



Understanding the ARSO Conformity Assessment Programme and Conformity Assessment Compliance Methods Including Testing and Why it is Crucial to Industry, Society, Trade and Sustainable Development

52nd Session of the Monthly ARSO Webinar

Theme: The Necessity and Impact of Testing in Conformity Assessment for sustainable development

26th February 2025

Reuben Gisore, Technical Director, ARSO





ARSO: Intergovernmental Organization Established in 1977 by OAU (Currently AU) and UNECA



INSTRUMENT OF ACCESSION

WHEREAS the Constitution of The African Regional Organisation for standardization (ARSO) was adopted at Nairobi on 11th January, 1977;

AND WHEREAS Article XIX (6) of the said Constitution provides that the Constitution after coming into force shall remain open for adherence by non-signatory State which are members of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and the Organisation of African Unity;

NOW THEREFORE, the Government of the Republic of Zimbabwe being a member of the Economic Commission for Africa and the OAU, do hereby notify that the Government of the Republic of Zimbabwe, having considered the aforementioned Constitution and accepted it, to hereby accede to the same and undertakes faithfully to fulfil and carry out the stipulations therein contained.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I, ROBERT GABRIEL MUGABE, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe have hereunto set my Hand and affixed the Seal of my Office.

DONE at HARARE this Fourth day of DECEMBER, one thousand nine hundred and eighty-nine.

R. G. Mugabe
R. G. MUGABE
PRESIDENT
REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE



በአዲስ-አበባ፡ ሰኔ ፡ አሥራ ፡ ስድስት ፡ ቀን ፡ አሥራ ፡ ዘጠኝ ፡ መቶ ፡ ስድሳ ፡ ዘጠኝ ፡ ዓመተ ፡ ምክረ-ት ፡ ተሰጠ።

A LOME, LE 12 JUN 1980
LE PRESIDENT DE LA REPUBLIQUE

[Signature]
GENERAL D'ARMEE GNASSINGBE EYADEMA



A Ouagadougou, 22 FEV. 1983

VS QU'IL EST ACCEPTE, RATIFIE ET CONFIRME
ETTONS QU'IL SERA INVIOLABLEMENT OBSERVE.

DE QUOI NOUS AVONS DONNE LES PRESENTES,
S DU SCEAU DE LA REPUBLIQUE DU SENEGAL.

DAKAR, LE 16 SEP. 1978

Par le Président du Conseil de Salut du Peuple
Chef de l'Etat

Le Ministre des Affaires Etrangères
et de la Coopération

[Signature]

[Signature]
LEOPOLD SEDAR SENGHOR

AYANT vu et examiné l' dit Acte
vons approuvé et approuvons en toutes et
parties, en vertu des dispositions qui
sont énoncées et conformément à l'article 53 de la
CONSTITUTION qu'il est accepté, ratifié et
PROMETTONS qu'il sera inviolablement
FOI DE QUOI. Nous avons donné les
lettres du Sceau de la République.

A Abidjan, le 10 / 05 / 81

[Signature]
Le Président de la République

INSTRUMENT OF RATIFICATION

WHEREAS a Constitution of the African Regional Organisation for standardisation was adopted at the Founding Conference held in Accra from 10th - 17th January, 1977.

AND WHEREAS it is provided in the said Constitution that ratification thereto shall be effected by deposit of an Instrument of Ratification with the Executive Secretary of Economic Commission for Africa.

AND WHEREAS on the 20th day of July, 1977, the Supreme Military Council of the Republic of Ghana, acting in accordance with the provisions of the relevant Decree approved the terms of the Constitution of the African Regional Organisation for standardisation.

The Government of the Republic of Ghana do hereby confirm and ratify the Constitution of the African Regional Organisation for standardisation.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF this Instrument of Ratification is signed and sealed by the Chairman of the Supreme Military Council of the Republic of Ghana.

Dated at Accra this second day of August, One Thousand Nine Hundred and Seventy-Seven (1977).

