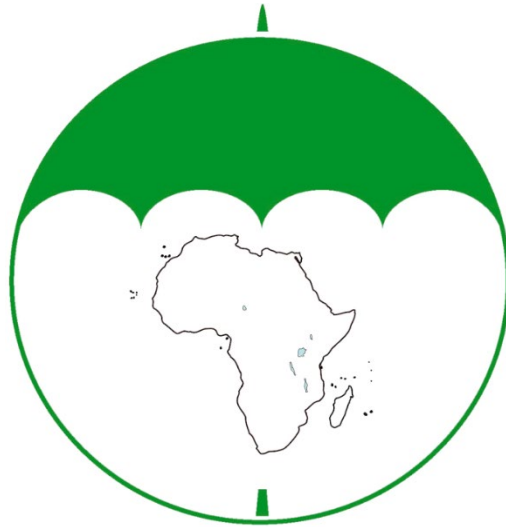


Terms of Reference



Terms of Reference for Consultancy to Undertake Research on Benefits of Implementing Harmonised African Standards

**ARSO Central Secretariat
Nairobi, Kenya
APRIL 2022**

TERMS OF REFERENCE (TORS) FOR CONSULTANCY TO UNDERTAKE A STUDY ON THE BENEFITS OF IMPLEMENTING HARMONISED AFRICAN STANDARDS(S)

1.Introduction:

The African Organization for Standardisation (ARSO) is an African intergovernmental organization established by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the Organization of African Unity (currently AU) in 1977. The fundamental mandate of ARSO is to develop and harmonize African Standards (ARS) and an African Conformity Assessment System for the purpose of enhancing Africa's internal trading capacity, increase Africa's product and service competitiveness globally and uplift the welfare of African communities. The work of preparing African Standards is normally carried out through ARSO technical committees, in liaison with international organizations, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), governmental and non-governmental organizations. Each Member State interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee., This could entail undertaking relevant research with a view to identifying issues that require interventions in order to improve the quality of goods and services and facilitate trade in the continent.

UNECA was established by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations (UN) in 1958 as one of the UN's five regional commissions. ECA's mandate is to promote the economic and social development of its member States, foster intra-regional integration, and promote international cooperation for Africa's development.

2. The Project

ARSO and UNECA are jointly implementing a project on "**Promoting the adoption of environmental standards to support globally competitive African value chains in the context of the AfCFTA**".

This is premised on the fact that African economies are among those most severely affected by climate change phenomena, such as flooding and prolonged droughts. Mitigation and adaptation to climate change will be vital for the continent. Sustainable production methods are one way of adjusting, and key economic sectors in Africa, such as agriculture and forestry, offer potential for reducing greenhouse gas. At the same time, for African products to succeed on world markets they will have to meet the growing demand among consumers for sustainably produced goods and services. So far, most African economies have been missing out on these market opportunities.

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) which became operational on 1st January 2021 is being implemented in a new "green" world. Europe has introduced a Green Deal that aims to halve carbon emissions by 2030 and achieve net zero by 2050. The current US administration has committed to an ambitious environmental strategy that outlines a total of \$2 trillion in investments

in clean energy, jobs and infrastructure. COVID-19 has shed greater light on the fragility of global supply chains, highlighting more than ever the urgency for greater resilience and sustainability. These developments mean that regional and global supply chains will be increasingly required to respond to consumer preferences for environment-friendly and sustainable production processes, and as penalties increase, non-compliance will not be a viable option. Further protection of the environment through production of goods and services through application of sustainability standards will mitigate air pollution, ensure soil health that will support food production and also conservation of water, forest cover and biodiversity. Sustainable production of goods and services will also have economic benefits to the producer as well as ensuring that the worker is well taken care of in terms of wages, health and other social issues.

There is however an opportunity for the AfCFTA to be implemented in a way that supports the enhancement of environmental standards throughout African economies, including the wide-scale adoption and implementation of the Eco-Mark Africa eco-label. ARSO developed the Eco-Mark Africa, an eco-label under a certification programme that aims to encourage intra-African trade through a labelling scheme that promotes environmental and socio-economic benefits. The Eco-Mark Africa mandate is to promote the marketing of sustainable goods and services in Africa, certify these goods and services based on African sustainability/ Eco-Labeling Standards and offer support to small and medium enterprises (SMEs) with certification. However, it also supports large enterprises.

Against this backdrop, this project entails carrying out research on **the opportunities and challenges of environmental standards in the development of competitive green value chains in Africa and African standards on governance and security**. In line with this, the services of a consultant are being sought to undertake a study on **“The Benefits of Implementing Harmonized African Standards”**.

3. Objective of the research

The main objective of the consultancy is to undertake an in-depth study on the benefits of implementing the harmonised African Standards in AU Member States and the role of various stakeholders in promotion of their uptake.

3.1. Qualifications:

- At least a Master's degree or equivalent in Economics, International Trade, International Law or a related area/discipline.
- Minimum of 5 years of professional experience working in the areas of Economics, International Trade, International Law, Business and/or related areas. Proven working experience on standardization is required. Demonstrated expertise working on sustainability standards, as well as experience working with governments of the AU Member States and other relevant stakeholders is an asset.

- For this specific job opening fluency in English and/or French is required. Knowledge of the other is an asset.

4. Duties and responsibilities

Under the supervision and guidance of the representatives from both ARSO and UNECA, the consultant will perform the following tasks:

- Articulate an analytical case for the development and implementation of harmonised African standards in Africa, based on theoretical constructs and empirical analyses making reference to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) etc.
- Undertake a desk review on the implementation of the Dual marking scheme in collaboration with National Product Certification schemes being implemented in AU Member States
- Demonstrate the advantages of dual marking of products complying with harmonised African standards to various stakeholders within Africa such as producers, consumers, traders, retailers, governments etc. This should encompass economic benefits such as improved market access and finances, increased intra-African trade, among others.
- Demonstrate how firms can leverage on harmonised African standards to gain competitive advantage and participate in regional value chains
- Identify the opportunities and challenges in advancing the uptake of African standards within Africa, including by SMEs, women and youth etc. (this encompasses case studies on companies within Africa implementing harmonised African standards).
- Propose a roadmap for adoption and implementing African standards, in particular the Dual marking scheme (this should cover the potential role of public-private partnerships in supporting the compliance with these standards).
- Conduct stakeholder consultations which will inform the research where necessary
- Support the organization of, and participate in the validation workshop
- Update the study based on feedback from the validation workshops

5. Deliverables

The consultancy shall be for a period of 4 months and the key deliverables are outlined below:

1. Output 1: Inception report outlining the understanding of the task, issues to be addressed, methodology and sources of information; an annotated outline of the study (within 2 weeks after signing the contract)
2. Output 2: Draft report (by the end of month 3)
3. Output 3: Final report incorporating feedback from the validation workshop (by the end of month 4)
4. Output 4: Slide deck