PAQI
PAN-AFRICAN QUALITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Africa Quality Policy

Final version adopted by STC-TIM on 3 September 2021

"Quality issues are of particular importance because they are a pre-condition for the competitiveness and access of products to regional and international markets."

Quality ensures:

- Marketable manufactures

- Diversified production

- Exploitation of regional and global value chains

- Safe medicines

- Sound infrastructure

- Reliable services and systems

- Safe and fair trade

- Accelerated socio-economic development

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Acronyms

AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
AFRAC	African Accreditation Cooperation
AFRIMETS	Intra-Africa Metrology System
AFSEC	African Electrotechnical Standardisation Commission
AIDA	Accelerated Industrial Development for Africa
AIM	2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime (AIM) Strategy
AMV	Africa Mining Vision
AQP	Africa Quality Policy
ARSO	African Organisation for Standardisation
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
AUC ETIM	African Union Commission - Department of Economic Development, Trade, Industry and Mining
BIAT	Boosting Intra-African Trade
BIPM	International Bureau of Weights and Measures
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
CAB	Conformity assessment body
CAMI	Conference of AU Ministers of Industry
CIPM	International Committee for Weights and Measures (Comité International des Poids et Mesures)
CMC	Calibration and Measurement Capability
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
EAC	East African Community
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECOQUAL	ECOWAS Quality Policy
ECOWAS	Economic Community for West African States
EU	European Union
GRP	Good regulatory practice
IAF	International Accreditation Forum
IEC	International Electrotechnical Commission
ILAC	International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation

INetQI	International Network on Quality Infrastructure
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
ITC	International Trade Centre
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
MRA	Mutual Recognition Arrangement
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NQI	National Quality Infrastructure
NSB	National Standards Body
NTB	Non-Tariff Barrier
NTRF	National Technical Regulatory Framework
OIML	International Organization of Legal Metrology
PAQI	Pan African Quality Infrastructure
PIDA	Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa
PPP	Public-Private-Partnership
PTB	Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt
QI	Quality Infrastructure
QP	Quality Policy
REC	Regional Economic Community
RIA	Regulatory impact assessment
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SADCAS	SADC Accreditation Service
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SI	International System of Units
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
SPS	Sanitary and Phytosanitary
SQA	Standardization and Quality Assurance
STC – TIM	Specialized Technical Committee for Trade, Industry and Minerals
TBT	Technical Barriers to Trade
UMA	Arab Maghreb Union
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organisation
WTO	World Trade Organization

Definitions

The following definitions apply to this Africa Quality Policy unless the context determines otherwise:

I. **Accreditation** is a third-party attestation related to a conformity assessment body conveying formal demonstration of its competence to carry out specific conformity assessment tasks *(Source: ISO/IEC 17000:2004)*;

II. **Calibration** is the operation that, under specified conditions, in a first step, establishes a relation between the quantity values with measurement uncertainties provided by measurement standards and corresponding indications with associated measurement uncertainties and, in a second step, uses this information to establish a relation for obtaining a measurement result from an indication *(Source: JCGM[1] 200:2012)*;

III. **Certification** means a third-party attestation related to products, processes, systems or persons *(Source: ISO/IEC 17000:2004)*;

IV. **Conformity assessment** means the demonstration that specified requirements relating to a product, process, system, person or body are fulfilled *(Source: ISO/IEC 17000:2004)*;

V. **Conformity assessment activity** means an activity conducted by a conformity assessment body when assessing conformity (Note: Activities covered by accreditation include, but are not limited to, testing, calibration, inspection, certification of management systems, persons, products, processes and services, provision of proficiency testing, production of reference materials, validation and verification) *(Source ISO/IEC 17011:2017)*;

VI. **Conformity assessment procedure** means any procedure used, directly or indirectly, to determine that relevant requirements in technical regulations or standards are fulfilled *(Source : WTO TBT Agreement)*;

VII. **Conformity assessment body** means a body that performs conformity assessment activities and that can be the object of accreditation *(Source ISO/IEC 17011:2017)*;

VIII. **Conformity assessment system** means the rules, procedures and management for carrying out conformity assessment *(Source: ISO/IEC 17000:2004)*;

IX. **Harmonized standards** means standards on the same subject approved by different standardizing bodies, that establish interchangeability of products, processes and services, or mutual understanding of test results or information provided according to these standards;

X. **Inspection** means the examination of a product design, product, process or installation and determination of its conformity with specific requirements or, on the basis of professional judgement, with general requirements *(Source: ISO/IEC 17000:2004)* ;

XI. **Measurement standard** means the realization of the definition of a given quantity, with stated quantity value and associated measurement uncertainty, used as a reference *(Source: JCGM 200:2012)*;

XII. **Metrology** means the science of measurement and its application *(Source: JCGM 200:2012)*;

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1   Joint Committee for Guides in Metrology (JCGM) publication - International vocabulary of metrology – Basic and general concepts and associated terms (VIM)

XIII. National measurement standard means a measurement standard recognized by national authority to serve in a state or economy as the basis for assigning quantity values to other measurement standards for the kind of quantity concerned *(Source: JCGM 200:2012)*;

XIV. Public in the context of the private and public sector includes independent statutory bodies;

XV. Policy means a guide to the action or decisions of people, aimed at helping to achieve the objectives in a consistent manner;

XVI. Policy measures means something that is done to implement a policy;

XVII. Quality Infrastructure (QI) is a system comprising the organizations (public and private) together with the policies, relevant legal and regulatory framework, and practices needed to support and enhance the quality, safety and environmental soundness of goods, services and processes. The Quality infrastructure is required for the effective operation of domestic markets, and its international recognition is important to enable access to foreign markets. It is a critical element in promoting and sustaining economic development, as well as environmental and social wellbeing. It relies on metrology, standardization, accreditation, conformity assessment, and market surveillance *(Source: Definition adopted in June 2017 by INetQI)* ;

XVIII.Quality policy means a policy adopted at a national or regional or continental level to develop and sustain an efficient and effective QI system (Note: This definition relates to policy making at national or regional or continental levels and differs from the definition of Quality Policy as stated in ISO 9000:2015, which applies more to organizations;

XIX. Quality management means the coordinated activities to direct and control an organization with regard to quality *(Source ISO 9000:2015)*;

XX. Quality means the degree to which a set of inherent characteristics of an object fulfils requirements *(Source ISO 9000:2015)* ;

XXI. (Mutual) Recognition Arrangement (MRA) means an arrangement whereby participating bodies acknowledge to others that the conformity assessment results of the other participating bodies have been produced by competently performed, equivalent procedures *(Source: ISO/IEC Guide 68:2002)*;

XXII. Standard means 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 *(Source: ISO/IEC Guide 2:2004)*;

XXIII. Technical regulation means a 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 labelling requirements as they apply to a product, process or production method *(Source: WTO TBT Agreement)*;

XXIV. Testing means the determination of one or more characteristics of an object of conformity assessment, according to a procedure *(Source: ISO/IEC 17000:2004)*.

Foreword

A key challenge for Africa as a region is to move off an economic growth path built on consumption and commodity exports onto a more sustainable developmental path based on production and trade of high quality products and the promotion of environmental and social well-being. It has long been appreciated that an important ingredient for the success and sustainability of Africa's development efforts necessary for poverty alleviation and attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), is ensuring that the products and services produced in Africa meet requisite standards. Quality does not happen by accident but must be deliberately built into production processes and service delivery. In turn, Africa must invest in quality through developing and supporting quality institutions at national, regional and continental levels. A quality policy ensures that this is done in an organized and coordinated manner.

This document, the Africa Quality Policy (AQP) is the result of efforts by African quality professionals and stakeholders to produce a policy that will ensure that the standards and quality requirements of flagship programmes such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and Boosting Intra-African Trade (BIAT), Accelerated Industrial Development for Africa (AIDA), Africa Mining Vision (AMV), Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) and many others are met. The policy highlights the institutional, structural and collaboration requirements for the existence of a robust quality infrastructure in Africa that would adequately support industrial development, trade liberalization and other African socio-economic endeavours. The AQP aims at providing guidance to Member States, who retain their sovereignty in all matters of policy regarding their national quality infrastructures. The AU will use the AQP to support quality initiatives in its flagship programmes.

