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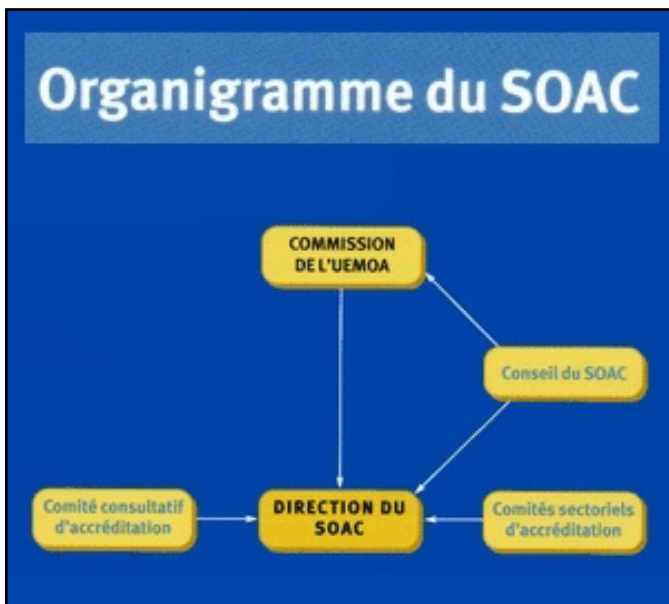
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UEMOA Special Quality Day in Ouagadougou on September 30 2005



enterprises in developing countries need competitive productive capacities, up to date information on international standards, and accredited laboratories

The UEMOA (Union Economique et Monétaire Ouest Africaine) Council of Ministers has adopted a decision for the operationalization of three UEMOA regional conformity assessment bodies: the West African Accreditation System (**SOAC – Système Ouest Africain d’Accréditation**); the Regional Secretariat for Metrology (SRM); and the Regional Committee for Quality Coordination (CRCQ). These three regional bodies are the first of their kind in the world. The initiation of these bodies and the establishment of the Standardization, Certification and Quality Promotion Secretariat (SCNCPQ), which will serve as a regional center for documentation, are some of the achievements of the [EU - UNIDO - UEMOA Trade Capacity Building Programme](#) that will be profiled at the Special Quality Day to be held at Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso on 30 September, 2005. The operationalization of these bodies is an important step in strengthening UEMOA export capacities in the fish and cotton sectors.

UEMOA, also known as the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), comprising eight member countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo, is a constituency of 70 million people covering an area of 3.5 million sq. km.

The Ouagadougou Special Quality Day will highlight both regional and national achievements of the EU - UNIDO - UEMOA Programme.

One significant achievement the programme in the field of trade capacity building at the national level was the lifting of the ban on shrimp exports from Benin to the European Union ([see UNIDOScope 24 - 30 April 2005](#)) in February 2005. The lifting of the export ban on Togo is expected in the next weeks or month. Although fish processing for export was more advanced in Togo than Benin, the lifting of the ban in Togo has taken longer as in addition to the work carried out by the UNIDO programme, there was a need for rehabilitation of physical infrastructure which is being undertaken by a separate programme.



a cotton standard for Western and Southern Africa developed under the programme enables producers in the eight UEMOA countries to market five different classes of cotton (with four grades in each class)

Another of the achievements to be profiled at Ouagadougou is the development, in cooperation with the Societe De Services Pour L'Europe Et Pour L'Afrique (SOSEA) and the African Cotton Association, for the first time, of a cotton standard for western and central Africa. This enables cotton producers in the eight UEMOA countries to market five different classes of cotton graded according to colour, length and presence of foreign material (each class has four grades), in contrast to one class previously. Two cotton classifiers from each country have been trained to train colleagues in their country to apply the standard. The African Cotton Association and the [French Cotton Association AFCOT](#) (Association Française Cotonnière) are publicising the standard.

In conjunction with the development of the cotton standard, by the end of 2005, UEMOA capacities in the field of classification and grading of cotton fibre will have been enhanced with the establishment of state of the art, [High Volume Instrument \(HVI\) technology](#) in four UEMOA countries. The HVI technology will be available to other countries for training purposes (all cotton tendered for delivery on futures contracts on the New York Cotton Exchange has to be classified using the HVI technology).