[Signature]
GENERAL IGNATIUS KUTU ACHEAMPONG
HEAD OF STATE AND CHAIRMAN OF THE SUPREME
MILITARY COUNCIL

Listed by date on which the AfCFTA instrument of ratification was deposited with the AUC Chairperson

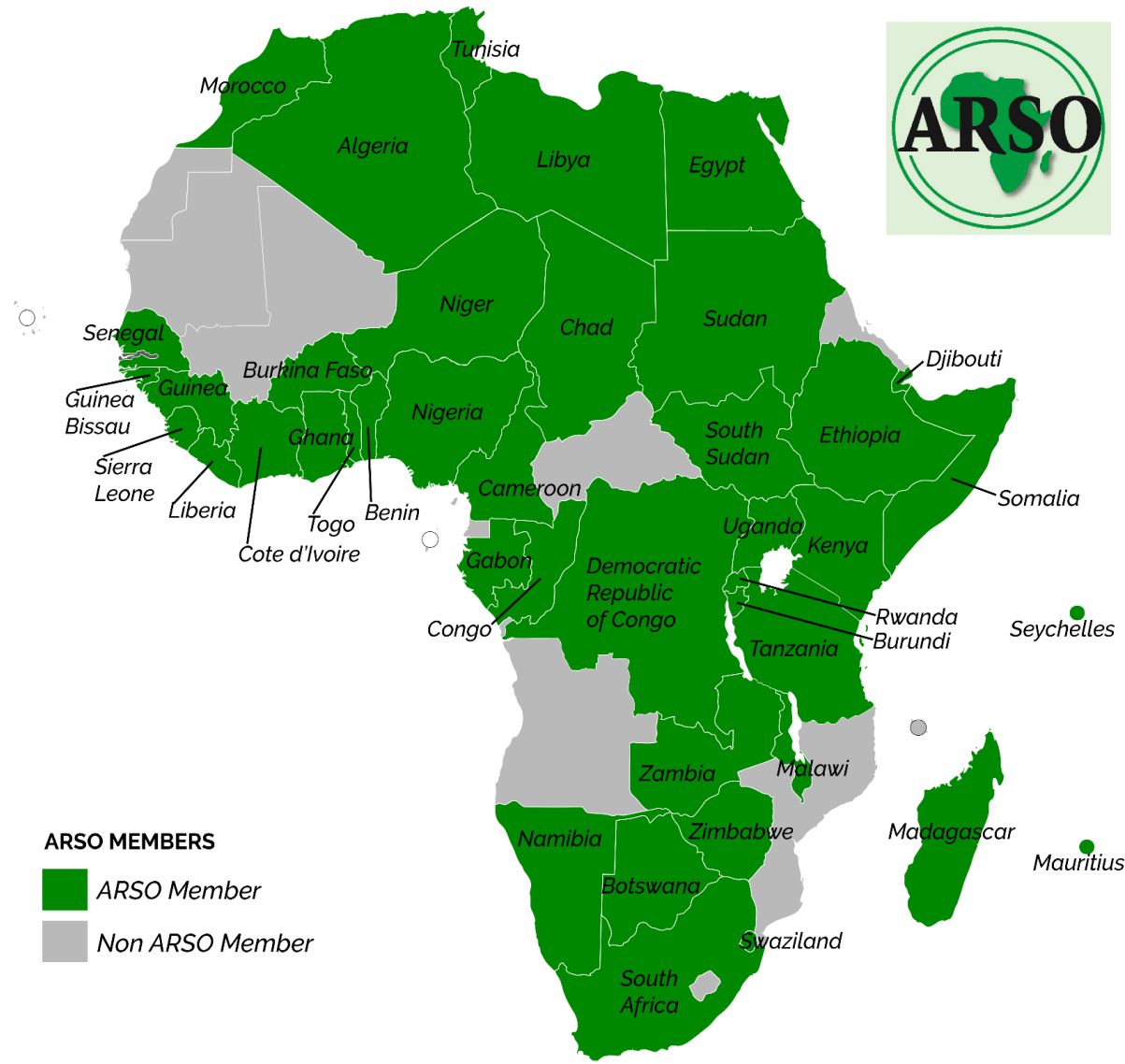
Ghana	10-05-2018
Kenya	10-05-2018
Rwanda	26-05-2018
Niger	19-06-2018
Chad	02-07-2018
Eswatini	02-07-2018
Guinea	16-10-2018
Côte d'Ivoire	23-11-2018
Mali	01-02-2019
Namibia	01-02-2019
Uganda	09-02-2019
South Africa	10-02-2019
Congo. Rep.	10-02-2019
Djibouti	11-02-2019
Mauritania	11-02-2019
Senegal	02-04-2019
Togo	02-04-2019
Egypt	08-04-2019
Ethiopia	10-04-2019
Gambia	16-04-2019
Sahrawi Arab Democratic Rep.	30-04-2019
Sierra Leone	30-04-2019
Zimbabwe	24-05-2019
Burkina Faso	29-05-2019
São Tomé & Príncipe	27-06-2019
Equatorial Guinea	02-07-2019
Gabon	07-07-2019
Mauritius	07-10-2019
Central African Rep.	22-09-2020
Angola	04-11-2020
Lesotho	27-11-2020
Tunisia	27-11-2020
Cameroon	01-12-2020
Nigeria	05-12-2020
Malawi	15-01-2021
Zambia	05-02-2021
Algeria	23-06-2021
Burundi	26-08-2021
Seychelles	15-09-2021
Tanzania	17-01-2022
Cape Verde	05-02-2022
Democratic Rep. of the Congo	23-02-2022
Morocco	20-04-2022
Guinea-Bissau	27-09-2022
Botswana	19-02-2023
Comoros	19-02-2023
Mozambique	05-07-2023
Liberia	31-07-2024



