

6.3. Beyond Government Control of China's Standardization System – History, Current Status and Reform Suggestions

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1. From the reform and opening-up of China up to now, the standardization system of China has changed significantly, from a pure top-down system led by government to a top-down government-centered system mixed with some bottom-up approach. Affected by the western world, currently, technical committees should be established for standardization in different areas, which means that different stakeholders should be involved in, and the standard setting process must conform to the principle of “transparency, openness and consensus.”
2. The standardization system led by Chinese government was instrumental for the technical progress in China. The “dual-adoption policy” (Chinese standards adopting international standards and the standards from advanced countries) during the preliminary stage of reform and opening-up increased the role of technology diffusion of standards (technology spillover effect), and the strategy of standards supporting independent innovation during the fast development of the economy proved effective and successful. The impetus was primarily positive.
3. After the economic slowdown, the drawbacks of the standardization system caused mainly by the multi-decision-making bodies of the government have become more and more prominent. The policy suggestion is, government should step back for the most part from voluntary consensus standardization and give the space to cultivate private sector standardization in China.