The construction industry in Kenya is one that has endured exponential growth amidst numerous challenges. Because of the fact that Kenya’s business economy is dynamic, it has made the country a hub for trade and finance thus increasing demand for offices, homes and commercial property. In other words, Kenya’s construction industry is now a boom. The Government of Kenya has also been categorical in stating that the road infrastructure is one of its major projects that enhances the ease of doing business for farmers, small business owners and transporters services. With good infrastructure, distribution of products and services becomes an element of supporting business growth.

According to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (2015), the real estate and construction sectors continues to be some of the key drivers of economic growth in Kenya for the last five years. The Kenyan construction industry contributes 7 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP), which makes it clear that Kenya has a fast developing construction industry.

However, challenges have arisen especially with regard to conformity assessment and this is evidenced from the
numerous incidents aired in local media about buildings collapsing due to poor workmanship, issues to do with capacity to competently carry out inspection and certification of buildings among other factors, within the country. On several occasions, we have witnessed the responsible government department reporting on trends such as lack of proper framework to facilitate the implementation of quality assurance in construction.

Therefore, there is need to enhance conformity assessment in the Kenyan construction sector. Accreditation comes into perspective by focusing on the ways and means of supporting professionalism in the industry, ranging from constructors, manufacturers, designers, architects, civil engineers to regulators. It is envisaged that Kenya will gradually embrace accreditation in this industry by ensuring that standards are implemented.

Standards and accredited conformity assessments are market-based tools that can be used in the construction sector to cover construction products and materials, building techniques and practices, on-site Health and Safety, environmental impact assessment and the use of digital technology in smart buildings.

Conformity assessment is an activity carried out to determine, directly or indirectly, that a process, product or service meets relevant technical standards and fulfills relevant requirements. It is also commonly known as compliance assessment.

On the other hand, standards define a set of rules established by an authority to measure the quality of service offered, thus ensuring some form of quality assurance. *(The article is adapted from the WAD 2017 brochure)*

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**Benefits of Accreditation to Construction Companies**

- Confidence that manufactured products and raw materials are safe and meet specification, thereby reducing potential delays, product failure and project costs.
- Provide a safe working environment for employees.
- Using an accredited body to carry out an independent evaluation helps demonstrate due diligence in the event of legal action.
Accreditation services provided by Kenya Accreditation Service (KENAS), the sole National Accreditation Body (NAB) for Kenya, can support professionals and stakeholders in the construction industry and the built environment.

Ranging from constructors, manufacturers, designers, architects, civil engineers, to regulators, accreditation focuses on formal attestation of technical competence in the inspection, testing and calibration activities in the entire construction chain.

Accreditation thus supports the construction sector to control risk, help drive efficiency, demonstrate regulatory compliance, and provide supply chain confidence.

With accreditation, a quality checks like the quality of building materials and components becomes a prime concern to the industry.

Product certification is an immediate quality control tool to enhance safety and avoid loss of lives and resources when buildings collapse due to poor construction and lack of competence by personnel.

Through the accreditation of product certification process, the whole construction process from incoming raw materials, production, inspection, sampling and testing, traceability, etc provides a reliable means for assuring quality throughout thus making available certified construction products for use in the building and construction industry. KENAS is able to engage with businesses that manufacture the ready-mixed concrete and building material industries to ensure that they understand the need for seeking accreditation to ISO/IEC 17020 –Conformity Assessment - Requirements for the operation of various types of bodies performing inspection;

ISO/IEC 17025 - General Requirements for the Competence of testing and calibration laboratories;

ISO/IEC 17024 - Conformity assessment - General requirements for bodies operating certification of persons.

Product certification becomes an immediate quality control tool to enhance safety and avoid loss of lives and resources when buildings collapse due to poor construction and lack of competence by personnel.
KENAS held the World Accreditation Day celebrations on 9th June, 2017 at the Ole Sereni Hotel, Nairobi County. The full day celebrations covered several activities that included presentations from various stakeholders in the Construction industry in Kenya. The Chief Guest was the Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Industry, Trade and Cooperatives, sent a representative who was represented by Ambassador Dr., Joseph Kiplagat, Director of Industrial Information & Research at the Ministry. The Ambassador said that accreditation by KENAS leads to a more competitive Kenyan economy through the regional and international acceptance of conformity assessment results and certificates and the elimination of Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) hence making increased trade a reality. The CEO KENAS, Sammy Milgo read the joint ILAC/IAF statement and highlighted KENAS achievements in the past year with regard to operations and awareness activities.

