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The [Study Groups](#) of ITU's Telecommunication Standardization Sector (ITU-T) assemble experts from around the world to develop international standards known as [ITU-T Recommendations](#) which act as defining elements in the global infrastructure of information and communication technologies (ICTs). Standards are critical to the interoperability of ICTs and whether we exchange voice, video or data messages, standards enable global communications by ensuring that countries' ICT networks and devices are speaking the same language.

International ICT standards avoid costly market battles over preferred technologies, and for companies from emerging markets, they create a level playing field which provides access to new markets. They are an essential aid to developing countries in building their infrastructure and encouraging economic development, and through economies of scale, they can reduce costs for all: manufacturers, operators and consumers.

From its inception in 1865, ITU-T has driven a [contribution-led, consensus-based](#) approach to standards development in which all countries and companies, no matter how large or small, are afforded equal rights to influence the development of ITU-T Recommendations. From its beginnings as a body standardizing international telegraph exchange, through its formative role in telecommunications, and in today's converged ICT ecosystem, ITU-T has provided the world's best facilities to the global standardization community and remains the world's only truly global ICT standards body.

Based at ITU's headquarters in Geneva, the [Telecommunication Standardization Bureau](#) (TSB) provides secretariat support to ITU-T Study Groups through sophisticated electronic working methods and state-of-the-art facilities in Geneva accommodating the six official languages of the Union – Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish. Headed by an [elected official with the title Director](#), it is the body responsible for providing cohesion to ITU-T's standards development process.

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