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WAQSP NEWS



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ECOQUAL

The Regional Quality Infrastructure
bodies are now operational,
after five years of intensive efforts

CONTENTS

▶ EDITORIAL

Page 3

▶ NEWS

- 1st meeting of the West African Accreditation Cooperation Forum (FOACA): a well-developed action plan Page 4
- 'The WAQSP strengthens the capacities of Consumer Associations on the United Nations Consumer Protection Guide' Page 5
- Meetings of Commissioner Mamadou Traoré with Quality operators in Togo, during his first mission within the framework of the ECOWAS Quality Programme Page 6
- WAQSP and AMANORM for the effective implementation of the National Certification Mark in Mali Page 7
- Implementation of the ECOWAS Mark of conformity to the standards: the experts validate the draft documents Page 8
- Regional Accreditation System: ECORAS becomes a member of AFRAC Page 8
- National training workshops on ISO 9001 v 2015 requirements: WAQSP increases the critical mass of Quality Management System (QMS) experts in the region Page 9

▶ FOCUS

- The bodies of the Regional Quality Infrastructure are operational, after five years of intensive work Page 10
- PHOTO ALBUM : ECOWAS Quality Infrastructure Forum Page 11

▶ ACTIVITIES OF PARTNERS

- On a working mission to Benin, Jean BAKOLE, UNIDO Regional Director in Nigeria, presented his credentials to the Beninese authorities Page 15
- West African Accreditation System (SOAC): the WAQSP supported the effective start-up of the activities of the unique accreditation body for UEMOA countries Page 15
- Celebration of World Metrology and Accreditation Events in Nigeria Page 16
- Nigeria: NINAS strengthens its acceptance at the African and international levels Page 16
- African Accreditation Cooperation (AFRAC) obtains international recognition. Page 17

▶ DID YOU KNOW THAT?

Page 18

WAQSP NEWS

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EDITORIAL



Mamadou Traoré
Industry and Private Sector Promotion Commissioner

Dear readers,

The ECOWAS regional quality bodies reached a new milestone with the holding of the first meeting of the Community Quality Council and the Constitutive General Assembly of the Regional Agency for Quality (ECOWAQ). These two meetings, which top off the establishment of the governance bodies of these structures, took place in Dakar, Senegal on 29 January 2018 as part of ECOQUAF, the first ECOWAS Quality Infrastructure Forum. ECOQUAF also served as a platform to evaluate the implementation of the ECOWAS Quality Policy (ECOQUAL) at both national and regional levels. Finally, the Dakar event made it possible to celebrate five years of intensive work to actually finalise the establishment of the regional Quality Infrastructure bodies.

I would therefore like to thank all the teams, both at national and regional levels, who have been able to mobilise selflessly and tirelessly for these results. This is the occasion to pay a posthumous tribute to our colleague, brother and friend, MR. Charles Okoro who passed away on Saturday, December 16, 2017. MR. Okoro was one of the experts who thought up and proposed the seminal texts that led to the adoption of ECOQUAL and the Harmonization System of Standards (ECOSHAM), whose implementation he contributed to.

The challenge today is to emphasise the role of two key actors in the definition of policies and the implementation of quality issues at large, namely the consumers and the private sector. Indeed, the 2020 vision of ECOWAS, which is “to move from an ECOWAS of the States to the ECOWAS of the People” confirms the need to have mechanisms in place to listen and take into account the expectations of consumers in our community space. The latter are, in fact, the final beneficiaries of national and regional quality instruments aimed at putting on the market healthy and safe products and services.

The private sector, for its part, is essentially an engine of growth, of wealth creation and added value for our States. It is therefore important that these two stakeholders increasingly take ownership of the quality infrastructure tools at all key stages, from design and implementation to evaluation of results achieved.

The WAQSP, which is in its final year of implementation, is already playing its part in this dynamic. Thus, the private sector and consumers are represented in each of the Community bodies for quality set up with the support of the Programme, in particular the Community Council for Quality and ECOWAQ, the ECOWAS Quality Agency. Regarding standardisation, the private sector and consumers are involved at Member State level in the groundwork process towards regional standards.

To consolidate these achievements, the WAQSP will support consumers to better organise themselves and appoint representatives within the regional quality bodies. Similarly, the private sector will be better informed on quality issues to provide a more effective participation in the work conducted in this area. We intend to reinforce these achievements as part of our mandate.

To this end, before concluding my address, I would like to offer my fraternal congratulations to Commissioner Kalilou Traore for the remarkable work he has done during his mandate, for his election to the post of Chairman of ECOWAQ’s Board of Directors and for his appointment as Chief of Staff to the President of the ECOWAS Commission. I wish him every success in his new position. ■

Enjoy your reading!

► **Mamadou Traoré**

NEWS ► 1ST MEETING OF THE WEST AFRICAN ACCREDITATION COOPERATION FORUM (FOACA): AN ACTION PLAN FORMULATED



K. MIDAYE (EXPERT, WAQSP), M. OPUKU (GHANAS), C. OKANYA (NINAS), M. GBAGUIDI (SOAC) AND A. KOUASSI (CTA, WAQSP)

In the framework of the WAQSP, ECOWAS has set up a regional accreditation cooperation within the Regional Accreditation System (RAS) known as the “West African Accreditation Cooperation Forum (FOACA)”.

