

**Is international collaboration in nanotechnology standards a luxury or a necessity?**

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Nanotechnology will be a major wealth generator in the future. The shift from the laboratory to industrial products and services requires the development of standards to enable industrial interaction and ensure safety. An opportunity exists to develop these standards on an international basis, thus avoiding trade barriers that have traditionally arisen between the major trading blocks. The ability to unlock the benefits of common or at least internationally compatible standards should not just rely on working together in the standards committees. Collaboration in the R&D to generate the data, develop and validate the measurement and testing methodologies would bring two clear benefits - the creation of a sound scientific basis for measurement and documentary standards and common "ownership" of the technical approach. The challenge of this new paradigm - international collaboration between the trading blocks in pre-normative nanotechnology R&D thus generating science based standards that are globally acceptable - will be discussed.