Development of the Africa Quality Policy was led by the African Union Commission (AUC) and the Pan African Quality Infrastructure Joint Committee (PAQI JC) Secretariat. A first draft of the policy document was circulated in

June 2019 to all Member States and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) by the AUC/PAQI JC secretariat. A total of 50 AU Member States and 6 AU recognised RECs, namely COMESA, EAC, ECCAS, ECOWAS, SADC and UMA, participated in the AQP development process. Two consultative workshops were held in Nairobi, Kenya, from 22 to 23 July 2019; and in Abuja, Nigeria, from 29 to 30 July 2019 to discuss the circulated draft policy. Representatives of Member States and RECs were given the opportunity to consult with their stakeholders and submit comments for incorporation into the policy by the drafters making for a fully transparent and inclusive process. During the process over 500 comments were received and considered by the drafting team.

The draft AQP was presented to the STC-TIM and adopted on 3 September 2021. The AQP is now ready for implementation by relevant parties to ensure that African products are competitive on regional and international markets and that the necessary quality infrastructure support is available for safeguarding of the environment and the health and safety of citizens.

The AU is grateful for the support received from all national and regional experts in the development of the AQP. The AU also thanks its development cooperation partners, AFREXIMBANK and the Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt (PTB Germany) for their technical and financial support.

His Excellency Ambassador Albert M. Muchanga

African Union Commissioner for Economic Development, Trade, Industry and Mining (ETIM)

1. Introduction

1.1 Africa's development agenda

The African Union has launched itself on an ambitious socio-economic development trajectory anchored on infrastructural and agricultural transformation, accelerated industrial development, open trade and deeper integration. "Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want" is Africa's strategic framework that aims to deliver on its goal for inclusive and sustainable development, supported by science, technology and innovation (STI) driving manufacturing, industrialization and value addition as well as increased agricultural productivity and production.

1.2 Industrial development and international trade

A globally competitive Africa will need to shift from dependence on the export of raw commodities to a value addition and smart exploitation of regional and global value chains.

The Accelerated Industrial Development for Africa (AIDA) programme provides a continental framework for addressing the root causes of Africa's low industrial development and sets out a vision for product-based industrialisation. Standards and compliance to quality requirements is recognised as a key priority for the acceleration of Africa's industrialization.

The 2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime (AIM) Strategy was adopted in 2012 as a tool to address Africa's maritime challenges for sustainable development and competitiveness. The Strategy aims to foster more wealth creation from Africa's oceans, seas and inland water ways by developing a thriving maritime economy and realizing the full potential of sea-based activities, including fisheries and aquaculture industries, in an environmentally sustainable manner.

The Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) is Africa's continental policy framework for agricultural transformation. The performance of Africa's agricultural exports however needs to be improved with regard to standards compliance and quality in general (see Box 1).

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), under which trade started in July 2020, includes the Trade in Goods Protocol with annexes on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) and Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) measures. AfCFTA State Parties will be expected to comply with the provisions of these two quality-related annexes as part of ensuring that traded goods are of acceptable quality and pose no threats to the health and safety of communities and the environment.

The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa estimates that AfCFTA has the potential

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Box 1: Impact of standards on trade

African exports have been rejected a number of times at European Union (EU) borders because of their non-compliance with EU product standards. Africa accounts for about 30% of the total violations of EU food standards, with about 600 cases of African shipments being refused entry into the EU at the border between 2008 and 2013. *(Source: Kareem, Fatima & Brümmer, Bernhard & Martínez-Zarzoso, Inmaculada. (2018). Entry Barriers in the European Union and Rejection of Africa's Exports: The role of Institution and Trade Procedures*.)*

Compliance with standards and market requirements are prerequisites for successful market access and for improving the competitiveness of exporters in the EAC. A recent study indicated that the use of harmonized standards for producing certain products improved their competitiveness and market access by 18%. *(Source: Report on the impact assessment of the East African Harmonized Standards on the business community - East African Business Council (EABC))*

both to boost intra-African trade by 52% by eliminating import duties, and to double this trade if non-tariff barriers (NTBs) are also reduced[2]. Among the NTBs, technical barriers to trade (TBTs) are prominent, including the potential wrong use of standards, technical regulations and conformity assessment procedures. A continental quality infrastructure (QI) (see Box 2) operating effectively, can level the playing field and reduce TBTs significantly, thus helping to achieve the objectives of the AfCFTA.

1.3   Why is an effective continental QI needed for Africa?

Each country needs QI in order to ensure that all economic activities are carried out in the most efficient manner. QI is also a critical element in safeguarding the environment and ensuring social well-being. Defining standards for products, services, processes, systems, persons or bodies and ensuring that these conform to the defined standards, through testing, inspection or certification, is one way to achieve this goal.

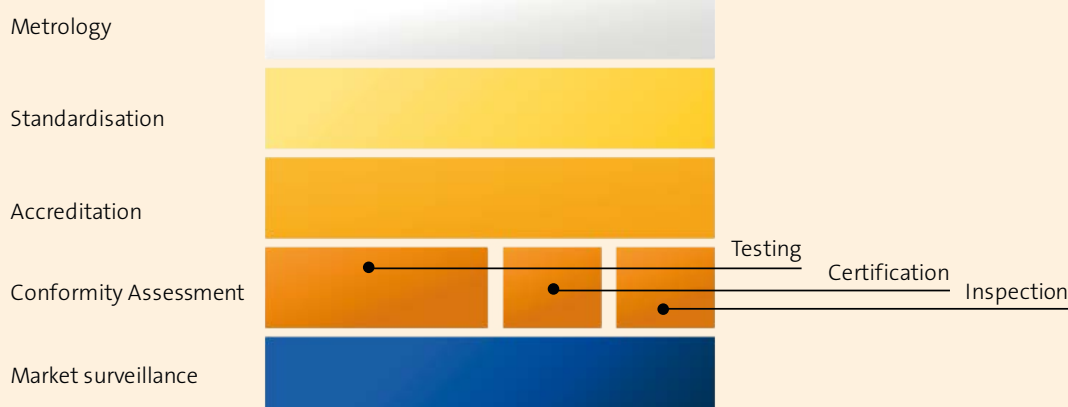**Box 2: What is a quality infrastructure (QI)?**

It is a system comprising the organizations (public and private) together with the policies, relevant legal and regulatory framework, and practices needed to support and enhance the quality, safety and environmental soundness of goods, services and processes.

The QI enables a country, a region or continent to set and achieve quality objectives. These objectives cover both national requirements as well as requirements imposed in regional, continental and international trade agreements. The QI provides acceptable evidence, recognized at the international level; that products, services, processes, systems, persons or bodies conform to stated requirements.

An **effective** QI results from the continual and satisfactory fulfilment of all the 7 elements listed below.

- Setting a quality policy

- Standardization

- Setting and implementing a Technical regulatory framework

- Conformity assessment

- Accreditation

- Metrology

- Quality promotion and use

Core elements of QI

Metrology
Standardisation
Accreditation
Conformity Assessment — Testing, Certification, Inspection
Market surveillance

Definition adopted in June 2017 by INetQI (then DCMAS Network: BIPM, IAF, IEC, ILAC, ISO, ITC, ITU, OIML, UNECE and UNIDO) + the World Bank

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2   African Continental Free Trade Area - Questions & Answers (Compiled by the African Trade Policy Centre (ATPC) of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in association with the African Union Commission)

Where products and services are exported, the country-level QI should be recognized by all foreign trading partners. This means that the national QI must be aligned with international best practices and requirements. At the level of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), national QI of members are thus brought up to a further level of alignment and harmonization, thus bringing more efficiency and effectiveness. Harmonization of standards, and conformity assessment procedures as well as ensuring equivalence of technical regulations are always needed within a REC despite the fact that Members' QI systems are deemed to be aligned with international requirements and therefore technically equivalent.

