



DEVELOPMENT OF ACCREDITATION IN AFRICA **SEPTEMBER 2020**

Introduction

Africa is the world's second fastest growing region, experiencing average annual GDP growth of 4.6% for the period from 2000 and 2016. For the current five-year period until 2022, Africa's real GDP is projected to grow at 3.9% annually. However, ensuring that economic growth is sustainable, boosts industrialization and improves the quality of lives needs to be at the forefront of policy-makers.

The majority of African Countries have been placed on sounder macroeconomic footing than they have been in the past three decades. Countries are now in a better position to compete in international markets. African countries have begun to attain the fundamental conditions needed to attract increased domestic and foreign savings and investments to underwrite a sustained economic recovery and accelerated growth and this can largely be attributed to the introduction of Quality Infrastructure Policy into African Economic System.

Economic growth is largely dependent on export, be it raw materials or finished products. Industry faces a formidable array of challenges at the global level. Issues such as logistics, management and financial, the required product or service quality demanded by the purchasers and/or regulatory authorities, needs to be achieved. Although the quality of product or service is the responsibility of the manufacturer or service provider, they will need the unstinting support of an internationally recognized and effective quality infrastructure system. Empirical evidence suggests that standardization (standards, metrology and accreditation) play important roles in technological progress, productivity and trade.

In order to facilitate this trade a system is required whereby importers can have confidence that the imported goods and services meet both performance and quality expectations that are found in standards hence, the critical need for accreditation. Accreditation is an attestation of the competence and impartiality of conformity assessment bodies to carry out specific conformity assessment tasks. These bodies include but are not limited to calibration laboratories, medical laboratories, inspection bodies, providers of proficiency testing, producers of reference materials, and bodies that certify management systems, products and persons, or undertake verification and validation. It is an impartial and objective process carried-out by third-parties, that offers the least duplicative, the most transparent, the most widely accepted, the least discriminatory route for the formal recognition world-wide of credible and trustworthy conformity assessment results.

Accreditation creates confidence in the work carried out by Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) located anywhere in the world. Accreditation comes from the Latin word 'accredo' which means 'give credit or acknowledgment'. Although accreditation is often thought of as a means to enhance the flow of exports, it also has a significant domestic role within an economy. Accreditation benefits both a country's domestic economy and its international trade. Compliance with standards is a voluntary action on the part of the manufacturer or supplier. Non-compliance may limit potential market share or it may be contractual misconduct, but not illegal. Non-compliance with technical regulations on the other hand is an offence and punishable by law. In all countries, governments have tried to ensure the safety and health of society and the health of the environment for decades. For those trading internationally, recognition of accredited conformity assessment results comes through mutual recognition arrangements established between the accreditation body members of IAF and ILAC. These ensure that the accreditation of conformity assessment bodies to international standards around the world is carried out consistently, and so conformity assessment results covered by accreditation under the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) and International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) umbrella can be accepted everywhere with equal confidence.

Accreditation in Africa

Accreditation is one of the pillars of a Quality Infrastructure and probably the least developed in Africa of all the quality infrastructures. Within the African continent of 54 countries there are 13 indigenous accreditation bodies

namely: Algerian Body of Accreditation (ALGERAC); Egyptian Accreditation Council (EGAC); Ethiopian National Accreditation Office (ENAO); Ghana National Accreditation Service (GhANAS), Kenya Accreditation Service (KENAS); Mauritius Accreditation Service (MAURITAS); Nigeria National Accreditation System (NiNAS); Moroccan Accreditation Service (SEMAC); Southern African Development Community Accreditation Service (SADCAS); South African National Accreditation System (SANAS); Sudanese Accreditation Council (SDAC); Tunisian Accreditation Council (TUNAC); and West African Accreditation System (SOAC).

