



# 10TH CONTINENTAL ESSAY COMPETITION

**CONCEPT  
NOTE**

Theme: "The role of standardisation in promoting the growth of Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) for sustainable, inclusive and diversified industrial and economic development in Africa"

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# ABOUT ORGANISERS

## African Organization for Standardization

ARSO is an intergovernmental body, established by the African Union and UNECA in 1977 with the principal mandate to harmonize African Standards and conformity assessment procedures in order to reduce Technical Barriers to Trade and therefore promote intra African and international Trade as well as enhance the industrialization of Africa.

Part of ARSO mandate is to ensure the well-being and safety of the African Community. Thus being an African organization, all the efforts to eradicate poverty and ensure the youth are enlightened and create a culture of quality among the youth is in line with its vision and mission.



AMC Group Africa Limited is a leading Kenyan management training, consultants and system auditors with clients from government ministries, parastatals, and institutions of higher learning and private sector organizations. They are the first Consultancy Firm in Kenya to be ISO 9001:2015 Certified.

In addition to this, AMC Group Africa Ltd also runs the following:

- The certified firms expo and plenary sessions
- Annual quality workshops
- Directory of certified firms



## INTRODUCTION

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) play a major role in most economies. In Africa and all over the world, SMEs have emerged as the engine and drivers of economic growth and global connectivity. They account for the majority of businesses worldwide and are important contributors to job creation and global economic development. They are vital for economic development for developing countries, due to their high labor absorptive capacity, lower average capital cost per job than in big business and their role in technical and other innovations which are vital for many economies. SMEs promote a flexible, innovative and competitive economic structure, which is vital for responding to changing global trends and overall competitiveness. SMEs are also important in the transition to a market economy and thereby contribute to overall development of the private sector, including the promotion of privatization. The SME sector thus serves as a 'nursery' and a proven training ground for 'higher level' entrepreneurship and innovation.

However, the reality that poorly developed SMEs cannot contribute to a sustainable development, Poverty eradication and industrialisation as it is expected, is proving a challenge to many governments and policy makers. The World Bank (2019) highlights the challenge, and points to the fact that many of the SMEs jobs produce low incomes and are insufficient to help them climb out of poverty and contribute to meaningful economic growth. Already, the disruptive impact of the COVID-19 crisis on workers, labor markets, and livelihoods has further underlined the importance of the jobs agenda and creating more awareness on the need to support access to better jobs for disadvantaged groups, through productive SMEs, and as an important element of implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals - SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth) and SDG 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure) and ending poverty and hunger.

To create more awareness on this, already the UN General Assembly in its 74th Plenary held on the 6th April, 2017 declared 27th June as Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Day, recognizing the importance of Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises and need to invest well in them.

The World Bank (2013) advises firms on the need to improving their quality assurance and management systems, better monitoring, evaluation, product testing and packaging methods to respond to changing technical requirements of Global trading partners. The challenge is therefore to make the SMEs more Productive and competitive. UNCTAD (UNCTAD/ITE/TEB/2005/1) highlights the need for developing polies that address the standardisation needs and challenges of the SMES in Africa as with Globalization, the TBTs (e.g. regulations, product standards, testing and certification procedures), and the SPS- sanitary and phytosanitary standards, and SPS (e.g. food safety and animal and plant health standards), pose the greatest challenge to market access for the SMEs in developing regions.



Theme: “The role of standardisation in promoting the growth of Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) for sustainable, inclusive and diversified industrial and economic development in Africa”



## ABOUT THE 10TH CONTINENTAL— ESSAY COMPETITION

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The Competition aims to have 3 categories of winners: the National, Regional and Continental. In this regard, ARSO is requesting all the National Standards Bodies (NSB) in Africa to organise the competition at the National level and send out the attached documents (10th Continental Essay Concept Paper and Registration Form) to the various Universities /Colleges for the competition. The NSB is expected to conduct the competition at National level.

This entails sending out the relevant documents to Colleges/ Universities, receiving the essays from the participants, doing the assessment, and awarding or giving recognition to the winners as appropriate to the NSB.

The organizers are inviting students in institutions of Higher Learning in Africa (Colleges/ Universities approved by their local commission of higher education) to submit their essays on the theme: “The role of standardisation in promoting the growth of Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) for sustainable, inclusive and diversified industrial and economic development in Africa” to their respective National Standards Bodies (NSBs) email addresses. (Confirm with your respective NSBs on the submission dates)

Kindly note that a *minimum of 25 participants\** should be registered with respective NSBs in order for them to proceed to Regional | Continental competition. The deadline for submitting top five winners by National Standards Bureaus (NSBs) is 28th April 2023 (This Deadline is only for Countries Submitting to the ARSO Central Secretariat; the deadline for participants submission to the NSBs might vary depending on the Country) through [arso@arso-aran.org](mailto:arso@arso-aran.org)

**\*only for the National Standards Bodies Compliance**



## WHAT THE ORGANISERS ARE LOOKING FOR—NOT NECESSARILY IN THE ORDER BELOW:

There are different areas on the role of Standardisation in promoting the growth of Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) for sustainable, inclusive and diversified industrial and economic development in Africa:

