

# UPGRADING OF QUALITY INFRASTRUCTURE IN AFRICA

**Project name:**  
Upgrading of Quality  
Infrastructure in Africa

**Commissioned by:**  
Federal Ministry for  
Economic Cooperation  
and Development (BMZ)

**Lead executing agency:**  
Physikalisch-Technische  
Bundesanstalt (PTB)

**Budget:**  
EUR 7.9 Million

**Duration:**  
09/2019 - 08/2023

## The beginning

Since 1998, PTB Germany has been supporting the establishment and development of Quality Infrastructure (QI) at the Pan-African level. This commitment was based on the findings of numerous bilateral and regional projects in Africa. An essential finding was to bring together the fragmented institutional structures and approaches into one strategy. **QUALITY FOR AFRICA** was an initiative that not only raised awareness of the indispensability of a functioning quality infrastructure, but also represented essential prerequisites for the successful implementation of the agendas of the African Union. PTB has proven to be a reliable development partner in its cooperation with Africa's Regional Economic Communities (RECs), the African Union Development Agency – AUDA (formerly the New Partnership for Africa's Development- NEPAD), as well as with the African Union Commission (AUC) over many years. PTB's neutral and professional advice is always oriented towards international best practices and agreements.

5

Pan-African  
Quality Infrastructure  
Institutions  
established

1489

harmonized  
African Standards  
published

6

African Accreditation  
Cooperation  
arrangement members

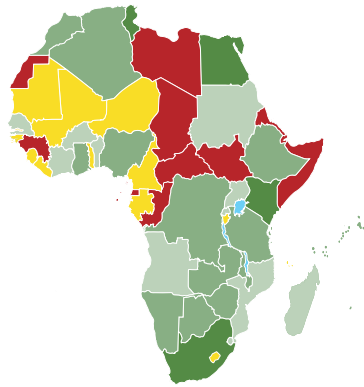
619

internationally  
reviewed and approved  
calibration capabilities  
in Africa

## The successes

In the course of the implementation of **QUALITY FOR AFRICA**, it became increasingly obvious that national quality infrastructure in Africa is not only rudimentary in many countries but Africa's representation in international professional organisations was also very limited. The African Organisation for Standardisation (ARSO), founded in 1977, could only partially meet the continent's needs as the sole representative in all areas of Quality Infrastructure. Therefore, processes were initiated to establish corresponding African professional organisations both in the field of scientific and legal metrology (AFRIMETS) as well as in the field of accreditation (AFRAC). Today, the institutional set-up mirrors that of all other continents in the world. With the foundation of Pan-African Quality Infrastructure (PAQI) in 2013 however, an exchange platform is now available that guarantees close cooperation between the various pillars of Quality Infrastructure. In this regard, Africa became a pioneer for other continents. Today, all PAQI institutions are internationally recognised and are involved in the international professional associations on an equal footing. In addition, PAQI provides the African Union Commission a competent contact partner for all questions related to "quality". Within the framework of the

## Map of Quality Infrastructure in Africa



- Well developed QI
- Reasonably developed QI
- Partially developed QI
- Limited QI
- Non or very limited QI



Currently 48,6% of State Parties have only limited or no capacities and/or competence to fulfil AfCFTA TBT requirements.

multi-level approach, the Regional Economic Communities, RECs, are an integral part of the PAQI Forum, so that their QI expertise is also used and an exchange between regional and continental levels is ensured. Among other things, this is an important building block for the implementation of the Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) as well as the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Annexes of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Agreement.

Since 2014, PAQI has been collecting the so-called PAQI Index, a stock-taking of each country's overall Quality Infrastructure based on more than 100 indicators. An easy-to-understand visualisation shows the status quo in Quality Infrastructure of each African country at a glance. This is a very helpful tool to draw the attention of political decision-makers to urgent needs for action. In this context, it becomes clear, for example, that almost half of the AfCFTA State Parties are not or only partially in a position to fulfil the requirements of the AfCFTA Agreement in the area of TBT and SPS.

## The challenges

Although there has been a great deal of improvement at the national level in the area of Quality Infrastructure in recent years, it should be noted that this progress is largely attributable to the group of already partially developed countries. This is where investments have been made in many areas of Quality Infrastructure. Nearly half of the African Union Member States, however, remain at a rudimentary level of quality assurance services. An Africa Quality Policy should serve as a guide here in the future. **Free, fair and safe** trade is closely linked to rules-based trade relations. This means that standards are harmonized, and technical regulations are approximated and mutually recognised. The establishment of an African Continental Regulatory Framework is not easy. However, even though it is a long-term process, it is indispensable in the light of boosting intra-African trade and general export promotion. In this context, it is also evident that improved cooperation among conformity assessment bodies in Africa needs to be achieved. So far there is no suitable platform to facilitate such an exchange. For example, one of the lessons of the COVID-19 pandemic shows that quality assurance in the pharmaceutical sector requires improved knowledge and understanding of the science by both manufacturers and regulators.

**QUALITY FOR AFRICA is the way forward,  
the goal, however, is to establish “Made in Africa”  
as a quality trademark.**

## CONTACT

TBT/QI Advisor to the  
African Union Commission  
Dr. Oswald Chinyamakobvu  
chinyamakobvuo@africa-union.org

PAQI JC Chairperson  
Dr. Celestine Okanya  
paqi@arso-oran.org  
www.paqi.org

Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt  
Dr. Barbara Siegmund  
barbara.siegmund@ptb.de  
Text: Martin Kaiser