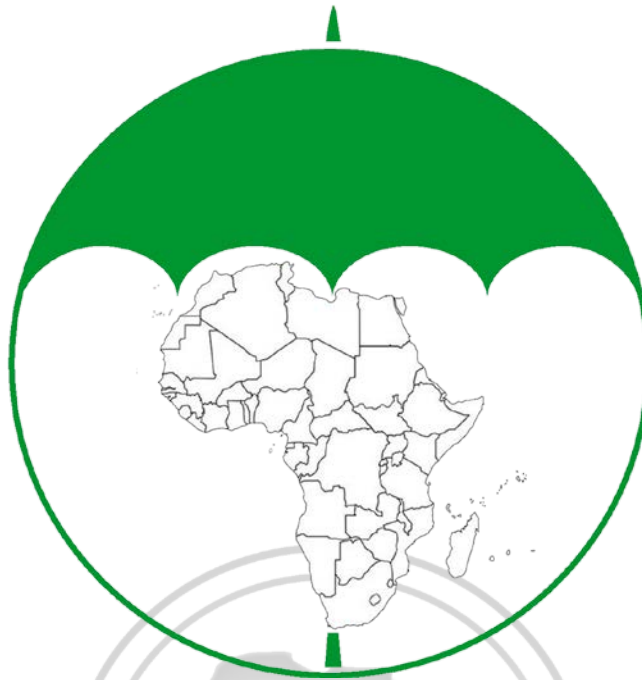


Draft Business Plan

ARSO/CACO/BP/01/2014



**Draft Business Plan of the ARSO Conformity
Assessment Committee**

ARSO CACO

**ARSO Central Secretariat
Nairobi, Kenya
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Executive Summary

On being established in 1977, ARSO was mandated, among other functions, to:

- Promote and coordinate standardisation and conformity assessment systems in Africa;
- Coordinate the views of its members at international level; and
- Create appropriate bodies in addition to the organs of ARSO for the purposes of fulfilling its objectives.

The Lagos Plan of Action (LPA) for the Economic Development of Africa (1980 - 2000) (OAU, 1980) reiterated the scope of standardization and expanded the mandate of ARSO thus:

- ARSO to be entrusted with the task of establishing African regional standards for all products of interest to intra-African trade.
- ARSO to operate a regional certification marking scheme with a view to certifying the quality of and promoting African products.

In accordance with the LPA, the objectives and functions of the regional certification marking scheme were to:

- (a) Establish African Certification System for products complying with ARS;
- (b) Improve the quality of goods and services in Africa;
- (c) Facilitate trade amongst African countries and with the outside world;
- (d) Provide a forum for collaboration in certification activities in the African region with a view to affording mutual benefits to the participating members of ARSO-CERT;
- (e) Coordinate management and development of the activities falling within the scope of mutual recognition agreements among Member States based on recognized standardization frameworks;
- (f) Provide technical solutions for the management of certification schemes in Africa;
- (g) Make arrangements for peer assessment activities for certification schemes.

Over the duration of 1980-1990, ARSO carried out the following activities:

- (i) Organizing training workshops in quality control and certification;
- (ii) Conducting expert studies on national, reciprocal, multinational and regional certification;

- (iii) Developing the modality and methodology for the establishment and operation of the ARSO Certification System (ARSO-CERT);
- (iv) Convening an Expert Group Meeting on Certification which reviewed and adopted rules and procedures which constitute the Constitution, Rules and the Guide of ARSO-CERT;
- (iv) To constitute the ARSO Certification Committee (ARSO CERTCO) to oversee the operations of ARSO CERT;
- (v) Final approval of the above rules and procedures of ARSO-CERT by the ARSO Council in November 1990 in Nairobi, Kenya.

The following were the specific functions of ARSO-CERTCO:

- (a) Establish principles, rules, guides and directives for the operation of ARSO-CERT;
- (b) Contribute to the implementation of African Standards (ARS);
- (c) Ensure application of uniform working methods and procedures in certification, and techniques used in certification;
- (d) Assist in establishing and strengthening national capabilities for certification in African countries by providing training and technical advisory services including promotional and other support services;
- (e) Compile and disseminate information on products certified under ARSO-CERT and under the national certification systems of participating members of ARSO-CERT;
- (f) Endeavour to satisfy the technical needs of the African Sub-regional Economic Communities for certification;
- (g) Facilitate co-operation between ARSO and other regional and multinational bodies operating certification systems;
- (h) Endeavour to satisfy the needs of member States not yet operating certification systems through members of ARSO-CERT.