■ Instrument of ratification deposited
■ AfCFTA Agreement signed
■ AfCFTA Agreement not signed

AfCFTA
54 Countries signed and
48 Ratification
 AfCFTA Secretariat

Last updated: August 2024



ARSO MEMBERS
■ ARSO Member
■ Non ARSO Member

42 Member States
13 Non-Member States
1 Observer Member



About ARSO

The African Organization for Standardization (ARSO) was established in 1977 by UNECA and OAU with the mandate to:

- a. harmonize national and/or sub-regional standards as African Standards and issue necessary recommendations to member bodies for this purpose;
- b. promote and coordinate standardisation and conformity assessment practices in Africa;**
- c. operate a regional certification marking scheme with a view to certifying the quality of and promoting African products;**
- d. encourage and facilitate the development by AU Member States of technical regulations to be based on African harmonised standards and/or international standards;
- e. promote and facilitate exchange of experts, information and co-operation in training of personnel in standardisation activities;
- f. create appropriate bodies in addition to the organs of the organization for the purposes of fulfilling its objectives.





Conformity Assessment: Definition and Functions

Activities or technics concerned with demonstration that specified requirements relating to a product, process, system, person or body are fulfilled

- They are techniques and activities that ensure a product, process, service, system, installation, project, data, design, material, claim, person, body or organisation, or any combination thereof, fulfils specified requirements.
- They provide a means of ensuring that the products, services, systems, persons, or bodies have certain required characteristics, and that these characteristics are consistent from product to product, service to service, system to system, etc.
- They verify that a standard or technical specification was applied in the design, manufacturing, installation, maintenance or repair of a device or system and must be carried out according to a set of well-defined rules to ensure consistent and replicable results.





Conformity Assessment: Techniques and Perspectives

(i) Inspection: professional judgment of the inspection bodies' personnel through: (1) visual examination of physical items; (2) measurement or testing of physical items; (3) examination of specification documents such as design drawings; (4) comparison of the findings with the requirements of specification documents or with generally accepted good practice in the field; and (5) drawing up a report on the results of the inspection.

(ii) Certification: Which is the formal and written confirmation that a product, service, Organisation, system, or individual, complies with a given set of specifications

(iii) Assessment: Which is the process of determining whether an organisation fulfils requirements related to its technical competence with an example being the assessment of conformity assessment bodies (e.g. laboratories, inspection bodies, certification bodies and validation/verification bodies) to ensure that the results that they produce can be relied upon, and are carried out during [accreditation](#) and [peer assessment](#).

