

REGIONAL STANDARDS

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Summary

The growing international trade of food, and the need for the elimination of barriers to trade, has stimulated and stimulates efforts in the field of cooperation at the international level in food standardization. Today this cooperation is realized both at regional and international levels. The first regional standardizing organizations were established in the 1960s. These organizations are the intermediate bodies between national and international ones. Among them, governmental and nongovernmental organizations can be found, depending on the economic level and the social, ethnic, and traditional requirements of the given region. Brief information will be given about seven principal regional standardization organizations (ACCSQ, AIDMO, ARSO, CEN, COPANT, EASC, and PASC), which represent all main regions of the world. In addition, a list is given of regional, scientific, and other organizations interested in agricultural and food standardization.

1. Introduction

In parallel with the development of national food legislation and the system of food law and regulations at the national level (including national standardization activity and establishment of national standards bodies in developed countries in the 1920s), there arose the need for international cooperation in this field. As it is treated in the chapter dealing with the history of standardization (see *History of Food Quality Standards*), interest in international cooperation in the field of food quality assurance started in the nineteenth century. It was in Vienna in 1887 that the congress on public health appointed members to an international commission, who were also responsible for the *International Review on Adulteration and Analysis of Foodstuffs*, which was published 1887–1916.

Nevertheless, the practical steps in this field started only after World War II. It became evident that variations in the procedures of national food control systems involving monitoring and sampling, detection, and analytical methods, application of standards, and food safety requirements can give rise to trade restrictions. Postwar years produced groups of nations which, to facilitate the smooth flow of perishable and other foodstuffs between nations, saw the need for the removal of some national obstacles. These nations were found in Europe, Africa, and Latin America. They were, however, principally concerned with marketing conditions.

The increasing interest in common markets and improved international food trade began the harmonization of standards on both regional and international levels. The problems of international standardization will be treated in a separate chapter (see *International System of Food Quality Standards*). Here, regional standardization will be discussed.

The first regional standardization organizations, the European Committee for Standardization (CEN), and the Pan American Standards Commission (COPANT), were established in the beginning of the 1960s, and the Euro-Asian Council for Standardization, Metrology, and Certification (EASC) in 1992.

These are intermediate bodies, operating between national and international standardizing organizations. Their common purposes are to promote:

- the standardization activity of the given region
- the harmonization of their standards
- their contact with international standardization bodies

Most of these organizations, similar to national and international bodies, have wider ranges of activity than standardization. They deal with many other matters that can directly or indirectly promote trade and commerce, along with the progress and prosperity of the given region. Among them, governmental and nongovernmental bodies can be found, depending on economic levels, and on the social, ethnic, and traditional requirements of the given region.

This chapter briefly gives information about the principal regional standardization organizations.

2. Main Regional Standardization Organizations and Their Activity

2.1. ASEAN Consultative Committee for Standards and Quality (ACCSQ)

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was established in 1967 in Bangkok by the five original member countries, namely Indonesia, Malaysia, The Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand. Brunei Darussalam joined in 1984, Vietnam in 1995, Laos and Myanmar in 1997, and Cambodia in 1999.

The aims and objectives of the Association are:

- To accelerate the economic growth, social progress, and cultural development in the region, through joint endeavors in the spirit of equality and partnership, to strengthen the foundation for a prosperous and peaceful community of Southern Asian nations, and
- To promote regional peace and stability through abiding respect for justice and the rule of law in the relationships among countries in the region, and adherence to the principles of the UN Charter.

In 1992 the ASEAN Heads of Governments declared that an ASEAN Free Trade Area should be established in the region, and in 1995 they agreed to accelerate its implementation to the year 2003.

In 1995 the ASEAN Heads of Governments adopted, in the Bangkok Summit Declaration, the Agenda for Greater Economic Integration, which includes among other things, the introduction of greater transparency in standards and conformance, the alignment of national standards with international standards, and the undertaking of a project to facilitate mutual recognition arrangements (MRAs), and greater intraregional trade.

In 1996 the governments of ASEAN nations, Australia, and New Zealand signed a Memorandum of Understanding Concerning Cooperation on Standards and Conformance.

The principal objectives of this memorandum are:

- to encourage collaboration in programs that may, from time to time, be arranged between the bodies that support the development of standards and conformance systems that facilitate trade
- to encourage and promote cooperation on standards and conformance including:
 - measurement standards
 - legal metrology
 - documentary standards development
 - accreditation of testing and inspection bodies
 - accreditation of certification bodies
 - other areas mutually determined by the Parties

In 1998 the ASEAN Heads of Governments undersigned a Framework Agreement on Mutual Recognition Arrangements. In this:

- It was recognized that MRAs could contribute positively in encouraging greater international harmonization of standards and regulations, and that any such MRAs

would require confidence in the other Member States' capacity and competence to test or assess conformity to a Member State's own requirements.

- It was decided to formulate a framework agreement to deepen and broaden cooperation on Standards and Conformance in ASEAN.
- The ASEAN Consultative Committee for Standards and Quality (ACCSQ) and the ASEAN Secretariat shall provide the support for coordinating and reviewing the implementation of the Framework Agreement and the Sectorial MRAs.
- The ACCSQ shall be the forum for linkages with industries with respect to the implementation of this Framework Agreement and the Sectorial MRAs.

