



# **African Organisation For Standardisation**

**Virtual Awareness Programme on African Standards and certification schemes for Edible Insects for food and feeds, 14<sup>TH</sup> April 2026.**

**The African Standards Development Process and the Role of Member States in the Development, Adoption, and Implementation of Harmonized Standards**

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Secretary ARSO PC 03**





# Introduction

- ❖ Standards are essential for trade, safety, and quality assurance
- ❖ Africa is working toward harmonized standards to boost regional integration
- ❖ Driven by frameworks like the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)
- ❖ Focus: How standards are developed and the role of member states





# About ARSO

ARSO is

**intergovernmental** organization

established in **1977** by OAU (currently AU) and UNECA with **founding Conference** held at the Accra International Centre, Ghana, with **21 founding member States, in blue.**

“ all member States who have not yet deposited with ECA their instruments of ratification to do so as soon as possible”.- **Prof. Dr. Adedeji Adebayo, 1976**, then General Secretary of UNECA.

16 Priority Sectors – ARSO –UNECA study 2019.

100 Technical Committees, run by African Experts.

## ARSO MISSION

Facilitate intra-African and global trade

through **harmonized standards and conformity system to address TBTs in Africa**

Membership : (43): **Algeria, Botswana, Benin, Burundi, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Congo Brazzaville, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Eswatini, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Morocco, Namibia, New State of Libya, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Somalia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Sudan, South Sudan, South Africa, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and with Zanzibar as an Observer member**



Representatives at an event an ARSO event on 14th March 1977



ECA's MAN AT THE TOP



### AfCFTA TBT Annex 6 - Article 6 : Cooperation in Standardisation

#### 1.State Parties shall:

- a)develop and promote the adoption and/or adaption of **international standards**;
- b)promote the **adoption of standards developed by the ARSO** and the AFSEC;
- c)where a relevant international standard required to facilitate trade does not exist, request the **ARSO and/or the AFSEC to develop the required standard to facilitate trade between State Parties**;



# About ARSO

## The Mandate of ARSO includes the following:

- i. initiate and co-ordinate the development of African Standards (ARS) with references to products which are of peculiar interest to Africa;
- ii. encourage and facilitate adoption of international standards by member bodies;
- iii. promote and facilitate exchange of experts, information and co-operation in training of personnel in standardization activities;
- iv. co-ordinate the views of its members at ISO, IEC, OIML, Codex and other international organisations concerned with standardisation activities; and
- v. create appropriate bodies in addition to the organs of the organisation for the purposes of fulfilling its objectives.





# Standards – Definitions

## ISO/IEC Guide 2:2004

### Standards and standardization

- A standard is a document which provides, inter alia, requirements, rules, and guidelines, for a process, product or service. These requirements are sometimes complemented by a description of the process, products or services.
- Standards are the result of a consensus and are approved by a recognized body.
- Standards aim at achieving the optimum degree of order in a given context.
- The process of formulating, issuing and implementing standards is called standardization.

“A standard is a document, established by consensus and approved by a recognized body, that provides for common and repeated use, rules, guidelines or characteristics for activities or their results, aimed at the achievement of the optimum degree of order in a given context”..

## TBT Agreement- 1995

“Document approved by a recognized body, that provides, for common and repeated use, rules, guidelines or characteristics for products or related processes and production methods, with which compliance is not mandatory. It may also include or deal exclusively with terminology, symbols, packaging, marking or labeling requirements as they apply to a product, process or production method.”





# Standards – Definitions

## A Technical regulation

**When a standard is declared mandatory, it becomes a technical regulation.**

### TBT Agreement- 1995.

“Document which lays down product characteristics or their related processes and production methods, including the applicable administrative provisions, with which compliance is mandatory. It may also include or deal exclusively with terminology, symbols, packaging, marking or labeling requirements as they apply to a product, process or production method.”