Similarly, there is a need for both the national QIs and REC QIs to undergo a further level of alignment at the continental level, thus bringing still more efficiency and effectiveness in support of inter-REC trade and other continental development objectives

1.4 Why is there a need for an Africa Quality Policy?

The QI relies on a combination of policy, legal, institutional and regulatory frameworks to fulfil its 7 functions effectively and efficiently. Operation of the 7 QI functions requires that there be specific policies, legal and institutional frameworks. Standardization and accreditation, for example, could operate under different legislation and under different ministries in a given country while in another country standardization activities could be a totally private undertaking. There are multiple combinations possible and that is why there is a need for a higher level policy document, namely the Quality Policy, which ensures that the QI continually operates in a coherent and effective manner while meeting international requirements constantly. It follows that wherever there is a QI operating, whether at country, REC or continental level, there is a need for a Quality Policy. The Africa Quality Policy thus embodies a vision, objectives and specific functional policies for implementing quality at national, regional (REC) and continental levels. The African Union, by agreeing to lead the implementation of the AQP, demonstrates its political will and its commitment to provide the necessary human and financial resources to achieve an effective continental QI.

The AQP also establishes a mechanism to monitor the effectiveness of the QI measures put in place as well as to undertake periodic reviews of the policies to ensure that they remain up-to-date.

2. Scope of the AQP

The AQP lays down policy directions for the operation of a continental-level QI, with the aim of aligning the AQP with the policies governing national and REC-level QIs. The alignment works in both directions, meaning that national and REC-level quality policies (QP) constitute building blocks for the continental AQP while at the same time the latter lays down directions for the former (see Box 3).

Box 3:
Scope: One QI/QP for all sectors

It is understood that there can be only one QI/QP set within a country, a REC or at the level of the continent. The QI/QP is independent of sectors since it is supposed to service all sectors. A country, for instance, cannot have a QI for the food sector and another QI for the textiles sector. Testing laboratories for foods and textiles both have to comply with the International Standard ISO/IEC 17025 to operate competently. The laboratories can be accredited by the same internationally recognized accreditation body to be recognized as competent laboratories, both nationally and internationally.

3. Balancing resources within the AQP

Since the QI supports and enhances the quality, safety and environmental soundness of goods, services and processes as well as provides acceptable evidence, recognized at the international level, that these products, services and processes conform to relevant requirements, it is a challenge to have a QI capacity that covers all goods, services and processes at the same time. Therefore, the policy focus and policy measures to consolidate and strengthen the continental QI should be based on priorities determined by the AQP Governance, i.e. the Specialized Technical Committee on Trade, Industry and Minerals.

It is recognized that RECs might have different and specific priorities needing strengthening of regional QI services. The AQP Council has the responsibility to balance resources and needs at the continent level so as to make fair and transparent decisions regarding channelling of continental resources in the area of QI.

4. Guiding principles for developing the AQP

The AQP was developed based on a set of guiding principles developed by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)[3].

The guiding principles used in developing the AQP were the following, with a brief description of "how" each was used:

a) Ownership:
Member States are responsible for managing their national QI through their national QP.
They also build/consolidate REC-level QPs and align their national QI. They participate in the development of the AQP and its implementation. They further undertake to align national and REC QPs to the AQP.

b) Inclusiveness:
Key stakeholders participate in the AQP development by discussing and commenting on the draft policy.
They contribute in formulating the AQP implementation strategy and action plan through stakeholder consultation workshops. Thereafter, they participate in AQP implementation, including providing or benefitting from training, as well as helping to collect performance data in the field.

c) Coherence:
Need of policies to harmonize standards and conformity assessment procedures as well as for ensuring equivalence of technical regulations. It also involves appropriate integration and alignment with other national, REC, continental and international policies that are intended to address quality-related needs.

d) Optimization:
Need to identify priority sectors, goods and services for which capacity should be built/consolidated/strengthened within the continental QI. Market surveillance responsibilities stay with Member States but continental level rapid alert system to notify Member States of sub-standard goods landing on the shores of Africa may be more effective.

e) Sustainability:
Need to promote membership and participation of MSs in AU-recognized Pan African Quality Infrastructure (PAQI) institutions.

Box 4: The AQP can be very efficient in addressing continental level quality problems

With regard to EU rejection of food and feed exports by Africa, by far, the most significant reason given was violation of mycotoxin limits, accounting for as much as 22.43% of rejections from Africa's food exports between 2008 and 2013. *(Source: Kareem, Fatima & Brümmer, Bernhard & Martínez-Zarzoso, Inmaculada. (2018). Entry Barriers in the European Union and Rejection of Africa's Exports: The role of Institution and Trade Procedures*).*

If the AQP were to address this problem, the question of investment in reference laboratories, post-harvest storage conditions, use of field testing/screening kits, etc., would cover 4 REC jurisdictions. This is an illustration where a continental quality policy can bring an added value in addressing an acute African problem, inter alia, by determining resource allocation modalities.

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3   https://www.unido.org/sites/default/files/files/2018-06/QP_GUIDING_PRINCIPLES_07062018_online.pdf

5. Policy options

Africa has set continental level policies and initiatives for enhancing industrial development, increasing intra-African trade, developing agriculture and exports of food products, enhancing wealth creation from sustainable governance of Africa's inland waters, oceans and seas, etc. Furthermore, an effective QI has been identified as a critical element for achieving these goals. In 2017, the PAQI conducted a stocktaking[4] of the status of QI in Africa which represented an important source of data that could effectively contribute to the formulation of African policy on trade and industrialization as well as directing QI technical assistance and capacity building programmes on the continent. The stocktaking exercise shows that in 2017, only 3 African countries had a well-developed QI while 8 had reasonably developed QIs. Twenty-four (24) countries had little or limited QIs. All the rest were in the middle somewhere.

In view of the results of the stocktaking, the following policy options were available to the AU:

I. **Option zero:** No intervention by the AU, but rather leaving it up to the RECs to develop QI within their Member States under the umbrella of any regional QI that existed.

II. **Option 1:** Limited intervention by the AU amounting to setting up a coordination entity at the continental level to encourage REC representatives to work together towards harmonizing REC-level QIs.

III. **Option 2:** Direct intervention by the AU to spearhead QI initiatives at the continental level by formulating an Africa Quality Policy that would lay down policy directions aimed at integrating national QIs, REC-level QIs and the Pan African QI so that the whole set-up could work effectively as a system.

Options zero and 1 would not have delivered the results expected as they lack the regional drivers such as the regional PAQI institutions which have the necessary oversight to uplift QI components in their respective fields leading to better alignment, not only at the continental level but also with international requirements and best practices.

Option 2 allows the AU to take the driving seat and formulate policies and policy measures that could indeed bring a consolidation and strengthening of a continental QI, building upon national QIs and REC-level QIs. The AU also has the necessary political leverage to mobilize resources needed to move towards this goal. Member States and RECs may have different priorities and therefore the AU through the policies taken under the AQP can assure that continental efforts are made on a transparent basis. Besides, as the continental AQP builds on REC-level QPs, such as ECOQUAL which is the quality policy of the ECOWAS, all continental initiatives and support necessarily take into account regional priorities as relevant. A case in point to illustrate this situation is described in Box 4. In implementing the AQP, the AU can also count on the regional PAQI institutions to undertake capacity building efforts and bring a certain level of harmonization of practices in their respective QI fields.

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4   PAQI stocktaking document 2017 (http://www.paqi.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/PAQI_Stock_Taking_2017-english.pdf)

6. African quality vision

All Africa's goods and services comply with relevant standards and technical regulations and are competitive on regional and international markets.

7. Overall objective

To contribute to poverty reduction and economic prosperity by realizing an effective African Quality Infrastructure (QI) capable of raising the quality of goods and services, thus increasing Africa's export-led growth and leading to industrial expansion and diversification in line with the African Agenda 2063, the AfCFTA and boosting Intra-African trade (BIAT).

8. Specific objectives

8.1 To assist Africa's enterprises in becoming globally more competitive, including better integration into regional and international value chains, through enhanced trade facilitation and sustainable industrialization.

8.2 To assure that the continental QI is aligned to and compliant with international best practices, regional requirements and international agreements to which AU Member States are party.

8.3 To assure that the technical regulatory framework complies with the requirements of the AfCFTA and the WTO TBT Agreement through the application of good regulatory practices.

8.4 To provide for arrangements for the mutual acceptance of conformity assessment procedures among Member States in the areas of inspection, certification, testing and calibration.

