HARMONIZATION OF EAC STANDARDS

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Outline

• SQMT Act and Harmonization;
• EAC Procedures and Harmonization
• Role of NSBs in harmonization
• Challenges
Background

• EAC Treaty provides for cooperation in the areas of standardization, Quality Assurance, Metrology and Testing (SQMT).

• SQMT Protocol was negotiated in 2001 and later in 2006 enacted as an SQMT Act.
SQMT Act

- Standardization, Quality Assurance, Metrology and Testing (EAC SQMT Act 2006), provides a framework for the development and implementation of SQMT activities in the EAC.
- stipulates objectives for harmonization and provides for establishment of structures for harmonization.
Objectives for harmonization of standards

• Protect and improve the health and safety of consumers;
• Facilitate regional and international trade;
• Increase opportunities for companies within the community to participate in international technology transfer.
Harmonization objectives Cont’

- Prevent deceptive practices
- Protect animal or plant life or health
- Protect the environment
Provisions in the SQMT Act

The Act provides for the establishment of structures for SQMT activities:

- East African Standards Committee (EASC) – policy guidance
- Liaison office (SQMT Department) – coordinations, technical guidance and monitoring
- Technical Sub committee e.g Standards Management committee (SMC)

Provides for the development of procedure for harmonization of standards;
SQMT Act Cont’

- Adoption of harmonized standards by the partner States;
- Enforcement of compulsory standards;
- Declaration and acceptance of certification marks;
- Approximation and alignment of laws and regulations;
- Defines the roles of the NSBs in regard to the SQMT activities.
PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES FOR HARMONIZATION OF STANDARDS

Harmonization process is done in accordance with the Principles and Procedures that are based on principles defined in Annex 3 of the WTO TBT Agreement and ISO/IEC Directives.

Procedures define and outline the following:

- **principles** to be followed during harmonization based on international best practice (transparency, openness, coherency, impartiality consensus, development dimension, effectiveness and relevance);
- **roles of the different stakeholders** in the process (i.e., Council, EAC Secretariat, EASC, Standard Management Committee (SMC), Technical Committee (TCs), Subcommittees (SC)).
PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES Cont’

- **Key stages** and **duration** of each stage in the development of the EAS i.e. (preliminary, proposal, committee, enquiry; ballot, approval, declaration and publication)

- Procedures for:
  - formation of TCs;
  - making proposal for standards harmonization and approval;
  - convening and conducting meetings,
  - notification of draft standards to all trading Partners,
  - adoption of international and regional standards,
  - review and amendments of standards,
  - issuance of corrigenda and the appeals on the process
Annex A: Organizational Structure for the development of EAS standards

- COUNCIL OF MINISTERS
  - EASC
    - SMC
      - TC
        - SUB COMMITTEE
          - WORKING GROUP
Process for Development of Work programme

Generation of National proposals by NSBs

Submission and Compilation of Work plan by TC Secretariats

Consideration of TC work plans by the SMC and development of the Work programme

Approval of Work programme by EASC


Government, private sector or An individual
Key steps in harmonization of East African Standards by TCs

1. **Approved work item**
   - Yes
   - Does ARSO/ISO/IEC/CODEX Standards Exist
     - Yes
     - Circulate as draft EAS
     - No
     - Do National Standards Exist?
       - Yes
       - Study and recommend for adoption as EAS
       - No
       - Study and produce draft for harmonization
2. If National Standards Exist:
   - Yes
   - Study and produce draft
   - No
   - Discuss & recommend for adoption as EAS

(Flowchart representation of the above steps)
Role of Partner States NSBs in harmonization of standards

• Adopt within a period of six months without deviation from the approved text the East African standard as a national standard.
• Provide standards and standards related information to the public and the private sector.
• Publish harmonized EAC standards;
• Promote and facilitate the use of standards as a basis for the development of technical regulations
STATUS ON EAC STANDARDS HARMONIZATION

• As of April 2018 and EAC standards catalogue 1526 standards harmonized;

❖ A 3 years standards harmonization program is in place;

❖ A priority annual programme 2018 – 2019 approved by the EASC in place (see the attached);

❖ The annual program implementation coordinated by the SQMT Office and the Standards Management Committee (SMC);
Eighty Technical Committees (TCs) designated to develop and harmonize standards in specific areas / aspects (see attached);

Countries volunteer to manage specific TC Secretariats as specified in the procedures.
Challenges

- Low participation of the private sector in the process at all levels leading to spontaneous review of the adopted standards;
- Low publicity and awareness of the programme for harmonization of standards within EAC;
- Low publicity and awareness of the harmonized standards;
- Emergency counterfeits.
- Limited capacity at NSBs
THANK YOU