**Technical regulations and standards set out specific characteristics of a product, such as its size, shape, design, functions and performance, or the way it is labeled or packaged before it is put on sale.**

## The Difference Between Standards and Technical Regulations

The difference between a standard and a technical regulation lies in compliance. While conformity with standards is voluntary, **technical regulations are by nature mandatory and have the force of law. They have different implications for international trade.**

**If an imported product does not fulfill the requirements of a technical regulation, it will not be allowed to enter the market.**

**In case of standards, non-complying imported products will be allowed in the market, but then their market share may be affected if consumers' prefer products that meet local standards such as quality or color standards for textiles and clothing.**





# What are Harmonized Standards

- ❖ Standards aligned across multiple countries
- ❖ Reduce technical barriers to trade
- ❖ Promote:
  - Cross-border trade
  - Industrial growth
  - Economic integration





# Benefits of standardization

Standards provide benefits to different sectors of society. Some of the benefits of standardization are as follows:

## For manufacturers, standards:

1. Rationalize the manufacturing process.
2. Eliminate or reduce wasteful material or labour.
3. Reduce inventories of both raw material and finished products.
4. Reduce the cost of manufacture.

## For traders, standards:

1. Provide a workable basis for acceptance or rejection of goods or consequential disputes, if any.
2. Minimize delays, correspondence, etc., resulting from inaccurate or incomplete specification of materials or products.

## For customers, standards:

1. Assure the quality of goods purchased and services received.
2. Provide better value for money.
3. Are convenient for settling disputes, if any, with suppliers.

## For technologists, standards:

1. Technological Transfer. - Provide starting points for research and development for further improvement of goods and services.

**NOTE:** Standards provide a vital link to global trade, market access and export competitiveness. In expanding trade, in particular, standards and technical regulations are essential for market access.