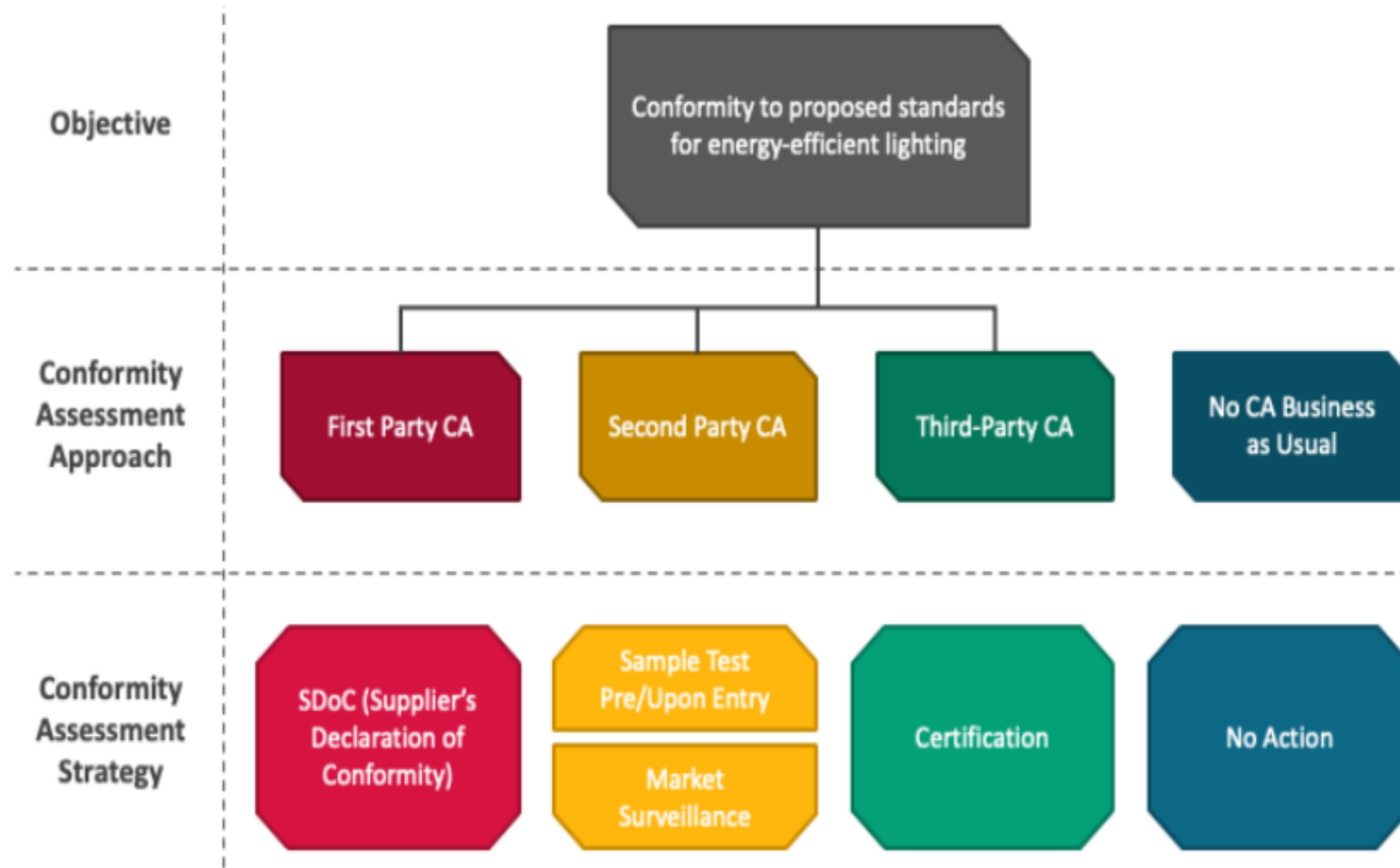
(iv) Auditing: which is a systematic, independent and documented process for obtaining audit evidence and evaluating it objectively to determine the extent to which the audit criteria are fulfilled.

(v) Examination: a mechanism that measures a candidate's competence by one or more means, such as written, oral, practical and observational, as defined in the certification scheme.