In June 2013, the 48th ARSO revisited the mandate of ARSO-CERTCO and rebranded it ARSO Conformity Assessment Committee (ARSO CACO) while refining the overall mandate as being the promotion and coordination of conformity assessment activities on the African continent without engaging in the actual certification process as implied by the previous name of the committee. ARSO CACO will thus guide the African continent in developing conformity assessment schemes and programmes which would be suitable for their products while taking into account the economies of scale, market access requirements and the competitiveness of African economies.

Abbreviations

AEC	African Economic Community
AMCHUD	African Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development
ARS	African Standard
ARSO	African Regional Standardization Organization
ASHAM	African Standards Harmonization Model
AUC	African Union Commission
CACO	Conformity Assessment Committee
CD	Committee Draft (Committee stage)
CD-ARCS	Committee Draft for African Certification Scheme
DARCS	Draft African Certification Scheme (Enquiry stage)
FDARCS	Final draft African Certification Scheme (Ballot stage)
GA	General Assembly
NGOs	Non-governmental Organization
NSB	National Standards Body
NWI	New work item (Proposal stage)
RECs	Regional economic Communities
TBT	Technical Barriers to Trade
THC	Technical Harmonization Committee
WD	Working Draft (Preparatory stage)
WG	Working Group

ARSO Conformity Assessment Committee (ARSO-CACO)

1. Scope

To provide technical guidance and strengthen the competitiveness of African goods, process and services through a coordinated conformity assessment system utilizing standards to facilitate intra-African and global trade due to increased competitiveness of African goods and services. The initial areas of focus will comprise of the following:

- African traditional medicine
- Conformity assessment for agriculture and food products
- Conformity assessment in natural resource management and sustainability
- Conformity assessment in the services sector
- Renewable energy
- Training, education and research
- Quality awards

2. Membership

Membership is open to all African and ARSO Member States through their conformity assessment experts. The committee currently has 22 participating ARSO Member States.

3. Business Environment of ARSO CACO

3.1 Description of the Business Environment

The following political, economic, technical, legal and social dynamics describe the business environment of the industry sector, products, materials, disciplines or practices related to the scope of CACO, and they may significantly influence how the relevant certification scheme development processes are conducted and the content of the resulting schemes.

3.1.1 Political-Legal Environment

The political and legal environment forming the underlying basis for ARSO-CACO work is traced to the following among others:

- (i) ***Decision on the Declaration of the Period 2001-2010 as the OAU Decade for African Traditional Medicine (AU Decision No. AHG Dec 164 (XXXVII)(E))*** in which the Heads of State and Government asserted that it was essential to strengthen structures of traditional medicine through analysis of the prevailing systems and with the involvement of traditional health practitioners and communities, focusing on strengthening the best practices of traditional medicine (AUC, 2001).
- (ii) ***Plan of Action on the AU Decade of Traditional Medicine: Implementation of the Decision of the Lusaka Summit of Heads of State and Government (AHG/DEC. 164 (XXXVII)) (AUC, 2005)***. The Plan of Action identified eleven priority areas, which were developed as strategic activities, including Sensitization, Legislation, Institutional Arrangements, Information, Education & Communication, Resource Mobilization, Research & Training, Cultivation & Conservation of Medicinal Plants, Protection of Traditional Medical Knowledge, Local Production of Commercial Quantities of Standardized African

Annex A

Provisional Work Plan

Activity	Start date	Due/end date	Responsible person
Circulation of the business plan to member countries with a request to propose areas of interest and NWIP	01/12/2014	02/2015	Secretary
Review comments, revise the work plan and propose and establish sub-committees		2 months	Chairman, Secretary, expert
Preparing the agenda and working group tasks			Convener, Secretary & chairman
Send out meeting invitation			Secretary
Working group 1 (ATM)			
Preparation of WD		4 months	
Voting on CD		4 months	
Internal commenting / CACO meeting		1 month	
Preparation for public enquiry		4 months	
Public enquiry		4 months	
Preparation for balloting / skype		1 month	
Balloting		1 months	
Approval and publication		2 months	

Working group 2 (Agriculture)			
Preparation of WD		4 months	
Voting on CD		4 months	
Internal commenting / CACO meeting		1 month	
Preparation for public enquiry		4 months	
Public enquiry		4 months	
Preparation for balloting / skype		1 month	
Balloting		1 months	
Approval and publication		2 months	

Annex B

List of Certification Schemes



Annex C

Glossary of Terms Used in the Business Plan



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