8.5 To promote trading of compliant products on the African market by ensuring that goods comply with agreed national, regional and international standards.

8.6 To support the use of standards for sustainable development in all spheres of socio-economic activity, especially the MSMEs, aimed at achieving an efficient economy within Member States, better social, environmental and consumer protection, and an enhanced quality of life for citizens.

8.7 To promote the involvement and support of the private sector, non-governmental organizations and other civil society organizations in formulating and implementing the AQP as well as fulfilling certain functions of the QI, for example, providing conformity assessment or consultancy services.

8.8 To support the establishment of African centres of excellence so as to promote research and innovation and support the QI in the areas of conformity assessment.

9. Policy focus and policy measures for QI elements

This section lists the policy focuses and the policy measures that the AU advocates for each of the 7 QI elements indicated in Box 2. It should be noted that there are various policy types – such as broad or strategic policy which enunciate general direction; more specific policy which may be developed for a particular sector (e.g. standardization) or issue (e.g. exports); or operational policy which may guide decisions on programs and project selection. A "policy measure" is something that is done concretely to implement a policy.

Particular care has been taken to align this AQP with REC level policies, whether they exist as formal quality policies, such as the ECOWAS Quality Policy (ECOQUAL), or whether they are implied in REC legislation, such as the East African Community Standardization, Quality Assurance, Metrology and Testing Act, or whether they are contained in other REC decisions/procedures, such as "Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Annex to the SADC Protocol on Trade" or the "Principles and procedures for the development and adoption of Tripartite standards".

Finally, the policy focuses and policy measures also stem from comments/observations provided by Member States while developing the policy document.

9.1 Setting and implementing the Africa Quality Policy

9.1.1 Policy context

The AQP is the basic AU instrument to modernize/consolidate the continental QI. It lays down policy directions for the various functions of the QI and indicates how they are fulfilled at country, REC and continental levels in order to have an effective QI to serve African as well as international needs. While the AU does not have the legal basis to enforce measures at country or REC levels, it does have the political mandate and authority to lead the continent along a path that brings sustainable development. Thus, this function of setting and implementing the AQP should be understood as the AU providing the thrust and leadership in QP and QI matters at continental level and its reliance on Member States and RECs to achieve the objectives of the AQP. This leadership role of the AU also means that it has to establish the necessary mechanism for overseeing the implementation of the AQP, to monitor its effectiveness and take corrective actions when needed.

The first step after approval of the AQP is to prepare and implement an action plan, including bringing awareness on the need for its thorough execution, principally among policy makers at Member State and REC levels who will have to bring more efficiency on the way QI institutions work to eliminate overlapping and incompatible functions, and hence move towards more effectiveness and efficiency.

Implementation of this quality policy will be driven with the support of continental institutions responsible for standardization, metrology and accreditation on the continent (see Box 5).

Box 5:
CAMI Resolution

At their meeting held on 10 – 14 June 2013 in Nairobi, Kenya, the Conference of AU Ministers of Industry (CAMI) made the following decision with respect to quality, standards and metrology:

"Recognize the Pan African Quality Infrastructure (PAQI) as the continental platform for all matters related to standardization, metrology, accreditation and conformity assessment in order to strengthen the competitiveness of Africa's goods and services and contribute towards the industrialization of the continent and its sustainability".

These institutions are:

African Accreditation Cooperation – AFRAC

AFRAC is a cooperation of accreditation bodies, sub-regional accreditation cooperation bodies and stakeholders whose objective is to facilitate trade and contribute to the protection of health, safety and the environment, in Africa and improvement of Africa's competitiveness. The mission of AFRAC is thus to cooperate in building capacity in African accreditation with the goal of sustaining an internationally acceptable mutual recognition arrangement (MRA) so as to facilitate the recognition of conformity assessment certificates and reports worldwide.

Intra-Africa Metrology System – AFRIMETS

Accurate, internationally acceptable measurement is crucial to ensure competitive manufacturing, to foster trade and to protect consumers. The collective term for the process to establish traceability to the international system of units (SI), disseminate this traceability to industry, the health sector, law enforcement and environmental monitoring, is called Metrology. The major mandates of AFRIMETS are (1) to promote harmonisation of scientific, industrial and legal metrology issues across Africa and to operate as a fully-fledged Regional Metrology Organisation (RMO) for Africa, in accordance with the Mutual Recognition Arrangement of the International Committee for Weights and Measures, the CIPM MRA; and (2) to facilitate, through use of accurate measurements, inter and intra Africa trade as well as ensuring the safety and health of consumers and environmental protection.

The African Electrotechnical Standardisation Commission (AFSEC)

African infrastructure and especially electrotechnical standards and conformity assessment systems are still at a nascent stage of development in most countries in Africa. Common standards and confirmity regimes in the electrotechnical area, if well configured, will have a multiplier effect especially in electricity generation, transmission, trading in electrical systems and in support of universal access to electricity.

The main objectives of AFSEC are to improve the wellbeing of the African people by the promotion, development and application of harmonized standards in order to improve access to electricity; to facilitate trade on the African continent by removing technical obstacles thus opening up new markets; and to industry and users a framework of dialogue making it possible to achieve considerable savings in the design and quality of electrical products and services.

The African Organisation for Standardisation (ARSO)

Increased trade and closer economic cooperation between developing countries represent a considerable potential for development, but realizing this potential represents a major challenge especially in creating viable, sustainable and effective continental standardization infrastructure. The fundamental mandate of ARSO is to develop tools for standards development, standards and conformity assessment harmonization and implementation of these systems to enhance Africa's internal trading capacity, increase Africa's product and service competitiveness globally, and uplift the welfare of African consumers creating a continental standardization forum to influence future prospects in international trade for Africa's benefit and advantage.

Pan-African Quality Infrastructure

AFRAC, AFRIMETS, AFSEC and ARSO have formalized their cooperation as members of the Pan African Quality Infrastructure (PAQI) by signing a Memorandum of Understanding in 2013. The 20th Conference of African Ministers of Industry (AU CAMI) recognized PAQI as the continental platform for all matters related to standardization, metrology, accreditation and conformity assessment in order to strengthen the competitiveness of Africa's goods and services and contribute towards the industrialization of the continent and its sustainability. PAQI fits well in the strategy for the implementation of the Action Plan for Boosting Intra-Africa Trade (BIAT) and above all for the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

9.1.2 Policy focus

The AU will:

* consult Member States and RECs, and through them the relevant stakeholders, on the content and orientation of the AQP during its formulation, its implementation and its periodic review;

* strengthen regional PAQI institutions (ARSO, AFRAC, AFRIMETS, AFSEC) and support their operational linkages with relevant international organizations to ensure that the continental QI is recognized internationally (see Box 5 on CAMI resolution 2014);

* strengthen regional services (e.g. reference testing and/or calibration laboratories, regional certification or inspection schemes, proficiency testing providers, etc.);

* encourage and support the private sector to invest in conformity assessment services, such as testing, calibration, inspection and certification to ensure that the combined efforts of the public sector and the private sector continually satisfy the needs of the continent;

* exercise oversight on continental QI functions to ensure their continual effectiveness, relevance and efficiency;

* encourage and support Member States and RECs to ensure that their QI institutions closely cooperate with and participate in the work of relevant continental and international organizations (e.g. ARSO, AFRAC, AFRIMETS, AFSEC, ISO, IEC, OIML, IAF, ILAC, CIPM, BIPM, etc.);

* monitor the African business environment with a view to its responsiveness to changing international requirements related to QI matters and take pre-emptive measures, in collaboration with Member States and RECs, to assure continued compliance.
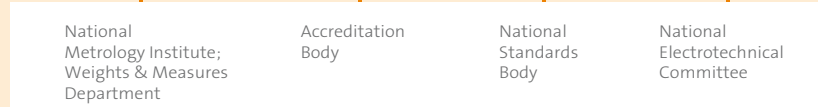
Pan-African Quality Infrastructure Setup

9.1.3 Policy measures

After the adoption of the AQP by the AU, the AUC will develop an Action Plan for its implementation including, among others, the measures related to the following:

- seeking external funding opportunities to strengthen the RECs' QI functions and PAQI institutions taking care not to duplicate resources;

- requesting MSs to appoint one or more technical personnel within their key ministry responsible for QI matters to coordinate national activities with regard to the implementation of the AQP;

- strengthening human resource capacity in standardization, technical regulations, conformity assessment, accreditation and metrology;

- designating and empowering an entity within the AUC to supervise, on behalf of the AU and in collaboration with Member States, RECs, PAQI institutions and stakeholders, the implementation of the AQP and monitoring of associated performance indicators;

- establishing clear targets and timelines for implementing the AQP;

- continually assessing the evolving continental needs in each of the 7 QI elements, identifying areas where there are gaps and implementing additional policy measures to bridge the gaps.

