

AFSEC CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE BUSINESS OPERATION PLAN

Contents

1.0 Introduction	1
2.0 AFSEC objectives	2
3.0 AFSEC strategic goals.....	3
4.0 Conformity Assessment committee (ACAC) operation plan	5
5.0 Implementation Timeline (2025-2030).....	7
6.0 Monitoring and Evaluation	7
7.0 Key performance indicators	9

PREAMBLE

The ACAC positions itself as a strategic player in the establishment of a reliable continental framework for the testing, inspection, certification and accreditation in the electrotechnical field in relation to products, services and systems. The implementation framework of the above processes should recognise the ACAC rules and procedures.

The African member states are to implement the Rules and Procedures recognizing their applicability at the **AFSEC level** within the Pan-African quality infrastructure framework under the African Union institutional arrangements. At the national level, the focal bodies are the **National Quality Institutions** under diverse **Country Governance Structures**, responsible for **Harmonized Africa Standards in Conformity Assessment**, involving the **National Electrotechnical Committees (NEC)**. **Here the NEC is the vehicle for developing a close** working relationship with the national bodies responsible for standards development, conformity assessment, metrology and regulation..

Hence the implementation framework together with the **ACAC Rules and Procedures** should result in the **Africawide delivery** of **Affective (people & property focus)** and **Effective (processes & systems focus)** and **Efficient (products & services focus) utilization** of the **ACAC Guides** by regional and country representative members. The foregoing necessitates the need for a practical business plan for the ACAC.

1.0 Introduction

The African Electrotechnical Standardization Commission (AFSEC) established the Conformity Assessment Committee (ACAC) in 2014 to guide and promote conformity assessment activities for electrotechnical products and services across Africa. ACAC works in liaison with international bodies and partner organizations to harmonize conformity assessment systems on the continent, supporting regional integration and reducing technical barriers to trade among African countries. By fostering collaboration with National Electrotechnical Committees (NECs), regulators, and continental organizations, ACAC aims to ensure that

products and services comply with adopted standards, thereby enhancing safety, quality, and consumer confidence.

The scope of AFSEC's conformity assessment activities covers renewable energy systems (such as wind, solar PV, and marine energy), electrotechnical and electronic equipment, explosive atmospheres, and electronic components. The committee's efforts align with the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) objectives, facilitating trade in electrical and electronic equipment by providing a harmonized framework for conformity assessment. This framework assists member countries in developing regulatory practices, verifying certification authenticity, identifying substandard equipment, and optimally utilizing international conformity assessment programs such as those from the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC).

ACAC VISION

To create an integrated pan-African conformity assessment system in the electrotechnical field aligned with the AGENDA 2063 framework.

ACAC MISSION

- To promote the harmonization and recognition of sustainable conformity assessment systems in the electrotechnical sector in Africa.
- To support member states in implementing sustainable and effective conformity assessment structures.
- To create the conditions for mutual recognition of conformity assessment results in the African electrotechnical sector.

ACAC VALUES

- Team work
- Integrity
- Inclusivity
- Professionalism

2.0 ACAC objectives

1. Promote Electrotechnical Conformity Assessment Activities Across Africa

- Facilitate the development, adoption, and harmonization of electrotechnical conformity assessment systems.
- Support regional integration and intra-African trade through mutual recognition of conformity assessment results .

- **Support NEC in developing a close** working relationship with the national bodies responsible for conformity assessment.

2. Enhanced Continental collaboration in conformity assessment.

- Deepen cooperation among National Electrotechnical Committees (NECs), regulators, law enforcement agencies and other relevant organizations.
- Align conformity assessment activities with the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) objectives and AUC frameworks.

3. Strengthen Consumer Trust

- Build public confidence in locally traded electrotechnical products and services.
- Ensure public confidence in electrotechnical products and services through conformity assessment activities and awareness to meet continental consumer safety and market development needs.

4. Foster Innovation and Sustainability

- Position ACAC as a partner in emerging technologies and market trends through promoting Research and development
- ACAC to promote conformity assessment throughout the stratified education systems
- Support Africa's transition to a knowledge-based, sustainable economy through innovative conformity assessment approaches.
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- Expand capacity-building initiatives and strengthen collaboration with technical committees.

