The Global Language of Business

Global Standards Management Process

2D in Retail

Mission-specific working group

Call to Action

Background

For over 50 years, GS1 standards have supported the use of barcodes to bring value to retail supply chains around the world. Now, new standards and guidance are required to help industry face the challenge of needing to have additional information available directly on a product package.

Additional information (e.g., batch/lot number, expiration date, serial number, sell-by date) is required to support critical use cases in retail, around inventory management, traceability, safety, sustainability and more. Along with the need for more data, the ability to provide engaging consumer experiences and improved package design has led to global communities pushing for more capable retail point-of-sale barcodes – this is where 2D barcodes can help.

2D barcodes can hold more data in a smaller footprint than the 1D barcodes currently used. When coupled with the GS1 Digital Link standard, 2D barcodes can also bridge the gap between the physical product and a product's digital twin.

The world is already adopting 2D barcodes, however the inconsistent implementations are causing consumer and industry confusion. To support a streamlined, global migration, the 2D in Retail MSWG will determine what the future of retail scanning will look like. Once this work is complete, industry can begin investing in the standardised, common capabilities that unlock the value of having the right data in the best barcode to meet their needs.

This is one of several projects that will shape the future of retail. We have also started work on Modernisation of GTIN Management, which also focuses on retail but on making product identification simpler and more effective for both physical and digital commerce.

### What business challenges are being solved?

This work group will address how to best use 2D barcodes in retail by developing standards and guidance to:

- Enable scaled interoperability across global retail systems for processing 2D barcodes and the data they contain
- Decrease the number of barcodes required on retail point-of-sale (POS) packages to achieve business goals
- Provide guidance on how to use specific data (e.g., batch/lot, expiration, sell-by date) to meet retail business needs
- Define barcode quality, size and placement rules and best practices
- Support standardised human readable text on-pack

The Global Standards Management Process of GS1 (GSMP) is a community-based forum for businesses facing similar problems to work together and develop standards-based solutions to address them. Active GSMP participants represent industries ranging from retail and consumer goods to fresh foods, healthcare, transport and logistics, government and more—a healthy mix of business and technical people from nearly 60 countries.
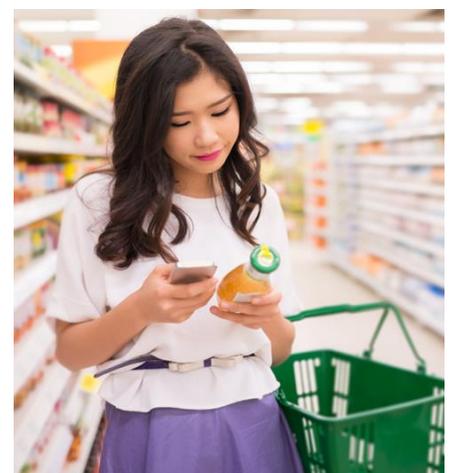
Four Step Global Standards Management Process (GSMP)
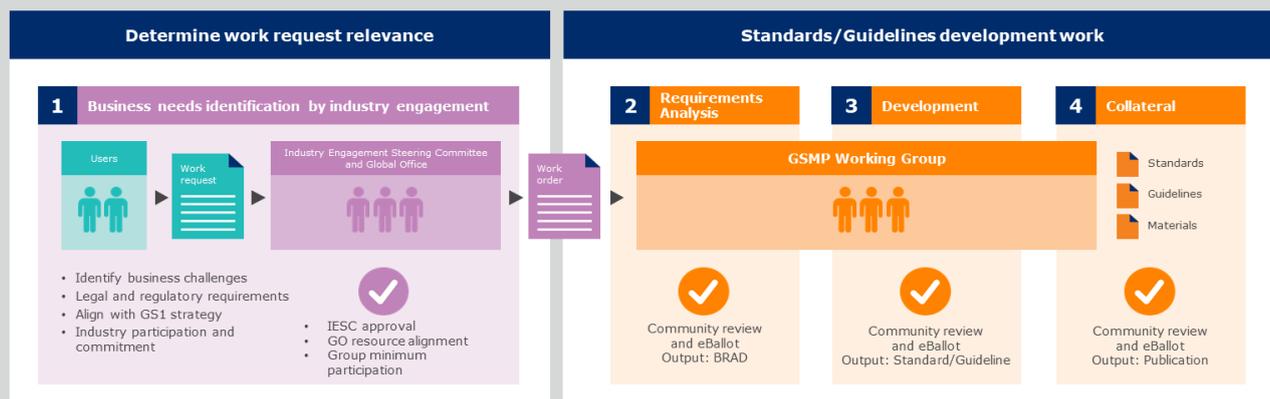
This effort will follow GS1's Four Step Global Standards Management Process to develop a globally agreed standard.

Impact

This work will provide a standardised industry agreement on how to use 2D barcodes and will create a path towards the goal of a single barcode containing a Global Trade Item Number (GTIN) with optional, additional data to serve multiple purposes.

Why is this work needed?

A globally-aligned approach based on GS1 standards is needed to create an agreement on how 2D barcodes will function in open global supply chains alongside today's 1D barcodes (EAN/UPC and GS1 DataBar) and in a standardised way that addresses all user needs.

If GS1 standards are not adapted to meet retail future-state requirements for 2D barcodes, then proliferation of proprietary barcodes and processes to meet those needs will continue. The spread of multiple proprietary systems increases cost and confusion. Global standards provide clarity and enable interoperability for efficient processes and consumer engagement.

Working group objectives:

1. Align on future-state standards to enable global 2D barcode scanning in retail.

Scan me to join the team!

2. Create implementation guidance to help users in their technical migration to 2D barcodes in retail, as well as other collateral that is needed to ensure consistent understanding of the standards that will be developed for 2D in Retail.

Who should join this working group?

Any company using GS1 standards to barcode their products and any company that scans barcodes on products. This includes, but is not limited to manufacturers, retailers, brand owners, solution providers and GS1 Member Organisations (MOs).

How will the working group operate?

This 2D in Retail MSWG group will operate under the GS1 IP policy.

There will be four calls per month (at times that vary to ensure global participation) for approximately 9 months. There will be periodic update calls thereafter.

Next Steps

Join us and be part of the team that changes the way the world uses barcodes.

Join the working group by using this link

- Join the working group by 28 February 2022 to attend the kick-off in early March 2022

- IP policy information is available at these links, GS1 Standards IP, GS1 IP FAQ and GS1 IP Made Simple

Help, questions, or need for more information, please contact:

Steven.Keddie@GS1.org