(vi) Testing: determination of one or more characteristics of a product according to a specified biological, chemical, electrical, mechanical or other physical procedure



Conformity Assessment: Types



- **1st party assessment** (self assessment: Self/Supplier's Declaration of Conformity) e.g. the manufacturer or supplier of the object of conformity;
- **2nd party assessment** (assessment by a purchaser or user of a product or service) e.g. the purchaser or user of the object of conformity;
- **3rd party assessment** (undertaken by an independent organisation) e.g. a person or organization that is unrelated to the manufacturer or supplier of the object of conformity or their customers (e.g. a third-party testing laboratory, inspection body or certification body).



Conformity Assessment: Testing

- Determination of one or more characteristics of an object of conformity assessment, according to a procedure;
 - The procedure may aim to "control variables within testing as a contribution to the accuracy or reliability of the results".
 - The results of testing may be seen as specified units or objective comparisons with agreed references.
 - In the case of testing used for conformity assessment, the characteristics will be included in the "specified requirements" which form the focus of the assessment.
 - The outputs of testing may be a test report or a test certificate. These outputs may comprise comments about the results of testing and the level of the fulfilment of the specified requirements.
 - However, the confidence in the measurements made during testing depends on the national measurement system and the traceability to international measurement standards through calibration.
 - For the most reliable test results, the test methods should be specified in the standard or other document to which conformity is being assessed. Where a test is used for a number of different purposes it could be specified in a separate standard such as ISO 3452-2:2021, *Non-destructive testing – Penetrant testing – Part 2: Testing of penetrant materials*
 - In other cases the test method could be defined in the requirements standard itself as in ISO 15012-2, *Health and safety in welding and allied processes – Requirements, for testing and marking of equipment for air filtration – Part 2: Determination of the minimum air volume flow rate of captor hoods and nozzles*