These objectives guide the ACAC's strategic direction, ensuring its activities contribute to sustainable growth, regional integration, innovation, and consumer confidence in Africa's electrotechnical sector.

3.0 ACAC strategic goals

1. Sustainability

- Ensure the long-term viability of conformity assessment activities.
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- Build robust financial and human resource capacity.
- Develop income-generating programmes and expand capacity-building initiatives.

2. Innovation and Competitiveness

- Position ACAC as a leader in emerging technologies and market trends.
- Support Africa's transition to a knowledge-based, sustainable economy.
- Establish working groups for renewable energy, artificial intelligence, energy efficiency, and 4IR technologies.
- Encourage adoption of international best practices in conformity assessment.

3. Regionalization

- Deepen regional cooperation and harmonization of conformity assessment activities.
- Support the objectives of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).
- Engage National Electrotechnical Committees (NECs), regulators, and continental organizations.
- Enhance collaboration with ARSO CACO and other continental bodies.

4. Africa Society Consumer Confidence

- Build public trust in locally produced electrotechnical products and services.
- Ensure conformity assessment activities address continental consumer protection and market needs.
- Develop consumer awareness campaigns and participate in "Made in Africa" initiatives.

These strategic goals are designed to foster sustainable growth, drive innovation, enhance regional integration, and strengthen consumer confidence in Africa's electrotechnical sector.

4.0 Conformity Assessment committee (ACAC) operation plan

The ACAC operation plan aligns with AFSEC's strategic goals, providing targeted actions for each pillar.

Strategic Goal 1: Sustainability

Objectives:

- Ensure long-term viability of conformity assessment activities.
- Build robust financial and human resource capacity.

Proposed operation plan:

- Develop a membership based framework.
- Support conformity assessment through accreditation or similar suitable qualification requirements, resources and fit for purpose institutional arrangements
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- Expand capacity-building initiatives:
 - Online learning modules
 - Webinars
 - Regional in-person and hybrid trainings
- Strengthen collaboration with Technical Committees (TCs) to leverage expertise and resources.
- Strengthen collaboration with IEC Conformity assessment systems to leverage expertise and resources
- Liaise with regulatory bodies.

Strategic Goal 2 : Innovation And Competitiveness

Objectives:

- Position ACAC as a leader in emerging technologies and market trends.
- Support Africa's transition to a knowledge-based, sustainable economy.

Proposed Actions:

- i. Establish working groups to monitor and anticipate market trends in:
 - Renewable energy
 - Artificial intelligence (AI)
 - Energy efficiency (in partnership with CREEEs)
 - Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) technologies

- Circular economy and e-waste management
- ii. Launch pilot projects and regional forums on innovative conformity assessment techniques.
- iii. Encourage adoption of international best practices in conformity assessment.

Strategic Goal 3: Regionalization

Objectives:

- Deepen regional cooperation and harmonization of conformity assessment activities.
- Support the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) objectives.

Proposed Actions:

- i. Promote CA activities by engaging National Electrotechnical Committees (NECs), regulators, and relevant organizations.
- ii. Develop targeted programmes to attract and involve continental regulators (e.g., Association of Energy Regulators).
- iii. Enhance collaboration with ARSO CACO and other continental bodies.
- iv. Champion sustainable trade in electrotechnical products through active participation in AfCFTA initiatives.

Strategic Goal 4: Africa Society Consumer Confidence

Objectives:

- Build public trust in locally produced electrotechnical products and services.
- Ensure conformity assessment activities address continental needs.

Proposed Actions:

- i. Identify priority areas where conformity assessment is critical for consumer protection and market development.
- ii. Participate in AfCFTA programmes that promote trade in African-made electrotechnical goods and services (e.g., “Made in Africa” initiatives).

- iii. Develop consumer awareness campaigns on the benefits of conformity assessment and standardization.