1. **Algerian Body of Accreditation (ALGERAC)** was created by Decree No 05-466 of 4 Dhou El Kaada 1426 corresponding to December 6th 2005 as a public establishment of an industrial and commercial nature.
2. **Egyptian Accreditation Council (EGAC)** was established by the Presidential Decree number 312/1996 and re-organized by the Presidential Decree number 248/2006 as the sole national body for the assessment and accreditation of conformity assessment bodies in Egypt performing testing/calibration laboratories, inspection and certification of products and systems as well as personnel. It is headed by the minister of Trade and Industry and governed by a board of 14 members, representing all stakeholders and concerned bodies.
3. **Ethiopian National Accreditation Office (ENAO)** was established as an autonomous federal government office having its own legal personality. It was established by council ministers 2. July 2011.
4. **Ghana National Accreditation Service (GhANAS)**, the board was established by the government of Ghana in 1993 with the enactment of PNDCL 317, 1993. The legislation has since been replaced by the National Accreditation Board Act, 2007, Act 744.
5. **Kenya Accreditation Service (KENAS)** is the sole National Accreditation body mandated to offer accreditation services in Kenya. Established under the state's corporations Act Cap 446; vide legal Notice No 55 of May 2009.
6. **Mauritius Accreditation Service (MAURITAS)** is the sole accreditation body and has been established under Mauritius Accreditation Service Act 1998 as a department within the ministry responsible for the subject of industry.
7. **Nigeria National Accreditation System (NiNAS)** is Nigeria's National Accreditation Body. It was established on 21st October 2015 as a key component of the National Quality Infrastructure Project (NQIP) for Nigeria, a project supporting the missing standards and quality control bodies, which Nigeria needs in order to improve the quality of goods and services exchanged in both national and international markets.
8. **Moroccan Accreditation Service (SEMAC)** is the sole Moroccan accreditation body for the accreditation of conformity assessment bodies, and operates under the final responsibility of the Minister of Industry, Trade, Investment and Digital Economy. SEMAC is not yet a member of AFRAC.
9. **South African National Accreditation System (SANAS)** is recognized by South African government in Act 19 of 2006 as its National Accreditation Body.
10. **Southern African Development Community Accreditation Service (SADCAS)** is a multi-economy accreditation body established in terms of Articles 15B of the TBT Annex to the SADC protocol on Trade registered as a not for profit company incorporated in Botswana in 2005. SADCAS services the accreditation needs of 14 SADC Member States namely: Angola; Botswana; Comoros; Democratic Republic of Congo; Lesotho; Madagascar; Malawi; Mozambique; Namibia; Seychelles; Eswatini; Tanzania; Zambia; and Zimbabwe. The objects, powers and rules for the operation of SADCAS are set out in the SADCAS Constitution. SADCAS is a subsidiarity organization of SADC and has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with SADC. This MoU serves as the basis for recognition of SADCAS by SADC Member States as a multi-economy accreditation body.
11. **Sudanese Accreditation Council (SDAC)** was established as government body through a resolution of the Council of Ministers Number 253 of 2015.
12. **Tunisian Accreditation Council (TUNAC)** was established about 26 years ago as a non- administrative public institution with moral and financial autonomy.
13. **West Africa Accreditation System (SOAC)** was established in 2010 as a multi economy accreditation body, by the Regulation No 3/2010/CM/UEMOA, of the Council of Ministers of the Economic and Monetary Union of West Africa relating to the Scheme for harmonization of activities of accreditation, certification, standardization and metrology in the UEMOA comprising of Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo.

African Accreditation Cooperation (AFRAC)

AFRAC, one of the four pillars of the **Pan-African Quality Infrastructure (PAQI)**, is a cooperation of African accreditation bodies established to support intra-African trade, improve the competitiveness of African goods and services and to facilitate health and safety of the public and the environment. Accreditation bodies in Africa, which have been evaluated by peers as competent, have signed a Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) that enhances the acceptance of products and services internationally. The AFRAC MRA is internationally recognized having achieved this status in May 2018. The AFRAC MRA is the basis upon which the international recognition of all African accreditation bodies is hinged and the basis upon which accreditation bodies are aspiring to get their international recognition upon. AFRAC was established by the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency in 2010.