9.2 Standardization

9.2.1 Policy context

The standardization activity consists of the processes of formulating, issuing and implementing standards. Standards are developed by national standards bodies (NSBs), regional standards organizations (e.g. ARSO or AFSEC) or international standards organizations (e.g. ISO or IEC). NSBs may become members of regional and/or international standards organizations and actively participate in the development of regional or international standards which they can then adopt as national standards. The WTO TBT Agreement, in its Annex 3, makes it an obligation for countries to have their NSBs accept and comply with the Code of Good Practice for the Preparation, Adoption and Application of Standards. In the context of intra-African trade, national standards, regional standards (developed by RECs) and ARSO/AFSEC regional standards need to be harmonized and aligned whenever appropriate with relevant international standards so as not to create unnecessary technical barriers to trade.

9.2.2 Policy focus

The AU will:

- encourage Member States to establish national standards bodies;

- ensure that standards harmonization work at the level of ARSO and AFSEC is always carried out based on priority needs;

- strengthen the active participation of Member States' national standards bodies in the development of regional and international standards particularly in those sectors that are crucial for intra-African and international trade;

- encourage Member States and RECs to ensure that their standardizing bodies accept and follow the Code of Good Practice for the Preparation, Adoption and Application of Standards as provided in Annex 3 of WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade;

- support ARSO and AFSEC with the means to ensure that they comply with the Code of Good Practice for the Preparation, Adoption and Application of Standards as provided in Annex 3 of WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade as well as follow the 6 principles[5] of transparency, openness, impartiality and consensus, relevance and effectiveness, coherence and consideration of developing country interests when developing Harmonized African Standards requested by the AUC;

- support ARSO and AFSEC to maintain the relevant level of membership or liaison in international standards organizations such as ISO and IEC respectively, and as far as possible participate in the international standards development work of these organizations, either directly or through Member States' NSBs;

- promote the linkages between research and innovation with African standardisation work.

9.2.3 Policy measures

After the adoption of the AQP by the AU, the AUC will

- assess the needs for harmonized African standards, establish priorities and request ARSO and AFSEC as needed to prepare such African standards within given deadlines;

- ensure compliance with the Code of Good Practice for the Preparation, Adoption and Application of Standards according to Annex 3 of the WTO TBT Agreement in all standardization work undertaken under this Policy;

- establish and implement a plan for capacity building of ARSO/AFSEC staff and technical committee members on good standardization practices;

- establish and implement a methodology for prioritizing standards development, through wide consultation among stakeholders, academia and research organizations as well as technical experts;

- ensure that standards will be developed only if they have a market relevance and are suitable as a technical solution;

- ensure that ARSO and AFSEC liaise with the AfCFTA Sub-committee on Technical Barriers to Trade to facilitate AfCFTA standards harmonisation needs in terms of the AfCFTA Agreement's Protocol on Trade in Goods Annex 6 on Technical Barriers to Trade;

- ensure that the programme of work relating to standards under development is published at least once every six months in accordance with the requirements of the WTO TBT Agreement;

- conduct awareness seminars to disseminate information about the benefit of standards to various target groups, including both the public and the private sector.

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5   Decision of the WTO TBT Committee on principles for the development of international standards, guides and recommendations with relation to articles 2, 5 and annex 3 of the WTO TBT Agreement

9.3 Setting and implementing a Technical Regulatory Framework

9.3.1 Policy context

Technical regulations, because of their mandatory nature, have the potential to become technical barriers to trade (TBT) which are barriers other than those of a financial nature that prevent or hinder the flow of goods and services between nations. Standards are voluntary but when referenced in technical regulations, they become mandatory.

The main barrier in the area concerning QI is the inappropriate use of technical regulations, standards and conformity assessment procedures. The AfCFTA Agreement, through Annex 6 on Technical Barriers to Trade, advocates for the use of International Standards or parts thereof as the basis of technical regulations so as not to create unnecessary obstacles to international trade. An analysis of the WTO TBT Committee's records however shows that about one third of all specific trade concerns (STCs) raised in the WTO TBT Committee are associated in one way or another with the subject of international standards[6]. One major problem that is of great concern to developing countries, for instance, is that different regulatory agencies within the same country do not reference standards in their technical regulations in a coherent manner.

Additionally, an analysis of the World Bank's worldwide governance indicators[7] in 2017, with regard to regulatory quality, show that only 4 of the 54 African countries for which these indicators have been compiled show an index slightly above zero on a scale ranging from -2.5 and +2.5, with higher values corresponding to better governance. This means that African countries have a deficit in using regulation effectively. To avoid this, the WTO TBT Committee encourages member countries to use Good regulatory practice (GRP), which describes best practices and procedures developed by governments and organizations to improve the quality of regulation, including technical regulations.

Technical regulations are the responsibilities of governments and, within the African context, also of some RECs, e.g. the EAC can declare compulsory standards akin to declaring technical regulations. There is thus a need at the country and REC levels to have a technical regulatory framework that each regulator can abide by, including the use of GRP and regulatory impact assessment (RIA).

9.3.2 Policy focus

The AU will

- request Member States to establish a national technical regulatory framework (NTRF) with a view to applying a set of mechanisms and related principles of GRP recommended by the WTO TBT Committee;

- encourage RECs to align NTRFs with any REC-level technical regulatory framework with a view to assuring regulatory coherence and regulatory harmonization aimed at minimizing TBTs; close collaboration will be maintained in this process with the AfCFTA Sub-Committees on NTBs and TBTs established under the AfCFTA Annexes 5 and 6 respectively; as well as with REC NTB Coordination Units;

- encourage Member States and RECs to use international standards and ARSO African Harmonized Standards as relevant as basis for technical regulations;

- encourage Member States and RECs to be linked and to share information and data on counterfeit and sub-standard goods in their markets;

- establish a continental early warning system to enhance the effectiveness of market surveillance systems operating at Member State or REC levels with a view to alerting all African countries when imports of sub-standard or dangerous goods on African soil are encountered.

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6   Wijkström, Erik and McDaniels, Devin, International Standards and the WTO TBT Agreement: Improving Governance for Regulatory Alignment (March 19, 2013).
7   https://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/#doc

9.3.3 Policy measures

After the adoption of the AQP by AU, the AUC will

- set up a committee composed of REC representatives, PAQI institutions and the African Union Commission - Department of Economic Development, Trade, Industry and Mining to develop guidance on setting up a national technical regulatory framework (NTRF) at the level of Member States; the Committee should ensure that the NTRF is based on features of high-quality regulation such as effectiveness and efficiency; transparency and accountability; proportionality and consistency;

- work with RECs to organize awareness and training programmes for national regulators on the NTRF guidance document to help them understand and apply GRP, RIA and other tools/principles;

- develop guidance on referencing international standards or African Harmonized Standards in technical regulations with a view to train regulators on referencing only the essential requirements of a standard necessary to meet the desired objectives of the technical regulation;

- facilitate the sharing of information, through the AU Trade Observatory, on findings of national market surveillance authorities on dangerous goods.