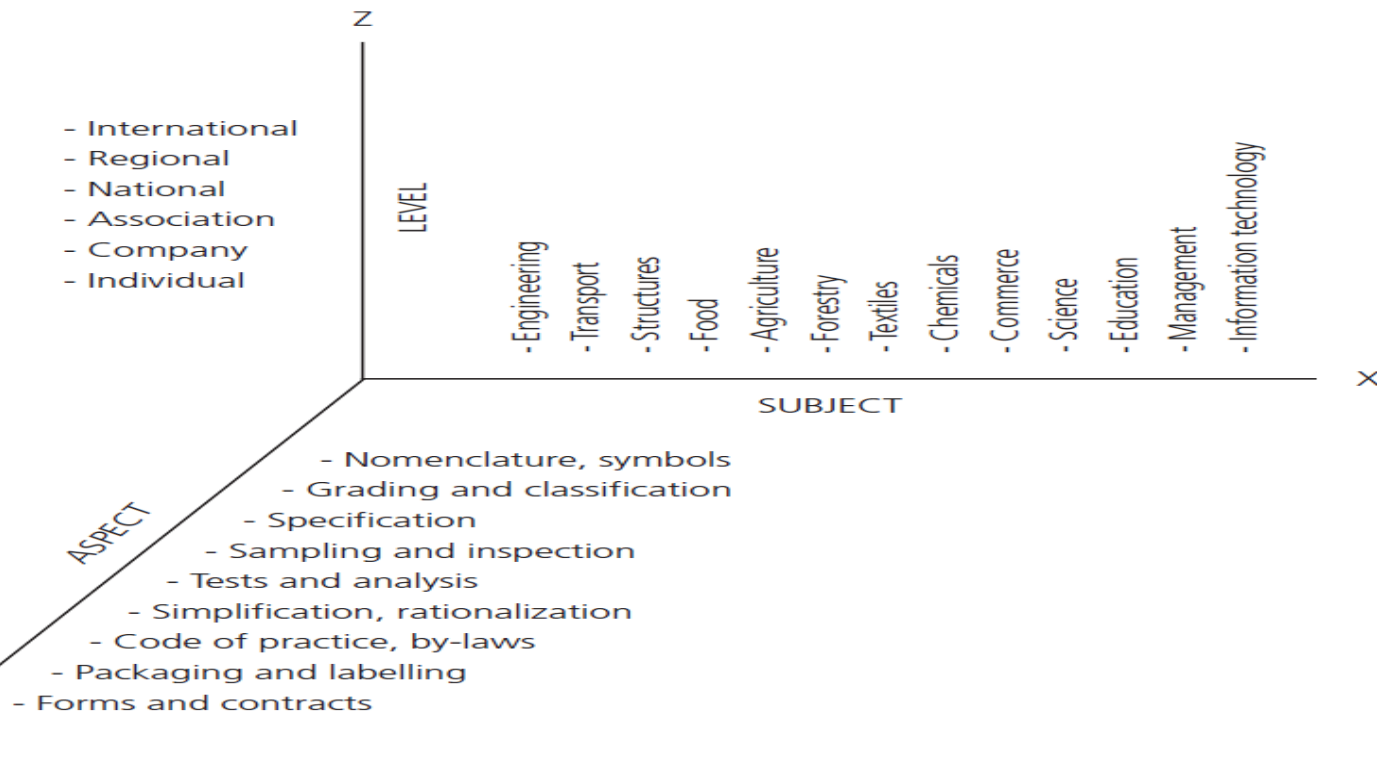




# Standards – Attributes of a standard

A standard generally has three attributes:

1. **Level:** such as at the **company, national or international** level.
2. **Subject:** such as **engineering, food, textile or management**.
3. **Aspect:** such as **specification, testing and analysis, packaging and labelling** (more than one aspect may be covered in a single standard: a standard may include specification of items such as the product, its sampling and inspection, related tests and analysis, packaging and labelling).





# Standards – Attributes of a standardisation Levels

Standardization can be undertaken at **four significant levels**. These are at the **international, national, association (or industry) and company levels**.

**Company** (government departments, project authorities, institutions and municipalities.) standardization includes all those activities that are aimed at streamlining, coordinating, and documenting generally accepted information (or procedures). Company standardization may deal with engineering standards, production standards, administrative and financial norms, codes of practice for manufacturing and maintenance, and even codes for conducting activities such as market surveys and cost estimates.

It provides a company with the means for the simplification and rationalization of its operations.



**Industry:** Beyond the company level, standardization efforts are also carried out at the level of the industry or of professional associations. This represents the collective standardization activity of groups of companies and other enterprises that focus on a given industry or trade. Industry level standardization serves to integrate company standards and unify them in the interest of the industry as a whole.

**National:** It is at the national level that the standardization requirements of individuals, companies and the industry are coordinated and integrated into purposeful national standards. At the same time, national level standards serve as a basis for forging international agreements on international standards, which help to promote worldwide exchanges of goods and services. At the national level, the work of preparing and issuing standards is carried out by **NSBs**.



## **Regional/Continental – HARMONISATION**

1. European Committee for Standardization (CEN-CENELEC)
2. Pan American Standards Commission (COPANT)
3. Arab Organization for Standardization and Metrology (ASMO)
4. African Regional Organization for Standardization (ARSO),
5. Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries (SMIIC).

**International** – Harmonisation of the National and Regional Standards. ISO, IEC, ITU..

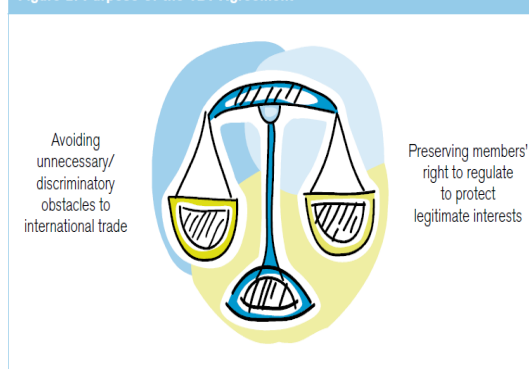


The Standards Harmonisation is based on the principle and procedure for the development of African standards and other deliverables (SHP-01) which defines the methodologies for the development, harmonization, adoption and publication of African standards. Wherever feasible, and with the necessary modifications, the procedures are based on the relevant ISO/IEC Directives. Cognizance has also been taken of the WTO TBT Agreement.