The presentations included but were not limited to:

a) How Standards are able to bring sanity in the construction sector.
b) Quality of building materials and the impact of construction.
c) Testing of materials used for construction.
d) Energy efficiency standards and implementation in buildings and infrastructure.

The event was graced by over 135 guests. The main aim of the day's discussions was to create awareness and offer round table discussions on matters of construction would be tackled with accreditation being the center of the discussions.

**HIGHLIGHT OF PRESENTATIONS**

Click here to access the full presentations for the day - WAD2017

**MR. WAHOME - MINOFTRANSPORT, INFRASTRUCTURE, HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT**

Chief Physicist of Material Testing Laboratory, Mr. Wahome. "When we ensure that quality control through material testing is done appropriately, the full utility of a structure is realised as per the designs; and the structure has prolonged life."

**QS. DAVIDMATHU - NATIONAL CONSTRUCTION AUTHORITY**

Speaking at the WAD celebrations Qs. Mathu said that the NCA has just commissioned a survey on construction failures in the country.

**MR. FIDELIS SAKWA - BAMBURICEMENT**

Speaking on the quality of building materials and the conformity of their specifications, he stated that the experience of the constructors, methodology, and equipment need to be inspected.

**ENG. DR. SIPHILA MUMENYA - UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI**

Globalization in construction, an architect should be able to appreciate green buildings and climate change and its effects. An architect should also ensure that the human centered designs are also taken into effect e.g. the Wangari Maathai Centre which is on the planning phase.
Accreditation: Supporting the Needs of Global Regulators

Standards and accredited conformity assessment of certification, testing, calibration and inspection services provide an essential tool that can be used by the public sector to meet policy objectives.

In order to highlight case studies from all over the world, Public Sector Assurance website showcases how standards and accredited conformity assessment is used around the world by central government, local government and regulators to deliver positive benefit. It features case studies that illustrate the value of accreditation to government officials and regulators in delivering results in key policy areas. It also provides independent research and supporting information which demonstrates the tangible benefits of conformity assessment to the public sector.

The site also shows how global accreditation arrangements operated by ILAC and IAF underpin the international acceptance of traded products. These arrangements enable governments to regulate products in the knowledge that the market will have the means of meeting both voluntary and regulatory requirements in a transparent way.

The Proficiency Testing Australia (PTA) has announced its proficiency testing program schedule for the period July 2017 to June 2018.

Usually, upon request, PTA conducts audits, consultancy and training course services to ISO/IEC 17043 and ISO 13528. Further details may be found on their PTA website, www.pta.asn.au

PTA is accredited by International Accreditation New Zealand as a Proficiency Testing Provider to the requirements of ISO/IEC 17043.

Please click this for the details on how to participate in PTA programs: Proficiency Testing by PTAustralia
The Kenya Accreditation Service (KENAS) and the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) which aims at enhancing quality assurance in the inspection services of petroleum road tankers. Several public notices have been shared in local newspapers giving notice that the ERC will be engaging accredited inspection agencies that deal with inspection of petroleum tankers. The MoU is yet another milestone for KENAS in entrenching the value for accreditation through partnerships with regulators and state agencies.

The 3rd Nairobi Innovation Week

The Kenya Accreditation Service (KENAS) participated in the third Nairobi Innovation Week which was held at the Nairobi University grounds from March 6th - 10th, 2017.

Prior to the main awareness event were several boot camp sessions held at Strathmore University, Nairobi campus where identified start-ups were taken through informative sessions on finance resources, quality of products and services, market research and needs etc. The Assistant Director for Testing and Calibration, Ms. Felista Nyakoe was invited to sensitise to the start-ups on the need for using accredited certification companies and accredited product testing laboratories to ensure that their products and services were meeting international requirements.

The Nairobi Innovation Week is a forum that seeks to bring together various stakeholders to streamline and energize innovation efforts by Start-ups in Kenya.
**EPZA COMPANIES LEARN ABOUT ACCREDITATION**

Kenya Accreditation Service (KENAS) has been heavily engaged in implementing targeted awareness activities through a development program funded by Government of Kenya. In March, 2017, KENAS visited the EPZA (Export Processing Zones Authority) in Athi-River to create awareness to textiles and apparel companies that are housed within the EPZA Complex. The companies were educated on the benefits of using accredited testing laboratories, certifying bodies and inspection bodies especially when considering exporting their goods outside the country. Quality control in the textile and apparels industry is of utmost importance since the Government of Kenya through the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Cooperatives has stated its intention to revive the textile sector for both local and international trade.