9.4 Conformity assessment

9.4.1 Policy context

Conformity assessment is the demonstration that specified requirements relating to a product, process, system, person or body are fulfilled – these requirements may be included in a standard or a technical regulation. Conformity assessment activities are carried out by conformity assessment bodies (CAB), i.e. testing and calibration laboratories, proficiency testing providers (PTP), reference material producers, inspection bodies and certification bodies. Conformity assessment procedures have to comply with WTO TBT requirements so that conformity assessment results from one country may be accepted by another country, provided there is evidence of competence of the CAB, for example through accreditation. All accredited CABs in the world operate to the same level of competence, thus facilitating mutual recognition of conformity assessment results among them. Thus, testing and calibration laboratories worldwide have to comply with the international standard ISO/IEC 17025. In the African context, 7 Member States have internationally recognized accreditation bodies that can accredit calibration and testing laboratories. Another 14 SADC Member States have access to internationally recognized testing and calibration accreditation services through SADC Accreditation Service (SADCAS), a multi-economy accreditation body. This means that 35 Member States have no access to national accreditation services to enable testing and calibration laboratories in these countries to be accredited to demonstrate their competence in testing intra-African traded goods. Mutual recognition of test reports is thus huge challenge among countries, necessarily negatively impacting intra-African trade.

In addition to conformity assessment procedures themselves, one also has to consider the wider picture of conformity assessment systems, which include the rules, procedures and management for carrying out conformity assessment. Although, conformity assessment procedures might be similar among countries, for example when based on international test methods, conformity assessment systems might be different, for example when high-risks goods are tested or when market surveillance requirements are governed by strict liability laws and penalties to ensure that products comply with requirements.

Yet, another important area of conformity assessment poses a problem in Africa – the lack of means and arrangements for conformity assessment of electro-technical products. This is particularly pertinent in these times when the fourth industrial (technology) revolution is well underway.

9.4.2 Policy focus

The AU will

- encourage Member States and RECs to ensure that they use conformity assessment procedures that comply with WTO TBT requirements, in particular the use of relevant guides or recommendations issued by international standardizing bodies as a basis for conformity assessment procedures;

- encourage Member States and RECs to accept, as far as possible, only accredited conformity assessment results to demonstrate compliance with standards and technical regulations in order to minimize risks; where this is not possible, results from CABs participating in recognized inter-comparisons and proficiency testing schemes may be temporarily accepted;

- encourage Member States and RECs to accept all accredited conformity assessment results or to support voluntary mutual recognition arrangements (MRAs) between conformity assessment bodies;

- encourage Member States and RECs to support regional optimization of conformity assessment services, for example by strengthening existing strong laboratories to build critical incremental capacity in testing and act as regional reference laboratories;

- welcome and support initiatives by CABs to regroup as professional associations or a forum to reflect on the state of CA in Africa and to advise the AU on policies to strengthen this sector;

- promote and support the establishment of centres of excellence that can be used as reference points for testing and calibration to support industrial development and trade;

- support programmes at the level of Member States and RECs to address the special needs of MSMEs for conformity assessment services, e.g. for handicraft products;

- encourage Member States and RECs to create the necessary business environment to enlist the support of the private sector in providing conformity assessment services, if necessary through public-private-partnerships.
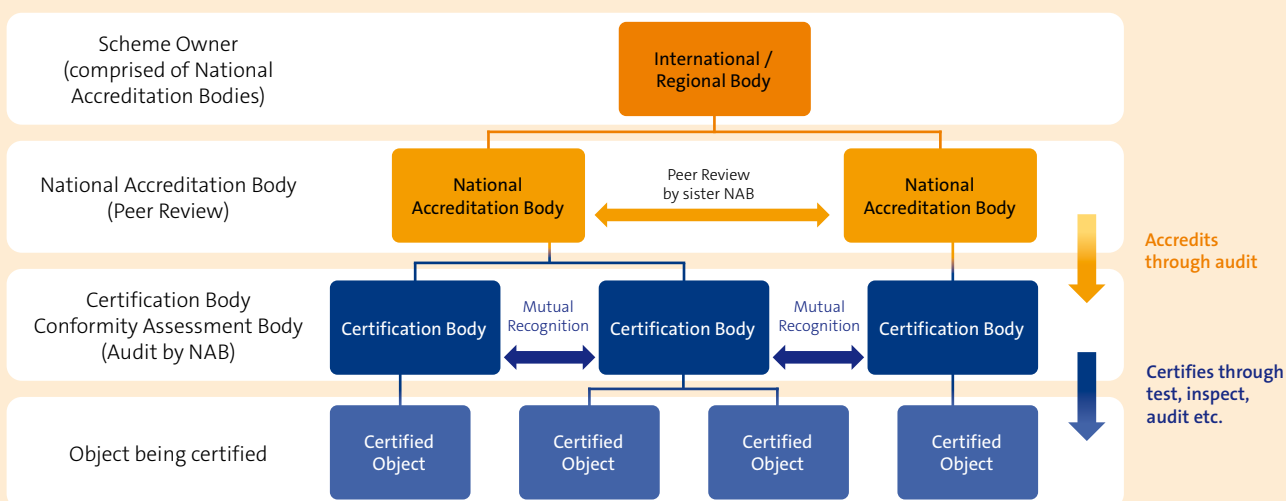
9.4.3 Policy measures

After the adoption of the AQP by the AU, the AUC will

- undertake a survey of CABs in Africa, with the help of Member States and RECs, with a view to constitute a continental database for use by producers, traders, regulators etc. to quickly identify appropriate CABs for their needs; regular updating of the database can also be used to measure progress in the expansion of CA services on the continent;

- prepare a framework agreement on Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRAs) under which Member States and RECs can establish MRAs;

- assess conformity assessment capabilities both in the public sector as well as in the private sector for continental priority sectors in view of addressing any gaps in needed capabilities by strengthening CA service providers through PAQI institutions and RECs as relevant;

- create the condition under which test laboratories in Member States will have access to regular proficiency testing;

- undertake to assess whether CABs operating in the priority sectors for Africa have access to accreditation services to cover their scopes of conformity assessment and if needed the capabilities of relevant national or multi-economy African accreditation bodies will be extended to cover the needs of CABs;

- enlist the support of ARSO Conformity Assessment Committee (CACO) to identify the need for and develop guidance documents on conformity assessment in the African context, including an African quality mark.

Mechanism for cross-border mutual recognition

Source: UNESCAP.org

9.5   Accreditation

9.5.1 Policy context

Accreditation is a third-party attestation formally recognizing the technical competence of conformity assessment bodies (CABs), e.g. laboratories, proficiency testing providers (PTP), inspection and certification bodies, to carry out conformity assessment activities so that certificates issued by these bodies are recognized as being reliable and trustworthy, both at national as well as international levels. In Africa, accreditation services are provided by accreditation bodies (ABs) which are either national or multi-economy accreditation bodies. ABs are recognized internationally after they successfully pass a peer-review process and become signatory to the mutual recognition arrangement of the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC MRA) and/or the multilateral recognition arrangement of the International Accreditation Forum (IAF MLA). If the AB accredits laboratories, PTPs and inspection bodies, it should adhere to the ILAC MRA and if it accredits bodies certifying quality management systems, products, services, persons and environmental management systems, it should adhere to the IAF MLA.

Becoming signatories to the ILAC/MRA and IAF/MLA for African ABs is facilitated by AFRAC, which is the PAQI institution for accreditation, and is recognized as a Regional accreditation group by IAF and a Recognised Regional Cooperation Body by ILAC. This means that African ABs just need to become signatories to the AFRAC MRA in order to become ILAC/MRA and IAF/MLA signatories.

In the African context, 7 Member States are signatories to the ILAC/MRA while 5 among these are also signatories to the IAF/MLA. SADCAS, a multi-economy accreditation body, servicing 14 SADC Member States is signatory to the ILAC/MRA but not yet to the IAF/MLA. It is also acknowledged that several other national ABs and a multi-economy AB in West Africa are working towards international recognition. There is nevertheless an acute need to address this deficit at the continental level.

9.5.2 Policy focus

The AU will

- encourage Member States and RECs to arrange for the provision of accreditation services to their CABs. This can be done either through the creation of ABs at the national level, or through regional or multi-economy ABs;

- strengthen AFRAC to extend its MRA scopes to cover other African needs, e.g. in proficiency testing;

- support regional and multi-economy ABs in Africa to achieve international recognition as soon as possible by becoming signatory members of AFRAC;

- encourage Member States to preferably use the services of national or multi-economy internationally recognized accreditation bodies from Africa;

- request Member States to recognize and accept results of conformity assessment from CABs accredited by any national or multi-economy internationally recognized accreditation bodies.