To achieve the worldwide acceptance of certificates they issue, the accreditation bodies in the region, namely the Ghana National Accreditation Service (GhaNAS), the Nigeria National Accreditation Service (NiNAS) and the West African Accreditation System (SOAC) covering eight economies, will need to be internationally recognized.

This recognition is obtained through the African Accreditation Cooperation (AFRAC), the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) and the International Accreditation Forum (IAF).

Given the time taken by this process, FOACA’s role is to develop a mechanism allowing a first level of recognition of these certificates within ECOWAS. To this end, FOACA organised its first meeting in Abidjan on 27 March 2018, in the presence of representatives of the three organisations concerned.

The WAQSP was invited to this meeting and represented by MR. Aka Jean Joseph Kouassi, Chief Technical Advisor, and MR. Koissi Midaye, Conformity Assessment Expert.

At the end of the meeting, an action plan was formulated focusing on setting up a pool of evaluators, strengthening their capacities and drawing up FOACA’s development plan and working procedures..■

THE WAQSP STRENGTHENS THE CAPACITY OF CONSUMER ASSOCIATIONS IN RELATION TO THE UNITED NATIONS CONSUMER PROTECTION GUIDE

NEWS

One of the main recommendations of the 1st ECOWAS Quality Infrastructure Forum (ECOQUAF) organized from 29 January to 1st February 2018 in Dakar (Senegal) was to “Develop the quality awareness of producers, consumers and political actors in the ECOWAS region through information and training actions” with the objective of strengthening access to healthy and safe products. It is in cognizance of this that some two months later, on 11 and 12 April 2018, the WAQSP organized a training workshop on good practices in consumer protection.

The workshop, which brought together national associations and public bodies in charge of consumer protection, was opened by MR. Yaovi Attigbé Ihou, Togolese minister of Industry and Tourism. He was accompanied by MR. Mamadou Traoré and MR. Lolon Komlan Locoh, respectively ECOWAS Commissioner for Industry and Private Sector Promotion and UNIDO National Focal Point in Togo. It therefore gathered the presence of the main stakeholders.

They were nearly 40 people from 14 ECOWAS Member States (Ghana, absent, apologized) and Mauritania. Participants were trained on the United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection. This training was conducted by experts from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) thanks to the cooperation developed with this institution by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the implementing agency of the WAQSP.

“We now know what role we must play with the ministry in charge of these issues so that a law for consumer protection, acceptable to all, is passed,” concluded MR. Maguette FALL, President of the Association for the Defence of the Environment and Consumers of Senegal.



PARTICIPANTS

According to Commissioner Traoré, this workshop is part of the regional vision which advocates for “a transition from an ECOWAS of States to an ECOWAS of Peoples by 2020”.

At the end of the workshop, the main conclusions were the following:

- Propose a text with regional scope to provide a framework for the activities of consumer associations;
- Transpose this regional text into the legal corpus of States;
- Support the establishment of a mechanism to appoint consumer association representatives within ECOWAS quality structures. ■



GROUP PHOTO OF PARTICIPANTS AFTER THE DELIVERY OF THEIR CERTIFICATES

NEWS ► MEETINGS OF COMMISSIONER MAMADOU TRAORÉ WITH ACTORS OF THE QUALITY INFRASTRUCTURE IN TOGO, DURING HIS FIRST MISSION WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE ECOWAS QUALITY PROGRAMME

In addition to the consumer protection workshop, the Commissioner participated in several meetings, leading a delegation including the President of the Federation of West African Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FEWACCI/FCCIAO), the President of the Community Conformity Assessment Committee (ECOCONF, ECOWAS), the Chief Technical Advisor of the WAQSP, the President of the WAQSP-Togo Monitoring Committee, the National Technical Coordinator of the WAQSP (Togo), the Vice-President and the DG of the West African Accreditation System (SOAC).

After being received by the Minister of Industry and Tourism, MR. Ihou, the Commissioner chaired a working session with the national monitoring committee of the WAQSP in Togo. The delegation then went successively to the BIASA Clinic and the Institut National d'Hygiène (INH), two laboratories accredited with support of the WAQSP, and to the Audit Expertise Comptable (AEC) firm, winner of the ECOWAS Quality Award, 2017 edition.

It should be noted that this visit by the Commissioner was the first of its kind with the Quality Programme since taking up his duties.

