

The West Africa Quality System

REACHING EXCELLENCE THROUGH QUALITY

Support to the Implementation of the
ECOWAS Quality Policy

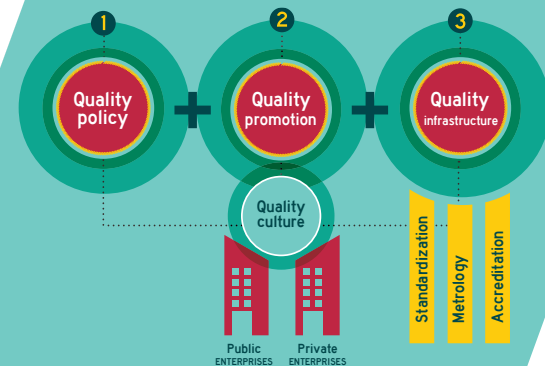


Context

Following a successful first phase from 2001 to 2005, the second phase of the West Africa Quality Programme (WAQP) was launched in 2007 for a period of 5 years. The aim was to strengthen regional economic integration and trade by creating an environment that facilitates compliance with international trade rules and technical regulations. Through the programme, tangible results could be achieved: A regional quality policy as well as some national quality policies were adopted, a regional quality infrastructure scheme was established, regional standards were adopted, 21 testing/calibration laboratories were accredited as per ISO/IEC 17025 and ISO 15189 standards, 20 enterprises were certified as per ISO 9001 and ISO 22000 standards, metrology laboratories were equipped and more than 4,000 staff members of laboratories, inspection bodies and private companies were trained. However, in order to deepen regional integration and to consolidate the implementation of the quality infrastructure it was decided to further support the region. The West Africa Quality System Programme was born.

Objective

Maintain, strengthen and specialize are the bywords of this programme. In order to build on the successes of the former phases, it is essential to consolidate the edifice. Thanks to the recently adopted quality policy of the ECOWAS and its related quality infrastructure scheme, the programme will support the ECOWAS Commission and the 16 West African countries in strengthening their quality infrastructure for greater effectiveness, leading to enhanced competitiveness and better intra- and inter-regional trade participation. Finally, the programme will bolster the creation of quality centers of excellence and networks of specialized quality institutions such as laboratories and conformity assessment bodies to provide efficient services to local and exporting companies. Consumers, for their part, will enjoy more protection and, eventually, economic development will be sustainably promoted.





Components and expected results

- **Quality policy:** Harmonization of national quality policies with the regional one, adoption of a law on consumer information and protection and establishment of a financial mechanism to sustain the West Africa Quality Infrastructure
- **Standardization:** Support of the regional standards harmonization mechanism (ECOSHAM), adoption of further regional standards and strengthening of the national standard bodies
- **Accreditation:** Establishment of a regional accreditation system
- **Certification:** Establishment of a regional product certification system
- **Metrology:** Establishment of a regional metrology and calibration system
- **Conformity assessment:** Strengthening of conformity assessment bodies and services
- **Quality culture:** Creation and strengthening of quality centers of excellence and awareness of the quality culture in the private sector, establishment of national and ECOWAS quality awards and establishment of a regional database on quality

Partners and beneficiaries

Public sector: - ECOWAS Commission: Department for Industry and Private Sector Promotion

- 15 ECOWAS Member States (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo) and Mauritania
- UEMOA Commission
- National standards bodies
- National metrology organizations
- National conformity assessment bodies

Private sector: - Professional associations

- Employers' associations
- Private conformity assessment bodies
- Independent organizations for quality promotion, quality consulting firms and consultants
- Consumer associations



Donor

The European Union (EU) supports regional integration as a tool for development, fostering sustainable growth and smooth and gradual integration in the world economy. After the success of the first two phases of the West Africa Quality Programme, the EU decided to continue supporting the development of the quality infrastructure in the region and allocated a total sum of EUR 12,000,000 for the present phase.

Implementation

The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) is the specialized agency of the United Nations that promotes industrial development for poverty reduction, inclusive globalization and environmental sustainability.

UNIDO's vision is a world where economic development is inclusive and sustainable and economic progress is equitable. The Organization focuses on three main thematic areas:

- Poverty reduction through productive activities
- Trade capacity-building
- Energy and environment

Principles

- Regional integration
- ECOWAS-wide harmonization and division of labor
- Coherence between regional and national regulatory frameworks
- Subsidiarity
- Variable geometry: complementary and synergies with national projects
- Human and technical capacity enhancement for programme appropriation by regional Commissions

At a glance

TITLE

West Africa Quality System – Support for the implementation of the quality policy of ECOWAS (Component 2 of the EU Support Programme for the Private Sector in West Africa)

DONOR

European Union

BUDGET

EUR 12.000.000

COUNTRY COVERAGE

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

IMPLEMENTING AGENCY

UNIDO - Trade Capacity Building Branch (TCB)

THEMATIC AREAS

Quality, accreditation, metrology, standardization, conformity assessment

Contact

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