



2 October 2014

(14-5594)

Page: 1/4

Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

Original: English

GCC STANDARDIZATION ORGANIZATION (GSO)

The following communication, received on 30 September 2014, is being circulated at the request of the GCC Standardization Organization (GSO).

1 ABOUT GSO

1.1. Inspired by the objectives of the charter of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf aiming at achieving coordination, integration and interconnection between them in all areas leading to their unity, GSO is:

- a not-for-profit organization that serves as an "umbrella organization" for the GCC standards, metrology, conformity assessment, and accreditation.
- a regional standardization organization (a sub-regional organization by ISO designation) that works under the umbrella of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) for the Arab States of the Gulf.
- GSO Members are: United Arab Emirates, Kingdom of Bahrain, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar, the State of Kuwait and Yemen.
- GSO assumed operation in May 2004, and superseded the Gulf Standardization and Metrology Organization GSMO (1984-2003).
- Its headquarters are in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and it has administrative and financial autonomy.

1.2. GSO has good working relationships with the following international entities:

- International Organization for Standardization (ISO);
- Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization (AIDMO);
- International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC); and
- Codex Alimentarius Commission.

2 GSO STRUCTURE

2.1. The Board of Directors comprises the Ministers in charge of standardization in member states. The Technical Council comprises the presidents or officials of the standardization organizations of the member states or their representatives. The Steering Committee of Standards comprises the directors of standards of the members' national standardization bodies. A Secretary General is appointed for a three-year terms, nominated by member states. Technical Committees are comprised of members from national standardization bodies in GSO and are focused on separate sectors.

3 OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

3.1. GSO aims at helping GCC achieve the objectives set forth in its charter and in the GCC Economic Agreement by unifying the various standardization activities, and following up

application and compliance of the same in cooperation and coordination with the standardization bodies in the member states in an endeavour to develop the production and service sectors, foster the intra-GCC trade, protect consumers, the environment and public health, and encourage GCC industries and agricultural production that would enhance the GCC economy, maintain the achievements of the member states and minimize the technical trade barriers as envisaged by the objectives of the Customs Union.

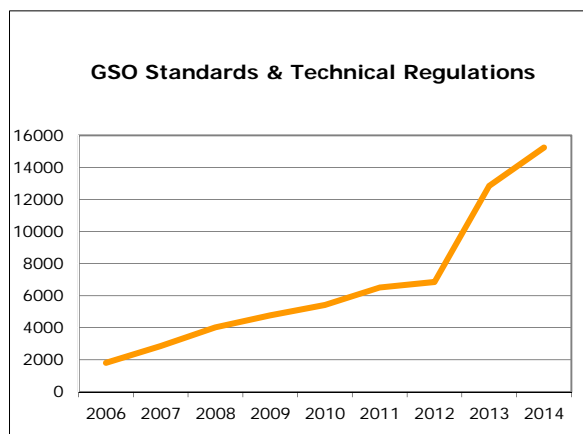
4 GSO ACHIEVEMENTS

4.1. Based on its strategic plans and main objectives, GSO accomplished many achievements in different areas.

4.1 Standards

4.2. GSO follows a specific Guide for the process of developing GSO standards and technical regulations. The guide is inspired by ISO Guide 21 and meets the requirements of GSO.

4.3. Through GSO technical committees/sub-committees, GSO managed to develop standards and technical regulations for the past years and achieved a remarkable increase in the number of publications per year. These standards/technical regulations are a response to market demands and comply with consumer protection and environmental and health requirements.



4.2 Metrology

4.4. Based on GSO objective to setup a unified regional measurements system in coordination with national standards bodies of GCC States, GSO has constituted the Calibration and Measurement Steering Committee and assigned it the responsibilities of updating the current metrological legislation in the GCC States and coming up with common metrology law.