The main conclusions and recommendations of these visits are as follows:

- Promote better involvement of the private sector in steering and implementing the activities of quality structures at regional and national level;
- Support regional and national incentives for organizations involved in the quality approach;
- Support the HAUQUE's (Togolese High Authority for Quality and Environment) operationalisation, in particular within the framework of the WAQSP, so that it can fully play its role as a national relay in the regional mechanism currently being implemented;
- Accelerate SOAC's establishment in order to offer accreditation services to Togolese conformity assessment bodies as soon as possible;
- Identify Togolese national expertise in the field of quality and make it available in the region. ■



ECOWAS COMMISSIONER GIVING THE WEST AFRICA ACCREDITED CAB'S DIRECTORY TO MS. ABIBA BANLA, MANAGER OF INH



... WELCOMED BY DR. CHARLES BIRREGAH, MANAGER OF AEC CABINET



... GIVING THE WAQSP BROCHURES TO MINISTER GABRIEL IHOU



... POSING WITH QUALITY STAKEHOLDERS IN TOGO

WAQSP AND AMANORM FOR THE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL CERTIFICATION MARK OF MALI

NEWS



YAYA NIAFO, DG AMANORM

As part of the implementation process of the WAQSP, support has been provided for the execution of specific national activities originating from national quality policies. To this end, the WAQSP has allocated over the 2017-2018 period an amount of 13,000 euros per ECOWAS member country and Mauritania. Mali allocated this amount to financing the following activities: the drafting of specific technical regulations for priority products (cement, reinforcing steel and edible oils), the drafting of certification procedures for these products, the training of members of special technical certification committees and the training of members of the impartiality preservation committee.

It is within this framework that the WAQSP organized, on 23 April 2018, a capacity-building workshop for members of the Technical Committee of the Product Certification Unit of the Malian Agency for Standardization (AMANORM). The opening ceremony was chaired by the representative of the Ministry of Industrial Development, Ms Ag Erless Oumou Coulibaly, in the presence of representatives of the WAQSP, EU, UNIDO and the Director of AMANORM, MR. Yaya Niafo.

The purpose of this activity was to support AMANORM in the effective operationalisation of its product certification unit, through the National Mark of Conformity of the Malinorm Standards (MN). It should be noted that this Mark has been registered at the African Intellectual Property Organization (OAPI) under number 95600.

At the opening of the workshop, MR. Julien Bouzon, representative of the Delegation of the European Union in Mali, reminded participants that the competitiveness of the Private Sector was a priority in the European Union's programmes, referring to the sector competitiveness project under implementation for an amount of 3.6 billion CFA Francs. He then said he was "very reassured by the outcome of these workshops, given the diversity of representation from the sectors".

For MR. Yaya Niafo, Director of AMANORM, "compliance with standards is a major challenge that companies must meet in addressing the development challenges" of the region. That is why he expressed the wish that the fostering of a quality culture be supported by the development of the national quality infrastructure.

Thus, on behalf of AMANORM and stakeholders in the MN Marking certification process, the Director urged all stakeholders to maintain their mobilisation for the effective implementation of product certification for the benefit of end consumers.

The representative of the Minister of Industrial Development, Ms Ag Erless Oumou Coulibaly, thanked the EU, UNIDO, the ECOWAS Commission, UEMOA and all the partners for their efforts to build an efficient quality infrastructure through standardisation, conformity assessment, accreditation and metrology. She considered that acquiring the tools delivered during the training was necessary for the members of the Technical Committee to support the operationalisation of the MN Mark. It should be recalled that Mali currently has 391 national standards. ■

▶ THANKS TO THE WAQSP, THE NIGERIAN PRODUCT CERTIFICATION BODY IS ACCREDITED FOR THE CERTIFICATION OF DRIED MEAT "KILICHI"

As part of its implementation, the WAQSP supported the groundwork and assessment of the Niger Standards Compliance Verification Agency (AVCN) against ISO/IEC 17065 by ACCREDIA, the Italian accreditation body. This led to the successful accreditation of the AVCN, which is an important result for the national economy. Indeed, the AVCN strived to certify companies producing Kilichi dried meat in cognisance that the certification of this star product of Niger will strengthen Kilichi's penetration capacity locally, but also in regional and international markets. ■



NEWS

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ECOWAS MARK OF CONFORMITY TO STANDARDS: EXPERTS VALIDATE THE DRAFT FOUNDING DOCUMENTS

A technical validation workshop of the draft documents relating to the implementation of the ECOWAS Product Certification System was organized on 31 May and 1st June 2018, in Cotonou, Benin. Member States' experts endorsed a set of documents on the Regional Product Certification System proposed by the WAQSP before their final approval by the ECOWAS Community Conformity Assessment Committee (ECO-CONF). It should be recalled that one of the main expected results of the WAQSP is the implementation of the ECOWAS Compliance Mark, which will be issued by competent National Product Certification Bodies (PCBs) that will be appointed for this purpose.

MR. Moïse Assogba, Director of Operation and studies of AVCN, Niger's PCB, which was recently accredited (ISO/IEC 17065) for the certification of KILICHI dried meat, acknowledged the significance of the certification Mark.

