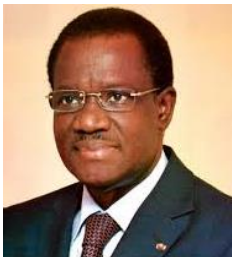


A quarterly newsletter published by The West Africa Quality System Programme — A project funded by the European Union

## The West Africa Quality System Programme (WAQSP) in brief



**Mr. Kadré Désiré OUEDRAOGO,**  
President, ECOWAS Commission

*“The WAQSP will contribute towards the implementation of the ECOWAS Common External Tariff (CET) and the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA)”.*

**President, ECOWAS Commission, Ambassador Kadré Désiré OUEDRAOGO, Launch of WEST AFRICA QUALITY SYSTEM PROGRAMME, Abuja, 26 Nov 2014**

The objective of WAQSP is to support the implementation of ECOWAS Quality policy – ECOQUAL, by providing technical assistance in standardization, accreditation, conformity assessment and quality promotion to public institutions and the private sector, thereby increasing competitiveness and improving protection of the consumers.

The WAQSP is the 3rd phase of a project that began in 2001 funded by the EU and implemented by UNIDO. After the success of the first two phases between 2001 and 2012, the European Union continues to support the development of quality infrastructures in the region. A further €12m. has been allocated for the West Africa Quality System Programme (WAQSP), with UNIDO as the implementing partner of the ECOWAS Commission once again.

## Editorial Note



**Mr Kalilou TRAORE, ECOWAS Commissioner of Industry and Private sector Promotion**

Dear readers,

I am very pleased to address you through this first issue of the newsletter of the West Africa Quality System Programme (WAQSP). While the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the European Union is at an advanced stage of endorsement by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and its different Member States as well as Mauritania, the Common External Tariff of our region has been effective since January 1st, 2015.

Many other agreements between West Africa and the rest of our continent and between West Africa and other regions around the world are being planned. It goes without saying that to take advantage of these trade opportunities,

the main challenge is the ability of our region to offer quality products that are compliant with international standards. This quality of products requirement will be one of the main levers for increasing the competitiveness of our companies in national, regional, and international markets.

In this context, the substantial efforts made over more than fifteen years in the area of quality infrastructure (QI), in association with our technical and financial partners, represent an important part of our strategy to tackle the following issue:

How can we build a win-win trade relationship **in the absence of:**

- Standards and technical regulations defining the rules of the game and providing a framework for trade in our region;
- Efficient conformity assessment bodies (laboratories, certification and inspection bodies), able to attest conformity of goods/services destined for our markets and of those destined for foreign markets (export);
- Credible accreditation systems at the international level which can recognize the expertise of our conformity assessment scheme at our borders as well as in our markets?

The Regional Quality Policy of ECOWAS (ECOQUAL), the ECOWAS Standards Harmonization Model (ECOSHAM), and the Regulation of ECOWAS regarding the Regional Quality Infrastructure Scheme, prove the strong will of our Heads of State to provide the region with an institutional framework, essential to fill quickly the gaps listed above.

Of course, tangible results have been achieved within the scope of the two previous phases of the West Africa Quality Programme, but there is still a long way to go. The ECOWAS is firmly resolved to overcome it fast, supported for that purpose by the European Union (EU).

I would like to use this editorial to repeat my gratitude to the EU which, with a substantial budget of €12m, is providing additional support for the construction of

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our regional quality infrastructure within the framework of the West Africa Quality System Programme (WAQSP).

The WAQSP, planned for a period of four years, is being implemented by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), whose expertise in the field of capacity building of quality infrastructure is widely recognized.

In order to implement this ambitious project, UNIDO has mobilised a significant

team, in Vienna as well as in Abuja and in each Member State. Governance bodies have also been set up in the form of an institutional steering committee, a regional steering committee, and national monitoring committees in each country covered by the programme.

At the end of these four crucial years, we expect a regional quality infrastructure to be operational, efficient and internationally recognised, and functioning as source of wealth for our populations.

In order to share information about these coming developments at national and regional levels, important communication efforts will be made during the WAQSP.

This communication will make use of tools such as an interactive website and this newsletter, which is now yours.

It only remains to me to wish good luck and much success to the WAQSP.

### WAQS Programme Launch

The programme was officially launched on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2014 in Abuja, Nigeria, in the presence of the Presidents of the ECOWAS and UEMOA Commissions, the Ambassador of the European Union to Nigeria, certain Ambassadors of ECOWAS Member States to Nigeria, the UNIDO Representative to Nigeria as well as the Programme Manager from the UNIDO Headquarters in Vienna.

It was followed by the appointment of the different National Focal Points (NFPs) by respective Ministries and the completion of the recruitment of National Technical Coordinators (NTCs) in each of the ECOWAS States and Mauritania.