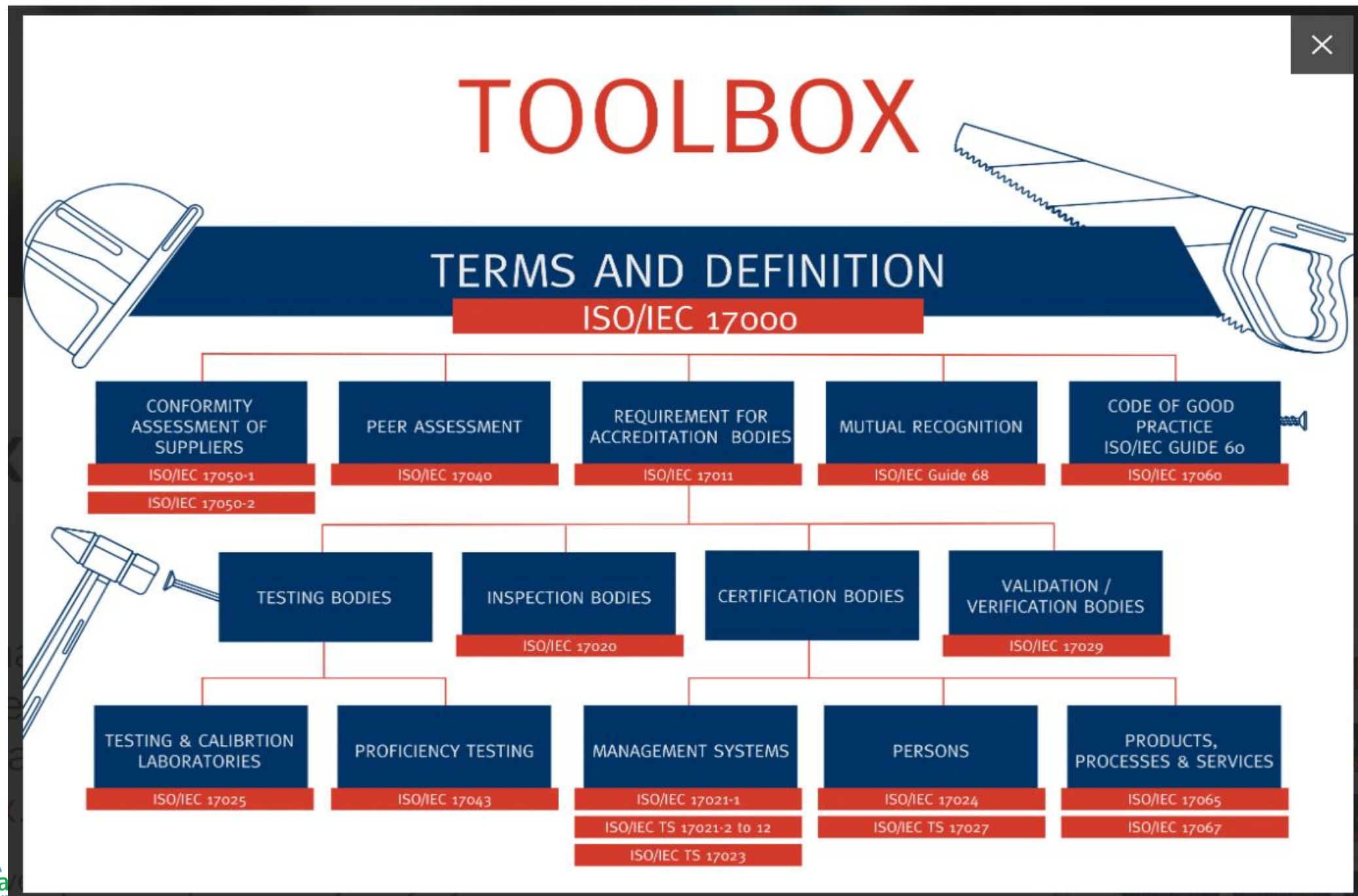


Testing: Core Areas

- (a) Food and feed quality and safety, integrity and wholesomeness at any stage of production, processing and distribution, including rules aimed at ensuring fair practices in trade and protecting consumer interests and information, and the manufacture and use of materials and articles intended to come into contact with food and feed
- (b) Animal health and welfare requirements
- (c) Requirements for the placing on the market and use of plant protection products and the sustainable use of pesticides
- (d) Safety, quality and efficiency of machines and equipment
- (e) Industrial products e.g., electrical, mechanical, biological, chemical, etc
- (f) Medical devices and medicinal products
- (g) Building & civil engineering materials, tools, equipment and facilities
- (h) Environmental requirements
- (i) Packaged products
- (j) Authentication of products for prevention of fraudulent and deceptive practices
- (k) Minerals, petrochemicals and fuel products including the valuation of value added products



Conformity Assessment:
ISO/CASCO
Toolbox





ARSO African Conformity Assessment Programme (ACAP): Aspirations

ARSO ACAP is intended to **provide confidence to all interested third parties**

- that goods and services produced in Africa fulfil specified requirements
- to improve the quality and/or safety of goods produced in Africa
- to facilitate Intra-African and Global Trade

By means of:

- a dedicated certification scheme system and
- implementing certification of specific recognized Standards, to facilitate trade between African countries and export out of Africa.