According to him, "[...] AVCN accreditation will support national market surveillance, ensuring consumer access to safe products that can be easily identified by the National Standards Compliance Mark. Moreover, the ECOWAS Mark may prove to be an opportunity for Nigerien operators to be present on sub-regional and international markets, especially if dried meat (Kilichi) is



GROUP PHOTO OF PARTICIPANTS

retained among the pilot products for launching the Mark. Finally, accredited certification bodies, such as AVCN, are in pole position to be selected by ECOWAS and mandated to issue the Regional Mark".

MR. Rafal Lapkowski, Head of Cooperation at the Delegation of the European Union (EU) in Benin, who represented his institution at the regional workshop, agreed: for the latter, "the regional product certification system, through the ECOWAS Conformity Marking, will be one of the main tools that will serve as a reference for consumers to identify products that meet quality standards". ■

REGIONAL ACCREDITATION SYSTEM: ECORAS BECOMES A MEMBER OF AFRAC

The ECOWAS Regional Accreditation System (ECORAS) was created in 2013 by a Regulation of the ECOWAS Council of Ministers. Its mission is to harmonize accreditation issues so that certificates issued by accreditation bodies in the region (GhaNAS, NiNAS and SOAC) are recognized in the community space.

Cooperation is also needed to make accreditation services available in countries that do not yet have operational bodies.

ECORAS aims to help these accreditation bodies to be recognised at African and international levels. Finally, ECORAS supports the launch of the ECOWAS product certification scheme, in particular by getting involved in the mandate process of national product certification bodies. ECORAS was registered in April 2018 in the "Stakeholder Member" category of the African Accreditation Cooperation (AFRAC).



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: MARCEL GBAGUIDI (DG SOAC), CELESTINE OKANYA (DG NINAS)

MR. Celestine Okanya, Director General of NiNAS and President of the ECORAS, recalled that this listing "is the first step towards the African and international recognition of certificates issued by ECORAS accreditation bodies".

According to him, "ECORAS also participates in regional market surveillance because its accreditation bodies evaluate conformity assessment bodies, i.e. laboratories, inspection bodies and certification bodies, present in West Africa. Similarly, the accreditation certificates issued will constitute a passport for trade facilitation for enterprises in the region.

Indeed, the quality of their products will be confirmed by certificates issued by conformity assessment bodies accredited by ECORAS," he insisted. ■

Indeed, the quality of their products will be confirmed by certificates issued by conformity assessment bodies accredited by ECORAS," he insisted. ■

NATIONAL TRAINING WORKSHOPS ON ISO 9001: 2015 REQUIREMENTS: WAQSP INCREASES THE CRITICAL MASS OF QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (QMS) EXPERTS IN THE REGION

NEWS



PARTICIPANTS IN TOGO



... IN CABO VERDE

If the previous Quality Programmes (phase I and phase 2), the ECOWAS-GIZ programme and other private or public initiatives have significantly helped to create a pool of skills in the region on the ISO/IEC 9001 standard, the needs for this type of expertise are still very important, particularly in support of the growing quality culture. It should also be noted that a new version of this standard was published in 2015.

To this end, the WAQSP contributes to popularising it, in particular by enabling the knowledge upgrading of experts in quality management.

As a reminder, with the support of the national technical coordination, the WAQSP had previously identified priorities in relation to the three technical fields of environmental management, quality management and food safety management. The food safety management system (FSMS) was thus identified as priority number one, followed by quality management and environmental management.

Thus, in 2016-2017, the WAQSP organized a series of training courses in FSMS which led to the qualification of a hundred resource persons in this field in all countries, except Nigeria (supported in FSMS by the National Quality Programme of Nigeria). Regarding quality management, the Programme organised a series of training courses during the first half of 2018. The first workshops were held in the Gambia, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

They continued successively in Cabo Verde, Togo, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Benin.

In each country, approximately 25 participants benefited from the training. In order to ensure the sustainability and rationalisation of all these efforts, the selected participants were national auditors of the ECOWAS Quality Award (the benchmark for the Award being largely based on the ISO 9001 standard), members of the quality system of some national bodies in charge of the control of medicines (those benefitting from the support of the WAQSP to implement ISO 9001), together with other resource persons from various structures identified at national level. ■



...AND THE AUTHORITIES' HIGH TABLE DURING THE WORKSHOP OF GHANA

FOCUS

THE BODIES OF THE REGIONAL QUALITY INFRASTRUCTURE ARE OPERATIONAL, AFTER FIVE YEARS OF INTENSIVE WORK

Following the adoption of the ECOWAS Quality Policy (ECOQUAL) in February 2013 by Additional Act A/SA.A/02/13, the Community Regulation N° C/REG.19/12/13 established the ECOWAS Quality Infrastructure Scheme. Article 7 of this Regulation led to the creation of the Community Quality Council (CCQ) including five Community committees (ECOMET for metrology, ECOCONF for conformity assessment, ECOREG for technical regulations, ECORAS for accreditation and ECOSHAM for standardization) and its executive agency (ECOWAQ).

One of the activities of the WAQSP, which started in September 2014, was to formulate texts regarding the organisation and the operation of the above-mentioned bodies. In this context, draft texts have been prepared in the spirit of Article 9 of Regulation No. C/REG.19/12/13. The study also examined the proposal for a financing mechanism for the ECOWAS Quality Infrastructure Scheme.