5.0 Implementation Timeline (2025-2030)

Year	Key activities
2025-2026	Launch income-generating programmes, expand online learning, establish innovation working groups
2026-2027	Initiate pilot projects in renewable energy and AI, deepen collaboration with TCs and NECs
2027-2028	Roll out regional trainings, enhance engagement with regulators, participate in AfCFTA initiatives
2028-2029	Evaluate and scale successful programmes, advance consumer awareness campaigns
2029-2030	Consolidate gains, review and update strategic focus, publish impact assessment report

6.0 Monitoring and Evaluation

Annual reviews are a critical component of AFSEC's conformity assessment framework to ensure continuous improvement, alignment with continental priorities, and effective implementation of conformity assessment activities. The review process includes the following key elements:

i. Assessment of Adoption and Implementation

Evaluate the degree to which electrotechnical standards and conformity assessment procedures have been adopted and implemented by individual AFSEC member countries, identifying gaps and areas for improvement.

ii. Audit and Monitoring

Conduct audits in phases including planning, execution, and review, with involvement from Technical Committees (TCs) to approve audit plans and ensure conformity with AFSEC guidelines.

iii. Performance Evaluation

Review the effectiveness of income-generating programmes, capacity-building activities, and stakeholder engagement to measure progress against strategic goals.

iv. Compliance with International Standards

Align conformity assessment scheme evaluations with international best practices and accreditation requirements, such as those outlined by the European Accreditation (EA) procedures and the International Accreditation Forum (IAF).

v. Reporting and Recommendations

Prepare an annual report summarizing findings, challenges, and recommendations for the following year's activities. This report supports transparency and informs decision-making by AFSEC governance bodies.

vi. Continuous Improvement

Use review outcomes to update conformity assessment guides, frameworks, and operational plans to address emerging trends, technological developments, and regulatory changes..

Stakeholder feedback mechanisms to ensure alignment with continental needs. The approach to stakeholder feedback includes the following key aspects:

i. Inclusive Engagement Platforms

AFSEC provides platforms that enable stakeholders—including National Electrotechnical Committees (NECs), regulators, industry players, and consumers—to actively participate in standards development and conformity assessment activities.

ii. Stakeholder Feedback

Collect input from National Electrotechnical Committees (NECs), regulators, industry players, and consumers to ensure conformity assessment activities remain relevant and responsive to market needs.

iii. Consultation and Collaboration

Stakeholders are engaged through consultations, forums, surveys, and workshops to gather diverse perspectives and inputs that inform conformity assessment strategies and programmes.

iv. Transparency and Responsiveness

Feedback mechanisms are designed to be open and transparent, ensuring that stakeholders receive timely responses and that their concerns and suggestions are addressed effectively.

v. Documentation and Analysis

Feedback is systematically documented and analyzed to identify trends, challenges, and opportunities for improvement. This process supports evidence-based decision-making and continuous improvement of conformity assessment processes.

Vi. Targeted Communication

Communication strategies are tailored to meet the needs and expectations of different stakeholder groups, including vulnerable populations, ensuring broad and meaningful participation.

vi. Verification and Quality Control

Stakeholder input helps identify critical areas such as substandard electrotechnical equipment, verification of certification authenticity, and optimal use of international conformity assessment programmes.

vii. Alignment with Continental Frameworks

AFSEC's stakeholder engagement aligns with broader African Union and AfCFTA policies that emphasize inclusivity, accountability, and co-creation in decision-making processes.

viii. Continuous Feedback Cycle

Feedback is collected throughout the lifecycle of conformity assessment initiatives – from planning to implementation and evaluation – ensuring ongoing refinement and relevance

Performance indicators for each strategic goal to track progress and impact. These indicators help to assess progress in standardization, market surveillance, capacity building, and regional integration .

7.0 Key performance indicators

- Number of countries adopting the AFSEC conformity assessment guidelines.
- Number of accredited or recognized laboratories under AFSEC.
- Number of mutual recognition agreements signed under AFSEC.
- Number of certified electrotechnical products circulating freely within the AfCFTA.
- Country Specific National IEC Committee [NEC] annual reports on CA activities including feedback on practical use of AFSEC CA Guides and Systems.