4.5. GSO organized many symposia to introduce the importance of metrology and reached a consensus agreement on the importance of creating a Regional Metrology Organization (RMO), with a vision of establishing a self-sufficient and sustainable internationally recognized RMO. This RMO (GulfMet: <http://www.gulfmet.org>), officially established in June 2010, has many achievements to its credit:

- GulfMet established the following Technical Committees: the Technical Committee for Mass and Related Quantities, the Technical Committee for Electrical and Magnetism, the Technical Committee for Thermometry, and the Technical Committee for Quality;
- Developed guidelines and procedures in different aspects of (QMS, Quality, ...);
- Provides training programmes in the metrology field;
- Advises on an inter-laboratories comparison programme;
- Advises on quality management review; and
- Signed MoUs with international metrology institutes.

4.3 GAC (GCC Accreditation Center)

4.6. GAC aims to achieve the following goals:

- Building confidence in the results of services provided by the organizations accredited by GAC;
- Achievement of mutual recognition with the international and regional bodies and organizations working in the accreditation field;
- Providing the accreditation services regarding the requirements and needs of conformity assessment bodies and all the bodies related to accreditation in the member countries; and
- Safeguarding the interests of the accreditation services beneficiaries.

4.4 Conformity Certificate Scheme

4.7. The GSO Conformity Certificate is a self-declaration from the Motor Vehicle Manufacturers, certifying the compliance of their vehicles with related GSO technical regulations.

4.5 Technical Services

4.8. The Technical Services Department focuses on process automation and provides professional services to all GSO clients in GCC, including software development that meets the demands of GSO departments. Furthermore, it provides the first point of contact for clients' inquiries.

4.6 International Cooperation

4.9. GSO distributed an approved work-plan to all GSO Members to facilitate the maximum utilization of the memoranda of cooperation that GSO signed with international organizations and other stakeholders.

4.10. GSO participated in events and signed a memorandum of cooperation with many organizations such as:

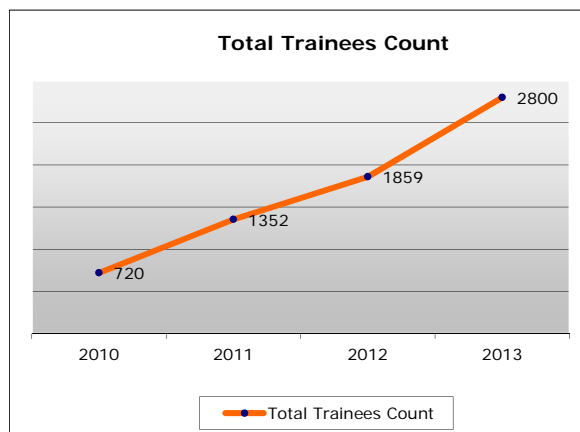
ISO	SMIIC
IEC	CAC
BSI	KATS
NIST	AIDMO
ASTM/ANSI	CEN/CENELEC
TSE	ASME

4.7 Training

4.11. Technical training is paramount in technical staff capacity building, and increasing awareness of standardization importance and its impact on all aspects of society.

4.12. GSO provided training for member states covering all technical fields, such as:

- Technical requirements for GSO standards and international standards;
- Accreditation requirements for laboratories proficiency testing;
- Inspection bodies;
- Social responsibilities;
- Technical regulation application; and
- Technical committees guide.



4.8 WTO Membership

4.13. All GSO member states are Members of the WTO. The following table shows the year each member state joined the WTO.

	Member State	Date
1	United Arab Emirates	1996
2	Bahrain, Kingdom of	1995
3	Saudi Arabia, Kingdom of	2005
4	Oman	2000
5	Qatar	1996
6	Kuwait, the State of	1995
7	Yemen	2014

4.9 SPS Notifications

4.14. GSO member states notify the SPS Committee about technical regulations related to SPS issues. To date, more than 400 notifications were submitted to the SPS Committee by GSO member states; 82 of them were submitted in 2014 alone.