In June 2017, the Council of Ministers adopted the Regulations establishing the organisation and the operation of ECORAS and 3 of the Community Committees listed above (the texts relating to ECOSHAM had been adopted in 2013) and authorising the creation of the ECOWAS Quality Agency (ECOWAQ). In November 2017, the ECOWAS Commission organised the constituent meetings of ECORAS and of the three Community Committees in charge of metrology, conformity assessment and technical regulation.

The last stage which consisted in organising the first meeting of the ECOWAS Community Quality Council and of the Constitutive General Assembly of the ECOWAQ was held in early February 2018. The implementation of the Regional Quality Infrastructure Scheme was thus finalized and promoted within the framework of the organization of a Regional Forum (ECOQUAF), held from the 29th of January to the 1st of February 2018, at the King Fahd Palace Hotel in Dakar, Senegal.

The Forum aimed at bringing together national and regional quality actors as well as technical and financial partners at continental and international levels with the aim of strengthening the foundations of the Quality Infrastructure in West Africa.

This forum, which was the first of its kind organised on ECOWAS Quality Infrastructure, took place under the effective presidency of the Prime Minister of Senegal, MR. Mahammed Boun Abdallah Dionne, in the presence of five ministers in charge of quality (Senegal, Cabo verde, Gambia, Niger and Benin), the Director of Trade, Innovation and Investment of UNIDO, representing the Director-General, as well as representatives of the other ministers in charge of quality in ECOWAS and in Mauritania.

This first edition of the ECOQUAF forum has achieved important results, in particular:

- **The holding of the constituent General Assembly of the ECOWAS Quality Agency (ECOWAQ).** During this General Assembly, the Agency, constituted as an association, adopted its statutes and elected its President and Vice-President, MR. Kalilou TRAORE and MR. Germain MEBA respectively. As a reminder, ECOWAQ maintains the technical secretariat of the Community Quality Council and each of its Technical Committees;

- **The holding of the 1st meeting of the Community Council for Quality (CCQ).** This meeting was chaired by MR. François Kpakpo, representing the Minister in charge of quality in Togo, MR. Gabriel Ihou. Indeed, Regulation C/REG.8/06/17 stipulates that the President of the CCQ is the Minister in charge of Quality whose country holds the Presidency of the ECOWAS Conference of Heads of State – in this case Togo. In accordance with these Regulations, the Vice-Presidency of the CCQ is assured by the Commissioner of the ECOWAS Commission in charge of Quality. The meeting also approved the action plans of each of the committees and the Regional Accreditation System, previously validated by each structure, in Abuja in November 2017;

- **The organisation of 4 high-level panels** that discussed the development and implementation of quality policies (Panel 1), the financing of Quality Infrastructure (Panel 2), the major issues and challenges of the main quality components (Panel 3) and the promotion of Quality (Panel 4);

- **The organisation of a B to B meeting** during which nearly 50 representatives of various public and private organisations working in the field of quality were able to exchange views. Most of these structures animated exhibition stands visited by the authorities, international ECOQUAF participants and the public during three days.

The quality bodies carried out their first technical activities during the first half of 2018, within the framework of the WAQSP, as follows:

- **Regional Accreditation System (ECORAS):**
 - Support to the organisation of the second meeting of the Board of Directors and the General Assembly of the West African Accreditation System (SOAC);
 - Organisation of the first meeting of the West African Accreditation Cooperation Forum.
- **Community Committee for Conformity Assessment (ECOCONF):** approval by national experts of draft texts relating to the implementation of the ECOWAS Product Certification Mark;
- **Community Committee for Technical Regulation (ECOREG):** ongoing study with a view to proposing a Community regulation on procedures for harmonising technical regulations within ECOWAS.

• **Accredited product certification bodies supported by the WAQSP congratulated by the ECOWAS Commission**

During the ECOQUAF opening ceremony held in Dakar at the end of January, three product certification bodies supported by the Programme and two others who participated in the Forum, received ECOWAS Certificates of Merit for having successfully achieved their accreditation: the Agence nationale de Normalisation et de Métrologie et du Contrôle Qualité ANM (Benin), CODINORM and Bureau Norme et Audit BNA (Côte d'Ivoire), the Ghana Standard Authority GSA (Ghana) and the Association Sénégalaise de Normalisation ASN (Senegal).

