

Standards and Interoperability Framework

The Standards and Interoperability (S&I) Framework within the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) was formed to orchestrate input from the public and private sectors to create harmonized health information technology specifications for use throughout the United States.

The S&I Framework represents a unique approach to developing and evolving a transparent model of health information exchange. The program operates on the belief that many of the critical elements for health IT interoperability success already exist, namely: a culture of collaboration and innovation fostered through programs such as the Federal Health Architecture (FHA); successful pilot projects and programs between the public and private sectors such as the Direct Project and CONNECT; substantial IT investments and infrastructure from the public and private sectors; thought leadership; a robust community of individual stakeholders; and federal partners who have a track record of investing in health information technology.

The S&I Framework aims to leverage these elements into harmonized processes that result in elegant, simple-to-use health IT standards and specifications for use nationwide.

To achieve this end, the S&I Framework provides an open forum for organizations that share common challenges to work together to create common solutions. It convenes multiple stakeholders to collaboratively work on harmonized interoperability specifications that support national health outcomes and healthcare priorities. It also works to ensure all resulting specifications align with Meaningful Use requirements and support the Nationwide Health Information Network.

Industry-wide collaboration in the S&I Framework will play a critical role in achieving a future in which all American citizens have accurate and secure health records that can be exchanged in a standardized fashion to support care outcomes.

The Standards and Interoperability Framework Functions

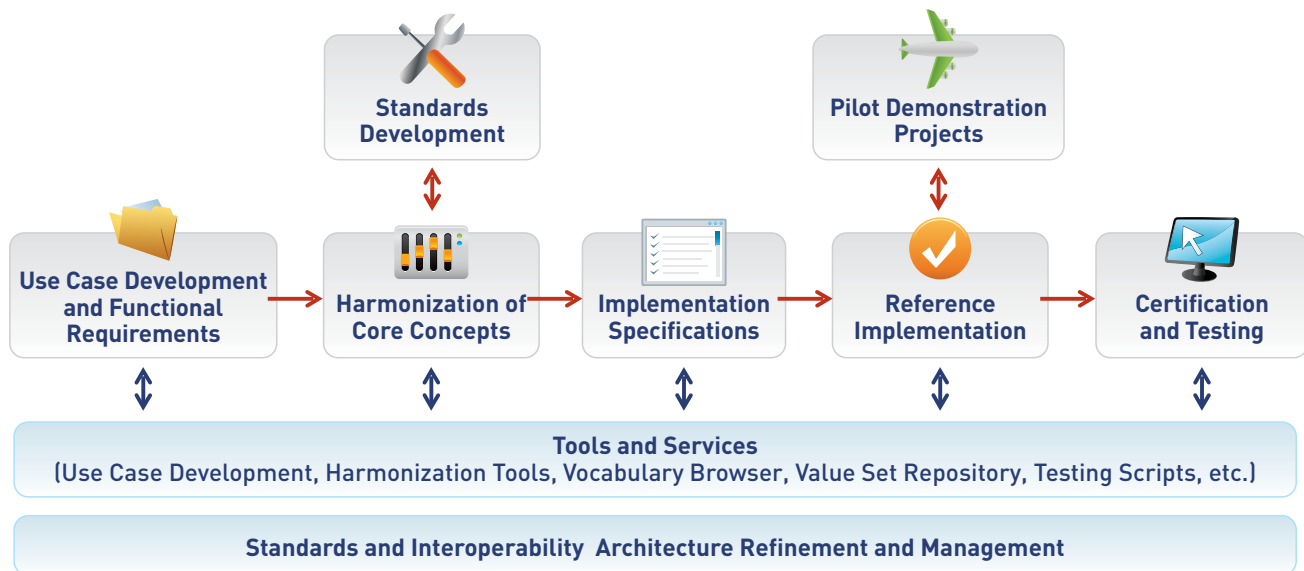
The S&I Framework supports the entire specification lifecycle, from identifying the need for specifications through to creating/harmonizing standards and testing for compliance. The Framework functions within each phase of the specification process by coordinating efforts among public and private sector stakeholders as they work together to: develop content and technical specifications; develop reusable tools and services; and unite stakeholders around common healthcare challenges.

The S&I Framework is working to build out the full set of components needed to achieve the seamless electronic exchange of health information between different organizations and different information systems. These components include:

- Use cases and Health information standards
- Tools to support the adoption and use of standards
- Process to evaluate, test, and refine the standards exchange
- Certified products that meet security and interoperability standards
- Policies and governance structures for the Nationwide Health Information Network
- Technical infrastructure (directories and certificate authority) for the Nationwide Health Information Network



This set of functions enables the successful launch and completion of selected initiatives across the development life cycle.



The S&I Framework is building model-driven, repeatable processes that leverage best practices in the industry to speed the development and harmonization of effective specifications. Delivering on this approach will enhance efficiency, quality and effectiveness of healthcare delivery. These processes are already being leveraged within the Direct Project and the CONNECT open source software project to achieve rapid results in public/private health IT collaborations.

What are the S&I Framework Initiatives?

The S&I Framework currently supports three initiatives: Transition of Care, Laboratory Results Interface, and the Clinical Document Architecture (CDA) consolidation project in collaboration with HL7, IHE and Healthbridge.

Initiative Name	Summary
Transition of Care	Address interoperability of a set of core information that needs to be exchanged at transitions of care.
Laboratory Results Interface	Reduce the cost and time to implement new laboratory results interfaces in ambulatory settings.
CDA Consolidation Project	Support consolidation of CDA documents and the development of easy-to-use green CDA templates

ONC is actively seeking volunteers to participate in these three S&I Framework initiatives. Members of the public and interested parties are free to volunteer.

For more information on how to get started as a volunteer please visit:
<http://jira.siframework.org/wiki/display/SIF/Getting+Started+as+a+Volunteer>

For more information on the S&I Framework please visit: <http://wiki.siframework.org>