## The SPH 01 is based on:

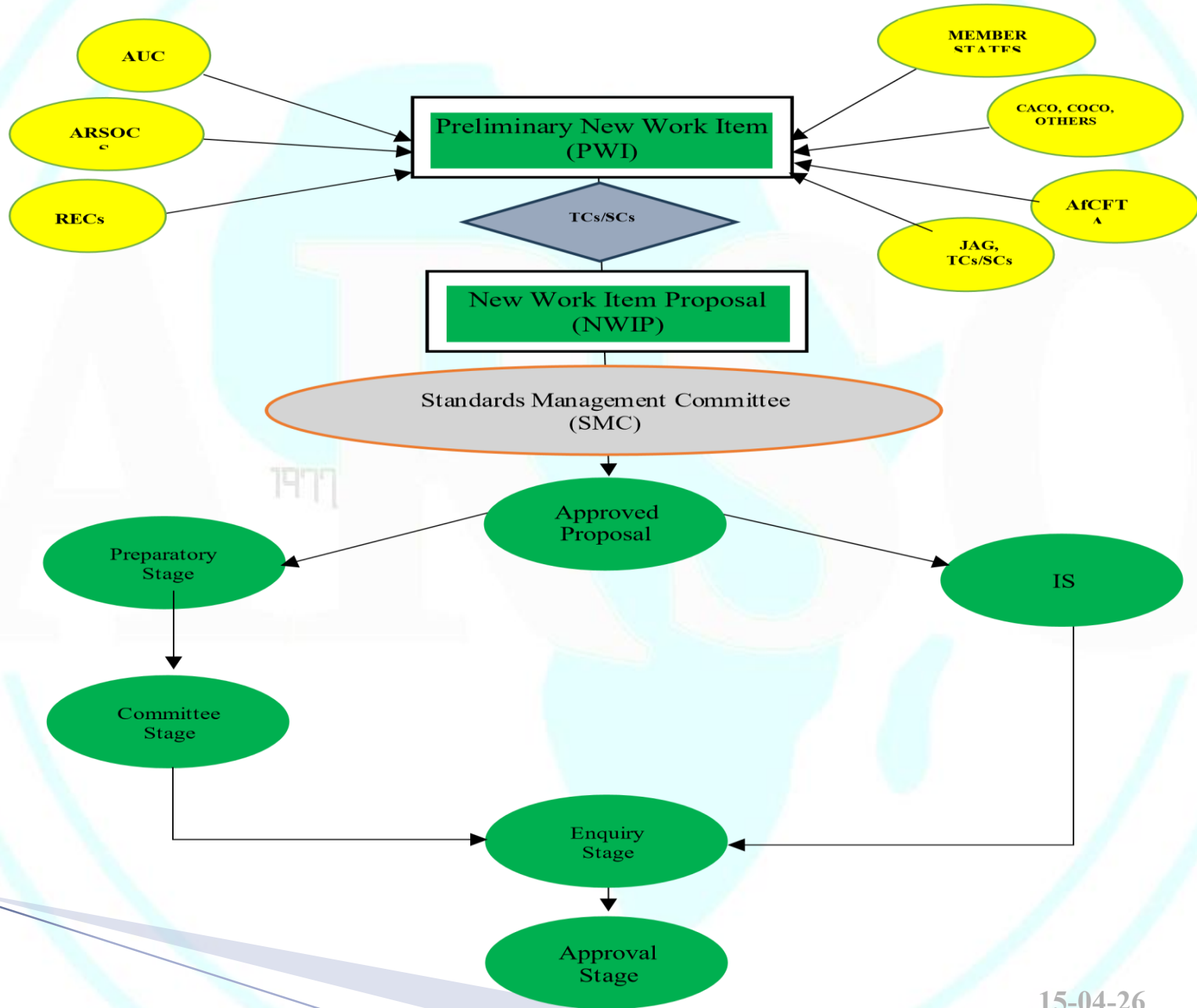
1. Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community (The Abuja Treaty) of 1991
2. Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area
3. ISO/IEC Directives — Part 1: Procedures for the Technical Work
4. ISO/IEC Directives — Part 2: Principles and rules for the structure and drafting of ISO and IEC documents
5. ISO/IEC Guide 2, Standardization and related activities — General vocabulary
6. WTO Agreement of Technical Barriers to Trade (WTO TBT Agreement)/The Code of Good Practice (Annex 3 of the TBT Agreement) which establishes the principles for the preparation, adoption, and application of standards

Figure 2: Purpose of the TBT Agreement





# Paths for Harmonizing African Standards



# Principles of Standardisation

The development of Standards shall be in accordance with the following principles as defined in the WTO/TBT Agreement and ISO.