BNA accreditation was obtained with its own funds, while the GSA was supported by German cooperation. ANM, CODINORM and ASN were assisted by the WAQSP. The Niger Standards Verification Agency (AVCN), also supported by the WAQSP,

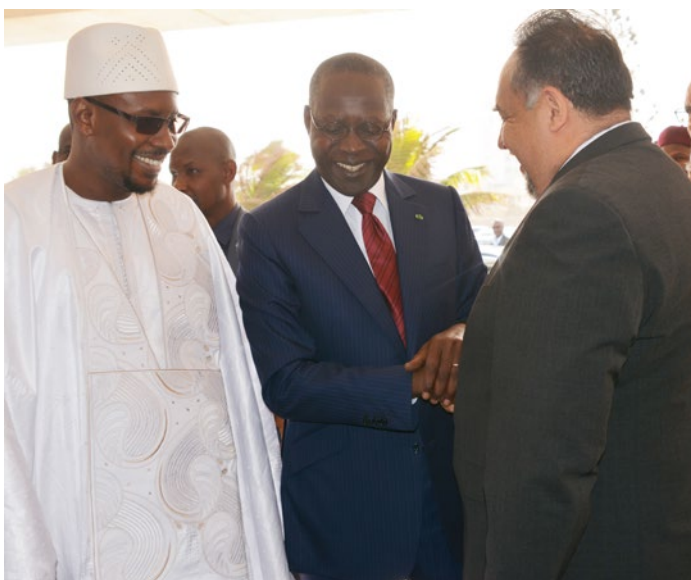
later joined the small circle of accredited product certification bodies in June 2018.

The products covered by these accreditations are wide-ranging: ANM: soft drinks; BNA: certification of agricultural products according to the Global GAP standard; CODINORM: electrical cables, GSA: cashew nuts, chocolate, bottled drinking water, bottled mineral water, fruit juice, gin, whisky, canned tuna; ASN: drinking water; AVCN: dried meat (Kilichi). These six organisations are the pioneers of accreditation according to the ISO/IEC 17065 standard in West Africa.

ECOWAS can now rely on the first internationally recognized regional expertise to assess the conformity of products traded on its market. These bodies will constitute the first pillars on which the ECOWAS regional product certification system will be based, with a view issuing its Mark. ■

PHOTO ALBUM : ECOWAS Quality Infrastructure Forum

ARRIVAL OF AUTHORITIES



FOCUS

PHOTO ALBUM : ECOWAS QUALITY INFRASTRUCTURE FORUM

OPENING CEREMONY



VISIT OF STANDS BY AUTHORITIES



FIELD VISIT



PHOTO ALBUM :
ECOWAS QUALITY INFRASTRUCTURE FORUM

FOCUS

STEERING COMMITTEE



BODIES' MEETINGS



FOCUS

PHOTO ALBUM : ECOWAS QUALITY INFRASTRUCTURE FORUM

THE PANELS



DELIVERY OF CERTIFICATE



B TO B MEETINGS



ON A WORKING MISSION TO BENIN, JEAN BAKOLE, UNIDO REGIONAL DIRECTOR IN NIGERIA, PRESENTED HIS CREDENTIALS TO THE BENINESE AUTHORITIES

ACTIVITIES OF PARTNERS

MR. Jean Bakole, Representative of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) in Nigeria and to the ECOWAS Commission and Regional Director of UNIDO, undertook a working mission to Benin from Wednesday 28 February to 3 March 2018.

The purpose of the mission was to present his credentials, in his capacity as UNIDO Representative to Benin, to MR. Aurélien Agbénonci, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Benin. He met other Beninese authorities, including the Minister of State for Planning and Development, Abdoulaye Bio Tchane, the Minister of Industry and Trade, Serges Ahissou and the Secretary General of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, Françoise Assogba Komlan.

He also met MR. Yves Gillet, Head of Cooperation, Minister Counsellor of the European Union Delegation in the Republic of Benin, as well as MR. Siaka Coulibaly, Resident Coordinator of the United Nations System and UNDP Resident Representative. ■



THE REGIONAL DIRECTOR, JEAN BAKOLE (THIRD FROM THE LEFT SIDE) POSING WITH HIS GUESTS

WEST AFRICAN ACCREDITATION SYSTEM (SOAC): THE WAQSP SUPPORTED THE EFFECTIVE START-UP OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE UNIQUE ACCREDITATION BODY FOR UEMOA COUNTRIES



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: A. BARO (CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD/SOAC), M. GBAGUIDI (DG SOAC), JEAN GUSTAVE SANON (UEMOA RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE, CÔTE D'IVOIRE) AND SOULEYMANE DIARRASSOUBA (MINISTER OF TRADE, INDUSTRY AND PROMOTION OF SME, CÔTE D'IVOIRE)

SOAC is one of the lynchpin organisations of the ECOWAS Regional Accreditation System (ECORAS), whose objective is to cover the accreditation needs of all 15 ECOWAS Member States. Under SOAC, which assumes the vice-presidency of ECORAS, more than 50% of this objective is in the process of being successfully achieved.

SOAC held its second General Assembly in Abidjan on 29 and 30 March 2018. This GA marked the effective start of the activities of this unique accreditation body created in 2010 by the UEMOA Council of Ministers and aimed at meeting the needs of the eight

UEMOA Member States. Operating budget for SOAC office in 2018 is however still to be released by UEMOA Commission. Prior to the meeting, the Board of Directors met and renewed its executive committee. The former Chairman of the Board, MR. Aboubacry Baro, was reappointed. He will be assisted by Ms Assa Lolonyo of Togo, newly elected Vice Chair certification bodies. During the General Assembly, the keys to SOAC's provisional headquarters were handed over to its first Director General, MR. Marcel GBAGUIDI, under the aegis of the Ministry of Industry and Mining of Côte d'Ivoire.