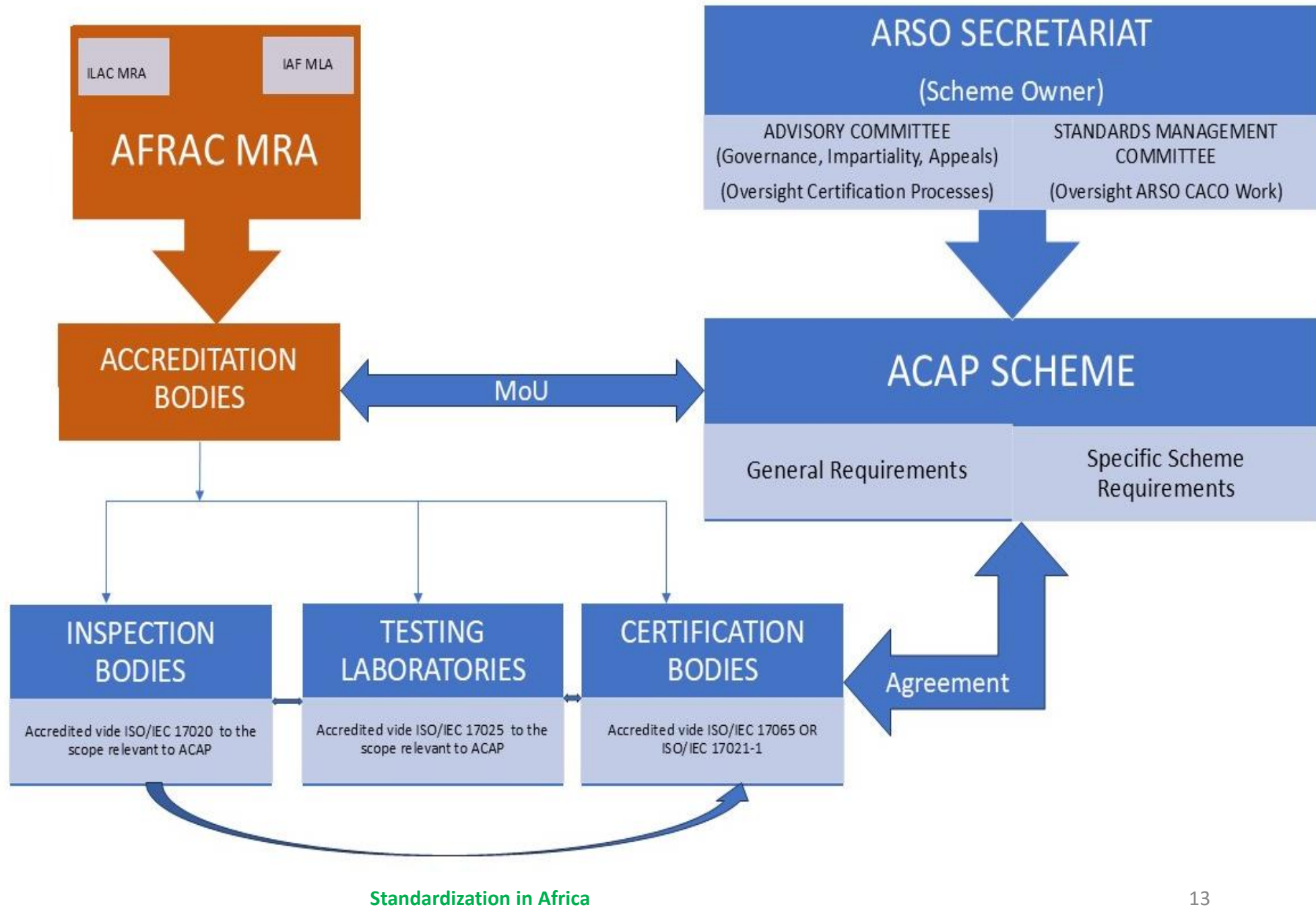
African Conformity Assessment Programme: Objectives

- (a) To provide for an African Certification System for goods and services produced in accordance with African Standards (ARS) issued by ARSO
- (b) To improve the quality, safety and legality of goods and services in Africa
- (c) To facilitate intra-African trade and global trade
- (d) To establish a third-party assessment program to increase transparency and credibility of the stakeholders on ARSO Certified products
- (e) To 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
- (f) To add value to African Standards through harmonization and independent verification**





African Conformity Assessment Programme: Structure





International Basis of ACAP

- The ACAP Documental System is based on ISO **international standards and guidelines for Conformity Assessment**
- Rules for qualification of **Certification Bodies** based on **ISO/IEC 17065, *Conformity assessment - Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services***, or
- **ISO/IEC 17021-1, *Conformity assessment - Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems - Part 1: Requirements***
- Rules for qualification of **Testing Laboratories** based on **ISO/IEC 17025, *General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories***
- Rules for **Auditing and Auditors Qualification** based on **ISO/IEC 17024, *Conformity assessment – General requirements for bodies operating certification of persons***
- The ACAP Certification schemes are designed in accordance with the requirements of ISO/IEC 17067, *Conformity assessment – Fundamentals of product certification and guidelines for product certification schemes*
- ARSO Secretariat operates ACAP as the Scheme Owner in line with the requirements of ISO/IEC 17067 and IAF MD 25, *Criteria for Evaluation of Conformity Assessment Schemes*





ACAP Operational Management

The overall implementation and maintenance of ACAP is under the direct responsibility of the ARSO Central Secretariat.

For the purpose of operationalizing the ACAP system, ARSO Secretariat:

- (a) Shall work with African accreditation bodies under the auspices of the African Accreditation Cooperation (AFRAC);
- (b) The national accreditation bodies shall act as administrators of ACAP in their territories in cooperation with ARSO through agreed mechanisms;
- (c) Conformity assessment bodies involved in the scheme (e.g. testing laboratories, inspection bodies, product certification bodies, bodies auditing manufacturers' management systems) shall be assessed and accredited, participate in peer assessment or qualified in another manner as AFRAC may recommend.