- How to reduce poor Market Access by SMEs, due to non-compliance with the Market regulatory Requirements and poor-Quality products
- The Problems facing the Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
- Solutions provided through the Implementation of Standards in MSMEs to improve their competitive advantage
- General Understanding of Standards and Specific Issues affecting players
- Policy Strategies developed to address problems facing the Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises in Africa

## ENTRY RULES AND CONDITIONS

1. This competition is open to Citizens of all African Countries Only *below the age of 35 years living in Africa* and studying in a university/college recognised by the local commission for university education or equivalent body in their countries
2. Length of essays : Essays should be *between 1000 and 1200 words*
3. Presentation: Essays should be double spaced and presented in *Century Gothic, size 12*
4. Language of essays: Essays must be submitted in *English or French*
5. Information on the author: Authors may use up to 50 words to describe themselves. Information should include their names, course and year of study, name, town and country in which their university is located. (N. B: this will not be part of the 1000- 1200 words)
6. Contacts of authors: *Authors should provide us with their postal, physical, telephone and email addresses on the first page of the essay together with the title of the essay and information on the author. Also kindly attach a copy of the Identity Card or Passport and a completely filled registration form* that can be obtained from AMC Group Africa Limited (<http://amcgroupafrica.com/> ) and ARSO (<https://www.arso-oran.org>)
7. Eligibility - The following essays are not eligible for this competition:
  - i. Essays that have been published in any form.
  - ii. Essays that have been shown or accepted for other competitions.
  - iii. Essays that focus on the work of a particular person, organization or brand name.
  - iv. Participants are only allowed to submit one essay.



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## PRIZES FOR WINNERS

There will be two levels of winners

**At Regional Level**

1st position – USD 500

2nd position – USD 300

3rd position – USD 200

**At Continental Level**

1st position – (male and female) each USD 1000

2nd position – USD 800

3rd position – USD 500

*In addition the 1st Position Winner at the Continental Level will be given a trip and accommodation to the next ARSO General Assembly Events that will take place in 2023 to be honored.*

## SELECTION OF WINNERS IN REGIONS

The selection of winners at regional level will be done according to the UNECA clustering of African states as follows.

**Central Africa:**

Cameroon, Chad, Central African Republic, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and Sao Tome & Principe

**Eastern Africa:**

Burundi, Comoros, D.R Congo, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Madagascar, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda

**North Africa:**

Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Sudan, and Tunisia

**Southern Africa:**

Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe

**West Africa:**

Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo

More information on this can be obtained by visiting [www.uneca.org](http://www.uneca.org).





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## **COPYRIGHT**

Please note that by entering the competition, you have assigned copyright of your essay to the organizers of this event who may publish it in whole or in part on their respective websites, websites of national standards bodies, a wide range of publications for circulation both inside and outside Africa.

## **SELECTION OF WINNERS**

Winners will be selected through a fair and impartial selection process by the organizers. The decision of the judges shall be final, on the awarding procedures and process.

## **ANNOUNCEMENT OF WINNERS**

### **Regional winners**

Information on regional winners will be published on the following websites:

1. The organizers
2. Their respective regional economic communities
3. The website of their national standards body

Regional winners will be announced during the national standards day celebrations in their countries immediately following the essay competition and selection of winners:

### **Continental winners**

Information on Continental winners will be published on the following websites:

1. The organizers
2. African Union Commission
3. Website of all national standards bodies

Continental winners will be announced during the Africa Standards Day Celebration held yearly during the ARSO General Assembly Events (in Democratic Republic of Congo – June or July 2023)

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT THE FOLLOWING WEBSITES TO DOWNLOAD RELEVANT DOCUMENTS:**

- African Organization for Standardisation - [www.arso-oran.org](http://www.arso-oran.org)
  - AMC Group Africa - [www.amcgroupafrica.com](http://www.amcgroupafrica.com)
  - Websites of various National Standards Bodies in Africa
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# 10TH CONTINENTAL ESSAY COMPETITION REGISTRATION FORM

(ARSO/CACO/EC/FORM 1/2022)

**FULL NAME (AS LISTED ON THE ID OR PASSPORT)**

**DATE OF BIRTH (DDMMYYYY)**

**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN**

**EMAIL ADDRESS**

**MOBILE NUMBER**

**NAME OF UNIVERSITY | COLLEGE**

**CONFIRMATION FROM COLLEGE | UNIVERSITY**

**SIGNATURE CONFIRMATION FROM STUDENT**

NAME, SIGNATURE AND STAMP OF HEAD OF  
DEPARTMENT IN COLLEGE/ UNIVERSITY

PARTICIPANT'S CONFIRMATION THAT THE  
INFORMATION BEING SUBMITTED IS TRUE AND  
CONFIRMING THE THEY HAVE READ THE ENTRY RULES  
AND CONDITIONS

## TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR SUBMISSION

Open to African Youths (below the age 35 years) and enrolled in recognised university/College

Kindly type into every field provided in the form and submit it to the National Standards Bureau (NSB) in your country

The Form (3) shall be submitted to the respective National Standards Bodies (NSBs) email addresses together with the written essay (1) and the copy of Identity card (2) or passport at date set by the NSBs