The main goals of the work program of ACCSQ between 1995 and 2003 are as follows:

- Technical information affecting trade to be made accessible to ASEAN member countries and their trading partners
- Harmonization of Standards
- Mutual acceptance of QS Audits
- Mutual confidence in conformity assessment system
- Facilitation of development of technical infrastructure to enable participation on MRA decisions
- Mutual recognition arrangements
- Accreditation in ASEAN
- International/Regional recognition of member countries' accreditation systems
- Mutual understanding of member countries' regulations
- Strengthen promotion and practice of quality and productivity
- Mutual cooperation with other regional economic groups and with international institutions
- Support from high-level ASEAN authorities and from other ASEAN institutions

2.2. Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization (AIDMO)

The Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization (AIDMO) was established in 1989, in the framework of the restructuring of inter-Arab cooperative organizations. It originated from a fusion of the following three specialized Arab organizations:

- Arab Organization for Mineral Resources
- Arab Organization for Standardization
- Arab Organization for Industrial Development

Created under the sponsorship of the League of Arab States, AIDMO is an Arab governmental organization endowed with a moral mission and administrative and financial autonomy. The Central Secretariat of AIDMO is located in Rabat (Morocco).

All Arab states are members of AIDMO. At present it has the following 21 members: Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

AIDMO is working to promote standardization development in member countries. To achieve this aim it is charged with taking action to prepare quality standards required for

the improvement of Arab industrial products and market competitiveness, and also to prepare joint Arab standardization of each product and service that will be freely exchanged between Arab countries.

Within the administrative organization of AIDMO there is a Standardization and Metrology Center, which is divided into three branches:

- Metrology Section
- Standardization Section
- Quality Control Section

To create necessary coordination in the activities of standardization, AIDMO set up a consultative body with the title “High Committee of Standardization,” composed of the directors of standardization institutes in the member countries. Its role is:

- To assist AIDMO in elaborating and executing its programs in the field of standardization,
- To assure coordination between member states in this field, and
- To revise the list of standards to be submitted for approval by the member countries and the Ministerial Council.

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Biographical Sketches

Radomir Lásztity, D.Sc., Professor of the Department of Biochemistry and Food Technology at Budapest University of Technology and Economics, was born in 1929 in Deszk, Hungary, and completed his studies in 1951 at the Faculty of Chemical Engineering of Technical University of Budapest. Dr.

Lásztity received his M.Sc. degree in Chemical Engineering in 1951 and his D.Sc. degree in Chemical Science in 1968.

Dr. Lásztity is honorary president of ICC (International Association for Cereal Science and Technology). He was chairman of the Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling of the FAO/WHO Food Standard Program in the period 1975–1988. Dr. Lásztity is a member of the Food Division of the Federation of European Chemical Societies and a member of the editorial boards of several international scientific journals. He was Vice Rector of the Technical University from 1970 to 1976.

Among other awards, he has received the Bailey and Schweitzer Medal of the ICC, the State Prize of the Hungarian Republic, and the Golden Medal of the Czech Academy of Sciences.

Dr. Lásztity's main research activities are chemistry and biochemistry of food proteins, food analysis, and food control. The results of his research work were published in more than 700 papers in foreign and Hungarian journals. He is the author of more than 20 books and textbooks (among them: *Chemistry of Cereal Proteins*, First and Second Editions in 1984 and 1996, respectively; *Amino Acid Composition and Biological Value of Cereal Proteins*, 1985; *Use of Yeast Biomass in Food Production*, 1991; *Gluten Proteins*, 1987; *Cereal Chemistry*, 1999).

Dr. Márta Petró-Turza, chemical engineer, graduated in 1996 and received her doctor's degree in 1975 at Budapest Technical University. Between 1966 and 1990 she worked as a researcher for the Central Food Research Institute, Budapest. In the last 13 years of this period she was head of the Analytical Chemistry Division of the Institute. Her main research areas were flavor research and the detection of adulteration of fruit juices. Between 1990 and 1995 she was the director of quality assurance of the Canning Research Institute, Budapest.

Since 1996 she has worked for the Hungarian Standards Institution as secretary of ISO Technical Committee TC 34 "Food Products," and its Subcommittee SC 4, "Cereals and Pulses."

Tamás Földesi was born in 1920 in Budapest, Hungary. An electrical engineer, he graduated in 1942 from Technical University in Budapest. He worked at a design office, then in foreign trade, and since 1957 in the Hungarian Office for Standardization (transformed in 1995 into the Hungarian Standards Institution, MSZT). He retired in 1983 but continued to work at the same office as a senior advisor. In the meantime, from 1974 to 1980, he worked in the ISO Central Secretariat in Geneva, dealing with standardization and certification issues. Back in Budapest, from 1983 to 1991 he was responsible for the secretariat of the Hungarian National Committee for EOQ.

During the past five years his activities were focused on training in the field of standardization, quality, certification, and accreditation. He is a certified quality system manager, author of numerous articles and some textbooks on standardization, quality, and certification. He was the prize-winner of the IIASA-Shiba award in 1998. IIASA is the International Institute for Applied Systems.