1. Openness
2. Transparency
3. Impartiality and Consensus
4. Effectiveness and relevance
5. Coherence
6. Development dimension

Figure 4: Six Principles for the Development of International Standards, Guides and Recommendations



Source: TBT Committee.



# Principle

## Openness

Participation in the process of harmonization of African Standards is open on a non-discriminatory basis to all interested parties in the African countries through:

This would include openness without

- ▶ discrimination with respect to the participation at the policy development level and at every stage of standards development, such as the

1. proposal and acceptance of new work items;
2. technical discussion on proposals;
3. submission of comments on drafts in order that they can be taken into account;
4. reviewing existing standards;
5. voting and adoption of standards; and
6. dissemination of the adopted standards.





# Principles

## Transparency

All essential information related to standards development are accessible and clearly communicated to all interested parties.

This shall be achieved through:

- 1) announcement of approved new work items on the ARSO website, websites of the respective RECs and NSBs;
- 2) announcement of drafts for public comment on the ARSO website, websites of the respective RECs and NSBs and notification to WTO Secretariat; - **NOTE: All Draft African Standards for public comment can be downloaded from the website free of charge.**
- 3) publication of standards work programme bulletin on Web-Portals and notification of the same to WTO Secretariat;
- 4) official notification of adopted/amended/withdrawn standards;
- 5) prompt publication of adopted/amended/confirmed standards; and
- 6) searchable and downloadable Catalogue of African Standards on the respective Web-Portals.





# Principles

## Impartiality and Consensus

- ▶ The standards harmonization process shall not favour the interests of any particular party and shall grant equal rights and opportunities in the harmonization process and in the dissemination of standards to all interested parties.

- **Members:** should be provided with meaningful opportunities to contribute to the elaboration of an international standard so that the standard development process will not give privilege to, or favour the interests of, a particular supplier/s, country/ies or region/s.
- Consensus procedures should be established that seek to take into account the views of all parties concerned and to reconcile any conflicting arguments.
- Impartiality should be accorded throughout all the standards development process with respect to, among other things:
  - a. access to participation in work;
  - b. submission of comments on drafts;
  - c. consideration of views expressed and comments made;
  - d. decision-making through consensus;
  - e. obtaining of information and documents;
  - f. dissemination of the international standard;
  - g. fees charged for documents;
  - h. right to transpose the international standard into a regional or national standard; and
  - i. revision of the international standard.



# Principles

## Effectiveness and relevance

In order to serve the (national, regional or international) interests of facilitating trade and preventing unnecessary trade barriers, standards need to be relevant and to effectively respond to regulatory and market needs, as well as scientific and technological developments.

Accordingly, it is important that ARSO process:

- ✓ Take into account all relevant regulatory or market needs, as feasible and appropriate, as well as scientific and technological developments in the elaboration of standards;
- ✓ Put in place procedures aimed at identifying and reviewing standards that have become obsolete, inappropriate or ineffective for various reasons; and
- ✓ Put in place procedures aimed at improving communication with the WTO





# Principles

## Coherence

- ❖ Coherence is the quality of being logical and consistent ,and the quality of forming a unified approach.
- ❖ It is about avoiding duplication or overlap with other works in order to minimize development of conflicting standards.
- ❖ **To avoid duplication and conflict, cooperation and coordination with the work of RECs, Member States and other regional, sub-regional and international standardizing bodies shall be undertaken.**

### **1. Joint Advisory Group (JAG)**

Established by the ARSO Council for the purpose of liaisons with RECs in standardization and for recommending priority sectors and topics for harmonization at ARSO level.