The end of 2005 will also see the development and promotion of a special cotton label for UEMOA cotton in conjunction with other activities to enhance the market image and promotion of UEMOA cotton products in cooperation with the African Cotton Association.

The regional accreditation secretariat *Système Ouest Africain d'Accréditation* (SOAC) is being set up with the technical support of the French Accreditation Body COFRAC. Joint COFRAC / SOAC evaluations will be carried out until SOAC is recognized by ILAC and IAF, the International Accreditation Forum (certificates issued by bodies accredited by members of the IAF Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA) are relied upon all over the world because the MLA assures customers that the certificate is credible).

The programme is strengthening the capacities of some 50 laboratories. Twenty four of these labs are being assisted to apply for accreditation. It is expected that around 14 of the labs will be in a position to apply for accreditation by the end of 2005. Test methods for food products have been harmonized in the 50 laboratories (among them: 19 for physico-chemical; 12 for microbiological; 10 for sensory analysis). A regional pool of 16 technical laboratory assessors (two from each UEMOA country) has been trained to assess to ISO 17025 (the equivalent of ISO 9000 for calibration and testing laboratories). Laboratories assisted by the programme will conduct regulatory inspection of plant and animal health, and pesticide residues.

Six standards bodies have been assisted so far in the Programme. This includes the formulation, adoption and dissemination of around 500 harmonized national standards for specific products in the food and fish and cotton sectors with high export potential in Burkina Faso; Benin; Mali; Guinea Bissau and Togo. A complete collection of international standards (in French) is now available from the standards bodies in each of the UEMOA countries. Over 1,000 managers and entrepreneurs have consulted the standards bodies for information on national and / or international standards.

six publications will be presented at the UEMOA Special Quality Day in Ouagadougou



The achievements of the UEMOA - EU - UNIDO Programme will be presented in Geneva on 27 October 2005

Regional databases, one each on laboratories, standards, and quality have been set up and are available at the national level in all UEMOA Member States. They have been available on the UEMOA Commission server since December 2003. Some 250 UEMOA laboratories have been networked. The databases contain information on the location and capacities of these laboratories, on some 360 quality promotion and upgrading initiatives, and on international regulations in the areas of laboratories, standards and quality. The databases also have information on 70 regional and national consumer protection organizations.

The Special Quality Day in Ouagadougou will also see the presentation of the following six publications that have been produced by the programme: *Le Système Ouest Africain d'Accréditation* (The West African Accreditation System); *Accreditation, Certification, Normalisation, Métrieologie et Promotion de la Qualité: contribution à l'étude de droit lié à la qualité* (Accreditation, Certification, Standardization, Metrology and Quality Promotion: contribution to the legal framework related to the Quality); *Promouvoir l'accès des produits agro-alimentaires de l'UEMOA au marché de l'Union Européenne* (Facilitating access of UEMOA Food products to the European Union Market); *Le consommateur, destinataire final de tout dispositif de la qualité* (The Consumer, final beneficiary of the Quality System); *Lignes directrices*

pour la modernisation de l'inspection sanitaire alimentaire dans l'espace UEMOA, (Guidelines for upgrading of food sanitary inspection in UEMOA); *Strategie de promotion industrielle et commerciale des productions animales dans les pays de l'UEMOA* (Strategy for industrial and commercial promotion of animal production in UEMOA countries).

So far 10 enterprises have been ISO 9001 certified. This activity commenced early in 2003. It is expected that by the end of 2005, this number will reach 20. In all, the programme is enhancing the productive capacities of some 68 enterprises with the introduction of Quality systems and assistance with ISO 9001 certification. Among the participating firms, 18 are from the food sector, 4 from fish and 10 are cotton enterprises. A regional pool of 40 qualified ISO 9001 auditors has been established.

National Quality Awards have been instituted in all UEMOA countries and with the presentation in Togo on 8 September 2005, the Award will have been presented for the first time in seven of the eight UEMOA countries (Senegal has had its National Quality Award Programme for a longer time). The Quality Award Programme has trained 32 journalists in consumerism and product quality.

The winners of the National Quality Awards are competing for the UEMOA Regional Quality Award, to be presented for the first time at the UEMOA Special Quality Day in Ouagadougou on 30 September 2005.

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coming events

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