Prior to his recruitment to this position, MR. Gbaguidi was the Principal Technical Expert of the WAQSP, funded by the European Union and implemented by UNIDO.

With the operationalisation of SOAC, the region will now have a local accreditation structure providing accessible accreditation services to Conformity Assessment Bodies (CAB) (testing laboratories, inspection bodies and certification agencies). It should be recalled that up to now, within the Union, accreditations have been issued by foreign bodies at prohibitive costs.

The operationalisation of SOAC's activities should change the situation, to the benefit of the economy and the populations of the UEMOA region, in particular CABs which will now have the possibility of assessing their competencies in the region at affordable prices.

For companies, it is a question of being able to have the quality of their products assessed by CABs accredited by SOAC, before export, thus reducing the risks of rejection in target countries. ■

ACTIVITIES OF PARTNERS

CELEBRATION OF WORLD METROLOGY AND ACCREDITATION DAYS IN NIGERIA



THE CTA/WAQSP DISTINGUISHED BY DG NINAS, FOR GIVEN SERVICES

World Metrology Day, which is celebrated on the 20th of May each year, was celebrated in Nigeria in Abuja on the 17th of May 2018. The event was organized as part of the activities of Nigeria's National Quality Infrastructure Programme (NQIP).

This activity was supported by national institutions such as the Standards Organisation Of Nigeria (SON) and the Department of Weights and Measures of the Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment (FMITI).

This was attended by organisational structures from the public sector (Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development

- FMARD, Federal Ministry of Health - FMOH, Bank of Industry -BOI, National Agency For Food And Drug Administration And Control -NAFDAC) and by the organized private sector (Association of Development Professionals in Nigeria-ABDPIN, Flow Precision Limited -Calibration Agency-, Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry -LCCI-, Mudiame International Limited -Calibration Services-, National Metrology Institute -NMI-, Nigerian Association of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Mining and Agriculture -NACCIMA-, Nigerian Association of Small and Medium Enterprises -NASME-, National Association of Small Industrialists -NASSI-, and Weigh Tech. Industries Limited).

On Friday the 8th of June 2018, NINAS (Nigeria National Accreditation Service) celebrated World Accreditation Day. This event was used to inaugurate its new headquarters in Asokoro, Abuja. In line with this year's theme "Accreditation to make the world a safer place", NINAS' Executive Director and ECORAS President, MR. Celestine Okanya, said the organisation "is working to ensure a safe working environment and safer products, food and transport systems for the health improvement of Nigerians and of the world". NINAS also celebrated on this occasion the first accreditation certificates it issued to CABs in Nigeria.

During these events, the WAQSP, represented by its Principal Technical Advisor, Aka Kouassi, submitted the results of the programme for each relevant area and exchanged with the participants on the avenues for future collaboration. ■

▶ NIGERIA: NINAS STRENGTHENS ITS RECOGNITION AT THE AFRICAN AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS

On 16 June 2018, NINAS was accepted as an Associate Member of the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC).

This result follows its acceptance as a full member of the African Accreditation Cooperation (AFRAC) in May 2018. For Celestine Okanya, Executive Director of NINAS and President of ECORAS «these results reflect the commitment of all NINAS staff and of its partners who have placed their trust in this organisation».

He also indicated that «this result strengthens ECORAS, of which NINAS is a member (with GhaNAS and SOAC), by consolidating its credibility». It is recalled that ECORAS was accepted as a «STAKEHOLDER MEMBER» of AFRAC in April 2018 under the leadership of its President. ■



AFRICAN ACCREDITATION COOPERATION (AFRAC) OBTAINS INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION

ACTIVITIES OF PARTNERS

The African Accreditation Cooperation (AFRAC) was created in 2010 to close the gap in this strategic quality infrastructure area on the continent. Supported by German cooperation through the German Metrology Organisation (PTB), AFRAC obtained, in May 2018, after 8 years of continuous efforts, its recognition by the IAF, the International Accreditation Forum and ILAC, the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation, in May 2018. This major result now enables African accreditation bodies to request international recognition directly from AFRAC for the following authoritative references:

- ILAC Recognition: Accreditation of laboratories (ISO/IEC 17025 and ISO 15189), accreditation of inspection bodies (ISO/IEC 17020),
- IAF Recognition: Accreditation of quality and environmental management system certification bodies (ISO/IEC 17021-1).

AFRAC continues to strengthen its membership and peer evaluation pool. It organised two training sessions for the latter in June 2018 in Nairobi, Kenya:

- From 22 to 23 June 2018: Training on the ISO/IEC 17025 standard, the new version of which was published in 2017: This standard relates to the general requirements in regard to the competency of the testing and calibration laboratories;
- From 24 to 26 June 2018: Training on the ISO/IEC 17011 standard, the new version of which was published in 2017: This standard relates to the requirements for accreditation bodies that engage in accrediting conformity assessment bodies.