### **2. Standards Management Committee (SMC)**

Established by the ARSO Council for the purpose of management of procedure, due process and harmonization programmes for their timely execution.

### **3. MoUs – ISO, IEC, ITU, ASTM International, ANSI, GSO, SMIIC**





# Principles

## Development dimension

- ▶ **Constraints affecting the participation of under developed/ with capacity gaps, limited skills and experience, without research facilities, limited financial resource should be taken into account in the standards development process.**
- ▶ **SHP01 Say, mechanisms shall be developed to enhance the participation and to promote equitable and inclusive participation of all ARSO Member States in order to ensure a real multi-stakeholder-process in the harmonization of African Standards.**
- ▶ Practical ways of facilitating participation of the “weak” in ARSO standards development should be sought. This is more so because the principles of Transparency and Openness requires that the “weak” are not excluded.





# How African Standards are Development

Project stage	Associated document	
	Name	Abbreviation
0: Preliminary stage	Preliminary Work Item	PWI
1: Proposal stage	New Work Item Proposal	NWIP
2: Preparatory stage	Working Draft(s)	WD
3: Committee stage	Committee Draft(s)	CD
4: Enquiry stage	Draft African Standard	DARS
5: Ballot stage	Final Draft African Standard	FDARS
6: Approval stage	Final Draft African Standard	FDARS
Published Standard	African Standard	ARS





# Preliminary stage (Stage 0) New work Item review

To analysing proposal against stakeholders ,legislation , science, experience and practice.

- ▶ PWI are evaluated for its relevance, necessity and possibility of achieving the harmonized standard or other deliverables.
- ▶ stage where decision taken on whether to progress this PWI into the harmonization process.
- ▶ NWI is sent to the NSBs for 2month vote.
- ▶ NSBs returns response through which may be acceptance or rejection of the NWI
- ▶ Positions of the NSBs is compiled and submits to SMC for approval.
- ▶ The preliminary stage ends when the PWI has been accepted by the TC to advance to the proposal stage. No target dates can be allocated to a work item at the preliminary stage.



# Proposal Stage (Stage 1)

- ❖ Following the evaluation of PWI and when the TC is satisfied with its relevance and necessity for a harmonized standard
- ❖ The TC Secretariat sends out a NWIPs Form to member countries for a 3-month vote.
- ❖ In the case of a project that will not require preparatory and/or committee stages, such as ISO/IEC intended for direct entry at Stage 4 (Enquiry stage) the NWIP Form is sent out for 5 months with the accompanying International standard



# Proposal Stage (Stage 1) cont.

- ▶ **The acceptance criteria;**
- ❖ For indigenous NWIPs sent out for 3 months vote, the criteria is acceptance by simple majority of P-members voting, plus at least three (3) members willing to participate actively in the project particularly at the preparatory stage
- ❖ For NWIPs circulated with international or REC standard for direct entry at Stage 4 (Enquiry stage), the criteria is acceptance by 50% of P-members voting in favour. Effort shall also be made to reconcile negative vote.
- ❖ The proposal stage ends when NWIPs ballots has been considered by the SMC and is either approved or rejected basing on the above criteria





## Preparatory stage (Stage 2)

- ▶ **The preparatory stage covers the preparation of a WD. This may be achieved through one of the following means;**
- ✓ A project Leader may be appointed with the guidance of the TC Secretariat to come up with the WD
- ✓ A Working Group may be constituted with the guidance of the TC Secretariat to develop a WD
- ✓ The proposing NSB may supply the a WD within 2 month.
- ✓ A suitable international or regional standard may be considered as WD
- ✓ A WD must take into consideration the available relevant standards which may be use as references for development.
- ✓ The WDs are circulated with comments form by the TC Secretariat to all members NSBs for consideration and national consultation. NSBs Submits comments within 1 month.





