

NISTIR 8404

**Twenty-Fourth Annual Report on
Federal Agency Use of Voluntary
Consensus Standards and
Conformity Assessment Activities**

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Twenty-Fourth Annual Report on Federal Agency Use of Voluntary Consensus Standards and Conformity Assessment Activities

Each year since 1997, the U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC) provides a report to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) summarizing federal agency use of government unique standards (GUS) used in lieu of voluntary consensus standards (VCS) during the previous fiscal year (FY) as required by Section 12(d)(3) of Public Law 104-113, the “National Technology Transfer and Advancement Act of 1995” (NTTAA). By implementing the NTTAA and OMB Circular A-119 “Federal Participation in the Development and Use of Voluntary Consensus Standards and in Conformity Assessment Activities” (Circular A-119), agencies seek to minimize their reliance on GUS by using VCS whenever possible to achieve the following goals:

- reduce costs and regulatory burden;
- provide incentives and opportunities encouraging growth of U.S. enterprises;
- increase agency benefits from private sector expertise.

The FY 2020 summary, prepared by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), compiles the reports provided by 22 participating agencies listed in Appendix A. In these reports, agencies document any new use of GUS in lieu of VCS during FY 2020 and provide a rationale for each new use. Agencies also list any rescinded GUS in lieu of VCS during the past year. Agencies briefly describe their activities undertaken to carry out provisions described in Circular A-119. Individual agency reports may be found at <https://www.nist.gov/standardsgov/nttaa-reports>.

VCS are defined in Circular A-119 Sections 2d-e as standards developed via a process incorporating openness, balance, due process, an appeals process, and a consensus process. GUS, defined in Circular A-119 Section 2c, are standards developed by and for use by the Federal Government that do not follow the process used in developing VCS.

For FY 2020, federal agencies did not report any new GUS used in lieu of VCS, nor did federal agencies rescind any GUS used in lieu of VCS.

Summary

In FY 2020, federal agencies did not add or rescind any GUS in lieu of VCS and report a total of 80 GUS currently used in lieu of VCS. This analysis does not reflect the use of standards by the Department of Defense (DoD) or the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) as they report their use of GUS on a categorical basis via a different reporting mechanism. Agencies demonstrate the effectiveness of the NTTAA and Circular A-119 by their continuous review of opportunities to rescind GUS in favor of using VCS, and their demonstrated interest in engaging with the private sector through the VCS process. These activities suggest that federal agencies are cognizant of the benefits of meeting their mission needs by actively seeking to use standards developed by the private sector.

In accordance with its coordination role as defined in the NTTAA and Circular 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 and report standards activities as required by the NTTAA and Circular A-119. This report fulfills the annual reporting requirements of both the NTTAA and Circular A-119.

Appendix A: FY 2020 Federal Agencies Reporting per OMB Circular A-119

Access Board (ACCESS)
Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC)
Department of Agriculture (USDA)
Department of Commerce (DOC)
Department of Defense (DoD)*
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 the Interior (DOI)
Department of Justice (DOJ)
Department of Labor (DOL)
Department of State (DOS)
Department of Transportation (DOT)
Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
Federal Communications Commission (FCC)
Federal Trade Commission (FTC)
General Services Administration (GSA)
Government Publishing Office (GPO)
National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)*
National Archives and Records Administration (NARA)
Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC)

* Agencies reporting on a categorical basis per OMB Circular A-119, Section 11.