ECORAS was represented at these workshops by SOAC Director General Marcel Gbaguidi, also an AFRAC peer reviewer in testing methods. According to him “these workshops have been particularly important because they allow us to be aware of the challenges arising from the publication of the new versions of the ISO/IEC 17025 and ISO/IEC 17011 standards for peer evaluators but also for laboratories and accreditation bodies”.

He also highlighted the fact that “these two workshops helped to understand the way forward for conducting peer reviews in the spirit of the new ISO 17011 standard which introduces specific concepts such as risk analysis and process approach;



DGS AFRAC ACCREDITATION BODIES (INCLUDING MR. GBAGUIDI, DG SOAC, 2ND FROM RIGHT)



GROUP PHOTO OF PARTICIPANTS

The workshop also provided an opportunity to discuss the importance of having a transition plan for laboratories and accreditation bodies to switch from the former versions of references to the new ones”.

From 27 to 30 June 2018 in Nairobi, Kenya, AFRAC organised a series of mid-term meetings in preparation for its next General Assembly in September 2018: Technical Committee Workshop (27 June 2018), Marketing Committee Workshop (28 June 2018), Mutual Recognition Agreements Committee Meeting (27-28 June 2018), Executive Committee Meeting (29 June 2018). ECORAS was represented at its various meetings by SOAC and NINAS. ■

▶ DID YOU KNOW ?

▶ WAQSP IS ASSISTING 12 LABORATORIES THAT SEEK ACCREDITATION

The WAQSP currently assists 12 laboratories wishing to extend the scope of their accreditation in two ECOWAS priority areas, namely agri-food and buildings/construction materials.

The assistance provided for upgrading their quality system has been completed for three of them: the CERES LOCUSTOX laboratory in Senegal evaluated in March, the Laboratoire d'Essais et de Recherche en Génie Civil (LERGC) and the AIWA TECHNICAL SERVICES laboratory (ATS - SARL) in Benin, which will be evaluated in July. These three assessments are carried out by the Comité français d'accréditation (COFRAC).■

▶ THE WAQSP IS ASSISTING 4 NATIONAL DRUG REGULATORY AUTHORITIES TOWARDS CERTIFICATION

Since December 2017, the WAQSP has assisted 4 national drug regulatory agencies (ANRM) in 4 English-speaking countries, more specifically the MCA (Gambia Medicine Control Agency - MCA) – The Gambia, the LHMR.A (Liberia Medicines and Health Products Regulatory Authority) in Liberia, the NAFDAC (National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control) in Nigeria and the PBSL (Pharmacy Board of Sierra Leone) in Sierra Leone. The purpose of this assistance is to obtain ISO 9001:2015 certification. It should be noted that the Ghana ANRM (FDA) has already obtained ISO 9001 certification using its own funds.■

▶ THE TEXTS RELATING TO THE ORGANISATION, FUNCTIONING OR AUTHORISING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF REGIONAL QUALITY INFRASTRUCTURE BODIES HAVE BEEN ADOPTED BY THE ECOWAS COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

Following its meeting held in Monrovia, Liberia, on 1st June 2017, the ECOWAS Council of Statutory Ministers adopted the following texts:

- Regulation C/REG.7/06/17 on the action principles and modalities for the implementation of the ECOWAS quality infrastructure;
- Regulation C/REG.8/06/17 on the organisation and functioning of the Community Council for Quality;
- Regulation C/REG.9/06/17 on the organisation and functioning of the Community Committee for Technical Regulation;
- Regulation C/REG.10/06/17 on the organisation and functioning of the Regional Accreditation System;
- Regulation C/REG.11/06/17 on the organization and functioning of the Community Committee for Conformity Assessment;
- Regulation C/REG.12/06/17 concerning the organisation and functioning of the Community Committee for Metrology;
- Regulation C/REG.13/06/17 establishing a regional quality association known as ECOWAS Quality Agency (ECOWAQ)..■

▶ THE COMMUNITY QUALITY COUNCIL HAS 5 TECHNICAL COMMITTEES NAMED AS FOLLOW :

ECORAS
(Regional Accreditation System)

ECOMET
(Community Committee for Metrology)

ECOSHAM
(Community Committee for Standardisation)

ECOREG
(Community Committee for Technical Regulations)

ECOCONF
(Community Committee for Conformity Assessment)



**5
YEARS**

The quality policy of ECOWAS

ECOQUAL

is five years old (2013-2018)

WAQSP IN A FEW WORDS

West Africa Quality System Programme

Support to the implementation
of the ECOWAS Quality Policy

DONOR

European Union

FUNDING AMOUNT

EUR 12 000 000

BENEFICIARIES

Regional Level

UEMOA Commission, ECOWAS Commission

National Level

Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo & Mauritania.

IMPLEMENTING AGENCY

UNIDO

ISSUES

Quality Infrastructure : Quality policy, Accreditation, Metrology, Standardization, Conformity assessment, Quality promotion
Technical regulations



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