

Action Plan to Connect "One Belt, One Road" through Standardization (2015-2017)

With approval from the leadership team, the Office for the Advancement of the "One Belt, One Road" (hereafter abbreviated as OBOR) Initiative released the Action Plan to Connect OBOR through Standardization (2015-2017) on October 22. The full text is as follows:

This Action Plan has been formulated in order to implement the standardization tasks proposed in the "Vision and Actions on Promoting the Joint Construction of the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road" (hereinafter referred to as "Vision and Actions"), giving full play to standardization's fundamental and supportive role in the building of OBOR.

I. Guidelines

We should fully follow the guidelines set out at the 18th CPC National Congress and the 3rd and 4th Plenary Sessions of the 18th Central Committee, thoroughly implement the guiding principles put forward by General Secretary Xi Jinping in a series of important speeches, take the initiative to adapt to the new normal of economic development, actively foster new advantages in international competition, closely work around the general requirements of "policy coordination, facilities connectivity, unimpeded trade, financial integration and people-to-people bonds", continuously deepen bilateral and multilateral standardization cooperation and connectivity with OBOR countries, vigorously promote Chinese standards to "go out", accelerate internationalization of Chinese standards, so as to provide comprehensive support for the construction of OBOR.

II. Objectives

The Action Plan is integrated into and fully serves the "Vision and Actions", aiming to "promote Chinese standards to 'go out', facilitate investment and trade, deepen international cooperation, raise the level of internationalization of standards and bolster connectivity". We should strive to speed up standards to "go out" by improving relevant policies and measures, so as to boost international cooperation on production capacity and equipment manufacturing. We should deepen mutually beneficial cooperation on standardization with core OBOR countries, in order to accelerate mutual recognition of standards. We should encourage joint development of international standards to raise the level of internationalization of standards. We need to have 500 urgently-needed national and industry standards translated into foreign languages to support facilities connectivity and unimpeded trade. We should conduct comparative analysis of the standards on bulk commodities of core countries to provide better standards information service. We need to establish ASEAN Agricultural Standardization Demonstration Zones in order to promote Chinese standards and management experiences in agriculture. We need to organize expert exchanges and talent training to build standardization capacity and improve standardization in OBOR countries.

III. Principles

1. Demand-oriented, integrated planning

We should work closely around the requirements of the "Vision and Actions", focusing on establishing and deepening pragmatic cooperation on standardization with OBOR countries. We should make proper top-level design by better playing the government's role in macro-planning, policy support and providing guidance and services. At the same time, for important industries and key enterprises, we need to target the urgent standardization needs in the "going out" process of their technologies, products and services, in order to identify core countries, priority fields and key projects for Connecting OBOR through Standardization.

2. Collaborating to achieve common goals

We should give full play to the role of standardization departments at all levels to mobilize enterprises, relevant research institutions, technical committees and regional research centers of standardization to work together. Overall planning and integrated management should be enhanced in order for all involved to share tasks and work in unison to achieve common goals.

3. Starting with key pilot schemes but aiming for incremental expansion

We need to focus on the standardization tasks identified in the "Vision and Actions", steer in the right direction, and perform well on key projects, giving full play to the leading role of major construction projects and standardization demonstration zones in OBOR countries. With replicable experiences thus gained, we will be able to gradually increase cooperation with those countries on a more comprehensive scale.

4. Integrating internal and external efforts for mutually beneficial outcomes

We should adhere to the spirit of all-round opening-up, strengthen communication and coordination with OBOR countries, and find our common interests, taking into account those countries' development strategies, industrial distribution and demands for cooperation. On that basis, we should explore mechanisms for long-term cooperation on standardization, engaging all concerned parties to build and develop together.

IV. Key tasks

1. Developing and improving special programs, policies and measures for Chinese standards to "go out".

For core countries, priority fields and key projects, we should propose plans for standards to "go out". In the key fields of international cooperation on production capacity and equipment manufacturing, we need to develop and implement a "Work Plan on Accelerating the 'Going-out'

of Chinese Standards to Boost International Cooperation on Production Capacity and Equipment Manufacturing". We need to study and develop expedited procedures for the translation and publication of foreign language editions of national standards, as well as relevant management measures such as copyright policies authorizing overseas use of Chinese standards, so as to facilitate their "going out".