9.5.3 Policy measures

After the adoption of the AQP by the AU, the AUC will:

- undertake a survey of accreditation needs in Africa in priority sectors with the help of AFRAC;

- mobilize resources to strengthen national or multi-economy accreditation bodies from Africa in light of needs identified above, for example to extend their scopes of accreditation when these are needed by African producers in priority areas for the continent;

- support Member States and RECs to disseminate awareness and information on accreditation and conformity assessment to various target groups;

- support RECs to establish and implement plans for capacity building to constitute/expand regional pool of technical assessors, auditors and experts for use by national and multi-economy ABs when providing accreditation services across Africa.

- ensure that AFRAC liaises with the AfCFTA Sub-committee on Technical Barriers to Trade to facilitate AfCFTA accreditation needs in terms of the AfCFTA Agreement's Protocol on Trade in Goods Annex 6 on Technical Barriers to Trade.

9.6 Metrology

9.6.1 Policy context

Metrology is the science of measurement and it has become a natural and vital part of our everyday life, e.g. food is bought by weight, water or electricity are metered, instruments analysing blood samples must be precise, etc.

Metrology is divided into three subfields, namely

- scientific or fundamental metrology (concerns the establishment of measurement units, realization of measurement standards and the transfer of traceability from these standards to users in society),

- applied or industrial metrology (concerns the application of measurement science to manufacturing and other processes and their use in society) and

- legal metrology (concerns regulatory requirements of measurements and measuring instruments for the protection of health, public safety, the environment, protection of consumers and fair trade).

Metrology is critical for the operation of the QI. Balances and other instruments in laboratories need to be calibrated so that they can provide reliable measurements, otherwise test reports have no value. Firms cannot satisfactorily implement process controls to manufacture a product to specified standards if control instruments such those measuring pressure and temperature are not properly calibrated. Confidence in national measurement is assured by a national metrology institute (NMI) when it becomes signatory to the Mutual Recognition Arrangement of the International Committee of Weights and Measures (CIPM MRA). The CIPM MRA provides the institutional and technical framework for NMIs to recognize each other's measurement standards and calibration certificates.

Legal metrology falls within the regulatory sector and most countries have passed laws to ensure that proper measurement in this area is covered. This entails two areas of responsibility:

a) defining the legal units (weights and measures) and the levels of accuracy in measurements, and

b) enforcement which includes type approval, initial, and subsequent verification.

In the African context, the major mandates of the Intra-Africa Metrology System (AFRIMETS) are

1) to promote harmonisation of scientific, industrial and legal metrology issues across Africa and to operate as a fully-fledged Regional Metrology Organisation (RMO) for Africa, in accordance with the Mutual Recognition Arrangement of the International Committee for Weights and Measures, the CIPM MRA; and

2) to facilitate, through use of accurate measurements, international and intra-Africa trade as well as ensuring the safety and health of consumers and environmental protection.

9.6.2 Policy focus

The AU will:

- encourage Member States to use only the International System of Units (SI) of measurements at the national level; other local or traditional units of measurements should be phased out gradually;

- encourage Member States to establish/ strengthen national metrology institutes (NMI) with the responsibility of acquiring and conserving national measurement standards capable of providing accurate and reliable measurements in the country;

- encourage Member States and RECs to ensure harmonization of type approval and verification procedures of measuring instruments at REC level first, then at continental level;
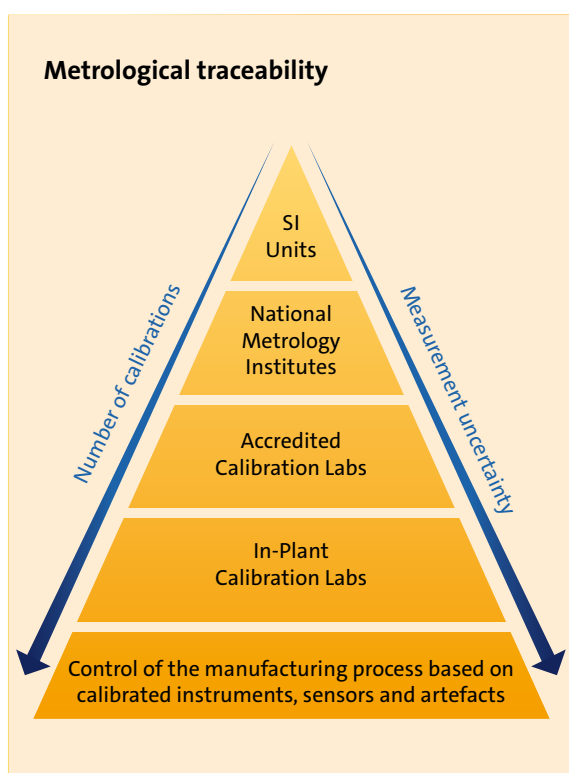
- encourage Member States to ensure protection of consumers by controlling pre-packaging of goods on the market, all of which should be based on relevant international or regional standards such as the Recommendations of the International Organization of Legal Metrology (OIML);

- encourage Member States to recognize the equivalence between any public or private calibration laboratories, including those of NMIs, to provide calibration services provided that they are accredited; private sector operators should be encouraged to offer calibration services;

- encourage Member States to ensure that all national measurement standards in the custody of their NMIs are traceable to the International System of Units (SI).

9.6.3 Policy measures

After the adoption of the AQP by the AU, the AUC will

- undertake a survey of metrology capabilities in Africa with the support of AFRIMETS to identify gaps in priority areas for Africa and draw necessary plans to address these gaps;

- establish a plan in collaboration with Member States and RECs to support AFRIMETS to implement its mandates as described above;

- identify, as a matter of priority in consultation with Member States and RECs, operational hurdles preventing NMIs from guarantying traceability requirements;

- consider regional optimization measures to enable Member States with limited resources to obtain international traceability from other African countries;

- establish a priority plan to support accreditation of NMIs so that they can disseminate traceability to calibration laboratories within Member States;

- ensure that AFRIMETS liaises with the AfCFTA Sub-committee on Technical Barriers to Trade to facilitate AfCFTA metrology needs in terms of the AfCFTA Agreement's Protocol on Trade in Goods Annex 6 on Technical Barriers to Trade.

Metrological traceability

- SI Units
- National Metrology Institutes
- Accredited Calibration Labs
- In-Plant Calibration Labs
- Control of the manufacturing process based on calibrated instruments, sensors and artefacts

Number of calibrations

Measurement uncertainty

9.7 Quality promotion and use

9.7.1 Policy context

What are the drivers that bring producers, service companies, etc. to apply standards and feel the need to demonstrate conformity? When standards are made mandatory under technical regulations, the inducement is clear but what about the voluntary sector? The answer is that it could be a mix of the following: increased awareness about the benefits of applying standards in operations, strong demands for conforming products by well-organized and strong consumer associations, procurement conditions in Government purchase contracts, requirements of overseas buyers, need to demonstrate a leadership position and improve corporate image, etc.

All the above factors pushing towards better use of standards may well exist in a given country but it is not enough. Technical expertise should be available easily, e.g. in the form of a pool of national experts, to help enterprises apply standards and even prepare them for certification. Building capacity at the local level is key as lack of expertise can become a major constraint in the QI. It is useless to build CAB capability and build/reinforce institutions under the various other functions of the QI if users of the services are unable to progress because of lack of expertise.

9.7.2 Policy focus

The AU will

- encourage Member States to promote awareness campaigns and training with the view to raise knowledge and awareness of quality in society, including by establishing programmes for education in standardisation and other elements of QI ;

- support PAQI institutions to create and conduct capacity building programmes in their respective fields of expertise, including preparation and publication of technical brochures, manuals, etc.;

- encourage Member States to promote application of quality tools to improve products and services through training of industry personnel, with special regard to MSMEs and integration into the international and regional value chains;

- encourage Member States to support consumers and consumer organizations to disseminate knowledge and information about standards and quality;

- encourage Member States to create national pools of experts in quality management to support producers and services to apply quality management systems;

- encourage Member States and RECs to create national institutes of quality and national/ sub regional quality awards to promote the quality culture;

- establish an Africa Quality Award Scheme (AQAS) with the specific aim of promoting quality in the MSME sector;

- encourage Member States and RECs to closely involve the private sector in all initiatives

  related to quality promotion.