**SENSITIZATION OF MEDICAL, TEXTILE AND APPARELS INSTITUTIONS WITHIN NORTHRIFT AREA, KENYA**

Ms. Doris Mueni, the Assistant Director for Health and Safety and Ms. Felista Nyakoe, the Assistant Director for Testing and Calibration visit the KARI Dairy Research Institute in Naivasha.

Ms. Felista Nyakoe, the Assistant Director for Testing and Calibration conversing with the Egerton Chemistry Department team during an awareness visit to the Egerton University, Nakuru. During the visit, the team also visited the Egerton Medical Centre to sensitize on the need for medical laboratory accreditation.

Ms. Doris Mueni and Ms. Felista Nyakoe visit the Rivatex Complex in Eldoret as part of the KENAS targeted awareness campaign.

KENAS officials, Ms. Felista and Ms. Doris visit the Moi University Textile Testing Laboratory in Eldoret to sensitize on ISO/IEC 17025 accreditation for Testing laboratories.
Mr. Stanslaus Masinza of KENAS attended the ICARST (International Conference on Applications of Radiolgy Science Technology in Vienna this April. This was the 2nd Consultants’ Meeting themed: “Development of standards for radiotracers applications”. It had five participants from, Germany, Korea, Kenya and Albania to discuss and evaluate issues related to international standards on radiotracers and sealed source applications in industry.

The National HIV Reference Laboratory team received their re-accreditation certificate during their ceremony for the launch of their new strategic plan in March. The laboratory is accredited to ISO 15189.

The National Microbiology Reference Laboratory team are all smiles after receiving their accreditation certificate during their accreditation ceremony. The laboratory is accredited to ISO 15189.

MS. Ursula Msis of KENAS (left) attending to a guest at the KENAS stand during the World Intellectual Property Day at the KICC, Nairobi hosted by KIPI (Kenya Industrial Property Institute).

KENAS hosted a training for ISO/IEC 17025 Internal Audit and Internal Audit training for ISO 15189 at Panari Hotel, Nairobi County.

The new Principal Secretary, for Investment and Industry under the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Cooperatives, Mr. Patrick Nduati Mwangi, CBS visits the KENAS offices in a meet the KENAS management tour in April, 26, 2017.
Crop Nutrition Managing Director, Mr. Jeremy Cordingley (right) receives their re-accreditation certification from KENAS CEO, Sammy Milgo. Crop Nutrition is accredited to ISO/IEC 17025 as a testing laboratory.

The KEMSA (Kenya Medical Supplies Authority) Ag. CEO Mr. Odhiambo (left) receives the accreditation certificate for the KEMSA testing laboratory. The KEMSA testing laboratory is accredited to ISO/IEC 17025 (General Requirements for the Competence of testing and calibration laboratories).

The Assistant Director, Communication and Public Relations at KENAS, Ms. Elizabeth Muema attended the ILAC and IAF Communications and Marketing Committee meetings which were held in Auckland, New Zealand in March. The Committee discussed on various communication and marketing activities that ILAC and IAF have committed to do to enhance their role as the umbrella organisations that oversee accreditation activities at a global level.

KENAS Staff under the Health and Safety Scheme taking a group of trainees through Uncertainty of Measurements training course for ISO 15189 (Medical Laboratories - Requirements for Quality and Competence) at EKA hotel in April.

The Medical Laboratory Technical Committee meeting was held in February at the KENAS offices to discuss various criteria documents. Opening the session was the CEO KENAS, Mr. Sammy Milgo (far right).

Kisii Teaching and Referral Hospital Laboratory staff celebrate upon receiving their ISO 15189:2012 Accreditation Certificate during their ceremony in Western Kenya.
NEWLY ACCREDITED

1. Testing Laboratories
   Kenya Medical Supplies Authority (KEMSA)
2. Medical Laboratories
   a) Kisii County Teaching and Referral Hospital Laboratory
   b) KEMRI Alupe - HIV laboratory
   c) Africare Ltd Laboratory
3. Inspection Bodies
   Kenya Association of Bus Manufacturers (KABM)

RE-ACCREDITED

1. Testing Laboratories
   Crop Nutrition
2. Medical Laboratories
   a. Nyumbani Diagnostics Laboratory
   b. Mater hospital Laboratory