2. Deepening mutually beneficial cooperation on standardization with core OBOR countries.

We should seek for shared interests, study and establish mechanisms for stable and smooth standardization cooperation, focusing on crucial routes, namely, from China to Europe via Central Asia and Russia, from China to the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean via Central and West Asia, from China to ASEAN and South Asian countries; as well as key corridors for international economic cooperation such as China - Mongolia - Russia and China - Central Asia - West Asia.

We should strive to encourage the signing of agreements on standardization cooperation with Mongolia, Russia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, India, Armenia, the GCC Standardization Organization and main GCC countries such as Saudi Arabia, as well as national standardization agencies of core countries such as Egypt and Sudan. We also need to actively work with Azerbaijan to solve any problems in standardization cooperation. We should explore and establish procedures and working mechanisms for mutual recognition of standards with OBOR countries, in order to speed up the process.

We should focus on the industry needs of core OBOR countries, giving full play to the role of industrial, local and corporate associations and industry technical alliances, to set up standardization work groups to deepen pragmatic cooperation on key projects. We should work with China's overseas engineering services to promote Chinese standards in the fields such as iron and steel, nonferrous metals, railway, highway and waterway engineering and oil and gas.

3. Encouraging the joint development of international standards.

We should earnestly fulfill our duties as a permanent member of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and in the technical institutions which China heads. We should encourage all industries to participate in relevant standardization activities of specialized international and regional organizations. In infrastructure such as electric power, railway, maritime and aerospace industries; emerging industries such as energy saving and environmental protection, new generation information technologies, intelligent transportation, high-end equipment manufacturing, biotechnology, new energies and new materials; and the industries in which China has traditionally had strengths such as traditional Chinese medicine, fireworks, tea, textile, footwear, etc., we should encourage key enterprises to initiate contact with core OBOR countries to study and jointly develop international standards, relying on our advantageous technical standards as a basis, so as to improve their level of internationalization. We should work with other countries to push the ISO to establish new technical institutions in the fields which have significant impacts on the industries of both countries.

4. Organizing the translation of urgently needed standards in priority fields into foreign languages.

In priority "going out" fields such as equipment, production capacity, and animal and plant quarantine, we should investigate on the "going out" needs of OBOR countries, using domestic specialized technical committees on standardization as a platform. According to the findings, we should compile a catalog of standards in those fields to be translated into foreign languages in order of urgency. We should prioritize the translation and publication of 500 national and industry standards that are urgently needed for facilities connectivity and unimpeded trade in the fields such as railway, highway and waterway engineering, electric power, maritime industry, metallurgy, building materials, construction machinery, aerospace industry, traditional Chinese medicine, etc.

5. Conducting comparative analysis on the standards of bulk import/export commodities.

We should analyze the state of import/export trade between China and core countries in ASEAN, Central Asia, West Asia and Southeast Asia, the standards of relevant countries, as well as the types of bulk import/export commodities of core OBOR countries. We should make the most of industry and local advantages by relying on relevant technical committees and regional research centers on standardization to study the technical regulations and standards of core OBOR countries, and compile a comparative analysis report on the standards on bulk import/export commodities in priority fields, so as to provide information for the construction of OBOR.

6. Establishing ASEAN Agricultural Standardization Demonstration Zones.

We should take advantage of the provinces and municipalities with climate, environment and culture similar to those of ASEAN countries, and build on our achievements in establishing the China - ASEAN Free Trade Area, to promote our experiences in standardized agricultural production and management. In the field of specialized agricultural products such as rice, sugar cane, tea, fruit and vegetables, we should promote our current effective agricultural inputs such as seeds and chemical fertilizers; best cultivation practices; relevant pre-, in- and post-production standards on grading and circulation, etc.; as well as management systems of standardized agricultural demonstration zones. We also need to work on localization research, demonstration and promotion, starting with pilot schemes but aiming for incremental expansion, so as to effectively raise the local technical level of standardized cultivation.