9.7.3 Policy measures

After the adoption of the AQP by the AU, the AUC will

- draw up an action plan for implementing the above policies in close collaboration with the PAQI institutions and RECs;

- design and disseminate a communication plan to inform all stakeholders on progress with implementation of the AQP.

10. Financing of the AQP

Implementation of this policy will be financed through a variety of funding streams. The AUC will also explore the possibility of setting-up a fund to ensure that resources are guaranteed for implementation of the AQP. The source of funds have to be determined through wide consultation among PAQI institutions, Member States, RECs and the AUC.

10.1 AUC Budget allocations

The AUC will fund the following:

- Administration costs related to the implementation of the AQP, including costs of running the secretariat;

- Activities related to interventions where quality gaps have been identified in value chains earmarked for industrial development at continental level;

- Participation of African representatives, i.e. from ARSO, AFSEC, AFRIMETS and AFRAC to annual meetings of ISO, IEC, BIPM/CIPM/CGPM and ILAC/IAF respectively;

- Participation of AUC and AfCFTA QI experts to WTO TBT & SPS Committee meetings;

- Participation of QI representatives at meetings of the AfCFTA Technical Committees on TBT, SPS and NTB as necessary;

- Standards development and/or harmonisation technical committee meetings;

- Proficiency testing schemes in selected areas;

- Technical capacity building activities such as training workshops and attachments for QI staff within the Member States and awareness building activities; and

- Support of an Africa wide annual Quality Award Scheme.

10.2 Contribution by Member States

Member States are responsible for financing national measures and activities that are necessary to fulfil the objectives of this AQP including the following:

- Development and consolidation of national QPs where relevant;

- Upgrading or consolidating the national QI institutions;

- Training and capacity building for QI institutions, consumer organizations, civil society organizations and other stakeholder groups; and

- Membership fees, as relevant, to appropriate regional, continental and international bodies.

10.3 PAQI Structures membership fees

The fees that PAQI institutions collect from their members will fund the following:

- The costs of running their structure secretariats;

- The costs associated with hosting each structure's annual general meeting (AGM) and any extra-ordinary AGMs;

- Their Membership fees to international bodies as necessary; and

- Participation at meetings and events other than those mentioned in 10.1.

10.4 Technical partners' contributions

These contributions will be used to support the following:

- Training of technical experts in the QI area;

- Training of industry personnel in the implementation of standards and use of quality tools in industry operations;

- Selected priority standards harmonisation technical committees meetings;

- Capital acquisitions to support regional Centres of Excellence, including reference laboratories; and

- Supplementary support for proficiency testing schemes as requested.

10.5 Private sector contributions

These contributions may be used to fund the costs of selected standards development/ harmonisation technical committees.

11. Implementation arrangements

It has to be highlighted that the AQP is a collective policy of the Member States and that it can only be successfully implemented if Member States are fully committed after having approved this policy. Member States should also consider implementing the policy and related measures at the level of and through the RECs of which they are members. Member States' and RECs' commitment are critical since the AUC, in accordance with the mandate given to it by the AU and which will oversee the implementation of the AQP, has only limited regulatory powers. There should also be a clear governance structure to support the AUC during the implementation process.

11.1 Governance

The Governance of the AQP implementation is vested with the Specialized Technical Committee on Trade, Industry and Minerals (STC-TIM). The latter may delegate some of its tasks to an AQP Council constituted as follows:

- Chair, the AUC Commissioner for Economic Development, Trade, Industry and Mining

- AfCFTA Secretariat

- PAQI institutions

- REC representatives

- Stakeholder representatives (private sector, consumers, academia).

The Governance has the following functions:

a) **monitor** and oversee implementation plans on a regular basis till successful implementation;

b) **commission** studies, request information from concerned institutions and conduct research to obtain information and data;

c) **adopt** plans for the modernization of the continental QI and assign implementation to specific PAQI institutions or RECs;

d) **review** the current status of the continental level QI and make recommendations on improvements;

e) **progress** the decisions and recommendations made to the highest level of the AU and AfCFTA secretariat for modernizing the continental QI.

11.2 High level implementation plan

In strengthening the continental QI as envisaged in this AQP, an integrated approach is required to ensure that there are no gaps, overlaps, duplication or conflicts of interest between the various PAQI institutions, Member States and RECs. The approach will consider the level of development/maturity of the national QIs before targeting support and channelling resources, in order to ensure that those MS most in need of support derive the necessary benefits.

The Governance will develop an Action Plan within 6 months of the approval of the AQP to guide all relevant parties in implementing this AQP. The implementation plan will be submitted for consultation to Member States and RECs.

11.3 Timeline

The AU is committed to implement the provisions of this AQP within a period of five years from the date of its approval.

12. Performance measurement arrangements and indicators

12.1 Scope of performance indicators

Indicators are metrics put in place to measure progress resulting from implementation of the AQP. Many factors such as inadequate financial and human resources or lack of coordination across all players involved in the implementation can hinder the proper implementation of the AQP. Thus, indicators provide objective information that can be used as basis for timely corrective actions if targeted objectives are not being met.

Indicators need to be SMART, the acronym meaning that they need to be specific, measurable, achievable at a reasonable cost, relevant, and time-bound. For the purpose of measuring performance, only the indicators relative to the proper implementation of the AQP will be covered, NOT the indicators relative to each of the elements of the QI. In other words, the indicators will not measure, for example, whether the function of accreditation or standardization is being fulfilled effectively at the continental level. They will only measure whether the policies, deadlines and targets set in the implementation plan, including in these QI these areas, are being carried out.

Performance indicators can be used during and after AQP implementation. In the former case, it monitors progress while for the latter, it helps in the review of the policy and for framing of new policies. Data collection relative to each indicator is of utmost importance for measuring progress in AQP implementation. The indicators used should not rely on complex and costly data collection methods, which might make the exercise unfeasible.

12.2 Setting targets for indicators

Once indicators are identified, target values for the indicators should be defined with the assumption that if the target is reached, then the performance is deemed satisfactory. The AQP Governance or the AQP Council (by delegation) will set the targets for each of the indicators identified below.

12.3 Types of indicators

With respect to the AQP, the following two types of performance indicators are relevant:

• Policy implementation indicators;
• Policy effect indicators.

12.4 Policy implementation indicators

The policy implementation indicators show how well the AQP is being implemented and is further broken down into input indicators and activity indicators.

Input indicators monitor the resources that are devoted to implementation of the policy while activity indicators monitor the activities that are carried out when implementing the AQP.

The following input indicator is proposed:

• Number of persons in Member States and RECs officially designated with the responsibility, in addition to their normal responsibilities, of coordinating the implementation of the AQP.

The following activity indicators are proposed:

• Number of meetings in a year of the AQP Council;

• Number of deadlines met as laid down in the implementation plan;

• Percentage of annual budget spent.

12.5 Policy effect indicators

The policy effect indicators can be broken down into the following, based on the principles governing the formulation of the AQP:

- Ownership indicators;
- Inclusiveness indicators;
- Coherence indicators;
- Optimization indicators;
- Sustainability indicators.

Ownership indicator proposed:

- Number of issues escalated to the AU Specialized Technical Committee on Trade, Industry and Minerals and successfully resolved because they could not at first be resolved at the level of the AQP Council.

Inclusiveness indicator proposed:

- Percentage of women, young adults and MSMEs among beneficiaries of training/ technical assistance activities conducted under the AQP Implementation Plan.

Coherence indicator proposed:

- Number of cases where good regulatory practices have been applied when reviewing/ developing technical regulations.

Optimization indicator proposed:

- Number of decisions taken by the Governance related to prioritization of sectors/products/ services or exploiting regional economies of scale

Sustainability indicators proposed:

- Number of funding-related critical gaps in the continental QI identified and escalated by the AQP Council to the AU STC-TIM for resolution;

- Number of members paying their member-ship dues to PAQI institutions.

This policy shall be reviewed three years after its adoption by the AU and thereafter every 5 years. The review process shall follow the same process of consultation, as was carried out for the development of the AQP.