## Committee Stage (Stage 3)

- ❖ The principal stage at which comments from stakeholders are taken into consideration and consensus built on the technical content.
- ❖ Member countries through their NSBs are required to study the texts of drafts and submit collated technical comments at this stage.
- ❖ Consensus is built on received comments for progression of the CD to the enquiry stage.
- ❖ The committee stage ends when all technical issues have been resolved by consensus and a CD is accepted to advance to the enquiry stage as a DARS



## Enquiry stage (Stage 4)

- ❖ DRS are made available for wider public comments for a period of 60 days.
- ❖ DARS are also notified to WTO by all participating members and ARSO Secretariat.
- ❖ Received comments are reviewed in order to deal with unresolved issues and to advance the document for formal acceptance at the balloting stage.
- ❖ Upon attaining consensus, the DARS is edited by the editing committee and upgraded to FDARS, ready for balloting by the member states.
- ❖ Editing meeting is essential and should be considered to review the structures, language, clarity of requirements and its test method, units and all issues of proper application of ARS template.



## Balloting Stage (Stage 5)

- ❖ The FDARS is circulated together with the ballot form for a 1-month vote.
- ❖ Members shall submitted ballot Form within 1 month.
- ❖ If a ballot is affirmative, the member shall not submit any comment.
- ❖ A member shall not cast an affirmative vote that is conditional on the acceptance of modifications.
- ❖ If a ballot is negative, the member shall submit technical comments justifying why.
- ❖ The acceptance criteria of FDARS during balloting must be a positive vote on the FDARS by 75% of the participating NSBs.
- ❖ The result of voting indicating either a formal approval or formal rejection of FDARS is circulated to SMC in ballot Summary Form.





# Approval Stage and Publication (Stage 6)

- ❖ The FDARS is considered by the SMC for verification of due process.
- ❖ The SMC recommends the FDARS to the Council on the basis of meeting due process.
- ❖ The FDARS is approved by the Council on the basis of recommendation from the SMC.
- ❖ The Approval stage ends when a FDARS is approved by the Council as an African Standard.
- ❖ The number, titles and scopes of the approved ARS is published by the ARSO/CS and made available for national adoption through NSBs.
- ❖ 15 Edible insects standards are available for members adoption and implementation to reduce technical barrier trade.





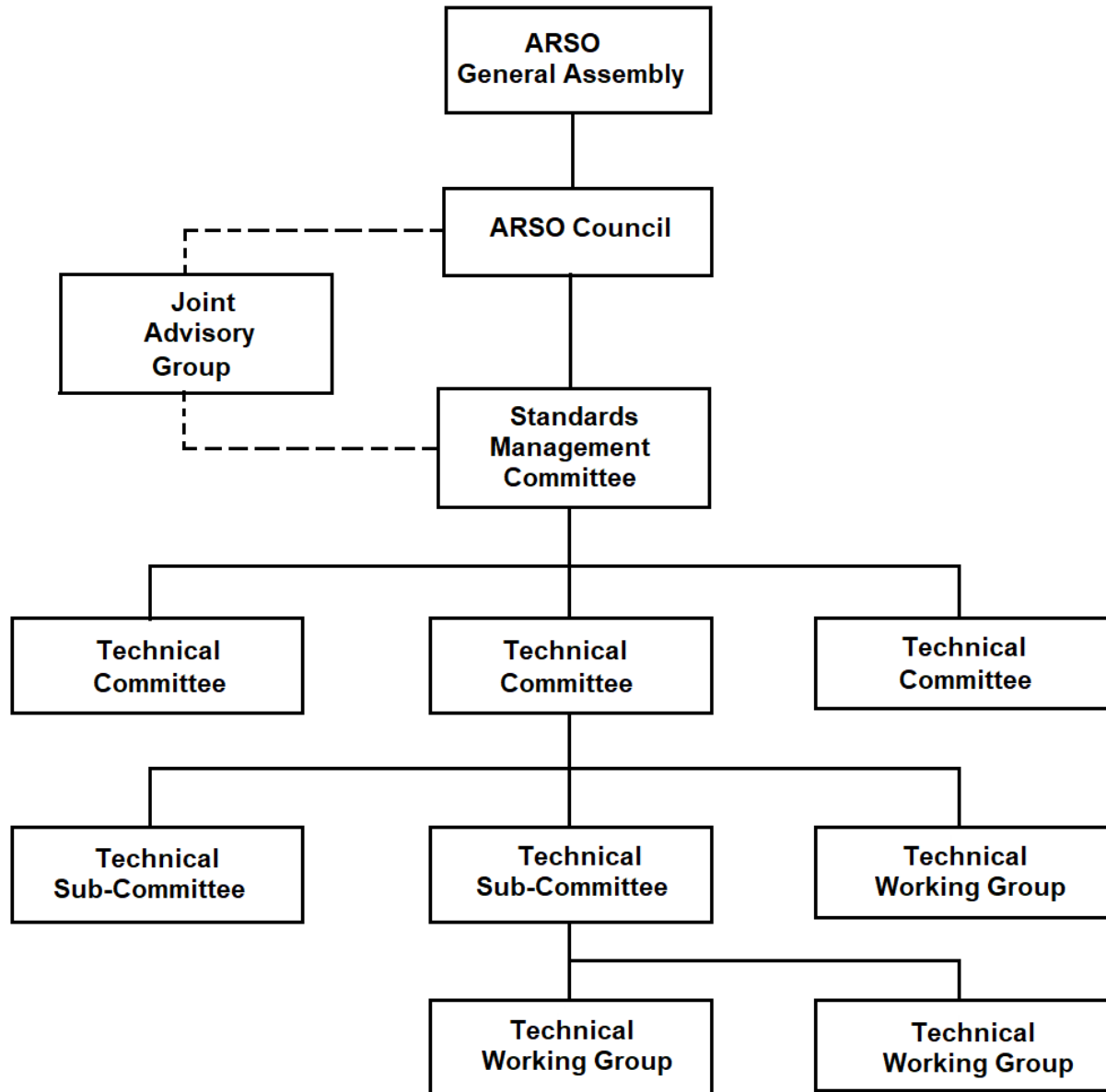
# Summary of time frame allowed per stage

