VCS substituted for GUS	New VCS used this year	Employee participation in VCS bodies	VCS bodies with agency participation
USDA	1	0	6	8	27
DOC	0	0	0	561	135
DoD	*	11	44	n/a	91
DOE	0	1	159	388	108
ED	0	0	0	26	4
HHS	1	0	31	831	162
DHS	0	0	43	192	38
HUD	2	0	0	11	8
DOI	0	0	0	7	87
DOJ	0	0	3	86	22
DOL	13	0	0	57	22
DOT	4	0	6	94	46
TRES	0	0	0	1	14
EPA	28	0	0	50	13
GSA	3	0	8	9	20
NARA	0	0	0	16	9
NASA	*	0	0	58	15
CPSC	2	0	5	38	8
FCC	0	0	1	28	13
FTC	0	0	0	0	0
NRC	2	0	12	204	14
GPO	0	0	2	9	5
ACCESS	1	0	0	7	12
NSF	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>2,681</b>	<b>**</b>

\* Agencies reporting on a categorical basis per OMB Circular A-119, Section 12.

\*\* Total not provided - a VCS body may have participation from more than one federal agency.

<sup>1</sup> Access Board (ACCESS); Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC); Department of Agriculture (USDA); Department of Commerce (DOC); Department of Defense (DoD); Department of Education (ED); Department of Energy (DOE); Department of Health and Human Services (HHS); Department of Homeland Security (DHS); Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD); Department of Justice (DOJ); Department of Labor (DOL); Department of the Interior (DOI); Department of the Treasury (TRES); Department of Transportation (DOT); Federal Communications Commission (FCC); Federal Trade Commission (FTC); Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); General Services Administration (GSA); Government Publishing Office (GPO); National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA); National Archives and Records Administration (NARA); National Science Foundation (NSF); Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC).