Standards & Quality

1. A Global Tool to Support Public Policy

Many organisations are familiar with inspectors and auditors who independently help assess that standards and regulations are being respected or "conformed to". But how do we make sure that they are doing this correctly and fairly? Accreditation is the independent evaluation of such conformity assessment bodies against recognised standards to ensure impartiality and competence.

To raise awareness about the importance of accreditation, the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) and the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) organise World Accreditation Day (WAD) each year on June 09. In 2016 the event looks at how we can use accreditation to support public policy.

Standards, together with conformity assessment, can be used by government policy makers to deliver better regulation, environmental protection, public safety, fraud prevention, fair and efficient markets and public trust.

Certification, calibration, testing, inspection, and validation and verification, are all forms of accredited conformity assessment activity. They are a great asset to the public sector as a way of helping officials meet their policy objectives. For example, accreditation may assist a department of justice in making sure that forensic labs performing activities like DNA analysis are reliable and follow best practice. Other areas benefitting from accreditation include health, safety, environmental protection and construction, to name a few.

IAF and ILAC emphasise that government and regulators can use accreditation and other conformity assessment tools to:

- Help businesses improve performance, while minimising risk and promoting trade
- Deliver and enforce policies
- Regulate
- Become more proficient in their own work

"Accreditation adds a layer of confidence to the ISO/CASCO toolbox," says Sean MacCurtain, Secretary of the ISO Committee on conformity assessment (CASCO). "The 'toolbox' is what we call the numerous standards related to conformity assessment bodies and practices that ISO has developed together with its members and partners, including IAF and ILAC. They cover topics such as the operating of testing laboratories, marks of conformity, accreditation and the mutual recognition of conformity assessment results."

All this is important because it is through the application of national and international standards, that governments, procurers and consumers can have confidence in calibration and test results, inspection reports and certifications.

ISO, IAF, ILAC and the Independent International Organisation for Certification give real-life examples of how accreditation is helping to deliver public policy, from assisting forensic science in the UK to supporting effective voluntary programmes in the US, improving food safety in Australia, and much more.

www.iso.org/iso/news.htm?refid=Ref2086

2. Regional Trade: Harmonisation of Standards Progresses at a Snail's Pace

Complying with the standards of products in international trade is becoming increasingly difficult. Developed countries and multinational corporations are gradually setting complex set of standards. Developing countries are also forced to follow the track which is burdensome for their producers and exporters. Though there is no way to ignore the importance of standards to ensure quality and safety of products, excessive rigidity turns standards into barriers to trade.

Moreover, differences among countries on standards make things more complex. Thus, trading partners in different regional trading blocs have identified 'a set a regional standards' as a tool to deal with the problem.

In line with this approach, members of the SAARC (South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation) also agreed to frame a set of SAARC or South Asian regional standards. Thus, the body named South Asian Regional Standards Organisation (SARSO) was established with its secretariat in Dhaka. In fact, intra-regional trade in South Asia has not been progressing mainly due to Non-Tariff Measures (NTMs) many of which ultimately turned into Non-Tariffs Barriers (NTBs). There is a strong linkage between standards and NTBs. Not that all standards are meant to create barriers to trade, but some are deliberately created by some countries to discourage trading partners. Again, some standards appear as NTBs as trading partners fail to comply with those.

www.thefinancialexpress-bd.com/2016/04/07/25087/Regional-trade:-Harmonisation-of-standards-progresses-at-a-snail's-pace

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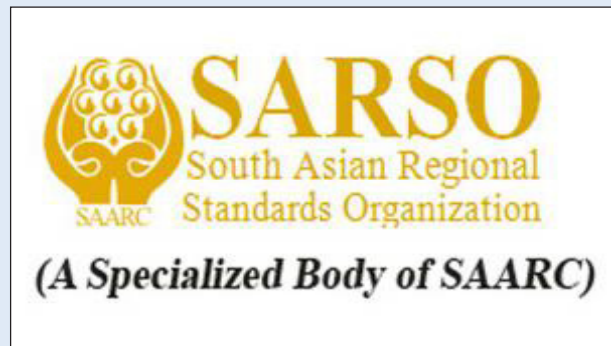
3. Continental Standards Bodies to Harness Strategies

In what is believed to be a springboard of economic growth through trade facilitation and open borders across the Africa continent, experts in a three day continental workshop on setting National Standardisation Strategies in Kigali, Rwanda, facilitated by the International Standards Organisation

(ISO) and organised by Rwanda Standards Body, say there is need for standards bodies to harness strategies.