Project stage	Associated document	Timeframe	Adoption of IS/REC Stds
0: Preliminary stage	Preliminary Work Item (PWI)	Not applicable	Not applicable
1: Proposal stage	New Work Item Proposal (NWIP)	3 to 5 months (3 months for circulation and balloting and 2 months to review ballot results and approval by SMC)	2 Months
2: Preparatory stage	Working Draft (WD)	2 months	0
3: Committee stage	Committee Draft (CD)	6 months	0
4: Enquiry stage	Draft African Standard (DARS)	4 months (2 months' public review) (2 months to resolve comments)	1
5: Ballot stage	Final Draft African Standards (FDARS)	1 month	2
6: Approval stage	African Standards (ARS)	Not applicable	1
Publication stage	African Standards (ARS)	Immediately upon approval	





# Organizational Structure for the development of African Standards





# Role of Member States in the Development, Adoption, and Implementation of Harmonized Standards

## Member states play a critical role in:

- ❖ Development
- ❖ Adoption
- ❖ Implementation
- ❖ Enforcement

## Role in Development

- ❖ Provide technical experts
- ❖ Participate in committees
- ❖ Contribute national perspectives
- ❖ Ensure standards reflect local realities





# Role of Member States in the Development, Adoption, and Implementation of Harmonized Standards

## Role in Adoption

- ❖ Align national standards with regional ones
- ❖ Withdraw conflicting national standards
- ❖ Adopt harmonized standards as national standards
- ❖ Adoption is identical
- ❖ 1 guideline, 9 Public Available Specifications (PAS) and 3 Technical Reports available for adoption.

## Role in Implementation: Integrate standards into:

- ❖ Policies
- ❖ Regulations
- ❖ Support industries in compliance
- ❖ Build capacity and awareness

## Role in Enforcement: Ensure compliance through:

- ❖ Regulatory bodies
- ❖ Quality control agencies
- ❖ Market surveillance
- ❖ Certification and accreditation system





# Conclusion

- ❖ Harmonized standards are key to Africa's economic integration
- ❖ Member states are central to success
- ❖ Collaboration is essential for effective development and implementation.



# *Thank you!*

CONSTITUTION  
OF THE AFRICAN REGIONAL ORGANIZATION  
FOR STANDARDIZATION