AFRAC comprises of 23 members as follows:

- 6 Arrangement members namely; EGAC (Egypt); ENAO (Ethiopia); KENAS (Kenya); SADCAS (14 SADC Member States); SANAS (South Africa); and MAURITAS (Mauritius).
- 5 Full members namely: ALGERAC (Algeria); NiNAS (Nigeria); SOAC (8 UEMOA Countries); SDAC (Sudan), and TUNAC (Tunisia).
- 1 Associate member namely Ghana National Accreditation Service (GhaNAS).
- 11 Stakeholder members namely:
 - African Society for Laboratory Medicine – ASLM;
 - Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS);
 - Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Regional Accreditation System (ECORAS);
 - Federal Centre of Quality and Safety Assurance for Grain and Grain Products – FSFI;
 - FHI360 (Kenya);
 - Laboratoire de Sécurité Alimentaire et d’Hygiène de l’Environnement (LSAHE) / Institut Pasteur de Dakar ;
 - Medical Laboratory Science Council of Nigeria (MLSCN);
 - SADC Regional Laboratory Association (SRLA) (South Africa);
 - Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON);
 - Southern African Development Community Cooperation in Accreditation (SADCA); and
 - Union Internationale des Laboratoires Indépendants (UILI).



Delegates to AFRAC General Assembly Meetings held on 27th September 2019 in Abidjan Cote d’Ivoire

Some Benefits of Accreditation in the Development of African Economy

Accreditation has contributed immensely to economic development in African region through the following:

Enhancing the Use of Energy: The application of energy-efficient production processes and technologies, along with enhanced utilization of renewable energy sources which will provide an opportunity for countries to follow a low carbon and low emissions growth path, powered by innovative, smart and locally relevant energy solutions, is a challenging aspiration for the future. The provision of energy involves complex supply chains and processes, often involving cross-border trade and the transportation of volatile substances. The commercial development of alternative renewable sources of energy needs to be environmentally-friendly, and demonstrate value in terms of costs, reliability, durability and performance. Accreditation supports governments and organizations in the process of enhancing the performance of energy efficiencies and improving economic performance, whilst reducing consumption of resource and emissions and preventing unsafe, unhealthy or environmentally harmful products from entering the market place.

Accreditation in Industry and Manufacturing: Industrialization is one of the main drivers of sustained economic growth and sustainable development. Industry is also the most dynamic driver of prosperity and collective wellbeing. Manufacturers need to ensure products are of consistent high quality, comply with regulations and standards, and meet specification. Accreditation enables consumers, suppliers, purchasers and regulators to have confidence that products placed on the market are safe and meet the manufacturers claims made about them.

Health and Safety in the Workplace: Health and safety are well recognized as having an impact on sustainable development from eradicating poverty through job creation, sustainable livelihoods, technology and skills development, food security and equitable growth; to ensuring sustainable consumption and production through dealing with environmental concerns related to health and safety in the workplace. Businesses face increasing social, commercial and regulatory pressures to assess and control hazards and risks from their operations. Accreditation ensures that employees, purchasers and regulators can have confidence in the provision of services that have an impact on health and safety.

Food Safety: Access to safe and nutritious food is important for healthy living. Provision of safe food is dependent on all the key players in the supply chain be from the farmers to the producers and retailers. There is also the international dimension of food safety as some of the raw materials or ingredients used for production of food are imported by the producers. Accredited conformity assessments services such as inspection, certification of products, certification of persons, testing of food products, testing of food handlers and management system certification of food manufacturers, certification for food safety are used in the food industry to ensure compliance to standards.

Conclusion

In Africa, accreditation has evolved overtime to facilitate trade by making it easy for consumers to identify products and services that meet quality requirements, build confidence of producers on the competitiveness of their products and provided a veritable template for raw materials from Africa to gain entry in the international market. Beyond the facilitation of import and export trade, the local market benefits tremendously from accreditation as it supports regulation, enhances consumer's appetite for locally manufactured products, creates jobs, increases efficiency, minimizes waste, supports health and safety. With the signing of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) by 52 countries and ratification by 24 countries, technically the AfCFTA is now in force unlocking a market of 1.3 billion people across African Borders. Accreditation is poised to play an even greater role as a transparent and nondiscriminatory means of assuring technical competence of conformity assessment service providers.

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