This means that countries will come together to share priorities in their national standardisation plans to incorporate the needs in each of the countries, which on the other hand will help in having uniform standards.

Through the national standardisation strategy at a country level, a standards body can look at the standards that would be required in other countries and set its requirements which then help to facilitate trade.

www.newsofrwanda.com/featured1/30763/continental-standards-bodies-told-to-harness-strategies/

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4. How do we Know How to Measure Anything?

Can you imagine what it would be like to make any scientific discovery or invention without measurements? Nearly impossible. But it's not enough to simply agree on units of measurement. These have to be consistent, reliable and standardised in order to enable international collaboration and interoperability. There is a science to measurement, and it's called metrology.

20 May is World Metrology Day. Inspired by the rapid pace of change in measurement science and the world around us, this year's event is dedicated to "Measurements in a Dynamic World". The Day,

organised by the International Bureau of Weights and Measures (BIPM) and the International Organisation of Legal Metrology (OIML), draws attention to the importance of metrology in scientific discovery and innovation, industrial manufacturing and international trade, as well as in improving quality of life and protecting our planet. And that is because, simply, without reliable measurements, we would live in a world of uncertainty and chaos.

Standardisation in metrology is not only about defining measurement units. ISO/IEC Guide 99 provides an international vocabulary of metrology and offers a common reference for scientists and engineers, teachers, practitioners, and any other individual or organisation involved in planning or performing all types of measurements.

Many ISO standards contain guidance on various measurement processes, to ensure consistency everywhere, every time. "Metrology is one of the pillars of quality infrastructure," says Sean MacCurtain, Secretary of the ISO Conformity assessment committee (ISO/CASCO). For example, if the measurements you make on a product for strength are not right, it may break or malfunction. Or if your oven temperature has not been calibrated at the factory, your baking may not turn out well.

Metrology is therefore an important component in determining the conformity of many products and forms the basis for calibration and testing. Moreover, without legal metrology, consumers would never be sure they are getting the product or service they think they are getting. Otherwise, how would you know the kilogramme of flour you just bought is actually… a kilogramme of flour?

Both the BIPM and OIML are actively involved in ISO committees relevant to metrology. World Metrology Day is an annual celebration of the Metre Convention, signed in Paris on May 20, 1875 by representatives of 17 countries to set the framework for global collaboration in the science of measurement and its industrial, commercial and societal applications. The original aim of the Metre Convention was ensuring the worldwide uniformity of measurement. Today, in our dynamic world, this remains as important as ever.

www.iso.org/iso/news.htm?refid=Ref2082

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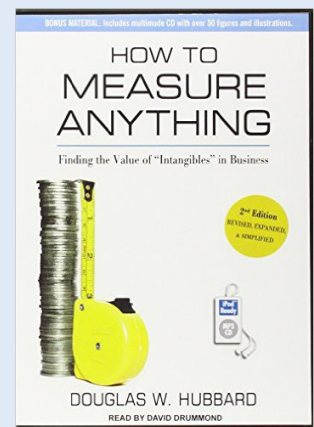
5. ANSI Insights on Corporate Engagement in Standardisation

During a recent meeting, S. Joe Bhatia, president and CEO of American National Standards Institute (ANSI), explained how collective participation in standardisation efforts can drive business performance. Bhatia emphasised how US standardisation engagement, with help of participating companies, enhances business opportunities and market access globally. Over 80 percent of global commodity trade is reliant on compliance with standards, and accredited product testing and certification can help ensure product success overseas.

http://news.thomasnet.com/companystory/ansi-ceo-addresses-corporate-engagement-in-standardization-20056109

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6. New Standardisation Initiative Could Save Billions for Solar Users

Sponsored by the US Energy Department, the Orange Button initiative is expected to reduce the cost of capital as a result of improved access to solar data, which would lower risks and result in savings of nearly US$9bn over the next 10 years.

The Smart Grid Interoperability Panel (SGIP) has received some US$600,000 from the US Department of Energy SunShot Initiative to manage stakeholder engagement, strategy and programme evaluation for the Orange Button initiative, a new programme aimed at simplifying and standardising solar energy data.

The US Energy Department selected four organisations – SGIP, SunSpec Alliance, kWh Analytics and the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) – to lead the Orange Button initiative and to streamline the way the solar industry establishes and manages data.

The initiative is meant to help industry stakeholders exchange quality data and make solar transactions more efficient. In order to boost solar bankability, the four organisations will work together to create a widely adoptable, unified data standard for the solar industry.

The Orange Button initiative aims to reduce transaction inefficiencies and improve market transparency in a self-sustaining manner by creating solar data standards, open marketplaces and tools for the private sector to access data.

www.pv-magazine.com/news/details/beitrag/us—new-standardization-initiative-could-save-billions-for-solar-users_100024174/#axzz46GAmuMBI

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7. Mobile Payments to Take Off with New Series of Standards

It is not so long ago that a mobile phone was used to make phone calls. These days, it is used for everything from navigating our way through the streets to paying our bills and managing our bank accounts. Mobile payments and banking are one of the fastest-growing areas of mobile use, but in order for the functions to work across the many platforms involved, harmonised processes and transparency are key. A new series of standards in development aims to offer just that.

Mobile devices have come a long way since they first entered our lives all those years ago. In terms of banking functions alone, we can now open bank accounts, review our transaction history, transfer money to other people, pay for purchases in-store or via the Internet, and even pay our taxes with our telephones. Technology in this area is exploding as fast as people are starting to use the functionality, and with so many different parties involved, it is clear that an agreed interface between the various devices and payment systems is essential.

The ISO 12812 series of standards and technical specifications aims to define common terms and requirements that allow for wider and more advanced interoperability. Its various parts define the technical components and their interfaces and the roles of the different parties involved.

The series is being developed by working group 10 of ISO technical committee ISO/TC 68/SC 7 for core banking services, whose secretariat is held by AFNOR, ISO's member in France.

The Chair of ISO/TC 68/SC 7, Patrice Hertzog, said increased security of transactions will be just one of the many benefits of the standards once they are in use.

"There are now about three times as many cell phones as bank accounts in the world, and customers are increasingly using their devices to manage all their banking needs. While the number of applications and the functionality are ever growing, there is still the capability for much more. In order for mobile payments and financial services to be truly widespread – as are credit and debit cards – it is critical that standards be established in this area. These standards will not only facilitate and promote interoperability and build a safe environment for mobile payments, but highlight gaps in standardisation which can then be filled."

www.iso.org/iso/home/news_index/news_archive/news.htm?refid=Ref2083
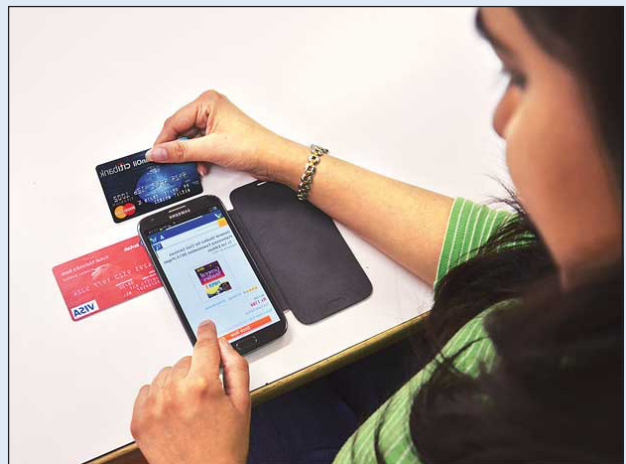
8. Kenyan Organisations Leverage Standards to Mitigate Risks

Kenyan organisations have been asked to adopt the ISO standards with a goal to mitigate various business risks.

Currently, there are only 600 organisations in Kenya which have taken up ISO standards. According to statistics from ISO, there were a total of 1,609,294 certificates issued to companies globally in 2014.

Kebs, which is a certified body that offers international standards, also trains companies on various standards regulations and policies. The trainings are carried by the National Quality Institute (NQI). The certification body aims at reaching out to at least 50 percent institutions to apply for ISO 9001 quality management system as a minimum by the year 2030 whose end game is to improve quality of goods and services.

Kebs has partnered with universities in Kenya and introduced academic programmes on standardisation. This is a key focus area for Kebs in an effort to introduce students on standardisation at an early stage.