7. Strengthening exchanges and capacity-building for standardization experts of OBOR countries.

We should take full advantage of our cooperation projects on technology and business, etc. to strengthen coordination with relevant authorities of OBOR countries. To respond to their needs for development and exchanges on standardization, we should use a variety of ways to run

standardization expert exchange and talent training programs for Asia and Africa, as well as targeted foreign aid training workshops on standardization focusing on general knowledge and specialized fields respectively. We should dispatch high-level consultants and experts in relevant fields to support standardization capacity-building in OBOR countries, so as to enhance Chinese standards' influence overseas. We should work harder to build a standardization talent reserve for OBOR by developing and implementing plans for international standardization talent training, inviting international standardization experts to come to China to give lectures and make exchanges, as well as cultivating talents on standardization management and in specialized fields, in order to provide a supply of talents for standardization cooperation and exchanges in OBOR countries.

8. Implementing key "standardization for connectivity" projects

In the fields of electric and electronic equipment, explosion protection equipment, home appliances, digital television broadcasting, semiconductor lighting, traditional Chinese medicine, marine technology and TD-LTE (telecommunication), etc., we should support a series of "standardization for connectivity" projects led by relevant trade associations, industry alliances, research institutions, universities and enterprises, for core countries and regions such as ASEAN, Russia, Central Asia, and Central and Eastern Europe, so as to reinforce the foundation for standardization cooperation. We should study and establish communication mechanisms for key OBOR standardization cooperation projects, and enhance our reserve of projects, in order to support standardization for industrial cooperation and connectivity.

9. Strengthening research on standardization for core OBOR countries and regions.

We should make full use of local geographical, technical and talent advantages to promote the establishment of standardization research centers in core OBOR countries and regions. For core countries and regions such as Arab countries, Central Asia, Mongolia and Russia, ASEAN, Europe and North America, we should conduct research on their standardization laws, regulations, systems and development strategies, as well as relevant standards in key fields, so as to establish a preliminary "standardization think tank" to push for early outcomes.

10. Supporting specialized standardization cooperation at local levels.

We should develop plans for implementing and promoting standardization of OBOR in various regions, giving full play to their geographic, cultural and linguistic advantages and strengths in specialized industries. We need to seek out a number of advantageous fields, technologies and specialty products that are ready for standardization, identify some key tasks and iconic cooperation projects, as well as conduct pilot standardization cooperation between Chinese and related foreign cities.

V. Safeguard measures

1. Setting up a special leadership team for the Connecting OBOR through Standardization Initiative.

We should set up a special leadership team for the Connecting OBOR through Standardization Initiative to coordinate internal and external work, supervise the implementation of various tasks in the Action Plan, and guide the work of all parties involved. The special leadership team should be jointly headed by the relevant leader of the National Development and Reform Commission and the principle leader of the National Standards Commission, with the principal leaders of relevant departments as team members. The office will be located at the National Standards Commission.

2. Strengthening safeguard of funds.

On the basis of thorough use of existing funding channels and liquidation of remnant funds, we should increase capital investment in the standardization projects that have achieved initial results, and explore mechanisms for market-oriented, diversified funding, so as to adequately safeguard funds for related projects of the Action Plan.

3. Reinforcing implementation, supervision and inspection.

According to the responsibilities allocated in the Action Plan, each department should further fulfill its key tasks and priority projects, and develop an implementation plan and a timetable, in order to move the OBOR initiative forward and achieve early outcomes. We also need to reinforce supervision and inspection of the Action Plan, solving any problems in a timely manner. We should strengthen follow-up and implementation evaluation of the Action Plan, providing timely suggestions on how to adjust the plan and improve relevant policies.

4. Publicizing policies and providing guidance.

We should reinforce publicity and guidance on the Action Plan, put more efforts in publicizing relevant policies and information, and strengthen publicity and guidance for enterprises, so as to create a supportive environment to engage all sectors of society in the initiative to Connect OBOR through Standardization.