The WAQSP is one component of a larger EU funded programme on competitiveness and private sector support for the region.



Personalities at the Launch:  
 Presidents of the ECOWAS & UEMOA Commissions, UNIDO Representative to Nigeria, EU Head of Cooperation, GIZ Director for Africa

### First Regional Steering Committee held in Lomé

The first Regional Steering Committee meeting took place from 24<sup>th</sup> March to 25<sup>th</sup> March 2015 in Lomé, Togo. Representatives of the ECOWAS States and Mauritania took part in it, as well as EU delegations in Nigeria and Togo, representatives of the ECOWAS and UEMOA Commissions, the UNIDO WAQS team based in Abuja, the UNIDO Representative office in Togo, the NFPs and NTCs, the Programme Manager from UNIDO Headquarters in Vienna, the Federation of West Africa Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FEWACCI), Helen Keller International (HKI), and the Federation of West Africa Employer's Associations (FWAEA).

It followed the second Institutional Steering Committee meeting between the EU, ECOWAS and UNIDO, which was held on 23<sup>rd</sup> March. A three day Internal Technical Workshop was also organized by UNIDO, enabling the NTCs to acquire better knowledge on how to support the implementation of the programme in their respective countries.



Regional Steering Committee Meeting Participants



Regional Steering Committee High Table from left to right:  
 UNIDO Project Manager, Bernard BAU, ECOWAS Commissioner Kalilou TRAORE, Minister Semodji DGOSSOU, Secretary of State Komi Assogba OHOUKOH, His Excellency EU Ambassador to Togo

## ECOWAS Commissioner Kalilou TRAORE encourages the development of laboratories accredited in the region

The Commissioner Kalilou TRAORE visited the National Institute of Hygiene (NIH) during his visit to Lome, Togo for the Institutional Steering Committee Meeting. The biomedical and food microbiology laboratories were accredited by the COFRAC (French accrediting body) respectively in 2012 and 2013 with the support of the West Africa Quality Programme. He was accompanied by the Director of Industry and the WAQSP Team which included the Chief Technical Adviser (CTA) and the Expert in Accreditation and Conformity Assessment. The Director General of the laboratory Dr Abiba BANLA KERE welcomed them.



Commissioner Kalilou Traore discussing with the lab technicians at the NIH

Dr BANLA KERE highlighted the successes of having two accredited laboratories. Notably the increased confidence towards the Institute and an increase in the number of tests carried out in the lab. She also highlighted the challenges faced as a result of accreditation. For example, accreditation fees are very high whereas fees for laboratory analysis are very low as the

Institute renders public services. They also do not have sufficient funds to extend accreditation to other services and maintain the equipment.

The Commissioner recalled that the WAQSP aims to give durable solutions in the region for all the quality infrastructure components, particularly for the development of laboratories accredited in the region.

## Synergies between NQIP and WAQSP

The Technical Coordination Units of the WAQSP and NQIP (National Quality Infrastructure Project for Nigeria) organized a session on 17th April 2015 in Abuja in the presence of the NQIP Programme Manager from the UNIDO HQ in Vienna. The two programmes converge on several points. They carry out activities in similar technical domains, are funded by the European Union, implemented by UNIDO, have common beneficiaries in Nigeria, particularly regarding the support to laboratories and set up of a system of accreditation. The situation in West Africa and Nigeria and areas of cooperation were discussed:

### At regional level

- existence of a number of evaluators with francophone, lusophone and anglophone technical experts trained during the previous quality programmes;

- existence of experts for the evaluation of accreditation files;
- thirty laboratories accredited by recognised international organizations;
- operating of a system of comparing laboratories in food microbiology and food chemicals on the millet and cassava matrices;
- significant progress in the set-up of the SOAC (West African Accreditation System, covering the eight UEMOA Member States, notably the drafting of business plans and technical procedures as well as the type of applicable status (regional non-profit association with functional autonomy).
- important progress in the set-up of NINAS (Nigerian National Accreditation Service), particularly in the drafting of projects and business plans as well as technical procedures, including determining the type of legal status (a non-profit and autonomous structure).

In terms of convergence, both programmes have decided to work on the development of inter-comparison, on the use of qualified human resources present in the region, on the sharing of resources in the framework of spreading quality process in laboratories which are regionally or locally selected.

### In Nigeria

- an important number of laboratories but not much involved in an accreditation process;
- trainings organized in the domain of inter comparison for about hundred laboratory technicians;



**Download the project leaflet here:**

In English: [http://www.unido.org/fileadmin/media/documents/pdf/TCB/WAPQ\\_EN.pdf](http://www.unido.org/fileadmin/media/documents/pdf/TCB/WAPQ_EN.pdf)

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