The standardisation body will provide guidance to firms to move from the 2008 version to 2015 in a period that will end September 2018 after which Certifications to ISO 9001:2008 will be rendered null and void.

www.hivisasa.com/nairobi/business/132951

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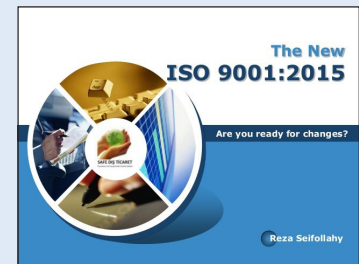
9. Revision for ISO 22000 on Food Safety Management

The consequences of unsafe food can be devastating, both for consumers and businesses worldwide. With many of today's food products repeatedly travelling across national boundaries, ISO 22000 is more essential than ever to the safety of the global food supply chain. Now the standard is being substantially revised to ensure it stays relevant to modern needs.

After a decade of good service, ISO 22000, the International Standard for food management systems, is undergoing a complete modification to bring it up to date with today's new food safety requirements. The international working group (ISO/TC 34/SC 17/WG 8) in charge of the revision, whose secretariat is held by the Danish Standards Foundation (DS), ISO's member for Denmark.

The standard is now at the Committee Draft (CD) stage and experts worked hard to sift through the more than 1 000 comments collated by DS on the draft standard. Simultaneously, WG 8 had to clarify certain key concepts. These included:

- Applying ISO's new High-Level Structure (HLS) to ISO 22000, which is now mandatory when drafting or revising management system standards (MSS). The new structure sets a framework that makes it easier for businesses to integrate more than one MSS at a given time.
- Providing users of ISO 22000 with a new understanding of the different risk-based approaches. The "risk" concept is used in various ways and it is important for food businesses to distinguish between hazard assessment at the operational level, through the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP), and the business risk where *opportunities* also form part of the concept.
- Providing further clarification on how the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle works by including two separate PDCA cycles in the standard, that operate one inside the other. The first will apply to the management system while the second, within it, addresses the operations described in Clause 8, which simultaneously cover the HACCP principles defined by the Codex Alimentarius Commission.
- Giving users a clear description of the differences between Critical Control Points (CCPs), Operational Prerequisite Programmes (OPRPs) and Prerequisite Programmes (PRPs).

Preventing, reducing or eliminating food safety hazards is essential to maintain a hygienic environment throughout the food chain. The revised standard will incorporate recognised key elements to ensure food safety at every step of the food chain, right up to the point of consumption.

The introduction of a food safety hazard can occur at any stage in the food supply chain, so it is essential to have adequate controls in place at every step of the way. Good communication is paramount to ensuring that food hazards are identified and managed at the proper operational level. Food safety can therefore only be ensured through the combined efforts of all parties along the food chain, from feed producers and primary producers through food manufacturers, transport and storage operators and subcontractors, to retailers.

Experts decided that a second CD would be necessary in order to have a more mature working document. There are major interests at stake between players in the global food chain, which means that a level of consensus has yet to be reached. The task of WG 8 is to clarify and communicate fundamental concepts in the simplest and most concise terms in order to produce a standard that is understandable and easy to implement in businesses, big or small, up and down the food chain.

http://www.iso.org/iso/home/news_index/news_archive/news.htm?refid=Ref2075

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10. ISO 26000 in the Post-2015 Development Agenda

In January 2016, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development came into effect. Now, the eyes of the world are on solutions to guide international development and cooperation for the 17 initiatives (goals) over the next 15 years. Can ISO 26000 make a difference?

At the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit on September 25, 2015, world leaders adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to end poverty, fight inequality and injustice, and tackle climate change by 2030.

The SDGs are a new, universal set of goals, targets and indicators that UN member states will be expected to use to frame their agendas and political policies over the next 15 years. They follow and expand on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which were agreed by governments in 2001 and expired at the end of 2015.

So where does ISO 26000 on Social Responsibility fit into the picture? According to Professors Adriana Rosenfeld and Adriana Norma Martínez from the National University of Luján in Argentina, ISO 26000 addresses sustainable development and the post-2015 development agenda in a coherent and complete way. The core subjects and issues defined by the ISO standard include human rights, labour practices, the environment, fair operating practices, consumer issues and community involvement, which encompass, among other things, the principles of equal opportunities and non-discrimination. ISO 26000 provides a visible, influential and pragmatic way to impulse change, and meet the SDGs.

www.iso.org/iso/home/news_index/news_archive/news.htm?refid=Ref2039