The need for the ACAP certification system

- (a) Promote the social and economic development of the continent by offering a conformity assessment system to underpin the quality and value addition of goods and services produced and traded in the continent;
- (b) Many of the existing CAS are foreign or private owned and are expensive to access by many stakeholders in the continent;
- (c) Build the capacity of African CABs to offer conformity assessment which is internationally recognized so as to create confidence in African products and enhance their regional and international market access;
- (d) Form the basis for mutual recognition of conformity assessment results across the continent so as to enhance intra-African trade;
- (e) Evolve CAS which are focused on African priority sectors in support of Africa's development strategies and flagship programmes; and
- (f) Evolve an internationally benchmarked while taking into account the specific experiences on Africa and addressing the unique challenges and opportunities in Africa.





The need for the ACAP certification system

- **ACAP Scheme A:** Primary Production (Crops, Livestock, Aquaculture)
 - **Scheme A1:** Primary Production for Single Farmers
 - **Scheme A2:** Primary Production for Group of Farmers.
- **ACAP Scheme B:** Food Safety Management Systems Certification
- **ACAP Scheme C:** Chain of Custody
- **ACAP Scheme D: African Eco Mark - Sustainability and eco-labelling**
 - **Scheme D1:** Single site farms/companies
 - **Scheme D2:** Group of farmers or multisite production operations
- **ACAP Scheme E:** African Traditional Medicine
- **ACAP Scheme F:** Sustainable capture fisheries
- **ACAP Scheme G:** Good Finance Grant Practice (GFGP)
- **ACAP Scheme H:** Cosmetology and wellness
- **ACAP Scheme J:** Sustainable mining
- **ACAP Scheme K:** Ecological Organic Agriculture Certification Scheme
- **ACAP Scheme L:** Made in Africa Certification Scheme
- **ACAP Scheme M:** Good Research Management Practice (GRMP)





ARSO Conformity Assessment Committee (ARSO CACO), established June 2013 and has the following structure:

1. TSC 1: Standards Implementation

- 1) CACO WG 1: Policy and Governance
- 2) CACO WG 2: Products and Sustainability Certification Schemes
- 3) CACO WG 3: Services
- 4) CACO WG 4: African Traditional Medicine
- 5) CACO WG 5: Market Surveillance and Inspection

2. TSC 2: Technical Regulations

- 1) TR-WG 1: Crops and plant protection
- 2) TR-WG 2: Animal resources
- 3) TR-WG 3: Infrastructure
- 4) TR-WG 4: Building and construction
- 5) TR-WG 5: Pharmaceuticals and medical devices

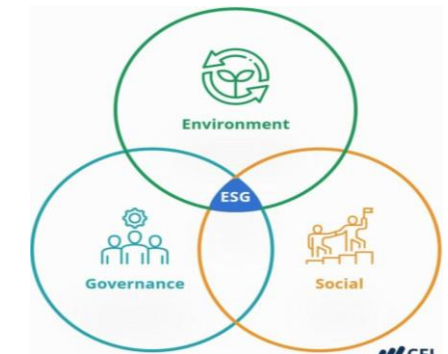
**Driving
Conformity
Assessment:
ARSO CACO**





Inter-Regional Testing Laboratories Network Architecture

- A model under consideration currently
- The regional, integrated laboratory system, optimized to serve the needs of both the national and regional market, while operating at a cost considerably lower than that of an equal number of separate national laboratories
- Supports the delivery of timely, high quality, and interpretable results for all users of the laboratory services
- The network facilitates intra laboratory communication and information flows, mutual recognition and the sharing of resources
- The laboratory networks create an inclusive forum for laboratory experts from Member States to share ideas, work collaboratively, and build relationships that will support a more effective integrated response to emerging needs
- The scopes of testing performed by the participating laboratory should be based on harmonized test methods or common approaches adopted in the particular sector.
- The scopes should be precisely and unambiguously defined to focus on the mandated role



Thank you!

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